

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

About the only subject that anyone can tell or write about this week is the weather. Monday morning the thermometer had a reading of six degrees in Raeford. With the wind out of the northwest the chill factor must have been about six or seven below zero.

Most of the older folks around town said that it had been colder one or two mornings in years gone by, but with the wind like it was, I don't believe it could have been much colder.

According to the long range forecast the cold weather will be around for a month or so more. I haven't heard of any shortage of fuel or electric failure in this area, but many people are talking about the high costs of keeping warm. Electric bills and fuel bills are more than double due to the cold weather. Some people are asking what other way could people keep warm. If you come up with an answer to this, let me know.

The good old days didn't have the modern conveniences of today, but the costs must have been cheaper.

If you have been looking at television recently, and with the weather like it is today, what else could you do, you have seen the advertisement of a movie titled "Sasquatch". From the appearance of the ads on TV it must be a good movie.

If you haven't seen it and would like to spend a warm evening looking at it, go out to Hoke High School Thursday night, January 20 at 7:30 o'clock. The film will be shown in the Hoke High Library and tickets are on sale for \$1.50 each. The movie is being sponsored by the DECA Club at the school and proceeds will be used by the club for projects.

Last week in this column I mentioned about the men of the Raeford Presbyterian Church having a breakfast meeting and that I would meet the men there. Besides this writer, 40 others showed up for the meeting.

Friday, a lady from the Raeford United Methodist Church came by the office with an article that appears elsewhere in the paper, and asked for equal rights in this column.

Now I will not be at the meeting of the Methodist Women Sunday afternoon at 2:30 to hear a talk on the subject of "Prayer and Self-Denial." Being a Presbyterian, I will not ask the Presbyterian women to attend, but if the Methodist women will attend it will be alright with me.

No equal rights ladies!

The Hoke County United Fund needs the help of anyone who hasn't opened his or her pocket-book during the drive. Unless you come through, the agencies will come up short for next year's budget. So if you haven't given, please do!

The inauguration for Jimmy Carter takes place Thursday, January 20. After listening to all the claims from this group and that group, I wonder if the votes of people like myself, that don't belong to any group, helped get him in office.

Maybe these groups that say if they had voted for President Ford that he would have won, had let it be known they would vote that way, it would have made groups that voted for the President vote for Carter.

So I wouldn't say any certain group of people elected anyone to any office. When one group makes known what it is going to do, then other people go in the opposite direction.

Why not wait and see what President Carter and his appointees will do, before you judge them.

Apartment Complex Proposed

Third Suspect Caught

A third suspect wanted for murder and armed robbery in connection with the fatal shooting of a Rockfish storekeeper Dec. 23 was arrested Jan. 11 in Illinois and returned to Hoke County last Sunday.

Sheriff D.M. Barrington identified the suspect as James Otis Havis Jr., 29, a serviceman stationed at Ft. Bragg.

Barrington, along with SBI agent Van Parker and J.E. Lamont chief deputy, traveled to Alton, Ill., a St.

Louis suburb, on Jan. 12 to return Havis to North Carolina.

Havis, who was AWOL from the Army and staying at his parents' home in Alton, was taken into custody by Alton authorities on warrants charging him with the murder and robbery of Robert Leslie Brooks, owner of the Rockfish Store in Rockfish.

Havis waived extradition and was returned to Hoke County by car. The soldier, who is married and

the father of several children, made a statement to authorities, Barrington said.

Havis was lodged in jail without privilege of bond. He was scheduled to be arraigned on Wednesday.

The Ft. Bragg soldier is the third suspect who has been arrested in the case. On Dec. 31, Kenneth Leo Dockery, 24, of Raeford, and Allen Dwain Smith, 24, of Fayetteville, were arrested and charged with murder and armed robbery.

Police Nab Teen Ring

Police have arrested two high school youths following an investigation of a forgery ring which involved checks stolen from the school principal and an athletic coach.

Police Chief Leonard Wiggins identified the two arrested Jan. 13 as Howard S. Adams, 18, of 510 W. Sixth Ave. and Gary W. Bease, 16, of 508 E. Prospect Ave. Both are Hoke High students.

Police said two checks belonging to Carl A. Edwards, Lewis St., principal of Hoke High, were stolen from a desk drawer at the school Nov. 20. On Nov. 28, a check belonging to John L. Harris, football coach at the school, was stolen from his desk at the school.

All of the stolen checks were forged and cashed at Western Auto, Kash & Karry Market and Harrell's Grocery, police said. The checks were made payable to a "Henry Blue" in amounts of \$42.

Police said one other check belonging to another teacher at the high school is believed stolen and a third suspect may be involved.

Adams and Bease are scheduled for a District Court appearance Feb. 4.

On Bypass Outside City Limits

A Greenville-based firm has made inquiries into constructing a duplex apartment development along the 401-bypass just outside Raeford city limits.

City manager Robert Drumwright confirmed Tuesday that W.H. Weaver Construction Co. of Greenville, had requested that part of a 7.78 acre plot belonging to Julian Wright be rezoned from commercial to residential. A portion of the land is already zoned as residential.

Weaver Construction has not as yet closed the land deal with Wright and no figures were available on the acreage price. However, the city recently purchased land in the vicinity for a new armory and paid approximately \$6,000 per acre.

According to Drumwright, the plans call for annexation into the city in order to connect with city sewer lines across 401. Water is already available to the area. Drumwright also noted that such annexation of the completed project would be worth at least a half a million dollars to the city's tax base.

Weaver project developer Ray Campbell would make no comment on the plans or on the type of the proposed construction. Drumwright, however, said that Weaver Construction has constructed similar projects in Aberdeen, Laurinburg, Asheboro and Roanoke Rapids. Farmers Home Administration is expected to finance the project, he said.

Prices for the one, two and three-bedroom apartments will begin at \$165 for the one-bedroom unit, according to Drumwright. The complex will be designed to include a resident manager and will be landscaped for privacy.

The city planning and zoning board was scheduled to meet Tuesday night to approve plans for the new subdivision. Drumwright said little or no opposition to the new construction was foreseen.

The city manager said if the proposed duplexes are built it will be a real plus for the housing situation. Presently there are only a handful of rental properties available and the demand for apartments is very high.

Cafes Vow Fight On Beer Ban

Cafe operators licensed to sell beer on Sundays under state-issued brown bagging permits met with county commissioners Monday night and announced they will fight the commissioners' plan to prohibit any Sunday sales.

The five county commissioners unanimously passed a resolution at the Monday night meeting asking the state legislature to give Hoke County the power to prohibit the

beer sales from all establishments between the hours of 1 p.m. Sunday and 8 a.m. Monday. Under current state law, restaurants and county clubs holding brown bagging permits may also sell beer, even if the county has a local ordinance against it on Sundays.

Julius Vanner and Ralph McNeill, operators of the County Line Plaza on U.S. 401, spoke out

against the commissioners' action, along with Grover Reasner, operator of Mae's Pizza and Cafe on Hwy. 211.

Reasner told the board he had spent \$100,000 to add a restaurant to his business so he could obtain a brown bagging permit last year after the board voted 3-2 not to allow groceries to sell beer on Sundays in an August decision.

McNeill argued that a total ban on Sunday beer would only encourage bootlegging and the county would have to bear the extra costs of increased law enforcement to control the bootlegging establishments.

McNeill also suggested that "some type of prejudice played a role" as he claimed the issue didn't become a controversy until the County Line Plaza opened last June. McNeill and Vanner are blacks.

"We had an incident when we first started the building. We were shot at and it took the police two and a half hours to get here. So what's going to happen when you get a shooting at one of these bootlegger's places, how long is it going to take them then?" he said.

"As far as these grocers, they want to sell beer on Sundays but they don't want to meet the state requirements. They should do like Mr. Reasner did. He was wise. Any businessman who goes into business does it to make a profit," McNeill said.

McNeill also said the county commissioners were not representing the people in their decision.

"The black and the Indian one up there", he said, referring to commissioners Neil McPhatter and

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Housing Applications Start Trickling In

Applications for federal funds for rehabilitation of sub-standard homes in low income neighborhoods are slowly stacking up at Cameron Heights Neighborhood Center on N. Main Ext.

"Maybe its just too cold to come out," said Nina Morrissey, center supervisor. Undaunted, however, Mrs. Morrissey has taken applications out into two of the three target areas, Cameron Heights and Jones Hill area. "Most of the ones I've visited were referred to me," she said, "but, most of the 27 applications I've gotten are from people who came in to the center."

"Most of the people want to know what attachment the government will have to their property if they sign the application. Many don't understand that it's a grant and not a loan," she said.

The \$87,000 federal grant was approved last year by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and will cost nothing to the 15 to 20 chosen homeowners except for a tax increase once the

improvements are made.

Mrs. Reba Holmes, Tim McKoy, J.D. McAllister and two county commissioners will screen the applicants giving first priority to disabled persons and lowest income families. Application deadline is set for Jan. 31 and improvements are expected to begin sometime in March.

According to Mrs. Morrissey \$2,000 to \$3,000 per home will be spent according to estimates on repairs needed.

The county task force has set a \$6,000 maximum family income ceiling allowing a \$300 deduction for each dependent as part of its guidelines to qualify. The task force also limited application to owners who occupy their homes or occupants with a legal lifetime right to occupy their homes. An \$18,000 maximum on total assets has also been set.

Application forms are still available at the Cameron Heights Neighborhood Center on N. Main Ext.

Baby, It's Cold Outside!

At 6°, Rabbits Wore Earmuffs

The unofficial low temperature in Raeford Monday morning was a bone-chilling six degrees above zero but the wind-chill factor made the actual temperature between four and seven degrees below zero.

Although everybody was shivering, the overnight low apparently didn't set any records. According to one old-timer here, the thermometer recorded three degrees above zero back in 1940.

One man claimed it was so cold "the rabbits were wearing earmuffs".

Another wag claimed that when he went outside to check his thermometer, he found it laying on the ground.

"The mercury dropped so low, it just pulled it down from the nail".

The bitter weather did cause some problems for the schools. Four buses failed to start Monday morning, delaying pupils, and some schools reported trouble with heating systems.

Maintenance workers checked over the Gibson building at the high school when the heat failed to come on. By late morning all of the sections in the building had returned to normal.

At South Hoke Elementary School some classrooms failed to get any warmer than 60 degrees. Seven classrooms in an older section of the school are affected on extremely cold days, School Supt.

G. Raz Autry said.

All of the schools use fuel oil for heating, except the high school which uses both electricity and natural gas for heating.

Autry said that he requested all maintenance personnel to report at 7 a.m. and principals by 7:15 a.m. Monday so that the boilers could be checked early before students began arriving.

The superintendent said the unusually cold weather has played havoc with the budget and if no relief comes soon, heating costs will run \$30,000 over the amount allotted in the budget.

"During the month of December, with the schools closed for eight days, we burned 19,000 gallons of fuel. Last year, we didn't burn 19,000 gallons for the entire school year," he said.

The Gibson building at the high school has become very expensive since electric rates soared and the school system already has plans to convert it to another form of energy by next winter. However, since schools were classed the same as industrial users by state officials recently, the price of natural gas has gone up steeply. Autry said the gas bill has increased by 66 per cent.

For the 1975-76 school year, the Hoke system received \$39,000 in state funds for fuel oil, and since all

of that amount was not needed, \$10,000 was applied to electric costs.

"This year I'm afraid we'll have to take that \$10,000 out of local money", he said.

To make matters worse, the state

recently sent out a memorandum to school districts to cut energy consumption back to 80 per cent of the level of last year.

School principals have been told to leave thermostats set at 68 degrees.

