

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The weather for the past few days has turned out to be Spring as it should be. The mornings are cool and then it warms up during the day. Also mixed in are the April showers that bring the May flowers.

The weather of a couple of weeks ago with the temperature in the high 80s was bringing summer on too fast. I like the seasons to run as normal rather than just having winter and then going straight into summer or vice versa. Enough of this Morris, you don't have any control over the elements.

Last Thursday night was this writer's time to have the program at the Raeford Kiwanis Club. Last year I took it upon myself to give the program and talked about the history of newspapers here in Hoke county. This seemed to go over fairly well with the Kiwanians so I thought staying within this line would be appropriate again this year. Not about the history of Hoke newspapers but someone in the news field to give a talk. So this was what I did.

Now when you think you have made all arrangements with someone to make a talk and even gone so far as to tell him the subject on which he is to talk and the length of time he has for the talk, and then before the talk give him a meal prepared by Miss Annie McNeill, you expect to sit back and listen for words of praise for the newspaper people.

Well, maybe you are saying that is what happened but just the opposite occurred.

Rip Collins, administrative assistant to Congressman Charlie Rose is a former managing editor of a Wilmington newspaper and has been in the newspaper business all his life. Rip was told by this writer to stay away from politics and talk about the days he was a newspaper man or things that would be associated with those days.

At the start, this Rip did, and even the joke to start the talk was first class. Then he got down to the main course of his talk and it seemed that about everyone at the meeting, except the program chairman, was enjoying and taking in everything Rip had to say.

His comments centered on how a reporter of today would distort the news for his or her own ego. How a news commentator on TV would smile or nod his head to try to slant the news his or her way. Of course this was coming from a former managing editor who hired or fired reporters. Yes, Yours Truly was not sitting at ease.

I would like to say that the talk was well received and the points brought out by Rip were well made. (he did have praise for the local paper)

Many thanks, Rip, for a job well done and in my mind this is what makes our field so interesting and what weeds out the people that give you a black eye. Keep up the fine job you are doing for the Congressman and keep telling it like it is, no matter whose toes you trample on.

Thinking about the above item brings to mind about Letters to the Editor. This newspaper wants to run all letters but we expect the writer to have the courage to sign his or her name to what they have written. Each of the writers of this newspaper, when writing a column, has his or her name at the top. We expect this from people who write in expressing views about others or on any subject matter.

So, if you want your letters published, be sure to sign your name.

The time change last Sunday seems to have worked out just fine. Everyone at this office was at work as usual and most of the people here have made no negative comments about the change.

As for me, I like it!

Mayor John K. McNeill, Jr. called to say that he and the Council want to thank all who participated in the clean-up in the city last Saturday. He said that it was a job well done.

Tenure Protection Thwarts Board In Edwards Firing



FIX-UP FESTIVAL -- Local residents pitched in to help N.C. State University School of Design students Saturday to beautify the taxi stand area downtown with a picket fence and a wash of cheery color over the nearby store side. The day-long festival featured arts and crafts exhibits, strolling musicians and home cooked food to add to the atmosphere. The Chamber of Commerce spearheaded the beautification drive. [Photo by Sutton]

Elderly Meal Program Expands To South Hoke

South Hoke Community Center began serving hot lunches to senior citizens last Wednesday as the nutrition program for the county's elderly residents was expanded to a second site.

The nutrition program, funded under the federal Older Americans Act, began here in January of 1975 with 35 meals served at the Cameron Heights Neighborhood Center in North Raeford. That site was later expanded to 50 meals Monday through Friday.

The Lumber River Council of Governments, which administers the program in the four-county region, announced last month that an additional 180 meals had been approved for the region. Each county got 35 and the South Hoke center was awarded the site locally.

Mrs. Eva Jacobs, center supervisor, said she was delighted the program could begin serving residents in that area since transportation is often a problem for the elderly.

Since last Wednesday, the center has been averaging about 25 per-

sons daily (Monday through Friday) for the lunch. Persons age 60 and older are eligible to participate, but the project is aimed primarily at low-income people. No one is required to pay for the lunch but a 25 cent donation is accepted from those who are able to pay.

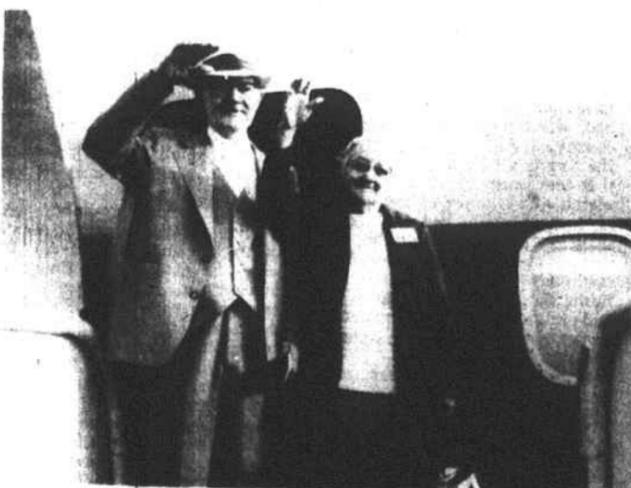
Mrs. Jacobs said she is hopeful that once the word gets around that more senior citizens will come and the program will run at capacity. Future plans are to schedule some special activity or program before or after the meals are served.

New Maps Now Out

New city maps ordered by the Chamber of Commerce arrived last week and are available free at the Chamber office at 120 W. Edinborough Ave.

Three thousand copies were received. Cost of the maps was paid for by Southern National Bank and Gentry's Tire Center, Chamber manager Dayna Pate said.

The new map shows the city on one side and the county on the other side. All of the information was updated from the old map which was published several years ago.



UP AND AWAY -- Wimzy and Allen Lundy Board the United Airlines jet which took them off on the first leg of their two-week Hawaiian vacation Monday. United's Jim Mummah, manager for sales and service in Charlotte, presented the happy couple with a cake at the airport.

Sixth Bolsters Patrol



T. K. Tolar

T.K. Tolar has joined the Hoke County troop of the State Highway Patrol, effective last week, bolstering the strength of the local unit to six men.

Tolar, 25, is a senior trooper and was previously stationed in Plymouth.

A native of Rowland, he is a graduate of Rowland High School and attended Robeson Technical Institute. He worked at Central Prison in Raleigh for one year and joined the Highway Patrol Jan. 7, 1974. He is a fully certified VASCAR operator.

Tolar is a bachelor.

The Board of Education scheduled another special meeting for Wednesday night this week at 7:30 following the disclosure last week that Hoke High principal Allen Edwards is a career status employee under state law.

The new development apparently invalidates the Board's decision taken April 14 to dismiss Edwards from his \$23,788 post. The board voted unanimously at the April 14 meeting not to renew his contract for another year, acting in the belief that he was still a probationary employee.

Under G.S. 115-143 which covers state employees and took effect July 1, 1973, a teacher or supervisor receives tenure at the end of the third year unless the local board votes not to retain. However, if a principal changes school systems, as Edwards did, he automatically resumes tenure at the end of his second year on the job unless the local board acts.

Edwards, 30, worked as principal of Benvenue Middle School in Nash County for three years before taking the Hoke High post in 1974 and informed board members here he had tenure status at Nash County during the special meeting Thursday night.

Edwards said that he learned of the new development the day before last week's meeting after his attorney checked into the matter and he notified one board member.

The board went into executive session Thursday night with Edwards and School Supt. G. Raz Autry for the second time in as many weeks after 25-30 spectators crowded into the meeting room in support of the embattled principal.

About eight persons spoke up to urge the board to reconsider its decision to replace Edwards, saying that he has done a good job and the reasons given by the superintendent in recommending his dismissal were not substantial enough.

Autry had recommended that Edwards be replaced because he had "lost his effectiveness". He listed four reasons, "his lack of credibility with his faculty, his inconsistency in dealing with students and the public, his being unavailable to his students and to his faculty, and his disregard for keeping appointments."

Several persons in the audience Thursday night complained that the public wasn't getting the full story and questioned the board's judgement by meeting behind closed doors. One woman requested a "question and answer" session, but board chairman Bobby Gibson said Edwards' rights must be protected, too.

"It's a hard line to draw between the public's right to know and Mr. Edwards' right to privacy," Gibson told the group. The chairman said all meetings were open unless a motion was made to go into executive session, a statement met with some jeering.

Autry said this week that despite the new legal snarl he stands by his original recommendation to replace Edwards. The superintendent said he was not made aware of the principal's tenured status until last Thursday, the day of the meeting.

"When he came here three years ago, we assumed Mr. Edwards had never been on tenure. There was supposed to be a "blue" contract in his file from Nash County. It was not. We asked him on occasions if he had tenure and he said no. Last Thursday, I asked him again and he said yes. He said he had known it since the previous Monday," Autry said.

"The law specifies that I make recommendations. It will be up to the board to accept or reject my recommendations. I haven't changed my mind," he said.

"One thing I want to make clear, I admire Allen as a professional educator because not once has he said the charges against him weren't serious. Although he has said they aren't true, as a professional educator, he realizes that they are serious charges. It amazes me that the people don't understand this. They feel they're not very serious, but they are," he said.

Edwards said this week that he was familiar with G.S. 115-143 but that he hadn't applied it to his situation.

"When I made application here I indicated what years I had worked where. I just didn't put it together until the situation (here) was blown out of proportion," Edwards said.

Edwards said he would not specifically request a closed session for this week's Wednesday meeting, but that he would work "with the wishes of the board".

"I'm optimistic the situation will be worked out, but if not, I have my options," he said.

Edwards announced after the board's decision to replace him became public that he had retained legal counsel and intends to fight the ouster.

Gibson said Tuesday that as far as the board was concerned, the superintendent's recommendation was "null and void" and a new recommendation would have to come before the board could take any action.

"The (four) charges were the basis for not granting tenure and that's a dead issue now, it sort of wipes the slate clean. We will expect some other recommendation, or no recommendation. We cannot act, by law, without one," Gibson said.

Gibson said that he personally had not formed an opinion on whether Edwards should continue or not.

"I'm not an educator, I'm not in a position to say. Legally, I can't afford to have an opinion without the superintendent's recommendation," he said.

All of the board members except Bill Howell are expected at this week's meeting. Howell has left on a six-week vacation, the superintendent said.

Late Tuesday, Autry said that he would have a formal recommendation to present to the board the next day, but that he hadn't decided what it would be.

UNC Cagers Play At 7:30

The "Hoke County Superstars" will take on the UNC all-stars tonight (Thursday) in the Hoke High gymnasium at 7:30 p.m.

UNC former stars will team with John Kuester, Walter Davis, Woody Coley and Bruce Buckley in the charity benefit game against local players W.K. Morgan, Larry Phillips, Rodney Johnson, Danny McGougan, Joe Bridges, James

Rainey, Rudolph Maynor, Richard McNeill, Bill Senter, Dennis Adams and Randy Bridges.

Ticket proceeds will go to the Hoke County unit of the American Cancer Society.

Tickets are \$3 per person and may be purchased at Howell Drug, Hoke Drug, Upchurch Junior High, Hoke High or at the gymnasium door tonight.