The Cherokee Scout

and Clay County Progress
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Water Heater Explosion Wrecks Murphy Home

These pictures were made by Scout photographer Jack Owens the day following the explosion of an electric hot water heater at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul V. Ridenhour, Blumenthal Street in Murphy. The explosion accurred at 10:30 p.m. Saturday, February 17. An electric wall clock blown from the wall in the kitchen was stopped at 10:30.

No one was injured although the house was occupied at the time of the explosion by the Ridenhour children and Mrs. Lily Rogers, a baby sitter. Extensive damage amounting to $3,000 - $4,000 was incurred by the dwelling.

The water heater enclosed in a closet in the combination kitchen-den blew holes in a portion of the ceiling, floor, roof, one outside wall, and the inside wall. The picture window at the front of the house was completely blown out. This window was credited with saving the house from total destruction.

Mr. Ridenhour tells the following story about the night of the explosion. He and his wife attended a function at the First Baptist Church after he cancelled a scheduled trip to Clayton, Georgia. After the church meeting, the Ridenhours went to the home of Rev. and Mrs. W. J. Thompson for coffee. The Ridenhours called home to check on their children and to inform the baby sitter of their whereabouts.

Mrs. Rogers was watching TV in the kitchen-den when the phone rang. After the conversation with the parents, she remembered that another phone was located at the other end of the house. She left the den to make sure the children had not been disturbed by the phone. On her way back to the den, she stopped at the bathroom.

It was at this time that the water heater exploded, completely wrecking one end of the house.

The photo at the top shows a protion of the back of the house. The center photo shows the hole in the roof and a teddy bear picked up by the explosion and lodged in the ceiling. At bottom, cabinets and drawers located in the kitchen were blown open.

Torpedo Bomber Will Cascade Chemical Fire

Atlanta, Ga. -- A World War II Grumman torpedo bomber will cascade chemical fire retardants on potentially dangerous forest fires in the Appalachian Mountains this spring. John B. Spring, Chief of Fire Control for the Southern Region of the U. S. Forest Service, said the Forest Service acquired the aircraft some years ago to test and develop methods of retrading forest fires from the air. Air tanker use has been widespread in the west since 1956. In the South, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida pioneered in the use of air tankers.

According to District Ranger, Bunch A. Nugent, this bomber is available for use in the Cherokee-Clay County area and will be used here if needed. Panther Top Lookout Tower west of Murphy and Joanna Bald north of Andrews are being equipped with radios for direct communication with the bomber. The Fire Boss on the fire may then direct the dropping of retardants.

The Forest Service plane, based at Knoxville Tennessee will attack forest fires in the National Forests of Tennessee, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Park Service is cooperating with the Forest Service in this project. Park Service personnel will service the ground operation at the Knoxville base, while the Forest Service will dispatch and pilot the aircraft.

The air tanker can carry 600 gallons of the retardant, diamonium phosphate which not only retards fire, but is a soil fertilizer. It is harmless to humans, domestic animals, wildlife and fish. A full tank will cover an area about 40 feet wide and 300 feet long. As an initial attack weapon, the tanker can hold a fire down until ground crews can reach and control it. For greatest effect, drops must be made from an altitude of 75 to 100 feet.

Based on past forest fire records, Spring expects the air tanker to be called into service 25 to 30 times during the spring fire season. "If the air drop keeps just one of these fires from spreading to 'blow up' proportions, it will more than save the cost of air operations in terms of recreation, wildlife, water, soil and timer values," said Soring.

DR. AND MRS. W. K. WHITSON

W.K. Whitsons To Celebrate 50th Wedding Anniversary

Andrews -- Dr. and Mrs. W. K. Whitson of Andrews will observe their golden Wedding anniversary Thursday, March 8.

A family dinner will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. N. Whitson f 20 Alabama Ave. in Weaverville on Saturday. Friends are invieted to call during the afternoon for 3 until 5 p.m.

Dr. Whitson was born and raised in Asheville and practiced dentistry there almost 50 years until his retirement. Dr. and Mrs. Whitson moved to Andrews nearly three years ago.

Dr. Whitson married the former Elliott Brunson Summers of Meridian, Miss., March 8, 1912, in Atlanta, Ga.

Joining in the celebration will be all of their children, Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Whitson, Jr. of Oak Ridge, Tenn.; Miss Elizabeth Whitson and the Rev. Edward B. Whitson of Andrews and the hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Richard N. Whitson of Weaverville. Also attending will be their grandchildren, Patricia of Weaverville, Nancy of Oak Ridge and Billy of Andrews.

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Strawberry Plants Are Available

by Jim Stewart
Cherokee County Farm Agent

A fruit which is a favorite of most families in Cherokee County is strawberries. This fruit is one which is excellent for use both fresh and frozen. The demand for local strawberries has not been adequately met. More strawberries can be sold to tourist through roadside stands.

To enable more families to have a plentiful supply of strawberries and have some to market, the Cherokee County Agricultrual Agent's office will handle orders for plants. The variety which will be ordered is the Tennessee Beauty. These plants will cost growers eight dollars per thousand. This cost will include delivery cost to Murphy.

Five thousand, five hundred plants are required to plant one acre spaced 2 feet by four feet. The time is fast approaching to begin preparation for strawberry planting.

All growers receiving plants through the County Agricultural Agent's office will receive information on proper care of strawberries maximum yields.

Since all plants will be to growers at actual cost all orders must be prepaid.

Bolling Springs News

Mr. and Mrs. Perry Abernathy and family attended the birthday dinner of his father who lived to see his 83rd birthday.

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Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd O'Dell and children visited Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Gaddis Sunday afternoon.

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Miss Cleo Mills visited Mrs. Tina Arms Thursday.

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Mr. R. L. Abernathy and Wayne Abernathy was called on the murder trial jury Wednesday at Sylva, N. C.

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Mr. Herbert Gaddis has returned home from the Providence Hospital.

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Mr. Robert McDonald and wife, Hannah of Ebenzer visited his mother, Mrs. Ella McDonald, Tuesday.

Hayesville Deed Transfers

Eddie Lee Lovin to Plato and Willa Mae Salts, 6 acres more or less in Hayesville Township

J. V. and Eunata Chastain to Robert L. Shook, 10 acres more or less in Hayesville Township.

R. E. and Glenn Penland to David Hogsed, 19 acres more or less in Shooting Creek Township.

Smithdale Industries Inc., to City Industrial Company, 67 1/2 acres more or less in Shooting Creek Township; and 1/4 acre more or less in Hayesville Township.

Charlie B. and Oneita Hall to Mary M. Brumby, 10 acres more or less in Brasstown Township.

Richare E. Thomas et als to Arnold F. Heavener et al, 40 acres more or less in Sweetwater Township.

City Industrial Company to A. J. Armstrong Company, Inc., 67 1/2 acres more or less in Shooting Creek Township; and 1/4 acre more or less in Hayesville Township.

Frank and Alice Marr to Glenn W. Ledford and Opalee Ledford 1 1/2 acres more or less in Hayesville Township.

Grain School To Be Held Monday Night

Cherokee citizens who are interested in either the production, storage or marketing of corn will have an opportunity to be brought up to date on latest information on corn. A grain school will be conducted in the Courthouse in Murphy, Monday, March 12, at 7:30 p.m. accordingto Jim Stewart, Cherokee County Farm Agent.

All Cherokee producers, buyers, handlers, feed manufacturers, dealers, livestock and poultry feeders will find this meeting valuable.

The most important topics to be discussed, will be corn outlook and price trends, positive ways to increase corn production and income, corn insect control, better selection and maintenance of corn harvesting equipment.

A. D. Stuart agronomy specialist, Everett Nichols grain Market specialist both of North Carolina State College and James Stewart, Cherokee County Agricultural Agent, will present the technical information for the grain school.

V.H. Bell, Brasstown Postal Clerk, Honored For Service

Victor H. Bell was honored for his forty-one years in the Postal Service at a surprise party given by the patrons of the Brasstown Post Office on Tuesday night, February 27th at the Rockhound Building in Brasstown.

About sixty-five people, representatives from each section of Mr. Bell's fifty-seven mile rural route, gathered to celebrate his retirement. His route served Brasstown, Little Brasstown, Pine Log, Trout Cove, Greasy Creek, Green Cove, part of the Sweetwater section, and Jenkins Branch.

Herman M. Wilson, postmaster at Brasstown, spoke of Mr. Bell's outstanding and accident - free record. Mrs. Georg Bidstrup told of his early days of service to the John C. Campbell Folk School. Mr. Fred O. Scroggs recalled the days when Mr. Bell travelled on horseback over roads impassible by automobile and described his adventures when learning to drive his first Model T.

As a token of appreciation and in anticipation of Mr. Bell's retirement plans for trevel, the people of the community presented him with luggage. Games were played. The refreshment table was covered with a yellow cloth and a centerpiece of yellow daffodils. A cake, baked by Mrs. Betty Myers for the occasion was decorated with forty-one candles and presented to the accompaniment of "For he's a jolly good fellow." Fruit punch, coffee, cookies and cake were enjoyed by all the guests.

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