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Hoke birds unruffled by repelling devices

By Ed Miller

Bird repellers recently placed at the Hoke County Courthouse at a cost of \$700, apparently are not bothering pigeons which roost in the building.

After two weeks of use, the birds seem undaunted by the high frequency devices and are roosting next to the repellers.

According to the manufacturer Bird-X of Chicago, Illinois, the sounders emit ultrasonic waves that birds find "intolerable."

The model of bird repeller ordered by Hoke County is the wrong kind for outside use, a spokesperson for Bird-X said last week in a telephone interview.

That particular model's sound waves dissipate too quickly for outdoor use, said the spokesperson, who would identify herself only as Joyce.

"When I take orders, I always

ask if the application is for indoor or outdoor use," Joyce said.

However, when the order was placed, Hoke County believed the devices were designed to do the job, County Manager James Martin said Tuesday.

"We thought we had good ones," he said.

Martin noted that he was unhappy with the performance of the repellers, but was unsure what action might be taken by the county.

The model ordered by the county is described in a letter from Bird-X Sales Manager Fred Van Wynn as one that revolves 360 and is called, "Ultrason."

Although two other model numbers are given for single direction units, there is not a model number for the units that were put on the courthouse last week. They are only referred to as "Ultrasons."

Observers at the courthouse have noted a box under the front and side entrances rotating with pigeons roosting on both sides.

According to the letter from Wynn, "Now, our improved 360° revolving Ultrasons provide even greater coverage. Birds can't hide from our sound in the round."

"One user, a world-renowned chemical manufacturer, reported that '...within 15 minutes, THERE WASN'T A BIRD LEFT.' We'd like to make that your testimonial too," Wynn says in the sales-pitch letter.

According to Joyce, if the county chooses to return the repellers, they will be given credit for them less 15% for "restocking purposes."

If the county reorders models for outside use, full credit will be given, Joyce said.



I'm still here

Hoke County spent \$700 on bird repellers for the courthouse, but the devices do not seem to bother this pigeon. The spinning repellers placed on the courthouse are supposed to emit a sound that keeps the birds away. They apparently do not work as well

as expected, because the birds are still roosting near the devices, and clean-up men still have to wash the steps of the courthouse every morning. A representative for the company peddling the repellers said that type of repeller is not supposed to work outside.

Courthouse not meeting fed handicapped requirements

The Hoke County Courthouse is being maintained in violation of both federal and state laws which require public buildings to provide equal access for handicapped persons, a local attorney says.

"Few public buildings are as inaccessible to the handicapped as is the present courthouse," Raeford attorney Phil Diehl said in a letter to County Commission Chairman John Balfour which was dated July 19.

Diehl suggested in the letter that

the county bring the facility into compliance with the laws by using a portion of the over \$165,000 which has been earmarked for courthouse renovations.

County officials are aware of the violations and are attempting to work with architects to make improvements, Balfour said Tuesday.

Ramps at the front of the building are in the plans and inquiries are being made into the cost of providing wheelchair lifts.

Earlier estimates pegged the cost

of installing an elevator at \$500,000, Balfour said.

The courthouse compliance matter is on the agenda for the August 6 commission meeting, the chairman added.

Laws were passed over 10 years ago by the Congress and the North Carolina Legislature saying that handicapped persons have rights to every part of public buildings, Diehl says.

An orthopaedically handicapped person cannot get to the cour-

room of the courthouse because it is on the second floor, and there are no elevators, the letter says.

"Such a person finds great difficulty in appearing as a witness in court, a party to a suit, or simply as a spectator, as is one's right as a member of the general public," Diehl says.

The attorney also sites that such a person cannot easily serve on a jury.

The North Carolina census reflects that one of every eight per-

sons are handicapped to some degree, the letter says.

There have been cases when a judge has had to hold court in the lobby of the courthouse or witnesses have had to be carried up the stairs to the courtroom by sheriff's deputies via "arm slings" or over the shoulder, said Diehl, adding that he has seen family members of handicapped persons wrestling wheelchairs up the stairs.

"These measures are dangerous,

risky and traumatic to all involved."

According to the letter, Hoke County has \$100,000 deposited in the bank from courthouse facility fees as well as a \$60,000 grant from the state that can be used for repairs and renovations to the courthouse.

Diehl suggests that the necessary renovations be made in 1984 to bring the courthouse into compliance with the law using some of the money designated for renovations.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather Monday morning made you think of a fall day in October. According to Robert Gatlin, National Weather Service observer, the low Sunday night, July 29, was 63 degrees. This was the lowest recorded temperature since June 13. But we mustn't get used to this weather, because there are many more hot days ahead.

Gatlin also stated that beginning July 14 and through Monday, July 29 it had rained 12 of the 17 days. It has rained over 10 inches during this period and two inches of this came in the past week. This gives a total of 37 inches for the year. He reported no rain for July 29. We need only 13 more inches for the average rainfall for the year. With over five months left in the year, we should go over our average.

I asked Eddie Baker if the rain had damaged the crops very much. He said not too much, just in some of the low land of farms. Eddie did say that he had rather have the heavy rains than a real dry season. So maybe we can expect a good crop year.

The following letter was received last week:

Dear Sam:
You make me hungry talking about butterbeans and peas. They seem to be better in Hoke County than they are in Florida.

No visible records
I was told by my parents they were the first couple married in Hoke County, 1911.

This might not be news. Maybe you could check this out. I think the records were burned. My parents names were Claud Lee Wood and Anabell Gillis.

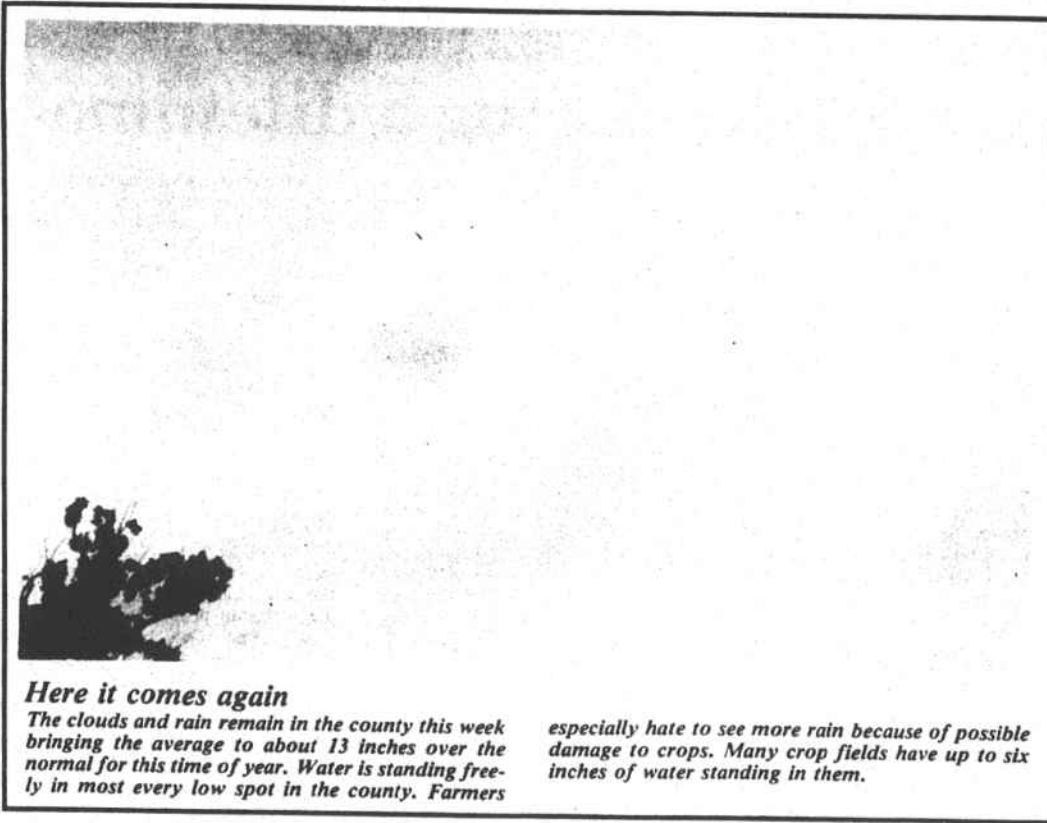
Enjoyed reading about your trip. Wishing you the best also in your golf game.

Give Brown Hendrix my regards.

Yours truly,
Howard Wood
1518 W. Clement Rd.
Box W
Lutz, FL 33549

Thanks Howard for your letter. It is good to hear from old Raeford High School people.

I called Mrs. Ethel Monroe of (See AROUND, page 9)



Here it comes again

The clouds and rain remain in the county this week bringing the average to about 13 inches over the normal for this time of year. Water is standing freely in most every low spot in the county. Farmers

especially hate to see more rain because of possible damage to crops. Many crop fields have up to six inches of water standing in them.

Marijuana found in 'coop,' man charged with growing

By Ed Miller

Local law enforcement officers arrested a Hoke County man last week after marijuana was discovered growing behind his "chicken coop."

Dennis Ronald Hammonds, 27, was released from custody after being arrested in connection with the growing of the plants last Thursday.

A Hoke County Sheriff's deputy and an Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) officer discovered the five plants, sheriff's reports say.

The plants were pulled up, reports say.

In another matter, Willie Jr. Smith is also out of jail pending charges that he took some checks from Irene Patterson and forged them, reports say.

The 19-year-old Hoke County man allegedly cashed a check for \$30 and two checks for \$47.73 at

Luke McNeill's Store, reports say.

The apparent forgeries were discovered after the checks were returned to the store because the signatures on them were inconsistent with ones on file, reports say.

According to the reports, Smith made the checks out to himself.

In an unrelated matter, personnel from Paul's Exxon reported that a large volume of fuel was taken from one of their tanks.

The pumps ran out of fuel unexpectedly last Thursday and caused the station attendant to check the tank, reports say.

The missing fuel was worth about \$516, reports say.

McGill Brothers Logging Company reported that one of its trucks had been broken into.

A \$175 AM-FM radio was taken out of the tractor trailer truck, reports say.

There was also \$150 in damage

done to two speakers within the cab of the truck.

Jimmy McQuage's Store was the victim of an apparent theft last Monday, reports say.

According to reports, the operator of the store sold two men some beer and ice for their cooler, which was apparently brought into the store.

The owner of the store discovered later that a \$50 set of speakers, four cartons of cigarettes valued at \$25.96 and five packs of ham had been taken from the store, reports say.

The total value of the apparently stolen merchandise was \$82.42, say reports.

A video machine was broken into Monday at the local Sky City and \$57 in quarters were taken, Raeford Police reports say.

Police Chief Leonard Wiggins (See GASOLINE, page 9)

Charges dismissed for McCain slaying

By Ed Miller

A Hoke County man, who was accused of the shotgun killing of his wife, was released from custody Friday after a District Court judge found that there was not enough evidence for a trial.

District Court Judge A. Elizabeth Keever found "no probable cause" to proceed with a trial for Larry Donald McCain, who was charged with the May 23 slaying of his estranged wife Sarah Ann McCain, 33.

Although there were several witnesses that could place the truck McCain was supposed to be driving on the scene of the apparent slaying, the state was lacking a witness that actually saw the murder, said Cumberland County Assistant District Attorney William Van Story.

"There is no real physical evidence. No gun was recovered," said Van Story.

There was evidence presented of threats by McCain to his wife. Two witnesses said they had heard him say that "his wife would not live to see the end of the week," Van Story said.

McCain plead not guilty to the charges.

"There was totally insufficient evidence," said Cumberland County Public Defender Paul Herzog, who represented McCain at the hearing.

"If you believe all the witnesses said, it just puts (McCain) at the scene of a crime," Herzog said, adding that just being there was not a crime.

The investigating officers did their duty well, but that it was "just a thin case," Herzog said.

"Harris (Hoke County Deputy Sheriff) did as good a job as he could have with what he had to work with," the public defender said.

McCain, 32, will not go to trial on the charges, Van Story said.

According to reports from the sheriff's department, Mrs. McCain was found dead leaning on a chest of drawers with a fatal shotgun wound in her neck.

Although a shotgun shell was found on the scene, no fingerprints were found on it, said Van Story.

Investigating officers believe that the fatal shot was fired through a bathroom window into the bedroom of the mobile home where Mrs. McCain was living.



The end of an era

The bushes that have been on the corners of the courthouse lawn for decades are going to be replaced. Monday the cedar-type bushes were trimmed to within an inch of their lives and they will be completely gone soon. County extension agent, Willie Featherstone, is currently searching for some healthy, different variety of plants to replace the old bushes with, said County Manager James Martin. When the plants were trimmed back this year, there were so many dead branches that the plants just looked bad, Martin said. "We're trying to improve the looks of that area," Martin said.