

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The weather on Easter was perfect. The sunshine made everything stand out and everyone could show off their Easter outfits.

Some other parts of the world didn't have such good fortune. There was an earthquake in Europe, a volcano erupted in the West Indies and flooding was in Mississippi. So you can see that we had plenty to be thankful for on Easter.

There were a couple of hundred at the Easter sunrise service according to reports. The weather was cool, but with the preaching and singing it didn't take long for most in attendance to forget the weather. The Raeford Presbyterian church was filled for the morning worship service and I guess the other churches had large crowds also, about the only excuse anyone could give for not being at church Sunday was they were out of town.

I don't believe the yards with the green grass and lovely flowers and plants have ever been prettier in Hoke County. If you haven't driven around town and looked at this beauty, take a few minutes and do so. The blooms will soon be gone, so do so today. It will be worth your time.

Don't forget to attend the Democratic precinct meetings at your polling places Thursday night, April 19 at eight o'clock. There must be 10 registered voters present to hold the meetings, so get busy and be sure you have enough present for the meeting.

The Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce in a letter to members announced this week that the annual dinner would be held on Monday night, May 14 beginning at 6:30 o'clock. The event will be held at the Hoke High Gymnasium. The speakers for the evening will be Charlie (Choo-Choo) Justice and Art Weiner. These men were All-American football players at the University of North Carolina in the 1940's.

According to the letter a record turnout is expected, so to be sure to be in on this annual event, make reservations by calling the chamber office 875-5929 or 875-2179.

People that serve on boards don't get enough thanks. Maybe we don't always agree with the decisions they make, but they take much of their time to serve.

The meeting of the Board of Education lasted until around 2:30 a.m. last week and these members were up and around at work the same day. Other boards will be burning the midnight oil in the next few weeks trying to get a budget together and set a tax rate that will please everyone. This is almost an impossible task.

An article that appeared in a daily paper this week was right amusing. It was about a contest at the University of Auburn in Auburn, Ala.

In part it said: The female that garnered the most votes in the Miss Auburn University election ran on the campaign slogan - "Bessie - not just another drop in the bucket."

Bessie is a Holstein dairy cow. It seems that Bessie pulled 2,385 un-official write-in votes. The closest candidate was a young lady from Montgomery, Ala. with 1000 votes.

Now the thing that is so amusing to me is that when I was in high school some people used to call one of our colleges, now a university, "Cow College."

I don't believe they ever had a cow as their college, because it made some of the graduates mad to mention the name, cow.

Ex-Hoke School Man Leaving Durham Post

Ben Brooks, formerly with the Hoke County school system, is leaving his position as superintendent of Durham city schools, a news report says.

Brooks served two years through 1963 as director of instruction for the Hoke schools. He was director of the audio-visual program in the Fayetteville city school system when he was named to the Hoke position.

After leaving Hoke County he served as principal of Enfield High School in Halifax County. Then he

At Commissioners' Meeting Monday

Ambulance Situation To Be Discussed

Holiday Weekend Generally Quiet

One Serious Accident

An Aberdeen man was injured critically in a one-car accident about 4 a.m. Sunday in Hoke County, the State Highway Patrol reported.

No other serious accidents were reported in the county during the Easter holiday weekend. The holiday traffic - accident count was started at 6 p.m. Friday and ran through Monday.

State Trooper Louis Rector reported Aberdeen man, Jerry Onslow Gillis of 112 Scott St., was termed semiconscious after the accident occurred on paved SR 1228 about 10 miles northwest of Raeford and was still in critical condition and under intensive care at Moore Memorial Hospital in Pinehurst Tuesday.

Rector said the 1977 Toyota

Gillis was driving south crossed the center line, traveled 256 feet, then overturned twice coming to rest on its top on the left shoulder.

The officer said Gillis, the only occupant of the vehicle, was thrown out of the car on the driver's side, landing 60 feet from the point where the vehicle came to rest.

Holiday traffic through the county was heavy, Patrol Sgt. D.L. Minshew reported Tuesday, but the early Sunday accident was the only one that caused an injury.

Seventeen motorists were cited for alleged speeding and three for allegedly driving under the influence, Minshew also said.

Rector, who was working nights, made all the arrests for the alleged DUI, Minshew said. Rector said he also issued speeding citations to 12 to 14 drivers.

The Sheriff's and the Raeford Police departments reported an exceptionally quiet Easter holiday with only one wreck reported in the city.

A Laurinburg woman was charged with a passing violation when she attempted to pass a vehicle on the right-hand side on south Main Street Monday, according to a police report.

Carrie Chatman of Laurinburg attempted to pull her 1978 Lincoln around the right side of Janet Adcock Baker's 1973 Chevrolet. Ms. Baker, of 517 N. Magnolia Street, was making a right turn at the time, and collided with the Chatman vehicle. Both drivers were slightly injured, and damage to the Chatman vehicle was estimated at \$130 while the Baker vehicle incurred about \$175 in damages, police said.

A local man was run over by his tractor Monday when he tried to crank it to plow his garden.

Ernest R. Phifer, Rt. 3 Box 295, A, Raeford, was preparing to plow his garden at 128 Harris Avenue. He left the tractor in gear, cranked it, and was knocked to the ground when the tractor moved forward, police said.

The tractor ran across his chest, and Phifer was taken by ambulance to Cape Fear Valley Hospital.

Also in the police report this

week was a complaint from Bill's Car Wash on 401 Bypass. Police discovered that someone had tampered with a coin box at the car wash, although they did not gain entry to the box. About \$10 damage was done to a lock on the box.

April 11, police investigated an accident on Magnolia Street involving one vehicle.

Ervin Graham, P.O. Box 758, Raeford, was charged with driving under the influence when his 1968 Oldsmobile ran off the right side of the road into a grove of pine trees. Damage to the vehicle was estimated at \$200 and a passenger, Annie F. Rogers, Rt. 1 Box 832, Raeford, was slightly injured in the crash.

The sheriff's department reported only two incidents during the last week.

Over the Easter weekend, Franklin Teal, 801 E. Prospect Avenue, Raeford, discovered that six golf clubs and his golf umbrella had been taken from his locker at Arabia Golf Course. Value of the missing items was set at \$175.

John Tucker, Rt. 1 Box 297, Aberdeen, reported on March 3 that a bike, a watch and a ring had been taken when thieves cut the screen on his door to gain entry to his home. Value of the items was \$240, and deputies recovered all of the items.

Hoke County's ambulance situation will be discussed by the county commissioners Monday night.

Commissioner Danny DeVane, chairman of the ambulance committee, told the other commissioners Tuesday night his committee would submit recommendations at the meeting.

The session, which will start at 8, was scheduled for a discussion of the county's current and long-range building and office - space needs. Architect Sam Snowdon will report.

The County Board of Equalization and Review also will meet Monday night.

The ambulance committee was appointed by John Balfour, chairman of the board of county commissioners, at the commissioners' April 2 meeting, obtaining ambulance service which would cost no more than the \$45,000 subsidy of the current fiscal year.

The decision to inquire was prompted by Spring Lake Ambulance Service's statement that the Spring Lake firm will need a \$75,000 annual subsidy for the next three years and a 5 per cent increase to meet inflation thereafter.

Addition of discussion of the ambulance service at Monday night's was made during the commissioners' mid-month meeting for April.

SCHOOL BUDGET

In other business, the commissioners heard the proposed \$858,806 county school system's budget for fiscal 1979-80.

Items were explained by school board chairman Dr. R.M. Jordan and County Schools Supt. Raz Autry.

The commissioners took no action on the proposal.

The school board had approved the proposed budget at a special session on the subject the night of April 10.

ROADS

The commissioners adopted a motion to ask the State Department of Transportation to include in its planned count of traffic on SR 1414 a similar count of traffic on SR 1466, known as the Chance Road.

They acted after Jesse Wheeler, owner of property on the road, told the commissioners that the road "is not being maintained (by the state). In fact, things have gotten worse."

In reference to the same road, they also were asked by Stephen W. Benkosky to ask the highway department how to appeal a ruling to a higher authority.

He pointed out that in the point system that helps determine road improvement priorities, a taxpayer's house receives only three points, where a public school is rated 15 and a church also rates much higher than private property. He asked, rhetorically, how much a public school or a church pays in taxes?

He also said that the highway department has taken one road out of a subdivision to include it in state maintenance while not taking others in the same subdivision.

Jack McGinnis, who lives on SR 1414, in reference to priorities, said one road with a cemetery at one end and a trailer at the other has a priority of one, higher than the road he lives on. DeVane later said the road carries through traffic, and Balfour said that other roads which serve more people should get more consideration.

The road referred to hasn't been improved because some rights-of-way necessary for the state to make the improvement have not been granted by property owners to the DOT, the discussion indicated.

FINANCING AUTHORITY

The commissioners adopted a resolution to establish a Hoke County Industrial Facility and Pollution Control Financing Authority.

County Attorney Duncan McFadyen, who drafted the resolution, explained that the authority could supply tax - exempt bonds to industries for financing improvements or to effect pollution control.

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BoE Delays Decision On Tenure Matter

The Hoke County Board of Education approved a roster of teachers for tenure and delayed action on giving tenure to a high school carpentry teacher in a special session Tuesday night.

The board delayed a decision on placing Peter Sawyer on tenure until Earl Oxendine, high school principal, can be reached to clarify comments made in an evaluation of Sawyer's abilities.

They agreed to meet at a later date to make a decision on tenuring Sawyer and to re-evaluate a teacher whose contract was terminated in last week's board meeting.

Approved for tenure at Hoke High were Cheryl Farmer; Danny McGougan, occupational education; Gail Williamson, biology and Geraldine Munn, extended day program. Jacqueline Gladney was placed on tenure as librarian at Upchurch Junior High.

Two other high school teachers were automatically tenured when the board failed to act on their

contracts at mid-year.

Harriet McDonald and Charlie Parson, both teachers at Hoke High, were automatically tenured when their three-year probationary period came to an end in mid-year.

New teachers are placed on tenure or their contracts are terminated at the end of a three-year probationary period. If the board fails to act on renewing or terminating the contract 30 days before the end of the period, the teacher is automatically granted tenure.

The board also decided to keep the meeting time at 7 p.m., although in recent years, meeting time was switched to 7:30 p.m. during daylight savings time.

They also discussed the possibility of purchasing two vans for transporting athletic teams and the band instead of purchasing a new activity bus. The decision was delayed until the county commissioners take action on the school budget for the coming year.

Hoke Man Convicted In Gibson Murder

A Hoke County man charged with the bludgeoning death of Glenn Currie Gibson, drew a first-degree murder conviction in Cumberland County Superior Court last Thursday.

James Thomas Jones, 57, of Rt. 1, Shannon, was found guilty of murdering Gibson, 43, of Rt. 2 Raeford, and later dumping his body along a roadway in South Carolina last year.

Superior Court Judge Coy E. Brewer sentenced Jones to life imprisonment shortly after the verdict was returned at 5 p.m. Thursday. Jones will be eligible for parole in 20 years.

Jones' attorney, Jack Thompson, immediately gave notice of appeal to the North Carolina Supreme Court, which hears the appeals of capital cases.

Gibson's decomposed body was found about 60 feet off of interstate 95 May 9 in South Carolina after police received a tip from a couple who claimed to have found the body while changing a flat tire. His burned-out car was found in Hoke County shortly after the body was discovered.

The state's chief defense witness, David Carl Odum, 23, of Rockingham, testified Wednesday that Jones had beaten Gibson to death on March 30. Three defense witnesses testified that they had seen Gibson alive as late as April 10.

Odum was charged with accessory to the murder after he told State Bureau of Investigation agents last August that he had witnessed the murder and had helped dispose of the body. According to a report in a Fayetteville paper, trial testimony indicated that Odum's attorney, Chief Public Defender Mary Ann Tally, told Assistant District Attorney Mike DeSilva that Odum would not testify unless the accessory charge was dropped.

The report also said that Odum testified that Jones wanted Gibson dead because he was afraid Gibson might testify against him in another trial. Jones has been charged in the Columbus County drowning of Billy Lee Thompson, 19. Thompson's body was found in a roadside canal about a half mile from his home in Cerro Gordo in November 1977.

Authorities indicated that Jones feared Gibson would testify against him when Jones was tried for

(See HOKE MAN, Page 15)



PROMOTED -- The silver maple leaf of a lieutenant-colonel is being pinned on Fred McKenzie (right) of Southern Pines at the National Guard Armory in Raeford by Lt. Col. William Sheldon of the First Army Inspector General's staff headquartered at Ft. Meade, Md. McKenzie is commander of the Second Battalion, 252nd Armor, whose headquarters company is based in Raeford. The ceremony was held Friday morning in a brief recess during the Raeford unit's formal Army Inspector General's inspection. McKenzie has been serving in the National Guard for the past 27 years. Before joining the Guard he qualified as an Army paratrooper and served in the 82nd Airborne Division. McKenzie was promoted to his new rank from major last November 3. He received the formal federal recognition of his higher rank last March 30.

But Employee Walkout Rumor Denied

Managers Leaving Ambulance Service

Jim Hinley, co-manager of the Hoke County Ambulance Service, denied Tuesday that employees of the service planned to walk out on Friday as a rumor has it.

The rumor didn't specify a reason.

Meanwhile, Hinley and his wife Linda, the other manager of the service, said Monday they have given a two-week notice and will leave the service Friday.

The Hoke service is a branch of Spring Lake Ambulance, which has a contract with Hoke County. The contract provides that the county will pay the firm a \$45,000 subsidy to cover expenses the firm cannot recover.

An ambulance committee of the county commissioners is searching for a service which will operate at about the same subsidy as the

Spring Lake service is receiving. The committee was appointed after the Spring Lake firm notified the commissioners it would have to have \$75,000 a year for the next three years and 5 per cent more after that to meet inflation effects on operating expenses.

Hinley said he and his wife were not leaving just the Hoke service but also the mother company.

"At least I will not be working for this Spring Lake ambulance service," Hinley said. He declined to comment on his future plans.

He also explained that he and his wife have decided to make Hoke County their permanent home because of the friendly reception they received here.

"We like it here. I haven't met a single person I didn't like," Hinley said.