

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The publisher walked in the office Monday morning and stated that by Wednesday it would be freezing here and would extend into Florida. So when you read this column the north wind should be blowing.

As has been stated in this column many times it seems to always rain on Wednesday, but this week it seems the rains came on Monday and that we will be in for winter weather by Wednesday.

The annual Raeford Kiwanis Club pancake supper will be held Thursday night, December 8th at the Gibson cafeteria beginning at five o'clock. Plans have been completed to start serving at that time and according to Avery Connell, chief cook and bottle washer, everything should run smooth.

The proceeds from this event will be used for the various projects the club sponsors. This supper and the softball tournament are the two main sources of revenue for the club.

Robert Gatlin, a club member, was by the office last week and was telling me some of the things the club did with its money in 1977. The amount that Gatlin had was \$2,709.67. Included in this amount were the following projects:

Boy Scouts, Troop 401, \$534.84; Boy Scouts, Troop 438, \$198.73; Emergency Fuel Fund, \$100.00; Hoke High Key Club, \$335.00; A.J. Lundy Fund, \$100.00; Hoke County Recreation Department, \$500.00; Special Olympics, \$100.00; North Carolina Symphony, \$100.00; Woman's Club Summer Camp Program, \$50.00; Pembroke State Wrestling Team, \$50.00; Hoke Civic Center, \$500.00; Scholarship Savings Bonds, \$75.00; N.C. Arts Council, \$25.00; and Special Student Carwinds Trip, \$41.10.

So you can see by these figures that the club puts the money to good use. So come out, and besides helping a worthy cause, join in the fellowship and fun at the annual pancake supper.

Maybe the writer can serve you!

Mrs. Eleanor S. Gentry, a teacher at Hoke High, came down to the office last Friday with her ninth grade English class. They had been studying newspapers as part of their course and wanted to see how a paper was put together. Eleanor had worked here several years ago and the place was not new to her. Of course a few changes had been made, but some of the people that worked with her were still around. It was good to have her and her class visit.

Monday this writer received the following letter:

Dear Sam:
Thank you very much for allowing my students to visit *The News-Journal* today. Connie and the other members of your staff were very adept at explaining the operating of a newspaper office. I think the students learned a great deal.

Sincerely
Eleanor S. Gentry

Last week I mentioned Leo Fuller and the 1929 high school baseball team in this column. Last Friday while I was out of the office, someone, who I think was Mrs. Lula Eubanks nee Lula Hall, brought a picture of that team by the office. Becky said that the lady said she was a member of the 1929 graduating class.

If anyone would like to see this picture it is on my desk and you are welcome to look at it. The members of the team, may of them now deceased, are as follows: Charlie Howard, James Veasey, George Bethune, Gaston McBryde, Jimmy Matheson, Clovis Falk, also Malcolm Campbell, T.B. Lester, Jr., Leo Fuller, John Dunk McNeill, Howard Rogers and Albert Aikens.

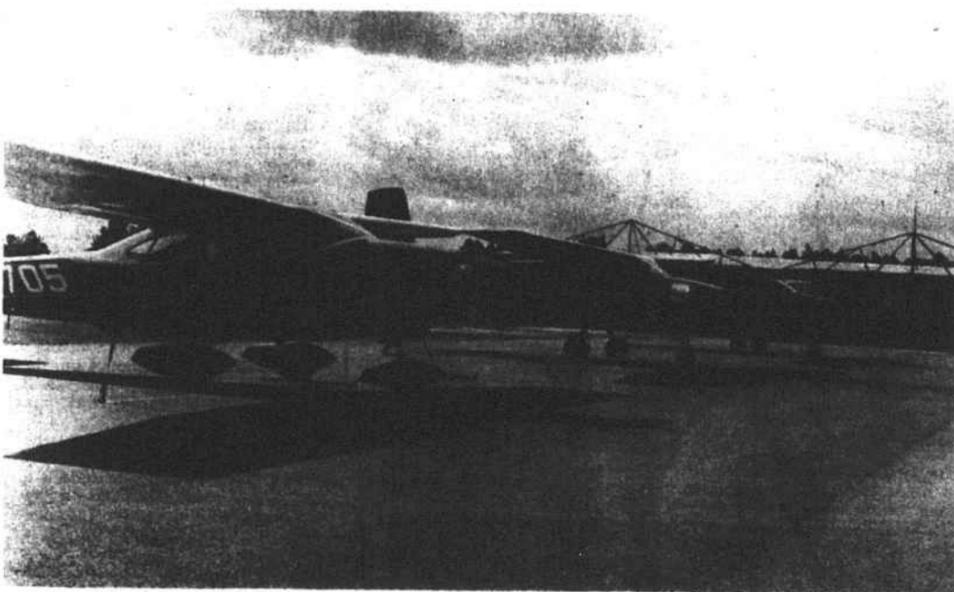
In the picture also were Jake Austin, Fred Culbreth, W.E. Pell and Coach Willie Hodgins.

Thanks for the picture and if I have guessed wrong about who brought the picture in, please let me know.

Last week Chief Leonard Wiggins brought me a copy of *The* (See AROUND TOWN, Page 15)

In Special Session

Council Votes For Second FBO



AIRPORT CONTROVERSY - The Raeford Municipal Airport has been a source of controversy in recent weeks. Some local citizens disagreed with the city council's decision to sign a 12-year lease with Gene Thacker for airport facilities. A special session of the board was held last week to discuss the lease.

County Approves Ordinance

An insulation ordinance affecting new homes in Hoke County was approved by the Board of Commissioners at its regular meeting Monday morning.

According to state law, no new houses may be occupied after Jan. 1 unless they have been certified to be in compliance with new minimum insulation standards for residential construction established by the State Building Code.

Clinic Holds Open House On Sunday

There was a good turnout Sunday afternoon for an open house at the Hoke County Mental Health Clinic on Campus Avenue in Raeford. George Barbour, director and psychologist, said that a mural painted by local high school students was a particular hit with visitors.

The mental health clinic opened in August. Among those who attended the open house was Steve Dingfelder, new area director of the Sandhills Mental Health Center.

The Hoke County Mental Health Clinic is one of five county based programs at Sandhills Mental Health Center. Services are supported by county, state, and federal funds as well as fees and contributions.

Anyone may schedule an appointment by calling the Raeford office. All contacts are confidential.

Included among services offered by the clinic are: Mental Health Outpatient, Alcoholism Services, Drug Abuse Services, School Mental Health, Mental Retardation Services, Early Childhood Intervention Program, and Consultation and Education.

"Visitors said that they were favorably impressed with the clinic," Barbour said. "Many said they were pleased that Hoke County has a full time Mental Health Clinic."

Local artists displayed their work at the clinic for the day. Minnie Harell and Betty Gill both donated paintings to the clinic. Barbour said. Jimmy James, band director at Hoke High had about a dozen paintings on display. Art teacher Clyde Jacobs also brought some of his work for the showing.

But the main attraction was a large mural that will remain in the clinic's waiting room. The mural was painted by high school students Richard Jones, Leaza Atkinson, Bob Lancaster, and Darrell Dees.

Raeford Lumber Co. and McLaughlin Hardware donated materials for the mural. Barbour said. He also thanked several local businesses who donated flowers for the open house. They were: Raeford Oil Co., Southern National Bank, The Bank of Raeford.

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It was incorrectly reported last week that the ordinance would apply to every home in the county. Only new construction is involved, officials said.

Building inspector Jack Ellis told the board that the ordinance will also apply to home additions built after the first of the year. It will not apply to homes that are moved into the county, he said.

Contractors will have to have a \$24-permit for installing insulation, according to the ordinance. This was designed to protect consumers who may be defrauded by sellers or installers of insulation.

County Attorney Charles Hosteler said that contractors working under a licensed engineer or architect would not have to have the permit. He said a homeowner who wanted to install his own insulation won't need it either.

In addition to the \$24-permit, a \$10 inspection fee per job will be charged, according to the ordinance. Board chairman John Balfour pointed out that the building inspectors are paid from money collected from fees.

In other business at Monday's meeting, Balfour was re-elected by acclamation to chair the board of commissioners.

Acting County Manager Lester Simpson was instructed by the board to place the county's Community Development investment

funds in the bank which offered the highest interest rates. According to figures compiled by Simpson, The Bank of Raeford offers the higher rates.

The board was told that the Council of Governments overpaid Hoke County \$1,158.90 in the Older Adults Program and has requested to be reimbursed for that amount. The board instructed that the money be paid out of the contingency fund.

The board voted to sign a contract with the N.C. Department of Corrections that will increase from \$8 to \$10 the daily amount the state will pay the county for the support of prisoners in the jail. Sheriff D.M. Barrington told the board the state will also pay the inmates' medical expenses in excess of \$35.

The board heard a report on a new telephone system that has been proposed for the county office building and decided to wait until July before considering the system. If it is approved at that time, the new system could be worked into the new budget, it was noted.

The board went into executive session around 11 a.m. to review 24 applications that have been received for the position of accounting clerk. No action was expected, chairman Balfour said.

The next scheduled meeting of the board is set for Dec. 19.

Cable TV Rate Increase Approved

The Raeford City Council voted at its regular monthly meeting Monday night to increase the rates of N.C. Cable TV Co. only after it has added two channels to the system that serves Raeford's 611 subscribers.

James F. Collins, president of the company, told the board that plans call for Channel 18 from Charlotte and Channel 10 from Columbia, S.C. to be added to the system by February.

The company has asked for a \$1 increase in rates. Collins said the company is losing money every month. Subscribers are currently charged \$6 a month for cable television.

The rate increase will have to weather a second vote before it will be official. The council is expected to vote again on the matter at its next meeting.

Collins said that a lot of problems with the system are caused by the fact that the company is losing money. He said the company could not keep up with technology without the rate increase.

Eventually, he said, the company hopes to hook-up with a satellite system that would bring in stations 17 from Atlanta, 27 from Portsmouth, Va., 11 from Chicago, and 2 from San Francisco. The satellite

system would also broadcast 265 events from Madison Square Garden every year, he said.

In other business, the mayor and members of the council were sworn in during the meeting Monday night. Vardell Hedgpeth was the only newcomer to the board. He joins councilmen Graham Clark, James McLeod, Bobby Gentry, and Sam Morris. Mayor J.K. McNeill, Jr. ran unopposed in the municipal election held Nov. 8.

The council voted to deposit the city's money in a central depository account with Southern National Bank.

The board instructed City Manager Robert Drumwright to work with area plumbers on problems they have encountered in unstopping sewers here. On several occasions, a plumber said that, after working two or three hours, he has discovered that the problem lies in the city's pipe beneath the street and not in the homeowner's line.

Plumbers are not allowed to tamper with city lines. The city has to be notified, and sometimes the plumbers are not paid for the time they put in locating the problem, it was pointed out.

Drumwright was instructed to (See CABLE TV, Page 14)

At a lively special session Nov. 30, the Raeford City Council voted to make room for a second fixed base operator who will service aircraft at the municipal airport.

It was one of the best attended council meetings in some time, with standing room only. And those who were there were not shy about voicing their opinions.

The airport controversy arose after the council voted on Nov. 7 to sign a 12-year lease with Gene Thacker for airport facilities. Thacker, the present fixed base operator, runs a sport parachute school at the field.

In that lease, which has not yet been signed, the city agreed to trade hangars with Thacker in order to protect a federal grant that will be used to pave and light the parallel taxiways at the airport.

According to the lease, the city would rent both airport hangars to Thacker. The city holds the deed to one of the hangars; Thacker owns the other one. The lease requires Thacker to deed his hangar to the city.

City Manager Robert Drumwright explained that the city must hold the deeds to both hangars in order to get the federal grant for airport improvements.

The mayor was authorized to sign the lease in an executive session on Nov. 7. Earlier that evening, Gene Vance, owner of Vance Aircraft Sales, Inc., requested that the city give him a permanent lease so he could expand his business at the airport. He asked that the council allow him to be the airport's second fixed base operator and also allow him to rent the hangar owned by the city. He said he intended to spend \$100,000 in expansion.

Vance sent a letter to the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce protesting the city's decision to rent both hangars to Thacker. The letter was endorsed by 16 prominent citizens and formed the basis for the Chamber's interest in the matter.

Several members of the group said last week that they felt the city was giving Thacker a virtual monopoly on airport facilities.

The special meeting was called after the Chamber of Commerce presented Mayor J.K. McNeill with a petition calling for the session. The petition was signed by four councilmen.

Chamber Manager Earl Fowler presented a prepared statement to the board at that meeting. After much discussion, the board voted 2-1 to see if Thacker will sell his hangar to the city. If he will agree to that, the city will lease the hangar back to him and rent the other one to Vance.

The motion included the stipulation that, should Thacker refuse to sell, the city will go ahead with the lease as planned and offer Vance the opportunity to locate elsewhere at the airport as its second fixed base operator.

As of press time this week, no lease had been signed concerning the airport. Thacker had not yet been contacted, city officials said.

VANCE LETTER

The letter from Gene Vance protesting the city's proposal lease with Thacker was given to the council by Fowler at last week's meeting. It was signed by 16 local citizens, including: Julian S. Johnson, III, Bill Boyles, Gene Carter, T.B. Upchurch, Jr., William L. Pate, Jr., William Moses, and William Niven.

It reads as follows:
"Approximately 24 months ago we approached the City of Raeford about locating an aircraft sales and services office on the Raeford Municipal Airport. Raeford at the time was one of several locations being considered.

"After talking with the City Manager, his reaction was that the city would like for us to locate here. He discussed our request with other operators on the airport, and the agreement was made that we would occupy our present facility until a permanent location was agreed upon.

"As time passed one of the operator's lease was canceled and the business closed. VASI then requested from the City Manager permission to operate a fixed base operation -- full service -- flight instruction, maintenance, sales, etc. He asked for some time to think it over and to try to clear up some of the legal problems with the former FBO.

"Mr. Drumwright (the city manager) came to me some time later; we discussed the FBO again. Mr. Drumwright said, quote, 'You will be the FBO.' About two months ago Mr. Drumwright informed us we would not be the FBO; he had changed his mind.

"We asked for permission to give flight instruction so the interest at the airport would not diminish. The City Manager disapproved. He went as far as to say, 'I do not want an increase of activity at the airport, I want to keep it small.'

"Later we learned that action was being taken by the city to lease all city property (owned at present) to one operator (Thacker). VASI again asked the City Manager for permission to offer some services that are not being offered at present -- flight instruction, etc. The reply was that VASI could sell airplanes but was not to do anything else.

"We asked for and did get an opportunity to request from the City Council permission to lease property to build new facilities or to add on to present facilities, for a full - service operation. This was done at the last council meeting, 7 November 1977. The council was also informed that buildings and improvements requested were to be built at VASI expense. The council voted "no" to all these requests.

"The City of Raeford has an unlimited potential for growth, and the airport can be very vital to that growth. Another operation even has expressed an interest in building a facility on the airport for their company headquarters and maintenance of their fleet of aircraft.

"We ask the Chamber of Commerce: Do you endorse the council's decision to hamper growth for your city and county? Do we have the support of the community for growth? We cannot believe the lack of concern shown by your city government is shared by all."

SUMMERFIELD LETTER

A letter from Sampson A. Starling, vice - president of Summerfield Industries, Inc., was also included with the Chamber of Commerce statement. It speaks in favor of letting Vance become a fixed base operator at the airport.

CHAMBER STATEMENT

The prepared statement presented to the board by Chamber of Commerce Manager Earl Fowler reads as follows:

"A letter (11-10-77) was directed to the Chamber of Commerce -- 'Does the Chamber of Commerce endorse the council's decision to hamper growth for your city and county?'

"The Chamber management and Board of Directors cannot

(See COUNCIL, Page 15)