

## Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

Robert Gatlin had better purchase another rain gauge if this tropical season keeps as it is now. The rain comes even if the sun is shining and the lightning was terrific Monday afternoon. But even when we have had an abundance of rain, it seems just a few miles from Raeford it is dry.

As has been said "we can all talk about the weather, but we can't do anything about it."

Earl Fowler, manager of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce is back from a three weeks vacation in Germany and Italy. He and his family visited the Beach family in Germany and it would be assumed after talking to Earl that it was a nice visit.

If you take time to talk with Fowler he can give you the latest on the value of the dollar and even though he has some humor in what he says it is not funny when you start to realize what he is saying.

So stop by the chamber office or stop Earl on the streets and listen to him for a few minutes.

Ken McNeill was by the office and was telling me about his trip to Williamsburg, Va. He stated that he rode most of the rides at Busch Gardens, except the roller coaster. I believe it is called "The Monster."

He did say that it was like a weekend at home, because he saw, besides Luke McNeill and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Julius Jordan and the Clyde Upchurches.

A book came to the office recently and during a break in my work, I picked it up and started looking at the pictures in it. When I saw Rockfish Creek, it slowed me down long enough to check who the author of the book was.

The title of the book is "Speak Softly to the Echos" by Art Gore. Turning to the book cover flap it said that the man was born in Raeford and we all know him as Arthur D. Gore, Jr. He is a brother to Mrs. Charles Hostetler.

Charles Blackburn in his column "HOKUM" is writing about the book, so I believe it would be well worth your time to turn to Page 2 and read what Charles has to say.

I don't know when the library will get the book, but if you would like to see it come by the office.

Jay Jenkins, assistant to President Bill Friday of the University of North Carolina, was by the office last week. Jay was in Wagram about the time I finished high school and later became a newspaper man with different North Carolina papers. He was the Raleigh correspondent for *The Charlotte Observer* for many years.

We have bumped into each other many times since the thirties and it was good to see him.

He is a relative of John Charles McNeill so he and Blackburn had a long talk about the poet. So maybe we will be reading more about the man from Wagram in the coming months.

While on the subject of John Charles McNeill, a letter came in last week requesting information about a book that was mentioned in *The News-Journal* write-up recently. The letter was from the Rev. Zane Grey Norton of Charlotte, who is a native of Hoke County. He is a brother to Alex Norton of the Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

The request of the Rev. Mr. Norton was forwarded on to him.

A billfold was turned in to the office last week and didn't have an ID card in it. It was found at the McLaughlin School Park and will be returned to its owner if they will come by and make proper identification.

By the way some money was in the billfold.

Plans have just about been (See AROUND TOWN, Page 15)

# Sheriff Alerted To PCB Spills

## SBI Investigates Airplane Sabotage

The State Bureau of Investigation and the state Department of Agriculture are probing into the possible sabotage of a crop-dusting plane owned by Farm Chemicals, Inc., of Raeford.

The plane dusted about 100 acres of cotton near Falcon in Cumberland County in early August and an unidentified chemical that was apparently added to the plane's gas and oil tanks caused damage to the crops. The investigators have not determined whether the crops were damaged through engine exhaust fumes or whether the chemical was also added directly into the craft's pesticide spraying containers.

Shell Oil Company in Houston, Texas, is testing the chemical additive to determine its identity, although S.B.I. tests have been delayed while priority is given to lab work on the recent P.C.B. spills reported along the roadside of numerous counties.

The agriculture department is testing samples of the chemical to determine if the proper pesticide, galecron, was improperly mixed or if something had been added to the compound.

The single-engine Cessna valued at \$43,000 had been spraying the cotton crops with what was thought to be galecron as a part of a three-year trial boll weevil extermination program sponsored by the state and federal governments.

President of Farm Chemicals Alfred K. Leach said the plane's engine, valued at \$17,000, was beyond repair and he expects to have to scrap the craft.

A spokesman from the Agriculture Department said it is too early to tell whether the damaged cotton crops will result in a loss to the growers. About 16 of the 100 affected acres were seriously injured, but it is hoped that only the foliage was hurt.

The plane reportedly made spraying runs on Monday, July 31, parking at night at an airfield in Wade. On August 2, Eddie Owens, the plane's pilot experienced engine trouble and flew to the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport to determine the cause. After discovering a liquid that he could not identify in the fuel, he contacted the Scotland County Sheriff's Office.

## County Board Okays Equipment Purchase

At a special meeting last Wednesday the Hoke County Board of Commissioners accepted a low bid of \$66,248 from Carolina Equipment of Raleigh to purchase a piece of heavy equipment for the county landfill.

The load-crawler will be used to bury garbage at the landfill. Although the landfill is operated by the City of Raeford, the county pays for 75 percent of the costs.

It was thought earlier that the board did not have enough bids on the equipment, but the commissioners later learned that they only have to have one.

Commissioner Danny DeVane cast the one dissenting vote, saying he thought the county needed more competitive bids. County Manager James Martin quoted prices surrounding counties had paid for similar equipment, and all were considerably higher than the lowest bid solicited by Hoke County.

"We only have one machine at

the landfill now and if it breaks down it will cost us \$3,000 a month to cover the trash there," Chairman John Balfour told the board.

The board also accepted a low bid of \$5,570 for a pickup truck from Hoke Auto Company for use at the landfill.

The city has to okay the bids, too. And the city manager got approval from the councilmen individually over the telephone last week rather than call a special session.

In other business in local government, the county commissioners last week delayed acceptance of the new South Hoke Community Center until several minor details are completed at the building.

The center cost about \$100,000 and was financed through federal funds. The board is expected to accept the building later this week, after the work has been finished. The building is located behind South Hoke School.

## Hoke School Board

### Allows Ford To Supply Cars

The Hoke County Board of Education voted Monday night to allow the local Ford company to re-enter the driver education program and supply cars for the Hoke school system.

Younger Snead, manager of Hoke Auto, approached the board in July to request that Ford not be allowed to re-enter the program. He reminded the board members that during the recession Ford had pulled out of the program and Chevrolet had come up with the extra cars needed for the program.

"I stuck with you in the crunch. When times got hard, during the recession, Ford pulled out and you came to me for all of the cars. I helped you then, and I believe you have let me down now," Snead told the board last month.

Autry told the board in the Monday night session that he had investigated and learned that the decision to pull Ford out of the driver's education program was made by the local manager. The Ford dealership here is owned by a concern in Asheboro, and is now under new management.

Board Chairman R.L. Gibson told the board that he believed it would be only fair to allow the new man a chance at the program since he had no part in the original decision. A unanimous vote approved the motion to allow Ford to provide part of the six cars used in the schools annually.

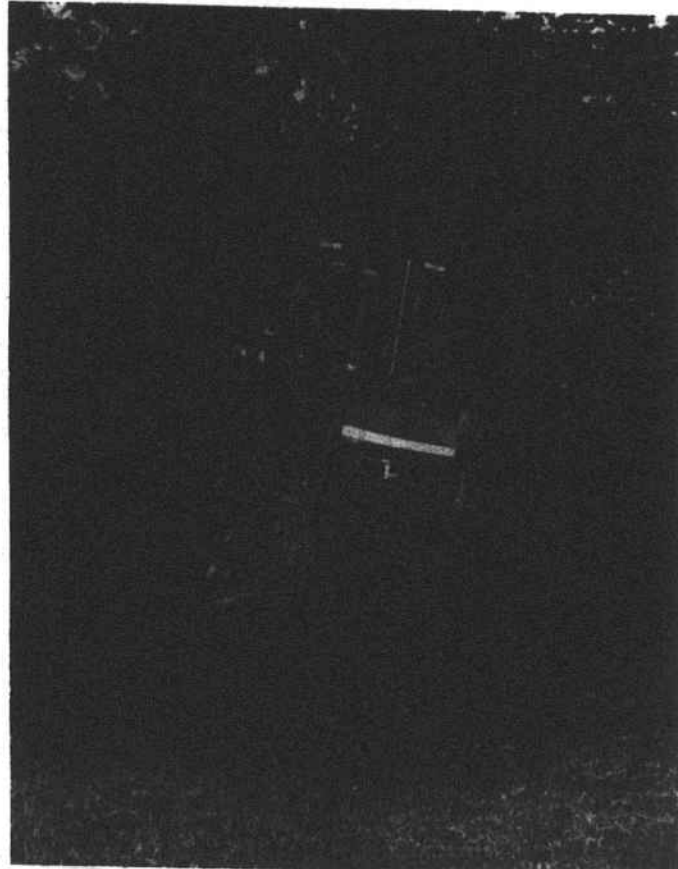
Also in last month's session, the board heard a request to include

travel pay into the salaries of the assistant superintendents. The inclusion of the travel expenses into the salaries would eliminate record keeping and would also re-imburse the full amount expended in travel for the school, Autry told the

## New Banker



**JOINS BANK** -- Gene Miller, the new city executive officer of the Raeford Southern National Bank, began his duties here last week. He succeeds Freddie Williams, who resigned from the bank earlier this month. Miller is a graduate of Appalachian State University and is married to the former Martha K. Simms of Laurinburg. They have two children and attend the First United Methodist Church.



**STOLEN TRACTOR** -- This \$35,000 farm tractor was stolen from Parker Equipment Company in Laurinburg over the weekend and ended up in Hoke County Sheriff Dave Barrington's yard early Sunday morning. The driver, who was being chased by deputies, fled on foot after the machine crashed into a tree. A reward has been offered for information leading to his arrest.

## Tractor Plows Up Barrington's Yard

It wasn't a very good weekend for Hoke County Sheriff D.M. Barrington.

He worked late on Friday, had to get up early Saturday, came down with a 24-hour virus that night, and early Sunday morning, while Raeford slept, a large farm tractor that had been stolen in Laurinburg plowed through his yard at about 40 miles an hour, flattening 75 feet of chain link fence, a persimmon tree, and his prize tomato plants.

The air-conditioner was running, and Barrington said he was so sound asleep he didn't know anything had happened until one of his deputies knocked on his door.

Things could have been worse, he admitted Monday as he inspect-

ed the damage to the lawn of his North Magnolia Street home.

"If he hadn't turned when he did, he would have come right in my bedroom window", the sheriff said.

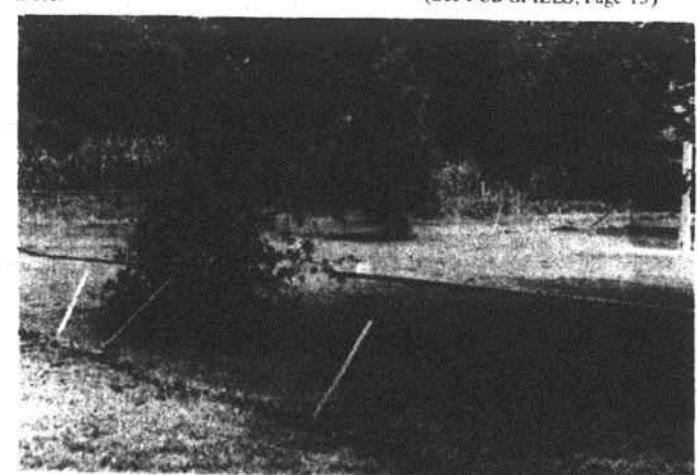
He was thankful his house and family had been spared. There was about \$500 damage to his yard, according to his estimates.

It wasn't anything personal. The culprit on the tractor probably didn't know whose yard he was invading. He was just interested in getting away from the law.

Deputies J.W. Jones and R.C. Hart had spotted the big machine on the N.C. 211 cutoff around 2:30 a.m. Sunday. They gave chase, and the tractor accelerated across U.S. 401-bypass, going out of control after heading down Fulton Street.

The tractor knocked down a hedge belonging to the sheriff's mother, who lives right behind him, and then came on through his yard, slamming into a tree. The vehicle was traveling at top speed when it hit the tree, Barrington said, and the impact tore off the wheels. The driver jumped out of the cab and ran before deputies, following on foot, could catch up with him.

As they later learned the \$35,000 tractor belonged to Parker Equipment Company, a John Deere dealership in Laurinburg. No arrests have been made in the incident. A reward has been offered for information concerning the theft.



**FENCE FLATTENED** -- A stolen tractor crashed through a fence around Sheriff Dave Barrington's yard early Sunday morning, knocking down a young persimmon tree and plowing through his garden.

Hoke County Sheriff D.M. Barrington said this week his office has been alerted by the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) to be on the lookout for "waste scavengers" that have been dumping toxic chemicals along North Carolina roads, but so far there have been no spills reported in this county.

Local officials are apparently not involved in the investigation of a 15 - mile spill along a deserted road on the Fort Bragg Military Reservation near here. Hoke County Health Department officials said they have not been contacted concerning the spill, which is believed to have occurred June 29 on Manchester and King roads between the Moore County line and Raeford.

Other suspected chemical spills have been discovered on the reservation.

Sheriff Barrington urged residents to keep an eye out for tanker trucks riding on the shoulder of the road with their valves open. This is how more than 250 miles of state roads have been contaminated with PCB, a chemical considered dangerous to humans.

State officials said last week, when the spills were detected, that a professional "waste scavenger" may have dumped the chemicals for a client seeking to circumvent new federal toxic waste disposal rules that went into effect August 1. Approved disposal of PCBs, which are used to insulate transformers, now cost up to \$3 a gallon.

PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyls, began showing up in Alamance and Johnston counties the first of this month. As spill locations were plotted, they appeared to be following a pattern along rural routes that branch off Interstate highways 85 and 95, the main north-south roads through North Carolina.

State environmental officials have advised Fort Bragg's environmental officer to keep people out of the area of the spill.

"We advised them as a temporary measure to cover the chemical with sand until we decide what to do with it," said Dennis Ramsey, an engineer with the regional natural resources office in Fayetteville.

PCBs are used in the repair and manufacture of electrical transformers at plants throughout the state and have caused liver cancer and nerve damage in animal experiments. It is considered more toxic than DDT. People who have been exposed to high doses have developed health problems including acne - like skin rashes, swollen limbs, runny eyes and discolored fingernails.

Under state laws the polluter could be punished by fines of up to \$5,000 per violation, forced to clean up the discharges and sentenced to six months in prison. There are federal penalties, too.

Officials estimate that it could cost as much as \$1 million (See PCB SPILLS, Page 15)