

## Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

For the past several weeks this writer has not mentioned the weather in this column because of a couple of bright comments from some of our readers. For an example, "This is last week's paper because it is talking about the weather in this column." But I am going to let them make other comments because ever since the weather has been left out of this column, it has been raining.

Sunday night it rained over four inches and the ground would not take anymore water, so it was standing in the roads and fields.

So if starting this column off talking about the weather will hold up the rains, then maybe the farmers can get back in the fields.

By the way maybe the people that bring fresh vegetables by the office can also get back to work.

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Many phone calls came in concerning the item last week on "Economy Grocery." The store was located in the Heins Building, now Wood's Furniture Co., and it was owned and operated by J.E. 'Cap' Conoly. Most callers said that it was there in the twenties and then moved to a small building on E. Prospect Avenue. Others said that it moved to Main Street before going to the Prospect location.

Mr. Conoly is the father of Bruce Conoly, head mechanic at Hoke Auto Company. He lived on Prospect where John Haire now lives.

Anyway if you want more information see Bruce and maybe he can fill you in on other details.

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Last week a couple of men were by the office that I hadn't seen for many years. They were Dan and Walter Howell, who lived here before World War II. They were the sons of the late Mr. and Mrs. Percy Howell and lived on St. Pauls Rd.

Dan is now working for a publishing firm in Nashville, Tenn., and Walter, who is a preacher, is Chaplain of the VA hospital in Columbia, S.C. They were just traveling around and renewing ties with old friends and relatives.

When I first walked up to Dan he looked at me and said, "you don't know who I am?" I told him he was a Howell and if my memory served me right we called him "Guts." He smiled and said that was right.

Dan went off with the National Guard in 1940 and also went to Trinidad with the first group to go overseas.

All three of us recalled many happenings of years ago and of course they were inquiring about my two brothers, Spec and James.

It is always good to see old friends after so many years.

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The results were totaled at the newspaper office last week and many people stayed until approximately three o'clock to get the final results. So I guess we should keep the run off results also.

The official tabulations can be found elsewhere in the paper for all precincts.

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The 55% turnout for the primary was fine and was more than some expected. There are 6001 registered voters in Hoke County and 3,333 voted in the primary last Tuesday.

This compares with 2901 in the primary in 1976 and 2419 voted in the run off a month later.

The general election which had Democrats and Republicans and all others voting, showed a turnout of 4,113. Of course this was for the president, governor and all state offices.

So you can see that it was a big turnout for Hoke County.

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There has been right much discussion about what is a majority when a group is running for more than one seat on a board. The discussion came up the night of the primary and I had many calls for a couple of days after the voting.

To set the record straight here is the law: "If nominees for two or more offices (constituting a group) are to be selected, and there are more persons seeking nomination than there are offices, the majority

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# County May Begin Ambulance Service



SEA OF TROUBLES -- Thanks to all the rain that's fallen on Hoke County in the past two weeks, some homeowners could fish from their front porches if they cared to stock the ponds that have formed in their yards. The picture above was taken on U.S. 401 By-pass.

## Fate Of McCain Hospital Still Uncertain After Special Study

The fate of McCain Hospital, a tuberculosis sanitarium in Hoke County, was still uncertain this week in the wake of recommendations by a task force that the state's three specialty hospitals take on new functions.

The study concluded that TB would no longer require treatment in a special facility if community hospitals and local health departments were properly equipped and staffed.

A minority opinion differed sharply from the majority report, recommending that two of the special hospitals be closed. It did not say which ones, whether Black Mountain, Wilson, or McCain.

Dr. Sarah T. Morrow, secretary of the State Department of Human Resources, said Monday that an "in-house" evaluation of the recommendations will be conducted since the group was divided in its opinions.

This new study is expected to delay a final recommendation on the hospitals by Dr. Morrow's office for months. The ultimate decision on the fate of the hospitals is in the hands of the General Assembly.

Tuberculosis is a communicable disease with symptoms primarily affecting the lungs. North Carolina ranks fifth among the states for incident of TB.

According to the task force report: "The current stigma attached to tuberculosis in North Carolina -- accounting in part for the reluctance of general hospitals to accept these patients -- can be overcome only through phasing out the practice of isolating tuberculosis patients in the specialty hospitals."

The 23-member task force, which included legislators, medical educators and physicians, began the study last August following a controversy over attempts in the 1977 General Assembly to close the two specialty hospitals at Wilson and Black Mountain.

Public hearings were held at each of the hospitals. Last November hundreds of supporters turned out to praise McCain Hospital when the task force held a hearing there. Former patients, area legislators, health professionals, and county officials told the task force that McCain Hospital is of vital importance to the health and economic well-being of North Carolinians in the counties it serves.

Founded in 1908, McCain was the state's first sanitarium. In addition to treating patients, the hospital serves as a training center for the detection and treatment of respiratory diseases. Every year the hospital interprets thousands of chest x-rays for health departments and physicians.

"It would be extremely expensive to duplicate the services offered by McCain in county hospitals," Rep. Joy Johnson told the task force at the hearing.

The majority of the task force urged that TB treatment be phased out of the three specialty hospitals and moved into community based programs.

The facilities would be maintained and expanded for other health care needs under the plan. The majority found there was a need for better care of the chronically ill, and indigent and the severely mentally or physically handicapped.

In addition to expanding services at the hospitals, the majority recommended that an additional \$500,000 be appropriated for the prevention, detection and control of TB and that the three hospitals be maintained to meet federal

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### Still No News

A News-Journal reporter called the special number installed by Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green again this week, but again there was no news.

Green said in an April 24 press release that North Carolinians could call 733-6666 for a daily report on what's going on in Raleigh.

The report is supposed to include news stories, a legislative calendar, and public service information. But so far, nothing.

The caller can leave a message for the lieutenant governor at the sound of the tone. Silence follows.

This week the reporter left a simple message: "Where's the news?"



Lester Southern

## Local Man Receives National Honor

Lester G. Southern of Raeford was recently named for inclusion in the 1978 edition of Outstanding Young Men of America.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Southern, also of Raeford, and will graduate May 12 from Atlantic Christian College with a degree in music.

Southern is serving as organist at the First Christian Church in Wilson and was elected to Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. He is also president and student director of the college choir and treasurer of Men's Interdom at Atlantic Christian.

Selections for the publication were made from nominations received from senators, congressmen, governors, mayors, state legislators, university and college officials and various civic groups including the United States Jaycees.

The criteria for selection include a man's voluntary service to the community, professional leadership, academic achievement, business advancement, cultural accomplishments and civic and political participation. Men between the ages of 21 and 36 are considered for the honor.

Southern's complete biography will appear in the annual awards publication.

According to the board of advisors for the program, "In every community there are young men working diligently to make their cities, as well as their country, better places in which to live. These men, having distinguished themselves in one or more fields of endeavor, are outstanding and deserve to be recognized for their achievements."

## PTA Meets

The Hoke County P.T.A. will have its monthly meeting Monday, May 15, at South Hoke School. The main purpose of the meeting will be to install new officers for the coming year. Members are urged to attend.

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted in a special session Friday not to renew its contract with Buie Ambulance Service. The board decided to put the contract up for bids and, at the same time, to study the possibility of a county-run ambulance service.

The county subsidized Buie to the tune of \$25,000 a year to provide Hoke with 24-hour ambulance service. The contract expires June 30.

There has been growing dissatisfaction among board members over the way the service has been run ever since an investigation last month by *The Fayetteville Times* revealed that emergency medical technicians (EMTs) were not on duty on more than 100 emergency runs.

State law requires an EMT to ride in the back of the ambulance with the patient on each emergency trip. The local service is also under investigation by the state for possible Medicaid fraud.

Tony Buie, owner and operator of Buie Funeral Home and an unsuccessful candidate for county coroner in the recent primary, told the board he couldn't afford to pay four men to man the ambulances on a 24-hour basis. However, additional EMTs were hired, back-up service was pledged by the Hoke County Rescue Squad, and the problem seemed solved.

But it was only a temporary solution in the eyes of some board members. Chairman John Balfour said he favored a county-operated service.

While Friday's decision not to renew Buie's contract was unanimous, the board was somewhat divided on the issue of the county's starting its own ambulance service.

Commissioners Neil McPhatter and Danny DeVane said they would rather avoid getting into the ambulance business right now.

"In order to go into any business you need prior planning and I don't think we have sufficient time by July 1," DeVane said.

McPhatter agreed with him. He said the county should put the service out on contract for another year and then think about taking over the responsibility if things don't work out.

Clair Hudspeth, regional Emergency Medical Services coordinator for the N.C. Department of Human Resources, told the board that Hoke should have a minimum of three ambulances and 10 to 12 employees for its service. He said the ambulances would cost about \$18,000 each if bought through the state on special contracts.

May 23 was set as the completion date for the study. The board will open bids on the ambulance contract that same day.

"At that time we can either accept the bids or take it over ourselves," Balfour said. "It hasn't solved our problems, but maybe it's a step forward."

Commissioner James A. Hunt also said he favored letting the county run the ambulance service.

"We all know we've had problems with the different ambulance services for years," Hunt said. "As businessmen we know we're not going to get the proper service for \$25,000 or \$30,000. We've been getting by cheap. I'm in favor of the county taking over. Ever since I've been on the board there's always been problems."

The fifth member of the board, Ralph Barnhart, took no stand on the issue but said the new contract should stipulate that ambulance records be submitted for inspection by the county manager. This way the county can make certain the required personnel are on board the ambulances when they make

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