

The News - Journal

The Hoke County News - Established 1928

The Hoke County Journal - Established 1905

VOLUME LXXII NUMBER 47

RAFFORD, HOKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

\$8 PER YEAR

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1981

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

As I write this on Monday afternoon it is raining in Raeford. The forecast is for it to be cold tonight, down to the low 20s. So I would guess we won't get much rain this time.

The forest fires over the weekend are good indications of how much we need the rain. Of course any farmer will tell you immediately that things are really bad for the planting of crops. So maybe it will rain for a week when it does come; let's hope that it will.

Mrs. Floyd McNeill was in the office today and asked me to write something about the Hoke Music Booster membership Drive. The drive is now going on and will end April 7th with a combined concert with Upchurch and Hoke High.

The memberships are as follows: Students - \$3.00, Adult Individual, \$5.00 and Family, \$15.00

There is a contest among the students, so be sure and designate the group or groups you wish to support when you purchase your membership. All contributions are tax deductible, and will be appreciated by the musicians, the instructors and the Music Booster Club.

So give to this worthy cause.

Don't forget that the Democratic precinct meetings will be held on Thursday, March 26 at 8:00 p.m. at the polling places.

There must be 10 registered voters at a precinct meeting to make it official. This is the grass roots part of the party and it is where you express how you want the leaders to perform.

So be sure to attend and remind others to do the same.

Something that upsets this writer is to hear someone in an official capacity say that we shouldn't worry about the costs in a public office or what someone's salary is because the city or county isn't paying for them.

Any worker that is on the public payroll is being paid with taxpayers' money and it doesn't make any difference what pot it is coming out of at that time. The taxes paid by the people of Hoke County to the state and federal government are tremendous and what the county receives from the taxpayers would be just a drop in the bucket.

Also, any taxpayer is entitled to know what is being done with his or her money and that includes what public employees make. If you don't want taxpayers to know, then you must not work for them.

I seldom care what people make, but when people come by the office and inquire what certain projects cost or did their change of personnel save money or cost more money, then it is the newspaper's job to inform the public. And they have a right to know. We just have a job to do, the same as other people and we try to do it.

Sometimes what you write or say will give away your age. I have never been one to care if people

(See AROUND TOWN, page 11)

United Way Drive Continuing

The 1981 Hoke County United Way is continuing with volunteers trying to raise a total of at least \$19,850, the campaign's goal.

The drive, headed by chairman John Leandro, started March 1.

The Boy and Girl Scouts, American Red Cross, White Cane (the Lions Club program to help the sight-handicapped), senior citizens, the developmentally disabled, the Home Health Agency, and the Rescue Squad will benefit from the money raised in the campaign.

The money will help pay for operating their programs through next year.

Administrator Refers To Threatened Closing

McCain Hospital Seen Still Needed

McCain Hospital is on Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr.'s list for possible closing in the next two years by General Assembly action for state economic reasons. The governor submitted March 9 to the chairmen of the State House and Senate appropriations committees a list of programs that could be eliminated or reduced to some extent in the next two years.

McCain Hospital Administrator John Watson said in an interview Thursday, however, that the hospital, which treats people stricken with tuberculosis and other lung disorders, is needed now as much as it ever was. The hospital was opened in 1908 as Montrose Sanitarium, the first state TB hospital and the third to open in the United States. The sanitarium stood in the Montrose community east of McCain.

Phasing out McCain Hospital was recommended February 17 by the fiscal research staff of the General Assembly to the joint base budget subcommittee on human resources.

Replying to questions asked by the reporter for *The News-Journal*, Watson also said figures quoted in a news report published March 10 regarding the governor's list were not correct.

Hoke County officials and community leaders, however, are planning to try to get the General Assembly to keep the hospital open.

State Rep. James Craven of Moore, obtained information early this month about McCain from Watson, who said he gave it to

Craven on Craven's request. Craven was quoted in last week's edition of the weekly Southern Pines newspaper, *The Pilot*, as saying he would withhold judgment for the time being on the proposal to close McCain. The report added Craven said additional information is being sought on the McCain situation and that he will

make a decision after these data are available.

Craven also was quoted as insisting that when a decision is made on McCain Hospital and Samarkand Manor, which is in Moore County, that it will be based on economics rather than political situations. Samarkand, a state correctional school for

juveniles who have violated laws, is on Hunt's list for consideration for either closing or for conversion into a regular state correctional unit.

The Pilot quoted Craven as saying the closing of Samarkand as a youth training school makes neither political nor economic sense.

Watson, replying to the reporter's questions Thursday, said that "today", the day of the interview, the hospital had 99 patients; of these 60 to 65 were tubercular and the rest were being treated for other kinds of lung ailments. He said that besides TB, the hospital treats patients suffering from emphysema, bronchitis, asthma and "all sorts of" other lung conditions.

Watson said an average of 90 to 100 patients are admitted to McCain Hospital each month, and about the same number are discharged each month. Of the number admitted, he said, two of every three are sent for treatment of TB and the other for a non-TB lung disease.

The March 10 news report says McCain Hospital "serves 30 to 40 patients with TB and other chest maladies". Watson said these figures are incorrect and apparently were drawn from the report of numbers of discharges of patients from the hospital which the hospital files periodically with the state.

Meanwhile, word received from the State Tuberculosis Office in Raleigh by the hospital administration was that an expected phaseout reported earlier would not be put into effect at least for the time being. Watson confirmed this information Friday morning in reply to a question asked by a reporter concerning a recently issued "directive". The expected phaseout would eliminate some, possibly half, the hospital's 100 beds, he indicated.

Watson said that now "we are sitting and waiting to see what is going to happen".

In the Thursday interview, he said the threatened closing of the hospital worries him for these reasons. "We feel it will be hard on the patients," he said in starting his comment. Some community hospitals, he said, are not suited to treat tuberculosis. There is still a lot of TB in the state, Watson said later in the interview.

Patients are sent to McCain by other hospitals after finding the problems they cannot handle; and by doctors and local public health departments, McCain is the only state hospital left in North Carolina treating lung disorders exclusively. The only other such hospital in the state is the federal Veterans Administration facility at Oteen near Asheville, but this hospital admits only veterans of the armed forces.

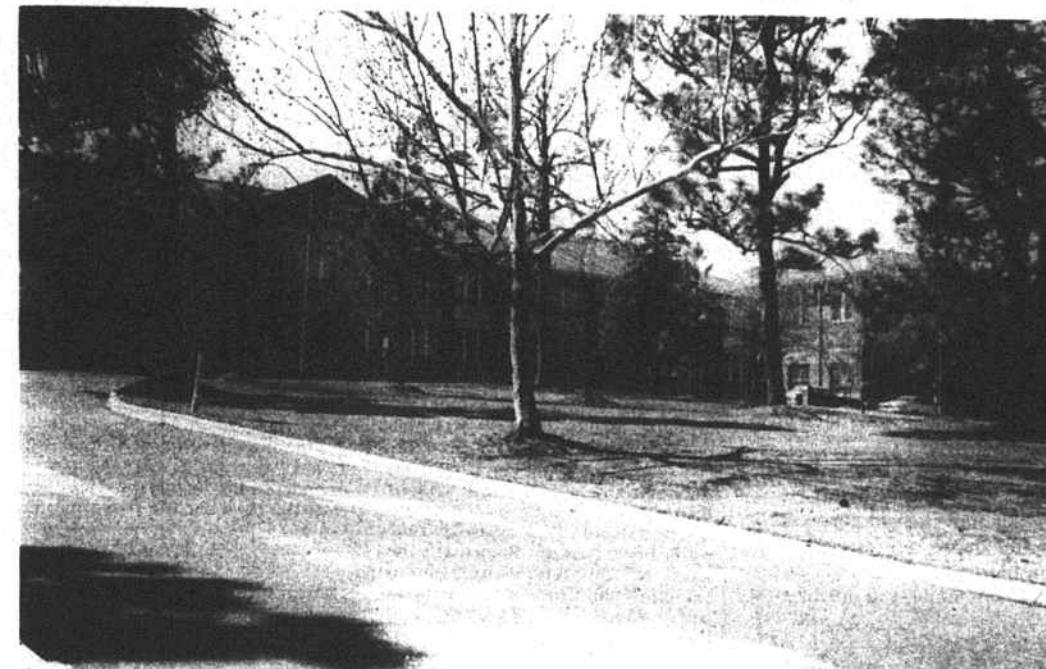
Watson's other primary worry caused by the threat of closing is the hospital's employees will be thrown out of work. He said the hospital now has 248 people on the staff. Most of these live in Hoke and Moore counties and the others in Cumberland, Scotland, Robeson and Richmond counties. (The hospital has 11 other positions not filled.)

He said the hospital's closing, in eliminating the jobs, would eliminate a payroll of over \$3.5 million a year. Of this, he said, over \$1 million is drawn by the employees who live in Hoke.

TB patients stay longer at the hospital than the patients with other lung troubles, he said, but thanks to the TB drug now available, not nearly as long as the TB sufferer had to in the past.

The March 10 news report puts

(See McCAIN HOSPITAL, page 11)



Part of McCain Hospital and its grounds, looking at the front. [Staff photo.]

At Raeford Airport

Pilot Killed, Passenger Hurt In Crash

An Army officer was killed and a passenger injured when a single-engine plane crashed about 12:15 p.m. Sunday at Raeford Airport shortly after a group of skydivers had parachuted from the plane, a witness said.

The officer was identified as Capt. William R. (Rick) Thacker, 28, of Belfry, Ky., executive officer of Company 'A', Second Aviation Battalion, of the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg.

The passenger was Bobby Over-

by of Greensboro, a civilian skydiver who jumps and also serves as a skydiving instructor at the airport on weekends.

The identifications were given Monday by the officer's uncle, Gene Paul Thacker, a fixed-base

operator at the airport, who lives at the edge of the airport. Thacker said Overby suffered fractures of an arm and a leg and was admitted to Moore Memorial Hospital at Pinehurst.

He said the plane, owned by Raeford Aviation, was returning to the airport after the parachutists had jumped, when the accident happened.

He said the Federal Aviation Administration was investigating and that the cause of the crash had not been determined officially.

The plane crashed in woods about 50 yards from the Farmer's Air Strip, which is west of the airport.

The plane's engine reportedly sputtered, then stopped shortly before the craft crashed.

The Hoke County Rescue Squad arrived at the site of the accident soon after the craft crashed.

Capt. Thacker lived in a mobile home at the edge of the airport. He had served in the Army seven years and had been with the aviation company a year, reporting for duty after returning from Korea following 13 months service there.

The officer also had served with the 101st Airborne Division at Ft. Campbell, Ky. Capt. Thacker received his officer's commission on graduating from Eastern Kentucky University. He had gone through training in the university's Army Reserve Officers Training Corps.

A qualified Army paratrooper

(See PILOT KILLED, page 11)



Wreckage of the plane after Sunday's crash that killed the pilot and injured a passenger. [Hoke County Rescue Squad photo.]

In Separate Hoke Fires

Man Found Dead; Greenhouse Burns

Weekend grass, brush and woods fires scattered throughout Hoke County left a man dead and a greenhouse destroyed, in burning an undetermined amount of acreage of brush and trees.

Sheriff David Barrington reported one of the fires spread through woods off Saunders Street Extension behind Tucker's Grocery Friday night from the victim's burning body.

He said he suspects the body is that of Paul Wall, Jr., but positive identification has not yet been made by the state medical examiner's office, which was awaiting

dental records. The sheriff said Wall was reported missing the day of the fire and has not been seen since.

He added that a can which had contained flammable liquid was found about six feet from the body, and the investigation indicated the victim's death was self-inflicted.

He said the body, lying face up, was found by firemen after they were summoned to extinguish the fire.

Fire of undetermined cause

(See BURNING, page 10)



Woods' floor are still smoldering late Friday afternoon from the fire that spread from a burning greenhouse about 50 yards east. The woods are behind a mobile home park on N.C. 211 about four miles west of Raeford. [Staff photo.]