

Commented At Raleigh Meeting Monday

DHR Man Found McCain Data Wrong

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The weather forecasters missed the weather for Sunday and it kept me off the golf course. It was predicted that the temperature would get up to 60 degrees for Sunday, but according to my thermometer it didn't even touch 50 degrees.

The rains came during the night Sunday and rained up until about noon Monday. Hoke County's weatherman hasn't been in the office during the day (Monday) so I can't say how much it has rained as this is being written. Of course every little bit helps, but we need more rain.

Now if the temperature will get up to normal, then we will have to be satisfied.

It was good to see Mary Archie McNeill up and around again. She was by the office on Monday morning and left me an article for this column. We offered her some fatherly advice about not getting out too soon in the cold damp weather. As always, she was very gracious in her reply to me.

The article she left is as follows: "Art work of students from all Hoke County Schools is displayed in Fayetteville's Cross Creek Mall this week through Saturday night at 6 o'clock. Featured in the Cross Creek Mall Student Art Show is art from Fayetteville City and Cumberland and Hoke County Schools.

"Everyone is invited and encouraged to go over to the Mall this week to view the creative work of our fine student artists. Hoke County Schools art instructors are Miss Teresa Marian, Mrs. Eloise Carter, Miss Beth Fox and Mrs. Donna Bullock."

She called later in the day and said that the Hoke County display was in front of Howard and Whitaker.

The NCAA basketball tournament is winding down to the end of the line. Saturday there will be two games and the final game will be played Monday night. Two of the remaining four teams are from the ACC and this year they have upheld the reputation of the conference.

It seems that everyone that comes into the office these days asks if I am as happy as I look. My answer is nearly always "Heavenly and the sky is blue." Even if the Tar Heels get defeated in the finals, it will still have been a wonderful season for the team and for me.

I can't at this time get Jake Austin to tell me if he is going to Philadelphia. All he will say is, "I don't have a ticket in my pocket." Would anyone like to wager about Jake going? I believe even Jimmy the Greek would give you odds!

So get the TV sets ready for the big weekend.

An occasion that is looked forward to by many men in Hoke County is the annual Rabbit Supper given by Clayton Buoyer at his pond. The menu consists of rabbit, (See AROUND TOWN, Page 11)



Historic marker tells of McCain Hospital's founding. It stands at the edge of the front of the hospital's grounds. [Staff photo.]

In Hoke County

Rain Aids Crops, Cuts Fire Danger

The rain that fell Sunday night through Monday morning cut the danger of forest fires to the point where State Forest H.J. (Bo) Green at noon Monday lifted the statewide burning ban.

The rain didn't fill the ponds much but "is going to do some good" to crops; has helped corn and tobacco, County Agricultural Extension Chairman Wendell Young said Tuesday morning, and would be "very helpful" for the planting season.

Robert Gatlin, Hoke County observer for the National Weather Service, said Tuesday rainfall during the two days totaled eight-tenths of an inch but there was no runoff, since it fell slowly, so "we got it all." He said half an inch had fallen by early Monday morning, (shortly after daylight), and seven-tenths inch by 9 a.m. The other tenth fell by 11, when the rain stopped. The rain was accompanied by cold weather. The temper-

atures in this area ranged from a low of about 37 to a high of 45 Sunday and Monday.

Hoke County Ranger Robert Jones of the State Forestry Service said Tuesday also, replying to a reporter's question, that "we're wet," referring to the county's woods and fields. He said fires during the past two months of drought before the rain fell early this week burned several hundred acres of brush and woods. Jones reported the lifting of the burning ban.

Some fires had been set accidentally, others were runaways from trash burnings, others had been set illegally for other reasons, and others resulted from undetermined causes, according to reports accumulated from Hoke fire departments.

Only corn and tobacco, among the commercial farm crops, and spring gardens have been planted

A member of State Human Resources Department secretary's staff said at a meeting in Raleigh Monday of Hoke County people that he realized later that information he obtained about McCain Hospital was erroneous but he did not explain why he failed to correct it.

The member of the secretary's staff who made the statement is James Woodall.

At the same meeting, Dr. Sarah Morrow, DHR secretary, replying to questions put by Raeford - Hoke County Chamber of Commerce Manager Earl Fowler, said she did not accept a task force majority report of several years ago recommending McCain be kept open, because the majority had become "too emotionally involved" to make a rational decision.

Woodall's information was given to a state base budget subcommit-

tee. Closing of the hospital, which specialized in the treatment of tuberculosis and other lung diseases, has been proposed on the basis of information the subcommittee was given.

Fowler's questioning about the task force report came after Morrow said, "I'm not hell bent and determined to close McCain Hospital." Fowler said Tuesday that nobody had accused her of being "hell bent" on closing McCain.

Fowler, representing the chamber of commerce, presented at the meeting statistics he had gathered for the chamber about the hospital and which he told a reporter Tuesday were true.

Attending the Raleigh meeting with Fowler were John Balfour, chairman of the Board of Hoke County Commissioners; Hoke County Manager James Martin; and Mrs. Betsy Ann (Ken) Mc-

Neill, a member of the McCain Advisory Board set up several months ago by Morrow (but which has never met formally); who also is a retired employee of the hospital with 30 years' service.

State Sens. Sam Noble, whose district includes Hoke; State Sen. Robert Jordan of Mt. Gilead; and Dr. Hugh Tilson, director of the State Division of Health Services.

Fowler on Tuesday provided *The News-Journal* the report of the Monday meeting. Noble also informed the newspaper that he was trying to have the pending action of the Legislature on McCain confined to reducing the number of the hospital's beds to 100 from 150.

It was Noble who had arranged the meeting of the Hoke County people with Morrow.

Fowler said the purpose of the group's going to Raleigh was "to make the true facts (about the hospital) known to those who needed to know them."

The hospital, established in 1908 to treat tuberculosis and other lung diseases, is the only one of the three like it remaining open in the state. The other, at Black Mountain and Wilson, were closed by General Assembly action following a study by the task force, which Morrow said in replying to one of Fowler's questions, she had "hand-picked."

Regarding her ignoring the majority report on McCain, Fowler quoted her as saying the majority had listened to former McCain patients and public input.

Fowler said that she agreed to furnish him a list of the task force members' names but that when they went to her office for it, it could not be found. She advised him, however, a copy would be mailed to him in the next few days.

When she made her statement about not being "hell bent" on closing the hospital, Fowler said he told her that, "up to that point, I thought you were."

Figures published this month about the hospital in reference to the proposed closing have been termed erroneous also by McCain Hospital Administrator John Watson.

Tilson indicated a lot of expertise was used by Morrow and her office in determining whether McCain would stay open or be closed, Fowler said. Then he asked Tilson, "Are you referring to the task force formed several years ago to evaluate McCain and others (like it)," and, he said, Tilson replied, "Yes." Fowler said he then asked Morrow how the task force had originated and that she answered, "it has been done through the secretary's (DHR) office."

After that, replying to another Fowler question, she said she had chosen the people for the task force.

Fowler said Tuesday that the people are entitled to know the truth about McCain and that "we intend to see that they get it." He also said, "All elected officials in the city and the county are concerned and are on top of this."

He also said he wanted to thank Noble for making the arrangements and for his interest in the matter, and Jordan.

Following is the information Fowler gathered about the hospital. The erroneous report made to the budget subcommittee says the

so far, Young said. He said the cold weather had kept down corn but the recent rain and subsequent warm weather should help the crops.

Young said tobacco plants looked pretty good the latter part of the week to Assistant Extension Farm Agent Bill Northern and him when they inspected them.

Statewide Petition, Hoke Statement

'Concerned Citizens,' NAACP Back McCain

A petition and statement calling for continuing McCain Hospital for treatment of tuberculosis and other lung diseases in service were given to *The News-Journal* last week.

The petition containing about 5,000 signatures was mailed to State Sen. Sam Noble of the 12th District, composed of Hoke and Robeson counties.

The endorsement was issued by the Hoke County Branch of the NAACP, and is addressed to "To Whom It May Concern." It reads: "We the Hoke County Branch NAACP support keeping McCain Hospital open in Hoke County for the employment and service of all its citizens. We also support petitions that are being circled in Hoke County." It is signed by Jimmy Morrissey, president, and Charlotte Kelly, secretary, of the Hoke County NAACP Branch.

Corrections

The News-Journal of last week contained two errors.

The story about the plane crash (front page); said the craft went down near Farmer's Air Strip. It should have read Johnson's Air Strip.

The strip was built by June Johnson, who has since died, and is now owned and used by members of his family.

The report published on Page 4, Section I, about Raeford dancers in the annual Spring Ballet of the Ann Clark School of Dance, given *The News-Journal*, said the Ballet "is now confined only to Fayetteville students." The Ballet is not confined only to Fayetteville students, *The News-Journal* was informed Thursday.

(See NAACP, Page 11)

(See WRONG, Page 11)

Officer Suspended In Assault Case

Raeford Policeman Earl Tindall, 46, was suspended without pay for two weeks March 13 after he pleaded guilty in Hoke County District Court that day of a charge of simple assault on a man he had arrested, Police Chief Leonard Wiggins reported Thursday.

He said Tindall was charged in a warrant issued March 12 on a complaint made by Matthew Rodney McGregor, 26, of 310 N. Wright St., Raeford.

The warrant charges simple assault and battery on McGregor on March 6. Wiggins said the incident occurred in the Breathalyzer room of the Hoke County Jail. The warrant says Tindall shoved McGregor's head several times against a locker.

Court records show McGregor was arrested by Tindall at 11:55 p.m. March 6 at Grant and Saunders streets and charged with driving under the influence. The record shows McGregor was released from jail March 7 after posting \$500 bond for his appearance in District Court for trial,

set for April 3.

Wiggins said the district attorney's office investigated the complaint and he made an internal investigation.

He said Tindall gave the DA investigator no reason for his acting against McGregor at the jail. Wiggins, replying to the reporter's question, said the details of an internal investigation are confidential, consequently he could not give information gathered.

He said "This is the first time we've ever had a complaint like this on Tindall." He said Tindall has been with the police department since 1973, except for about two months in the Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

Wiggins said he took the action that he took against Tindall "because of the officer he's been and the ability he had displayed. I feel that the action was appropriate."

After Tindall submitted his plea, Judge Joseph E. Dupree ordered Tindall to pay the court costs (\$27), a fine of \$50, and \$50 restitution for McGregor.

FmHA OKs Rent-subsidy Developer

Board Asked To Hear Housing Body Input

The U.S. Farmers Home Administration has approved Brown-Loving Co. of High Point as developer of a 30-unit family residential project in the federal rent-subsidy program. A tentative site on North Fulton Street and U.S. 401 North has been selected.

The Raeford City Council was informed of this Friday afternoon and adopted a motion asking the City Planning Board to hear the Raeford-Hoke County Housing Authority on architectural design, management, and site before making a decision on recommending a zoning variance for establishment of such a project. The council was asked by Buddy Blue, chairman of

the city-county Housing Authority to request this of the Planning Board. The Planning Board makes a recommendation on a zoning matter, but the City Council makes the final decision and is not obligated to approve a board recommendation.

Blue told the council that the units would be privately owned and pay county taxes, if outside the city limits, and both city county taxes after the project area is annexed, as expected. He said the tentative site is property owned by Avery Connell.

Blue also said the developer is "willing to shift the site farther out on U.S. 401."

A federal rent subsidy pays the difference between what a landlord charges and what tenant can afford to pay. Blue explained that a rent-subsidy, privately owned and operated project serves the same clientele (low-income people) as the federal housing and State Indian Housing Authority projects considered for the county.

Blue told the reporter the Brown-Loving project would consist of 22 two-bedroom and eight three-bedroom residences. He said the tentative site for the project covers three to four acres.

The FmHA, which provides low-interest federal loans, approved Brown-Loving by technically

finding the company acceptable as a developer.

Blue told the council that the Raeford-Hoke Housing Authority was asking that the Planning Board get recommendations from the Raeford-Hoke Authority before the board acts on a zoning variance request. "What we intend to do," he said, "is tell the Planning Board what we do not recommend."

Mayor John K. McNeill, Jr., at the opening of Friday's meeting, a special, informed the council that there were three sources of funds for housing in the city and county: the State Indian Housing Authority, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,

and the rent-subsidy program.

The mayor said the Raeford-Hoke Housing Authority would be the vehicle for the application to be made for the HUD funds.

Blue told the reporter later that the deadline for filing the application is April 15. He said the Indian Housing Authority project would contain 100 units and the HUD project a smaller number. An earlier report says the IHA project also would be financed by federal funds.

The Raeford-Hoke Housing Authority is to manage the IHA and HUD public housing projects and will participate with IHA and HUD in approving sites and architectural

designs.

Of the 100 IHA units, 25 would be for elderly single people and couples with no members of their families living with them.

Blue told the council that the FmHA came into the low-income housing picture in Hoke as the result of a request made to HUD by the Region N Council of Governments, but because two to three of the top COG people have left the organization no one in Hoke was notified of this.

Blue also said shortly before the council voted on the motion that options on other possible sites were being taken by other people, whom he did not identify.