

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

Last year about this time it was the extreme cold weather that had most of us lowering the temperature in our homes and also in our businesses. Monday night, because of the coal miners strike, the governor has asked for volunteer lowering of the thermostat by all citizens.

According to news reports, the power companies have something over a month's supply of coal and if volunteer measures are not taken, then more drastic measures will be taken.

So put on a sweater while working and while watching your favorite TV program and let's help put the miners back to work.

Earl Fowler, manager of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, said this week that the sale of license plates was spread over the entire month and a half and that the long lines were like they were a year ago. He thanked the paper for urging people to buy early and avoid the rush.

This could have had something to do with the early purchase of license plates and we will be glad to take the credit, but after thinking about it we believe the cold weather last year had more to do with it than anything else.

When you have to stand in line for a half a day with the temperature below freezing the license line party is not like you want it.

Cassie Wasko, reporter for this paper, brought in a copy of an old paper the other day. It was the front page of *The New York Herald*, dated April 15, 1865 and the price of the paper was four cents. The paper contained all the facts about the death of President Abraham Lincoln. Most of the page was taken up with stories concerning the shooting at the theatre and also about the whereabouts of the "Rebels" or Southern Army and facts about John Wilkes Booth.

The type the paper is set in must be six point type and would bring a scream today from people who would be unable to read it.

Thanks Cassie, for bringing the paper by. It was very interesting.

Sam Sneed of Red Springs was by the office last week and had an envelope of old pictures that were taken back in the late twenties and early thirties. These were during the school days of Sam and myself, and it was almost impossible to identify everyone in all the pictures.

While Sam and I were looking at the pictures, Dr. Julius Jordan came in and his lunch must have gotten cold, as he helped identify some of the folks in the pictures. Some people don't change in looks much, over a span of fifty years, but others do, and it is almost impossible to match them with what they look like today.

Anyway it was fun looking at the pictures and we appreciate Sam bringing them by the office.

The fight last week has caused a lot of talk around the office and after hearing all the remarks, maybe I should have stayed up and watched it. The reason for not watching it, besides liking sleep, is that the last few fights Ali has been in, have been more like a dance lesson.

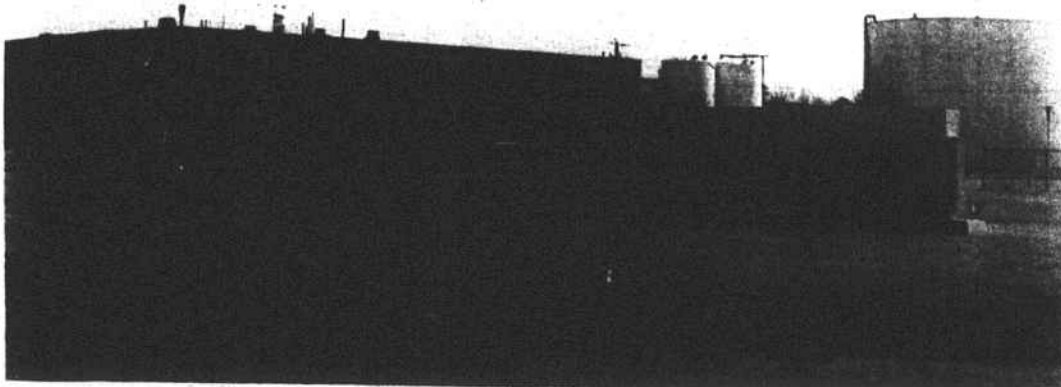
Recalling fights on radio and early TV that had Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano as the champs, the fights these days don't have the killer type in the ring like these men were. Maybe it could be my age and that the fights aroused my interest more many years ago.

Anyway we have a new champ and some say that he will fight in Fayetteville in the near future. So save your money for a night at the fights.

Ken McNeill, chairman of the Democratic executive committee for Hoke County, was in the office last Friday and said that the county precinct meetings this year would be held at the polling places on

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Summerfield Closing Idles 600



SUMMERFIELD CLOSING -- The employee parking lots were all but deserted at Summerfield Industries here this week as the textile firm announced that it was closing its Raeford operation. About 600 workers found themselves without jobs. Efforts are being made to find a buyer for the plant.

The closing of a local textile plant Monday idled approximately 600 workers.

Summerfield Industries, the second largest employer in Hoke County, confirmed Monday that the plant has permanently laid off all employees and liquidation proceedings are to start this week.

According to Stephen Benkosky of the local Employment Security Commission approximately 250 of the jobless are Hoke County residents.

In a statement issued Tuesday, Bert Phifer, treasurer of the local plant said, "Market conditions for our primary product, double knit fabric, have become worse and worse while the cost of raw materials, yarn and other items, as well as operating expenses, have increased substantially. As a result, we now find ourselves in a position that we are unable to continue in business profitably."

"In recent months, we have explored avenues of merger with other companies, revamping and/or reducing our level of business, refinancing and reorganization, etc., in an effort to continue to provide jobs and to hang on and wait for an upturn in the market. This was all in vain and Summerfield is being phased out as a going concern."

Earl Fowler, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said, "The Chamber of Commerce is working closely with Summerfield to find a buyer for the local plant. I don't want to sound a note of false hope, but we aren't going to let it get cold out there. We are exploring options now and are optimistic that some other company will take over the operation."

About 100 workers were idled last week when the knitting and dye departments were closed. According to an employee, the lay-off was expected to be temporary. Most of the employees did not know the plant planned to close until they went to work Monday morning and were told the lay-off had become permanent.

When asked what the local impact of the plant closing would be, Benkosky, interviewer in charge of the local Employment security Commission, said, "Disastrous. There is nothing to move in and fill the void."

Benkosky also said that his office appreciates the co-operation of the people who came in Monday. The office will take claims every day from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. until all claims have been filed, he said.

Summerfield Industries, which is headquartered in Greensboro, acquired the Raeford property less than two years ago when it bought out the financially troubled Knit Away, Inc.

Reportedly, the company is also readying an announcement of the closing of its Rocky Mount operation, also.

The Raeford Summerfield plant produced knits for apparel and home furnishings markets.

Board Told Of Housing Plans

At its Monday night meeting, the Hoke County Board of Commissioners was informed of a proposed housing project in Scurlock Community that will have 58 units in all.

Aubrey Jones, with the state Department of Economic Development, told the board that the project is still in the formative stages, that further study will be necessary to determine if it is feasible.

Plans call for 16 units for senior citizens, and 24 rental units. Another 18 units of housing will be for sale, Jones said.

"This is the first type of development in North Carolina, and possibly in the Southeast, with units both for sale and for rent," he said.

The project will be self-sufficient, with its own sewer system, Jones said. It would net the county \$7,500 in tax revenues each year, and the families there would boost the local sales tax by \$4,100 annually, he said.

"The project appears to be feasible. The need is here, the market is here. I think it will add to the growth and development of Hoke County," Jones said.

He said it is hoped that the development can be financed through the Farmers Home Administration, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or through some state agency.

The board was requested to give tentative approval to the subdivision, but board members were hesitant to go that far.

"I'm not in favor of spending taxpayer's money in a swamp," said Commissioner Danny DeVane.

Jones said earlier in the meeting that 45 percent of the site is swampy, but he said the Army Corps of Engineers is of the opinion that it could be drained.

Raeford Mayor J.K. McNeill, who is with the Dept. of Economic Development, told the board that the developers are working on the assumption that they will get a government grant.

"The Farmers Home Administration or HUD isn't going to approve the project unless it's right," McNeill pointed out.

Jones again said that the Corps of Engineers, from Wilmington, have made a tentative survey of the site and will return for more detailed study before saying absolutely whether or not the project is feasible.

"I don't object to the program," DeVane explained. "I think the program looks good. It's the site I don't agree with."

"The cost of draining the land may be prohibitive," Jones said. "We don't know right now. And we won't know until we take a closer look."

"If the project is feasible, we'll be back in touch with you," Jones continued. "If not, we'll try to find an alternate site."

In other business, representatives of the state Department of Transportation met with the board to outline highway projects proposed for Hoke County this year.

Martha Hollers, DOT board member representing Hoke and seven other counties, said the local share of highway bond money amounts to \$52,451. She said that, in addition to this, \$40,786 has been allocated by the department for road improvement in the county.

FAA To Hear Local Air Zone Proposal

Federal Aviation Administration representatives were scheduled to meet with city officials Wednesday on the creation of a proposed air zone which would allow armed military jets to pass near Raeford at altitudes of 500 feet.

F.A.A. representatives from the Atlanta regional office expected to hear from city officials and members of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association here to discuss the proposal outlined last year by the 7th Air Force based at Shaw Air Force Base near Sumter, S.C.

Federal regulations would require notification of scheduled military aircraft maneuvers if the military operating area (MOA) is created. Supporters claim that this would increase safety for private air traffic.

The restricted zone now coincides with the Ft. Bragg reservation boundary. Private pilots have been concerned that military jets might accidentally cross into public airways from the post restricted zone.

The military jets are normally restricted to altitudes of 10,000 feet

or more. Those opposing the MOA object to the noise that would be created by military jets flying at low altitudes.

The Air Force has received preliminary approval for the MOA. It would be used during specified times of day by military craft from Shaw and Seymour Johnson Air Force bases while performing close support exercises with Ft. Bragg troops.

Boundaries for the new area have not been announced, although Robert Drumwright, Raeford city manager, is opposed to the plan because of the close proximity to the city.

Gene Vance, owner of Vance Aircraft Sales, one of two firms based at the Raeford Airport, said that from a safety standpoint, he is in favor of the proposal.

The earliest the plan could go into effect would be several months if it receives final approval, according to Gilbert Hofheinz, chief controller for the Fayetteville FAA office.

"We're not really in that bad a shape in terms of roads," Commissioner DeVane noted.

The DOT representatives agreed, pointing out that Hoke has only 35 miles of unpaved roads.

DeVane was somewhat annoyed that DOT officials wanted the board to approve the improvement plans at that meeting. He said the

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Hoke Students In Wisconsin On School Exchange Program

This week 30 juniors and seniors from Hoke County High School are getting a taste of snow Wisconsin style, and you can bet it's deeper there than most of them have ever seen it.

In April they will return the favor by showing 30 Wisconsin students something most of them have never seen before -- the ocean.

The trip north is the first half of a domestic exchange program between Hoke High and Hartford Union High School in Hartford, Wis.

The local students departed Raeford on Friday and will return Saturday, Feb. 25. The 22-hour bus ride took them through Winston-Salem, Charleston, W.Va., Cincinnati, Chicago, and Milwaukee. Hartford is about 25 miles northwest of Milwaukee.

While there, they will attend school and also learn something about the Midwest.

Mrs. Shirley Gibson, guidance counselor at Hoke High, said the students will be visiting businesses and civic clubs in Hartford to see the similarities and differences between that community and their own.

Hartford is in a rural area where the main industry is dairy farming, she said.

"In contrast, we have only one dairy farm here in Hoke County. No telling how many they have out there," said Mrs. Gibson.

The students will be staying the week with host families in Hart-

ford. In turn, families here in Hoke County will host the Wisconsin students when they come south in April.

The exchange makes the program fairly inexpensive. The round trip by chartered bus cost \$76.50 per student. Meals will be provided by the hosts. The families were also asked to borrow heavy coats for the Hoke County students, who have never had to face a Wisconsin winter.

They will return the hospitality in April by showing their visitors such strange sights as cotton and tobacco and, on a weekend trip to Myrtle Beach, the ocean.

Trips are also planned to Ft. Bragg and the Golf Museum at Pinehurst, Mrs. Gibson said. She said the school will be getting in touch with local businesses and civic clubs to arrange tours here.

Ben Johnson, a social studies teacher at Hoke High, is the chaperone for the trip. He will be teaching at Hartford High this week. His counterpart will teach here in April. The schools are of a comparable size, with 1,800 students at Hartford and 1,500 at Hoke.

The exchange has been in the planning stages since last November, Mrs. Gibson said. It was

arranged through the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Information about the program came across the desk of Hoke High Principal Earl O'Connell who thought it would be a good idea.

Meetings with parents and students followed. The Midwest was decided upon as an area the students would like to see, and the association made arrangements with Hartford Union High to complete the exchange.

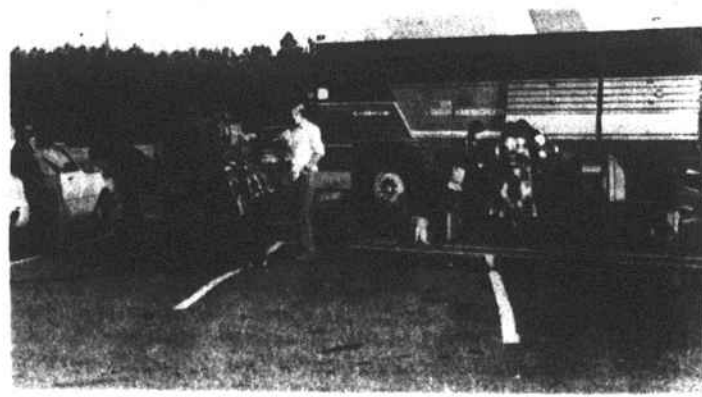
Sixty-seven students here expressed an initial interest in the trip, but over half later dropped off the list. Everyone who signed up to go was allowed to, Mrs. Gibson said.

Students on the trip are: Art Diehl, Kathy Bishop, Kel Crumpler, Blaine Sutton, Cindy Connel, Brenda Dees, Jackie McLaughlin, Denise Peterson, James Leach, Janice Crissman, David Holland, Marsha Gentry, Scott Hair, Michael Boyles, Rob Shook, Don Thomas, Joy Gibson, Susan McLean, Deborah Jameson, Victoria Billings, Jimmy Turner, Gary Register, Alan Sappenfield, Graham Poole, Al Averitte, Bonnie Locklear, Willie Jacobs, Shelly Dial, Julia Gibson, and Kim Oxendine.

Chief Says City Tags Required

Police Chief V. L. Wiggins said Tuesday that road checks for Raeford city tags will be made beginning March 1.

According to the law, the tags expired February 15, the same date as the state tags. New city tags should have been displayed after the February 15 deadline. Anyone who lives within the city limits and is caught in the road check without a tag will be fined and required to purchase a city tag.



LOADING UP -- Thirty Hoke High School juniors and seniors are in Wisconsin this week as part of an exchange program. Some of the students are shown here preparing to get on the bus last Friday. The trip took 22 hours. Thirty Wisconsin students will be coming to Raeford in April.