

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The saying that it never rains on golf course was not true Sunday afternoon. The bottom dropped out for a few minutes when the downpour I was playing with reached the fifth hole at Arabia. The sun came out in a few minutes and dried us off, but for a few minutes it was a wet foursome.

From the forecast it seems that we are in for more rain the remainder of the week.

The city council met Monday night in the new council room and it is certainly a nice meeting place. Of course a few more items must be purchased to complete the job, but it is an improvement over the old meeting place.

The city manager said that an open house for the city hall would be held in the near future, so this is something for everyone to look forward to.

I will not say that the decisions coming from the new place will be any better, but at least the council and citizens will be in a more comfortable place.

While gathering the information for the column of 25 years ago, I ran across the article concerning a Little League play off game between Raeford and Wilmington. The game was played at Aberdeen and the pitcher for Wilmington was Roman Gabriel. Of course most of you that keep up with sports know that Gabriel went on to star in football at N.C. State University and then played pro ball at a number of places. In fact I believe that he is still playing.

Anyway it took 25 years to realize that the tall lanky boy that pitched that day, was the same Roman Gabriel of today.

A letter from John Pecora last week had a season ticket to the high school football games included. So you will read elsewhere about season tickets being on sale and who and where you can purchase them.

Also some member of the Booster Club should be by and touch you up for a membership. Don't turn him down, but invest in the program at the schools. It will be money well spent. Maybe they will even come by the office and get a buck or two out of me.

Ronnie Branch was by the office Monday and asked that I express his appreciation to the citizens and merchants of Hoke County for all the support they have given him during his hours of trouble. He said he would never forget the aid and words of encouragement during this time of trouble.

A call last week from Lois Autry Strother was on the subject of Class Reunions. She is planning a reunion with other members of the class of 1948 of Hoke County High School. They hope to have the reunion on November 24, 1978. This is the Friday after Thanksgiving and plans are just underway, but they need addresses of the groups.

So if you are a member of this class or know anyone that is, please get in touch with Lois. She can be reached at 210 North Bethel Road, Raeford, N.C. 28376.

So you 1948 graduates contact Lois for an occasion you won't forget.

This letter is advice for everyone that has been on a trip:

Sam, you must talk about your trip to Hawaii!!! Doris Collins and I had a fantastic 4 island trip to Hawaii in March 1977. Not wanting to bore our friends, we said very little about how we flew to the different islands and were met by a bus which carried us on long and delightful tours to volcanoes, fjords, varied landscape, to see how the people work and live and to fabulous restaurants. Each island is different in so many ways. About one year later I mentioned that our tour covered four of the islands and flew us low over some of the smaller

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Test Scores Released

Hoke Students Below State Average

by Cassie Wasko



NEW COUNCIL CHAMBER - The meeting room at City Hall had that new car smell about it when the Raeford City Council held its first meeting there on Monday. The new facility seats over 50 and is an impressive addition to the town.

Raeford Council Convenes In New City Hall Building

The Raeford City Council held its first meeting in the new council chambers at City Hall on Monday, and the board was very favorably impressed with the facility.

The new meeting room seats over 50 and seems larger inside than it appears from the street. Octagonal in shape, it has rust-red carpet, beige vinyl wallpaper and orange trim. A large picture window looks out on Main Street and the courthouse.

It is a well lighted room, and those who arrived early couldn't resist flipping on the various switches. A series of spotlights in the ceiling shine down on the council table, which is on a raised platform at the front of the room.

Renovations in the rest of city hall are nearing completion. The police department is settled into its new quarters, and other city offices are operating in the building. The project cost \$250,000.

City Manager Ronald Matthews said at the meeting Monday that a date for an open house at City Hall will be announced in the near future.

Cable TV

At its business meeting Monday, the board voted to transfer the present cable television franchise in Raeford from N.C. Cable T.V. to Jones Interchange Inc.

The transfer will have to pass a second reading at the board's September meeting before it becomes official.

A representative of Jones Interchange told the board his company plans to add three new stations to the local system by the end of the year. One will be a movie channel, another will be a 24-hour Christian broadcast station, and the third will be Channel 17 from Atlanta, a 24-hour independent station.

Doyle Graves, regional manager for the company, said the additional channels will not require a rate increase. He said the movie channel will be optional, at a cost of between \$7.50 and \$8 per month.

Graves said his company is planning to operate cable television in St. Pauls, Red Springs, Pembroke, and Fairmont. Asked about the possibility of a weather station here, he said a channel would have to be dropped from the system to include it. He said he thought most subscribers would rather have the channel than the weather.

Apparently several members of the board didn't realize it, but the present system carries the FM radio band and can be hooked up to a receiver, according to Graves.

He said he will be moving to this area once the franchise is transferred.

Rev. John C. Ropp, who said it appeared to him that Jones Interchange is a more professional company than the one which presently holds the franchise.

"It seems to me like this company is going to put in a first class system," Ropp observed. "We have

had a second class system here up to now."

Cemetery Entrance

Following a complaint made by local citizens at the last council meeting, City Manager Matthews said he had met with officials of the House of Raeford turkey plant and worked out an agreement that he hopes will prevent further damage in the city cemetery near the plant's parking lot.

Citizens complained that turkey plant employees who eat their lunches in the parking lot leave trash in the cemetery and have been driving over some of the graves to turn their cars around.

Matthews said the city plans to clean up the area, straighten fence posts and erect a barrier to keep cars off the graves. Plant officials agreed to tell their employees not to eat in the parking lot.

Ditch Cleaned

Acting on another complaint, the city manager informed the board that a maintenance crew had cleaned out a ditch on South Main Street across from Raeford Lumber Company that had been causing drainage problems.

"If people will refrain from throwing box springs and tires in there, I think it will stay open for some time," he said.

In other business, City Attorney Palmer Wilcox said it won't be necessary for the preachers in town to decide the fate of several diseased pine trees near the tennis courts at McLaughlin Park. He said the deed to the property, which was donated to the city, allows city authorities to cut the trees if they think it's warranted.

A clause in the deed stipulates that if the city council is undecided about the necessity for cutting trees, the problem is to be given to the local clergy for solution.

Boards, Commissions

The city manager informed the council that the city is having trouble getting people to serve on various boards and commissions.

"These boards are vital to local government," Matthews said. "They kindle an interest in government and get people involved in the decision making process."

He said he thought if the city advertised openings that are available, interested citizens might respond. In the meantime, the board re-appointed a number of people to local boards.

Appointed to the Housing Board of Appeals were: J.W. McPhaul, Carson Davis, Jr., H.K. Brady, Hestel E. Garrison, and Roger Dixon.

Named to the Planning Board were: (inside the city) Ken McNeill, Stanley Koonce, Neill McDonald, James Davis, J.H. Austin; (outside the city) Jim Williamson, J.B. McLeod, H.L. Gatlin, Jr., Walter

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Traffic Accident Claims Life Of Local Child

A 3-year-old Raeford youth was struck and killed Sunday afternoon after he ran into the roadway, according to State Trooper Joe Stanley.

Demont Fredell Melvin, age 3, Rt. 2, Raeford, ran into the path of a car operated by Henry Earl Murchison, also of Rt. 2. Murchison was traveling from Raeford, and as he passed the school, the young Melvin ran across the roadway in front of the vehicle, Stanley said. The child had been playing with several other small children beside the roadway.

Stanley said no charges were filed in the accident. This marks the seventh traffic fatality of the year in Hoke County.

Funeral services for young Melvin were conducted Tuesday at the Laurel Hill Baptist Church by the Rev. Sylvester Melvin. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Surviving are his father, John McNeill; mother, Sylvia Melvin, both of Raeford; grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Melvin and Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Currie, all of Raeford, and two brothers, John

Vernon Melvin and Don Cornelius Melvin, both of the home.

Also killed in traffic accidents this year were Kevin Chavis, 2-year-old son of Linda Chavis, who was killed instantly when he was struck by a pickup truck in the driveway of the Chavis home, May 20.

June 22, Lennon Harris, 22, and his two infant daughters, Shanna, age two, and 7-month-old Christopher, were killed when he lost control of his car and it overturned on a rural Hoke County road about a mile and a half from the Cumberland County line.

A head-on collision between a truck and a car on Highway 401 North about eight miles from Raeford claimed the life of Arian S. Tesfamarian of Dayton, Ohio, March 23.

Lawrence McCollum, 59, died following a one-vehicle accident on RPR 1409 six miles north of Raeford July 5. Four young passengers were thrown from the rear of the pickup truck McCollum was driving, but they sustained only minor injuries.

Hoke County school students appear to be slipping farther behind as they advance in grade levels, according to recently released scores from the annual testing program.

In the lower grades, the scores indicate a variance of only one or two months from the state and national norms. But as the grade level progresses, the local students appear to be losing ground at a quicker rate.

The scores reflect the grade level on which the student is working. For example, the average first-grader in Hoke County had achieved work considered normal for a first-grader in the fifth month of the school year. The tests were administered in the seventh month of the school year, therefore the children should have achieved a 1.7 score.

In comparison with surrounding counties, Hoke's scores ran about average in the early grades, although they still fell behind in most areas in the higher grades.

According to socioeconomic data estimated by school officials, there are more minority children in Hoke County than whites, more students whose family income falls between \$5,000 and \$15,000 than low and high income families; more whose parents have finished high school than families with less than or more than a high school education; and more boys than girls.

Although most of the figures fall in line with the state-wide averages for sex, income and educational levels, the only drastic reversal in the figures appears in the white and non-white areas. Between 60 and 70 percent of the Hoke students in the grades tested are non-white, while between 30 and 32 percent of students state-wide are non-white.

Raz Autry, superintendent of public schools, said that he attributes the low test scores to the low income levels and lack of parental education.

"We can expect no improvement in the test scores of the Hoke students until the parents believe that education is the number one priority in the home. Until our low income and disadvantaged families put education first, we will see no improvement."

Two aids have been hired to work with high school students in the area of remedial math and two reading teachers, one for the junior high and one for high school students, have been added to the staff, Autry said.

"We have carefully selected the gifted kids and put them with average kids so the teacher won't have to teach on so many different levels. We will continue to work with the below average students. But the parent must realize that we have got to have help from the home," Autry continued.

The annual testing was administered to students in the first, second, third, sixth and ninth grades throughout North Carolina. Results from the tests will be used to identify students' learning strengths and weaknesses, to improve students' academic performances, to inform parents and the general public of the progress of their children and the educational programs, and to plan and improve the educational programs.

Gov. Jim Hunt said in a news conference last Thursday, "For the first time, we have a means of accurately identifying our problems and of measuring the progress we are making."

"I believe these results show us, for example, that we must continue our emphasis on the early years, with our kindergarten system and Primary Reading Program. We can see that we still have a job to do in the elementary and upper grades."

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MOA Plans Changed

Plans for the proposed Military Operations Area (MOA) over Raeford have been altered as a result of concerns voiced by the citizens here, according to a letter sent to city and county officials this week by Congressman Charlie Rose.

Rose said that a letter he received from Richard M. Robinson of the Federal Aviation Administration in Atlanta stated the new plan would prohibit the operation of military jets below 3,000 feet above the ground within a one and a half mile

radius of Raeford Airport and the City of Raeford. However, Rose said, they also propose to lower the floor of the Bragg South Bravo MOA to 500 feet above the ground level.

A second public meeting has been scheduled for 7:30 p.m. August 24 at the Hoke County Court House. Rose expressed a desire to see the meeting well-attended by the residents of Raeford and Hoke County.

County Board Denies Cost Of Living Raise

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners voted Monday not to give a cost of living increase to an employee who transferred from Scotland County to the Hoke County Department of Social Services this year.

The board also denied a request by the local Mental Health Center for an additional \$3,000 to give employees there with the cost of living raise.

Social Services Director Ben Niblock told the board he was disappointed with its decision not to give Herman Locklear the 7 percent raise that other county employees are getting this year.

Board members maintained that

Special Meeting

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners scheduled a special meeting for 10 a.m. Wednesday to discuss purchase of landfill equipment.

At its regular meeting Monday, the board rejected bids on one machine because only two bids had been submitted and one did not meet specifications.

the increase for Locklear would be incompatible with an earlier decision not to give raises to those employees hired by the county after April 1 this year. Locklear came to Hoke County after April 1.

Niblock argued that, as a transfer employee with eight years experience, Locklear should not be considered a brand new worker. He said such a policy would hamper efforts by departments heads to recruit qualified personnel from other counties.

When Niblock expressed displeasure over the board's decision, an executive session was called to continue the discussion.

In other business, the board reversed a previous decision to withhold \$1,934 from Hayes, Howell and Associates, architects for the newly constructed South Hoke Community Center. The money was spent by the county to correct a drainage problem at the new building, a problem which the board initially thought the architects should have recognized and avoided.

However, in a letter to the board, (See COUNTY, Page 14)