

## SBI Probe Of Shooting Continuing

By Sherry Matthews

A State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) probe was continuing this week into a Friday night shooting and fracas that left a local man and two Raeford Police officers injured.

Frank Johnson, senior SBI agent for the Fayetteville Division said that state officials were asked to investigate the case by Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins immediately after the incident occurred.

Steven LeGrande of Raeford was arrested during the incident and charged with three counts of assault on a police officer, one count of communicating threats to a police officer and one count of resisting arrest, a spokesman for the Raeford Police Department said.

The assault charges came after LeGrande allegedly struck Sergeant Jack Martino with a "two-by-four", Johnson said.

According to Johnson, an alleyway struggle started after Martino and patrolman Richard McNeill were dispatched to Jack's Video Village on Main Street where a man was reported to be lying on the sidewalk "passed out."

The man was apparently LeGrande's grandfather.

When the two officers tried to rouse the sleeping man, the younger LeGrande came outside and started verbally harassing the policemen.

As the officers attempted to arrest LeGrande, he "jerked away" ran out into the alley and up a flight of stairs, Johnson said.

Patrolman McNeill was injured during the chase up the stairs, Johnson said.

According to Johnson, Sergeant Martino cornered LeGrande in the alley and was allegedly struck in the ribs with a two-by-four.

During the struggle, the gun Martino had been carrying, dislodged, firing a bullet into LeGrande's shoulder.

Both LeGrande and McNeill were taken to Moore County Hospital for treatment.

McNeill was released Friday night with a sprained ankle, and LeGrande was discharged Saturday morning.

Martino suffered a severely bruised rib cage as well as other visible bruises, a spokesman for the police department said.

According to the police spokesman, LeGrande is out of jail under a \$2,500 secured bond.

Johnson said the investigation into the shooting was continuing and would be turned over to the District Attorney when completed.



### Cleaning contaminated ash

These barrels at an Ashley Heights dump site were loaded last week presumably to be taken to Goldsboro for recycling of metals contained in ashes. Transformer salvage operator Woody Wilson Jr. is cleaning the area after state health officials found toxic lead levels of 300 times what is considered safe.

## Jump School Owner Blasts Airport Committee

By Sherry Matthews

Charges and counter-charges continue to block a peaceful resolution of the use of the Raeford Airport.

The latest salvo was fired by parachute jump school owner Gene Thacker, in a fiery letter to members of the Raeford City Council.

In the letter Thacker blamed all the airport problems on a Blue Ribbon Study Committee that was formed to help the growth of the facility.

Thacker singles out one member of the committee as being the driv-

ing force behind recommendations to have his parachute landing site moved one-half mile east of the Raeford Airport.

Blue Ribbon Study Committee Chairman, Tom Cameron, was tagged a "committee of one" by Thacker.

According to the letter, Thacker claims Cameron's goal was to eliminate jumping at the airport.

Thacker also claims in his letter that the parachute landing zone is 1200 feet from the runway.

However, a 1979 Hoke County aerial photograph of the airport shows that the parachute landing

zone is only 650 feet from the runway, some 550 feet closer than Thacker claims.

Thacker also claims that the Laurinburg-Maxton airport conducts parachuting "as close as 50-200 feet from the active runway without any problem."

A letter from the executive director of the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission also contradicts Thacker's claim.

According to the letter sent by Larry Barnett, the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport allows parachuting activity that takes

## New Dump Site Being Checked

By Warren Johnston

State investigators were expected to begin taking samples Tuesday and Wednesday from a fourth location in Hoke County suspected of containing toxic and cancer-causing compounds, *The News-Journal* has learned.

In addition, samples will also be taken from a site located on state-owned property, which officials believe was used to covertly burn toxic materials.

State officials have been conducting a month-long probe into the dumping sites which are all located in the Ashley Heights and McCain areas of Hoke County.

The fourth location was apparently overlooked earlier by state investigators, but is within 50 yards of a site that was previously found to contain low to mid levels of polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) and lead levels of 600 times what is considered safe.

The new site is believed to be an area where oil from electrical transformers was "intentionally" dumped and where sulfuric acid from dismantled batteries was poured.

Pine trees in the area appear to be dead.

The state owned site, which is being checked, is located in a remote area behind the Sandhills Youth Center.

The state property being sampled shows evidence of burning and contains metal parts which appear to have come from electrical transformers.

Health officials from the state Department of Human Resources

(DHR), working with the Hoke County Health Department, also took water samples Monday from a well which serves more than one dozen families and which is within 100 feet of a battery casing burial site.

Toxic lead levels of 21 times what is considered safe have been found at that burial site.

Earlier health officials had believed that the well was dry and did not serve a nearby mobile home park and other surrounding residences.

However, local officials were told Friday that the well near the battery site was in use, and that some residents were complaining about the taste of the water, Hoke County Health Director Lloyd Horne said.

"They switched wells on us last week," Horne said, adding that the change was apparently made after a pump on another well quit working.

Lead levels in humans above .5 parts per million are believed to contribute to mental retardation, blindness and other health problems.

Although the new site is within view of the other locations tested by the state, officials were unaware of its existence prior to Friday, Horne said.

"We won't know until the testing is completed, but we suspect large quantities of oil were intentionally dumped," he said.

Thus far all of the allegedly contaminated sites have been linked to

(See NEW, Page 2A)



### Clearing away: before and after

Paul Bunyans they're not, but they appear to be getting the job done as they work to cut down this 200 year old tree in front of the Raeford Presbyterian Manse. After sawing and chopping all day Thursday the tree fell. According to Jimmy McPhaul the tree was dead and needed to come down. The deceased tree will be used to warm homes in the coming winter.

## Around Town

by Sam Morris

The weather for the past week has been perfect for all types of outdoor activities. We are not only thinking about sports, but the graduation exercises that have been taking place. It is not good when the high school graduation day has to be moved indoors. Then the only ones that can attend are the holders of tickets. I believe that each senior is given four tickets in case of inclement weather.

Someone did tell me that I shouldn't have obtained the information from Bill Lancaster last week. He wouldn't give me any reason, but he did mention later on something about having a green thumb. Maybe someone can help me figure this out before next week.

The forecast is for warm weather the remainder of the week.

Mrs. R.A. Matheson told me last week that she had read about Carrie Sturgis in my column and that Miss Sturgis was teaching here when she started in 1929. She said that Mrs. T.B. Upchurch said that Miss Sturgis came here in the fall of 1926.

After talking with Mrs. Matheson I have been informed (See AROUND, Page 10A)

## McCain Jobs Assured, State Legislators Say

By Sherry Matthews

Although it has been unanimously approved to turn the McCain tuberculosis sanatorium into a prison hospital, state Legislators feel "certain" that the facility's present employees will have their jobs and benefits protected.

"All the budget leaders have guaranteed that no jobs will be lost," state Rep. Daniel H. DeVane said Monday.

"I feel confident that the employees will be taken care of," DeVane said.

DeVane and other state leaders have been fighting for several months during sessions of the General Assembly to keep McCain as North Carolina's last sanatorium, but last month the joint appropriations base budget committee approved the conversion.

Last week, the joint expansion budget committee unanimously approved funding of \$5 million per year to turn McCain into a prison hospital.

Although DeVane and others are disappointed that the last remaining TB facility is being closed, they are glad that the issue is finally being settled.

"I am glad that we are not going to completely lose the facility," DeVane said.

"I am not happy about losing McCain, but I am satisfied as far as what is being done," DeVane added.

The planned conversion will be a "phase in, phase out" process which should be completed in October, DeVane said.

"We want to do this as smoothly as possible," DeVane added.

The gradual "change over" is apparently not going to upset the employees.

According to DeVane, there have been assurances from the Department of Correction that all McCain employees will be protected.

"They have always been my main concern," DeVane said.

The conversion of McCain hospital, which is adjacent to McCain prison, will begin in July, according to DeVane.

Monies to offset conversion cost will come from a state contingency fund and will be appropriated over a two year period.

According to DeVane, things are finally getting underway.

"I think the people at home are satisfied," DeVane said.

"Everyone may not be happy, but I think they realize this is the next best thing," he added.

"I think everyone is just ready to get it finalized," DeVane said.



## Inside Today

Vass Road, a one time heavily traveled public road now is trampled on by Army tanks, jeeps and helicopters. We take a look at the Raeford-Vass Road, its past and its possible future in this week's B-section of *The News-Journal*.