

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The weather this past weekend was perfect as far as this writer was concerned. If we can get by the Easter weekend without a cold snap, then Spring should be with us. I believe it officially comes in on March 20.

If the weather will stay this way for a few days, maybe the parking lot in front of *The News-Journal* can be completed. If it keeps on raining, the red sand-clay will be either on Elwood or Edinborough Avenue.

Anyway the weather has helped the energy situation and this is fine for everyone except the miners.

The concert put on last Thursday night by the Hoke High Band, Chorale and Chorus and the Upchurch Band and Chorus, from all reports, was a success. The concert was sponsored by the Hoke County Music Booster Club and approximately 100 members were signed up last Thursday night.

If you were unable to attend the concert, or have not been contacted about joining the Music Booster Club, there is still a way you can do so. Just get in contact with Nora Scull or Joyce Jameson. They will be glad to sign you up or will tell you someone else to get in contact with.

The precinct meetings for the Democratic Party will be held at the polling places at 8:00 o'clock Thursday night, March 16. This announcement is made by Ken McNeill, chairman of the county executive committee.

McNeill states that there is one exception to the meeting places. The Rockfish precinct will meet at the Rockfish Fire Station instead of at the usual voting place.

The party starts at these meetings and with so many candidates running for office on the Democratic ticket, the meetings should be well attended. Check the group over and see if all candidates from your precinct are at your meeting. If not, then ask them the next time you see them.

I received a book this week from Congressman Charlie Rose and it was about the Videoconferencing via Satellite of opening Congress to the people.

A section of the book was on the conference between Congressman Rose and the students and people of Hoke County on April 15, 1977. The portable earth terminal was set up at Hoke High School and local officials joined students in talking to the Congressman.

There are pictures and other comments in the book and if you would like to see it, come by the office and we will be glad to show it to you.

Thanks Charlie for the book, and the next time you are in North Carolina, pay a visit to Hoke County. Election day is in November, so keep in touch.

The following letter was received this week and we pass it along to our readers.

Dear Sam:

The Woman's Club again needs help in planning for some special Hoke County children to go to camp this summer. Last year 35 children were sent to Camp Monroe for one week through generous contributions from Hoke County people. The children were those whose families could not afford to send them and who needed the guidance of loving adults.

Our goal for this summer is to send 32 children to camp, an impossible task without the help of the community. If you have readers who would like to contribute to this project, perhaps "send a child to camp," they may call me or any Woman's Club member. Camp fees this year are \$37.50 per child. In addition to these fees each child will need clothing, a Bible, blanket, and linens.

The Woman's Club is always grateful to you at *The News-Journal* for the good help and publicity you give and the interest you always show in our projects.

Thank you for any help you can give this special undertaking.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Alfred K. Leach
President, Raeford Woman's Club

Drought To Blame

Hoke Farm Income Plunges

Testimony Begins In Murder Trial

Following the seating of 12 jurors and three alternates, testimony in the trial of Lloyd Stephen Lane, accused of the murder of special deputy Ronald G. Smith last September, began here Tuesday.

Lane, 25, of Fayetteville, went on trial March 6 when a motion to remove the trial to federal district court was filed by attorneys for the defense. After the motion was denied, the lengthy process of seating the jurors began March 7 and the final of the three alternates was seated Tuesday morning.

Lane is charged with first degree murder and two counts of armed robbery in the incident that occurred at a convenience store in Fayetteville last September.

Seated on the regular jury panel are four blacks, five whites and three Indians. Margaret McKenzie and Mary Lamont, both employees of the Hoke County School system, were excused for medical reasons after being picked as jurors.

The courtroom was scattered with a few spectators as the testimony began Tuesday morning. Seated on the front row of the courtroom were Mrs. R.G. Smith, wife of the slain deputy, and her 19-year-old daughter.

An eyewitness account of the incident was given early in the afternoon session by Ruby Lee Hall, manager of the Quik Shop convenience store where the shooting took place. Mrs. Hall told the court that special deputies arrived about 8:30 p.m. that evening and were stationed in a rear storage room. At 10 p.m., a black male entered the store and approached Betty Moore, a sales clerk. Mrs. Hall said. The man had a conversation with Miss Moore who then put money into a paper sack.

Upon orders from the man whom Mrs. Hall repeatedly identified as "the defendant," Mrs. Moore tried to open the safe. He told the two employees that he did not get any 20's the previous time, but he would get some this time. Miss Moore had earlier testified that the same man had robbed the store only a week before on September 7.

When Miss Moore had difficulty in opening the safe, the man "pulled a gun out of his belt and started approaching me," Mrs. Hall testified. She said he pointed the gun into her face and said, "Open that safe, damn you, open it." At that point, Mrs. Hall said, the door to the storage room opened and both he and Mrs. Hall looked toward the door. Mrs. Hall said she never saw Smith, that she and the assailant dropped to the floor and he began moving away in a crouched position.

After moving down the counter, he reached an exit in the enclosure of the checkout area that surrounded him and hid him from view. As he moved around the end of the counter, Smith called out "Halt. Police officer." "Like Hell I will," the assailant responded, and at that point he "wheeled around

the counter and shot him (Smith). Mrs. Hall said.

Mrs. Smith and her daughter expressed open emotion, embracing and wiping tears away when Mrs. Hall testified that Smith cried out "Oh, my God," as he fell to the floor.

Claude Maxwell, the first law enforcement officer to arrive on the scene, testified that Smith was still breathing when he arrived. Mrs. Smith was still clinging to her daughter's arm when Maxwell explained that Smith was not breathing normally, but that "there was a gurgling and choking sound and his respiration appeared very shallow."

An ambulance was called, but (See LANE, Page 15)



PLANT BEDS -- Tobacco plant beds in Hoke County are about a week behind last year because of cold weather, according to the extension service. Although the tobacco crop here was not seriously damaged by last summer's drought, farmers suffered severe losses in cotton and corn. Low wheat prices scored another blow to the local farm economy, which was down almost \$2.5 million from the previous year, according to extension service figures.

Everyone knows last summer's drought hurt local farmers, but the Hoke County Extension Service this week released figures that show just how much it hurt.

Total agricultural income for the county dropped from \$19 million in 1976, to \$16.5 million in 1977. The figure for last year includes \$56,000 in relief payments made to Hoke farmers by the government for crop failures.

The drought was the worst in this area in eight or 10 years, according to Extension Chairman Wendell Young.

"Hoke farmers say they need to get about 100 bushels of corn per acre at the current price to make the crop worthwhile," Young said in his office this week. "In a good year, they'll get 90. Last year, they only got 35."

"The drought was real severe on a good many farmers," he continued. "Many are having trouble getting operating money for 1978. Many were in debt before the drought and can't make ends meet. Some people don't realize it, but a farmer may have as much as a couple of hundred thousand dollars tied up in machinery. It's hard to get operating capital under these conditions."

Hoke farmers harvested 810,000 bushels of corn in 1976, compared to 285,000 last year. Big losses were sustained in cotton as well as corn, Young said. Cotton production fell from 2.1 million pounds in 1976, to 1.8 million last year.

"The farm chemicals for an acre of cotton cost \$75," said Young. "Farmers get about a bale per acre in a good year, or about 500 pounds. Last year they averaged 397 pounds an acre. At 50 cents a pound, farmers say it's getting hard to make cotton pay. That's the reason many are getting out of it. At one time, we had 11,000 acres of cotton in Hoke County. Now it's down to about 4,700."

There's no doubt about it, Farming is risky business.

"Once every four or five years we'll have a disaster of some sort, hail in tobacco, or dry weather," Young said. "We were more fortunate last year in this area than they were in other parts of the state. We made our tobacco crop here. In some areas, half of the tobacco crop was lost."

The tobacco crop here was still lower than the year before, by about half a million pounds. Tobacco sales for Hoke farmers totalled \$5 million in 1976 -- \$4.7 million in 1977.

In spite of last season's setbacks, Young said:

"Generally farmers are pretty optimistic, but most are trying to come up with an idea of what they're going to plant this year. We expect the soybean crop to be up this year. Farmers are watching the markets, particularly overseas grain sales and the soybean crop in Brazil. We think the crops will be pretty well balanced this season. Farmers are afraid to go with one crop."

Soybean production was up last year by a little more than 100,000 bushels, according to the extension service's statistics. The crop went from 340,000 bushels in 1976, to 443,000 in 1977. However, the price fell from \$6.65 a bushel to \$5.80.

Wheat production increased by almost 10,000 bushels last year, but the price fell from \$3 a bushel in 1976, to \$2.10 in 1977.

In other areas of agriculture in (See INCOME, Page 15)

Local Choirs Plan Special Musical Program For Sunday

Frederick Handel's "The Messiah" -- Part III will be presented March 19 at 3 p.m. in the Raeford Presbyterian Church sanctuary. The public is invited.

The musical service will be presented through the joint efforts of the choirs of the First Baptist Church, the Raeford United Methodist Church, The Antioch Presbyterian Church and the Raeford Presbyterian Church.

The 60-voice choir will be accompanied by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro String-Brass-Timpani orchestra. Guest soloists for this worship service include Katherine Lakoski, soprano; Dr. James V. Cobb, tenor; and Mr. Dale Stine, bass.

In April of 1977, the idea was conceived that the Easter portion of the "Messiah" should be presented to the Raeford community the following year. Practices began last January.

"It has been a blessing for me to coach this group of people," says Chris C. Watkins, director of music at the Raeford Presbyterian Church and conductor of the Palm Sunday presentation. "Mrs. Glenn Langdon, director of music at the First

Baptist Church, and Mrs. Gilbert Bernhardt, director of music at the Raeford United Methodist Church have been wonderful in the time and directing that they have given to their choirs. I know that they are deeply proud of their members as I am proud of my choir members."

Soprano soloist for the worship service will be Katherine Jane Lakoski. Miss Lakoski is a second-year Master's degree candidate in opera at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. A scholarship winner and finalist in the 1978 auditions for the San Francisco Opera, she is from Chesapeake, Va. and performed in Raeford in 1976 and 1977.

Katherine's goal is the Metropolitan Opera Company. To have such a goal requires an extraordinary talent, countless hours of work and a competitive nature. These requirements alone are demanding, but Kathy must also tackle a 38-hour work week on top of practicing and studying.

At Juilliard, Katherine studies music with Beverly Johnson. One of the famous voices Mrs. Johnson is working with currently is Anna Moffo, the American soprano.



Katherine Lakoski

James V. Cobb, tenor, is a visiting professor in voice at Elon College. He is a native of Memphis, Tenn., and a graduate of Southwestern at Memphis, Boston University, and the University of Illinois, where he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree. He served

(See MUSICAL, Page 15)

Oxendine Stays At Hoke High

by Cassie Wasko

The Hoke County Board of Education Monday night unanimously rejected an application from Allen Edwards for the position of high school principal and agreed to retain Earl Oxendine in that position on a permanent basis following an hour-long executive session.

Edwards was moved from the high school to the position of principal of Upchurch Junior High

last year amid much controversy. The board attempted to release him, but as a tenured teacher, he was offered the post at Upchurch instead. He was given the option of applying for the job of high school principal this year, but the board rejected that bid and named him permanent principal of the junior high.

Raz Autry, superintendent of public schools, denied reports that he requested Edwards not attend the meeting. Autry said he told Edwards at a principal's meeting, "In my personal opinion, a principal can't get involved in a debate with the board when they are assigning principals."

Oxendine and Edwards both opted not to attend the meeting, and Edwards said later in an interview, "I am disappointed. I have attempted to give the board and the citizens four good years of my profession and will continue to as long as I work for the board. I don't agree with the board's decision, but I will support the decision or I will resign."

Edwards said he had no immediate plans to resign and he denied a rumor that he had tendered a resignation effective in 1979. Autry declined to comment on the reported resignation.

Current high school principal Earl Oxendine said, contrary to rumor, he had not been offered another position recently. "I'm pleased and tickled that the board had enough confidence in me to appoint me permanent principal of Hoke High. I plan to fulfill my commitment to Hoke County."

(See OXENDINE, Page 15)



JURY SEATED -- A jury was seated and testimony began in Hoke County Superior Court this week in the trial of Lloyd Stephen Lane, 25, of Fayetteville [center above], who is charged with murder in the shooting death last September of Cumberland County special deputy Ronald Smith at a convenience store. The trial was moved to Hoke County because of publicity concerning the case. Lane is shown above being escorted to the courtroom by a deputy. District Attorney Ed Grannis, Jr. appears at left.

Kindergarten Registration Scheduled

Registration for all children who will attend kindergarten at J.W. McLaughlin, Scurlock, and West Hoke schools will be held during the week of April 17 - 21, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., at the respective schools, according to the Hoke County Board of Education.

Any child who has had his fifth birthday on or before October 15 of the year in which he enrolls shall be eligible for enrollment. The child's birth certificate and immunization record must be presented to the principal on the day of enrollment.