

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The weather was a little windy over the weekend but it was dry and everyone could get outside that wanted to do so. Saturday the wind was cold for the first part of the day, but was pleasant in the afternoon.

It was raining when I came to work Tuesday morning and the forecast is for rain through Thursday. The temperature will be in the 60s and 70s and this should not be too bad.

The weekend forecast is for great weather.

Easter was a lovely day and most churches had the usual Easter congregations, but it didn't seem to me that the crowds were as large as in previous years. I didn't notice as many corsages and Easter bonnets as in past years.

Maybe the price of gasoline kept many people from visiting this Easter season. I was told that the beaches had people down but "no vacancy" signs were not displayed as in previous years.

So maybe the gasoline prices will make us again a stay-at-home family group.

Bill Lindau called Tuesday and stated that he would be back to work Wednesday, April 9, but would have to take it easy for a few weeks.

We appreciate the help of Joe Holt and Marty Morrison during his illness. I know, that the readers will miss them, but will also be glad to welcome Bill back.

The Easter promotion put on by the Raeford Merchants Association was a success from all reports. It was good to hear one of them say that full cooperation was given by all merchants. This is what it takes for a strong merchants association.

Maybe this promotion will lead to others that will bring more and more people into the shopping areas.

The gas situation will give the local merchants a good chance to keep the customers at home and the way to do it is to let them know what you have to sell and give them service along with it.

Times have certainly changed in the past 50 years. I am not just talking about scientific and other technical things but also the thinking of most people. The thing that brings this to my mind is the baseball strike.

When I was a youngster most people would have played for nothing just to put on a big league uniform. Many folks here in Raeford played minor league ball all summer just for the fun of it.

It is hard for me to get through my head that the "boss isn't the boss." In these days and times management doesn't have much say so in how their business or ball club will be run. Maybe Gene Autry, former cowboy star and now a major league team owner, is right when he said "let's not open the play this year." Now some of the million dollar boys might not miss the money, but the little boys would and so would some of the big money agents.

I will be glad to see sports get back to where someone who participates thinks it is fun.

The publisher said that the price of gas in Mexico was 47 cents per gallon and not 43 cents as stated in this column last week. He also stated that I didn't mention the \$1.80 per gallon gas that he bought in other places.

Anyway it is good to have the Dicksons back in town and after the beach trip last weekend he looks rested. Now if he will just tick around, he won't get tired as quickly.

Frank Teal, manager of the Raeford Savings and Loan, was upset last Saturday when I went by his office to see if he wanted to play golf.

It seems that the annual association's Easter egg hunt was running behind schedule because the pair See AROUND TOWN, Page 11)

County Commissioners

HUD Rejects Housing Grant

Borrowing Ceases

County Interest Rates Still Rising

Record high interest rates on business loans and conventional home mortgages are putting a tight squeeze on borrowers in Hoke County, as elsewhere in the country.

"Our loan business has pretty much dried up," said Gene Carter, Bank of Raeford president, Friday. "Businesses have cut back, the farmers, it has really slowed down."

The prime rate, the interest large banks charge their most credit-worthy corporate borrowers, hit a whopping 20 percent last week at one New York bank.

Businesses, who routinely borrow short-term money in order to maintain a "cash flow", generally pay 2 percentage points above the prevailing prime rate.

Most consumer installment loans, with a much smaller maximum interest ceiling set by state usury laws, are also on the decline, as they are now becoming unprofitable for a bank.

For example, Carter pointed out that the "overdraft" checking option, in which a customer may write himself an instant loan according to a pre-arranged credit line, is subject to a maximum 15 percent interest rate.

"If a good customer asks for it, we'll try and take care of him. But we are not pushing it," he said.

Until last week, when the Federal Reserve Board lifted certain banking controls, a state-chartered bank, such as The Bank of Raeford, was restricted to charging 12 percent on certain

installment loans. Its competitor, The Southern National Bank, was allowed to charge 15 percent, Carter said.

Still, as long as the yield on "money market" certificates of deposit is hovering at 14 or 15 percent, bankers feel they are in a bind.

Carter predicted that the General Assembly will consider amending the state usury law this year to make consumer loans more costly.

"How much, I just don't know. I see a lot of confusion ahead and nobody really knows what will happen before things get better," he said.

Carter had just returned from Raleigh where he met with several hundred bankers at a N.C. Bankers Association seminar.

At Raeford's SNB, a lending official said bank spokesman Gene Miller was out of town Friday and unavailable for comment.

At Raeford Savings and Loan Association, the focus of attention Friday was on the announcement by the Federal Home Loan Bank that the nation's S&L lenders can begin offering Renegotiable Rate Mortgage.

Franklin Teal, general manager of the Raeford S&L, predicted that the RRM concept will revolutionize the home mortgage industry.

"I feel certain we'll get into it as quickly as we can. Probably 100 percent of our business will be the renegotiable rate," he said.

The RRM, or "rollover" as it is also called, is opposite the conventional type mortgage offered

today which has a "locked in" interest rate for the entire 25 or 30 year term.

The RRM would be like a contract to be reviewed, every three years or five years, and the interest rate would be adjusted according to the costs of borrowed money.

However, since the federal approval was made only last week, final regulations on how the program is to be implemented, and the maximum "up" and "down" range, have not been written.

Teal said Raeford S&L has got available funds for mortgages but not many "takers" because of the high interest rate.

On a \$40,000 mortgage for 25 years, an interest rate of 17 and 1/2 percent means a monthly payment of \$591, not including tax and insurance. To qualify for that, a borrower has got to have an annual income in the range of \$34,000, Teal pointed out.

For Hoke County

Food Stamp Cutback Would Be 'Disastrous'

The threatened cutbacks in the food stamp program would have a "disastrous" effect on Hoke County households, officials here said Friday.

"It would be a nightmare in a small county like Hoke," said Ken

Witherspoon, director of the department of social services. Witherspoon, along with DSS directors across the state, was notified last week by state officials to be prepared to implement immediate cutbacks if Congress does not approve additional funding by May 15.

A reduction, or even termination, is possible if a limit on food stamp spending for 1980 is not lifted and additional appropriations provided by the May deadline.

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have said the \$6.1 billion budgeted for the current fiscal year is expected to be exhausted by June, while the fiscal year does not end until September.

Witherspoon said a county like Hoke, with a participation rate of over 95 percent, would be especially hard hit. Participation rate is determined by the number of persons who are deemed eligible and the actual number who are receiving the aid.

Among the options, should Congress fail to extend the funds, are an across-the-board reduction in allotments or a complete shutdown for a period of weeks or months.

"I don't mean to sound pessimistic but I'm afraid it's leaning toward a complete cut-off," said Witherspoon. "If it was going to be a reduction, they would have had to start phasing down way before now."

"When you try and put 'caps' on entitlement programs, you get in trouble. You can't figure an exact budget for a program when you

vocationally disadvantaged program at Hoke High; and Rebecca Tillman as secretary - bookkeeper at Hoke High.

Also discussed and approved at the board meeting was the following school schedule for the 1980-81 year:

Aug. 20 - First (county-wide) teachers' meeting, Aug. 21, 22, 25 - Staff development, Aug. 26, 27, 28, 29 - Teachers report to individual schools, Sept. 1 - Labor Day - No school, Sept. 2 - First day of school, Sept. 30 - NCAE meeting - No school, Nov. 11 - Parent - teacher conferences (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.), Nov. 27 - 28 - Thanksgiving, Dec. 22 - Jan. 2 - Christmas holidays and

winter vacation, Feb. 2 - Parent - teacher conferences (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.), April 20 - 24 - Vacation and Holiday, June 10 - Last day of school (for students), June 11 - 12 - Extra days of employment, June 15, 16, 17 (1/2) - Vacation, June 18 - Holiday in lieu of Veterans Day, June 19 - Holiday in lieu of Memorial day.

In a final action, the board ruled into effect Autry's recommendation that make-up days in 1980 - 81 will be on Saturdays immediately following any days missed because of inclement weather, and that if days cannot be made up in that manner then days will be taken off the Easter vacation.

(See HUD REJECTS, page 11)

In Merchants Association Drawing

Doug Monroe Wins Easter Basket

The winner of the Giant Easter Basket drawing held here Saturday, April 5, was Douglas Monroe of Rt. 2, Raeford.

Monroe's name was drawn from a container holding an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 names of registrants for the big giveaway. Items and opportunities valued at more than \$450 constituted the kittle, as pledged by the 29 members of the Raeford Merchants Association.

Mike Smith, association president and proprietor of Michael's Men's Shop, congratulated Monroe on his win and thanked the Association's members and the public for their cooperation and patronage.

"This is a fine community," Smith said, "the kind of place where business and private individuals meet and work well together, all as mutual participants in the total community."

"The Raeford Merchants Association is grateful to all its many customers and friends, and values their continuing friendship very highly."

About his win, Monroe said it (Saturday) "was just a fine day for me."



Michael Smith, left, president of the Raeford Merchants Association congratulates Douglas Monroe on winning the Easter Basket given away during their recent promotion.

Approves Teachers, Employees, Schedule

School Board Ups Budget For 1980-81

The Hoke County Board of Education last week approved the budget for the 1980 - 81 school year as proposed and presented by Superintendent G. Raz Autry.

The budget totals \$885,521, but since Autry estimates he will have a cash balance of \$35,000 at the end of the current term, and that fines and forfeitures will be around \$95,000, the amount to be requested of the county commissioners is \$755,521.

This figure represents an increase of \$91,000 over the 1979 - 80 budget.

Autry emphasized to the board that in the past there has normally

been \$45,000 to \$50,000 in federal "impact" money available to the Hoke system, but that since the Carter Administration has "cut that out," the board must now look to the county to make up the difference.

(The impact money has been used to pay annual teacher supplements, for one thing.)

The budget will be presented to the county commissioners at their next meeting, Tuesday, April 8.

In personnel actions, the board approved tenure status for the following persons for the new term: Linwood Huffman, Faye Davis, Phyllis Fahrenbruck, Naomi John-

son, Helen E. Smith, Kimberly Williamson, Beverly Bowden, Susan Blackman, Nancy Martin, Jane H. Johnson, Malinda Leggett, Patricia Livingston, Faye Best, Pamela P. Wright, Pam Ward, Diane Monroe, Mary A. Teal, Gwendolyn Reeves, Judy Taylor, Gail Conoly, Leo Salzer, Stephen Chason, Cynthia McNeill, Joyce Edwards, and Brenda Edwards.

Employees added and/or approved were Willie Ray as janitor at J.W. Turlington; Gwendolyn McIntyre and Ardella Smith as aides in the exceptional children program at Upchurch; Brenda A. McPhatter as an aide in the

vocationally disadvantaged program at Hoke High; and Rebecca Tillman as secretary - bookkeeper at Hoke High.

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