

The News - Journal

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Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

County Commissioners

COG Proposal Board's Target

The City of Raeford was about closed up for New Year's Day. Some of the food stores were open, but for the most part everyone took a holiday. When the banks and post office close down it almost stops the flow of people into town.

So far, no violent deaths or accidents have been reported from the law enforcement officers. This is news that you always like to hear about after a holiday.

The weather was warm both Sunday and Monday, so most folks could get out for their favorite pastime. Many kids were seen riding their new bicycles up and down the streets. Traffic was light, so they almost had the streets to themselves.

Early Tuesday morning it started raining and as this is being written, it is still raining. The forecast is for it to stop raining in the afternoon, and the thermometer to drop to around freezing.

We worked most of the day at the newspaper office, but shut down when we caught up late on Monday afternoon. As the old saying goes, maybe we will be working and catching up all year.

Let's hope everyone had a fine beginning for 1979.

In the scriptures it says "it is more blessed to give than to receive". One time of year that this comes home to people is at Christmas time. Santa Claus visiting the youngsters and Mother and Daddy standing in the corner and watching and smiling as the little faces beam as they look at what Santa has left them.

Of course as the kids grow up, most of us early on Christmas day gather with our families around the tree and exchange gifts. Once again we notice the smile as someone gets something they have always wanted, but there is also a smile on the face of the giver.

At other times the joy of giving is helping a family that is down and out and would not have had a Christmas if it hadn't been for some organization or group that were the givers. You sit back and hear someone tell about taking food, clothing and toys to a family and hear of the look on their faces and this gives you a feeling of warmth within your heart because you were a part of this Christmas.

Last, but not least, someone will take it upon themselves to collect money to buy a gift for someone who is retired from public service or has retired and has been a hard worker in the community. This happened this year for a lady who has done much for many and has not received the credit due her because so many never knew she did anything for anyone. This was the way she wanted it when she was working for the public.

This lady had a tough job and she became, as many thought, tough with it. Yes, she was tough, but only on the outside; she has a heart of gold. I have received many a phone call from her and received her wrath, but underneath she was just giving me good advice. This, she has done for many in Hoke and Cumberland counties.

Last week Rena Smith, who worked for the Unemployment office for many years, called with, not wrath in her voice, but tears in her eyes, to tell me how much she appreciated the TV set given to her by many people in Hoke County. She wanted me to say "thanks" to everyone. It would be more appropriate to have made a tape recording of her voice as she talked and most folks would have known how sincere she was when she said thanks.

This project was headed by County Commissioner Mabel Riley, and to you, Mabel, thanks for letting me be a part of this project. The call from Rena Smith certainly made me feel that it is more blessed to give than receive.

Hoke High basketball team is to be congratulated for the fine showing they made in Raleigh last week. It is hard to lose a game like that.

To the folks that have inquired about the new shopping center on US 401 South as of this writing we haven't been able to get anyone to make a firm statement about who, what or when.

We will pass the news along to you just as soon as the facts can be confirmed.



SHOPPING CENTER - This sign on the southwest side of U.S. 401 near St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church south of Raeford speaks for itself. The main office of the developer, Syntax, is in Greensboro.

Shopping Center For City

A shopping center will be built in 1979 on the west side of U.S. 401 about a mile south of Raeford, a sign on the property says. But sources close to the proposed development had few details they could reveal this week. The center is to be built by Syntax Corp. of Greensboro on property owned by Julian Wright. The sign says the center will

contain a food store, a drug store and local shops. David Morgan of Syntax, replying to a News-Journal question asked in a telephone call to the company's office, said he could not give details now. He said verbal commitments had been made by prospective tenants of stores planned for the center but that they had not been made

formally, in writing. Morgan said the buildings would cover a total of about 40,000 square feet of floor space. A rumor circulating locally is that the food store will be a unit of a North Carolina-based chain of supermarkets, but since the name of the prospect could not be confirmed this week, it is not being published.

He Didn't Know Men He Knows Are Brothers Till He Read Story

Retired Raeford Postmaster Charles "Charlie" Morrison served three years in World War II with Liston Hoffman aboard the battleship Alabama and has known his brother, Joe Huffman of Raeford, for more than 20 years. But he didn't know till he read a story in the December 29 News-Journal that Joe and Liston are brothers. The story told of the brothers meeting December 18 for the first time in 50 years. "I had no reason to believe there was any connection," Morrison said. The difference in the spelling of the family name would be one thing

that would prevent curiosity from arising. Liston's name became "Hoffman," his brother explained to a reporter, by a Navy mistake, which Liston got tired of trying to get the Navy to correct. He called Joe Huffman about an hour after he read the story Thursday. "Hoffman and I were as close as anybody could get in a group like that," Morrison said of his World War II shipmate in talking with The News-Journal reporter. Joe Huffman gave him Liston's address in Flushing, Long Island, N.Y. Morrison said he would write to Liston.

Morrison and Liston Hoffman not only were shipmates but they worked in the same department of the ship and lived bunk-to-bunk. "He was No. One and I was No. Two in General Supplies," Morrison said. "We were in charge of 27 storerooms and 23 storerooms." They served on the Alabama through her 11 major Pacific campaigns, sailing 250,000 miles on sea duty, from the battle for Bougainville to the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay September 3, 1945. The Alabama was in the famed (See BROTHERS, page 15)

Significant Economic Changes Came

Hoke's Year Of '78 Reviewed

The year 1978 in Hoke County was a story of economic downs and ups, with the ups ahead at the end of the year and their chances looking good for 1979. It also was a year of major changes in local government. Some 600 people were left without jobs when the Raeford plant of Summerfield Industries closed February 20. But the following fall, Faberge, Inc., one of the world's major manufacturers of cosmetics, deodorants, perfumes and colognes, started production in the former Summerfield building. It is expected to replace up to half the jobs lost by Summerfield's closing. At year's end, Hoke County also was awaiting word from Russ Knit about where its new plant would be built. A site in Hoke County and one in Sanford was being considered. A restaurant, a pharmacy, a sewing center, and a real-estate firm arrived in Raeford, and a sign appeared on U.S. 401 south of Raeford near the end of the year announcing a shopping center would be built there in 1979. In agriculture, Hoke County's farm income generally was ex-

pected to have topped in 1978 the previous year's. In local government, the county gained a new manager (James Martin) in mid-January, and Raeford gained a new city manager (Ronald Matthews) later in the year. The county was informed in November it was losing its social services department chief (Ben Niblock). He is leaving Monday to start work in the same position in Johnston County. In politics, 1978 was an election year. Sheriff David M. Barrington was returned to office for a new term. Democrat Mabel Riley became the first woman to be elected a Hoke County commissioner. She also was the only new member elected to the county board. The November elections put two new members on the county board of education. On the tax front, the Raeford city property tax was set at the previous year's 57 cents per \$100. The county commissioners were considering a proposal to raise the county rate to 97 cents, which would have been five cents higher than the 1977-78 figure. About 600 citizens signed a petition protesting

the proposal, and the commissioners set the rate at the previous year's level and cut the budget to fit it. In July, Raeford held Open House in her new Fire Station. Jane Sellars is Miss Raeford of 1978. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Sellars and is majoring in speech and drama at Greensboro College. Miss Sellars was crowned the night of December 30 in the Raeford Jaycees' first annual pageant. Seven girls competed for the title. Hoke County got a new county manager when 1978 was only three days old. James Earl Martin, a 32-year-old native of Bladen County, was appointed by the board at the board's regular meeting for January. He was named to fill the vacancy created by the death November 8, 1977, of T.B. Lester, the county's first manager. Mrs. Peggy (John C.) McDiamid of Raeford is the winner of the 1977-78 Dr. R.A. Matheson Nursing Scholarship at Sandhills Community College. The scholarship is awarded annually to the Hoke County resident accepted for the college's nursing program who is judged most deserving to receive

The Hoke County commissioners Tuesday decided to send to planning region directors and boards, both U.S. senators, Congressman Charlie Rose and the county's legislators letters expressing their opposition to the proposed application for a federal grant for emergency medical services.

The application is being planned by the Pee Dee Council of Governments for the 15 counties in Health Care Area 5. Commissioner Danny DeVane made the motion, which the commissioners adopted, that copies of letters be sent.

The commissioners at their November 20 meeting adopted a motion to reject the proposed regional system after being told by DeVane that, in effect, it would be a corporation with an estimated \$117,000 in administrative costs. He also said the county couldn't afford to pay what would be its matching share of a federal grant. He said a federal grant of \$300,000 or less wouldn't warrant the expense.

At Tuesday's meeting, board Chairman John Balfour said to put into the letter to Pee Dee COG the statement that the commissioners have no funds available for the project.

The letter will express opposition especially because of administrative costs, and copies, according to the motion adopted, will be sent to the directors and boards of Regions H, M, N, and O; the Region N Emergency Medical Services Council; U.S. Sens. Jesse Helms and Robert Morgan, in addition to Rose, the congressman for the Seventh District; State Sen. Sam Noble and the three state representatives of the district in which Hoke County is located; and Dr. Sarah Morrow, secretary of the State Department of Human Resources, which would administer the federal funds for the EMS program.

The discussion started after Balfour read a letter from Pee Dee COG regarding the EMS 1203 application. The letter said in effect COG needs a letter stating the Hoke commissioners support of the project and intend to provide matching funds.

Then DeVane said his position was the same as it was when the commissioners were asked to adopt the resolution opposing the project.

"But they're still going ahead" with spending \$52,000 in federal planning funds. "COG is just using the money to pay the staff," he said.

He also said the Scotland County commissioners also have disapproved the project, objecting to the administrative costs.

DeVane said later that COG last year spent \$47,000 in similar funds on a project that was subsequently turned down.

In other action on emergency services, the commissioners later in the meeting adopted a resolution agreeing that the Hoke County Rescue Squad would respond to emergencies in the three other counties in Region N. The squad had adopted the resolution, the commissioners were informed.

The rescue services of the counties have been providing mutual aid as the occasions arise but Robeson and Scotland counties put the agreement in writing in a resolution adopted December 5. Balfour informed his fellow commissioners. Bladen is the other county in Region N.

The resolution says the counties agree to respond by dispatching a vehicle to the scene "regardless of geopolitical boundaries."

The resolution does not concern non-emergency vehicles.

The commissioners in other business adopted a motion advancing Frances Cox a step in pay when she becomes acting director of the county Department of Social Services. Ms. Cox, the department's administrative secretary, will serve in the position when Director Ben Niblock goes to his new job of director of the Johnston County Social Services Department. His resignation becomes effective Monday but he was quoted as saying he would spend a few days at the Hoke office before he leaves.

The motion provides that Ms. Cox will return to her administrative secretary's position at that position's pay when a permanent director for the Hoke department is appointed. The county Board of Social Services voted at a meeting Friday to approve the arrangement concerning the directorship and Ms. Cox.

The commissioners also at their Tuesday meeting, their first of the new year, adopted a motion approving payment of the county's share of the Nutrition Program for the Elderly. The share is \$1,836.78 of

(See COMMISSIONERS, page 14)

ing Young Law Officer; and Steve McNeill, Outstanding Young Educator.

The Board of Hoke County Commissioners agreed at its January 16 meeting to inspect a 50-acre site west of Raeford proposed for development as a county park. If the board approves the site, the county Recreation Commission will start negotiating to buy it. A total of \$25,000 in county Revenue Sharing funds has been allocated for development of the park, and the commission hoped to get an equal amount from the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to go with the county money for development.

The late County Manager T.B. Lester was announced as 1977 Man of the Year of The Raeford Kiwanis Club at the club's annual Ladies' Night dinner held January 19. The cup symbolic of the honor was presented to Mr. Lester's wife, Mrs. Lorena Lester.

The State Department of Transportation's most recent seven-year plan calls for widening to four lanes from two U.S. 401 from 71st High School to the Raeford bypass. James Turlington, principal of

(See '78 REVIEW, page 14)