

Editorial SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL

The Murphy Hospital Authority sent out an imaginative appeal letter last week, complete with a shiny new penny, seeking donations for its program to upgrade Providence Hospital.

The idea was that the penny would catch the eye and the letter would be read before being thrown in the wastebasket. We hope the MHA got its penny's worth in each case. At the present time, in the present situation, we think the upgrading program is the best thing Murphy can do.

The doctors here are overworked and several of them are men who have reached the time of life when they should be able to cut back and slow down. In the finest tradition of small-town physicians, they have served long and well. In matters of birth and death, they have worked daily pitting their knowledge and skill against the ravages of disease and Father Time. They also perform much of the dirty, bloody work of a community, patching up bodies broken by accident or crime. Yet at a time when their thoughts should be turning more to fishing or gardening or travel or grandchildren or a good book in a quiet corner, these older doctors are forced to feel the weight of duty more than ever—they deserve better.

Dr. Helen Wells and Dr. Walter Mauney, both reared in Murphy, perhaps more than anyone feel the full need for more doctors. Both have worked on their own and also with the MHA in efforts to bring doctors here. Their present workload is staggering.

In attempting to bring doctors to Murphy, the hospital authority finds itself in a very large game, with high stakes. The medical journals are full of advertisements by hospitals and communities trying to lure a doctor.

Any prospective doctor visiting Murphy, and there have been several during the past year, is interested in how many patients there will be and what type of place he will be working in. MHA members will assure him that there are plenty of patients. Then he visits Providence Hospital, clean, neat and accredited—also drab and dark.

Dr. Walter Mauney was outspoken and explicit in a hospital authority meeting in October—patients receive good care at Providence, he said, but in physical appearance it leaves much to be desired.

Trying to recruit a doctor has proved useless after he has seen the interior of the hospital. Dr. Mauney says, "He doesn't hear anything else you say or see anything you show him, after he's seen the hospital."

In the November public meeting of the hospital authority, a professional color consultant said the interior of the hospital needs to be painted in brighter, pastel colors to give patients a psychological lift. The dark colors, especially in the smaller rooms, he said make the room "seem to close in on the patient."

The fixing-up program will also mean that the hospital will be in good shape for service until a new facility is built in Murphy, whether it be five or 15 years away. A new hospital will eventually have to be built but it will take years of planning and finding money and in the meantime it will be better to have a hospital which is attractive and serviceable.

The Catholic Sisters of Providence, sent here to labor among us mountaineers, operated at a loss of \$15,000 last year. They lost another \$6,000 in operating expenses this year. They say they will continue to operate in Murphy—if doctors can be found to staff the hospital. But the Sisters can't do it alone—they need the help of the community.

We know it's Christmas and the United Fund just finished its drive and the first of the year, license plates, car insurance, college tuition and income taxes are just around the corner.

Give anyway—dig deep, if you can manage a little off from that last paycheck in December you can count it off as a deduction on this year's income taxes.



Culprits Tracks

The underside of a piece of bark from a stand of beetle-infested trees in the Owl Creek section shows the characteristic winding galleries where the pests tunnel and eat, killing the tree. The white spot at the point of the knife blade is a beetle grub. (Staff Photo)

Town Board Seeks Light At Courthouse

The Town Board has written a letter to a state traffic engineer in Raleigh, requesting a traffic control light at the courthouse intersection.

Town Clerk Charlie Johnson said the letter, addressed to J.O. Litchfield, State Traffic

Two Volunteer For Army Duty

The Clay County draft board on Monday, Dec. 8 sent two registrants to the Knoxville Entrance Station for induction into the U. S. Army.

They were Jerry Madison Buckner and Merl William Matheson, Jr., both volunteers. On the same date, the Clay County board sent 17 for physical examinations: Rex Henry Hall, James Edward Patterson, Phillip J. Moss, James Charles Lowe, Donald William Whitaker, Lowell Conard Martin, Harold Scroggs, Jr., Robert Mull, Sam Edward Ashe, George Hal McClure, Frank Richard Carter, Jr., Andrew Phillip Blankenship, Thomas Monroe Canup, Walter Morris Scroggs, Jr., Tommy Edward Moore, James Marvin McCray and Buddy William Carter.

Dress Plant To Re-Open

By Guy Padgett
Staff Writer

Work will begin this week in the new dress plant on NC-69 near Hayesville.

Mountain City Fashions,

Engineer, requests that the light be co-ordinated with light which will be placed at the square to make for a more orderly traffic flow in the center of town.

Johnson pointed out that the Town Board would like to have the light placed at the courthouse intersection when State Highway Commission crews are in Murphy on another project, putting up new lights at the square.

The new lights at the square, all nine of them, will probably be put into place sometime early in 1970, he said. They were planned several years ago but the town and the SHC engineers differed on the layout of the traffic lanes.

The SHC wanted the Town of Murphy to do away with the angle parking downtown and install parallel parking to allow for three lanes of traffic each way. Johnson said the town fathers, facing the loss of 40 spaces if they abolished the angle parking, refused.

In the final approved plan, the angle parking will remain and there will be two lanes of traffic, each with two separate lights, on each leg of the intersection at the square. The ninth light will be for motorists coming into town on Valley River Avenue and turning left onto Peachtree Street.

Inc., is the name of the new concern which replaces the former Hayesville Manufacturing Co., which discontinued operations here several months ago.

Murray Glassberg, owner of the new plant, says full operation will be under way by about the first of the year, with 100 or more employees at work. Glassberg is the son of the late Abe Glassberg, who was owner of the original dress plant at this location.

The new management has purchased the plant site and building which was built by the Clay Development Corporation, a locally owned corporation which was organized for the purpose of helping attract new industries to Clay County.

Adolph Seplin will be manager of the local plant and says that people wanting employment there should apply at the plant, just south of Four Points.

Cathy Originals was the brand name given products of the former Hayesville Manufacturing Co., but Glassberg says that "Cathy is dead."

The new products will carry a variety of brand names, depending on who they are made for. It is understood that dresses will be made on contract with merchandizing firms who will specify their own brand names for all garments.

Beetles Ready To Feast On Pines

Hungry little beetles, millions of them, about the size of rice grains, will probably eat up a large part of the pine stand in Cherokee County next Spring.

This gloomy prediction was made this week by the N. C. Forest Service county ranger, Harold Hatchett. The beetles have already damaged a great deal of the pine forests, he said, and will be ready to start eating on a grand scale as soon as warm weather returns.

The villain is the Southern pine beetle, now firmly entrenched in the four westernmost counties of the state. At stake in Cherokee County alone, Hatchett notes, is pine timber valued at more than \$15 million.

A similar invasion by the pine beetle in 1957, he said, was stopped cold by pure luck. Cold weather in the zero range will kill some of the beetles, which spend Winter under the bark of the pine trees, but Cherokee County that year got a letter-perfect weather situation.

"The zero weather was preceded by several days of moist, warm weather," Hatchett recalls. "The beetles fed on those days and took the moisture-filled wood into their bodies. Then we had a real cold snap with the temperature going down to zero in a hurry and the moisture in them did it—the water froze and burst the beetles."

Hatchett and alarmed

landowner owners, of course, are hoping for another lucky weather break. In the meantime, however, the forest rangers are urging landowners to cut diseased pine trees and sell them while the lumber is still usable.

If the landowner waits too long, the beetle-infested wood will rot and be worthless to him. Hatchett added that the landowner should cut all trees in a radius of 75 to 100 feet from any diseased tree to make sure he gets out all the beetles. Bark and any debris should be burned to prevent re-infestation.

"They're coming out of the Smoky Mountain National Park," Hatchett said. "They are not controlled there and the park acts as an incubator for this whole area. In Cherokee County they must be spread by the wind because we're finding them on the tops of the ridges and they apparently swept across the county on an east-to-west direction."

The Forest Service is not embarking on any spraying campaign, he said, mainly because there are no funds available. And the cut-and-salvage operation is hampered because so many landowners live in other states and cannot be reached.

"We're getting to all the landowners we can," Hatchett said. "But there will be an explosion next Spring when the warm weather comes. The woodpeckers are having a picnic, eating all the beetles they can, but there are not enough of them. They are a help but we would have to import about a billion woodpeckers to solve the problem."

The beetle, both as a grub and an adult, eats on the inner bark. The life cycle is between 30 and 40 days and in North Carolina as many as five generations are possible during the warmer months.

One pair of beetles in this state may have increased to 65,000 beetles by the end of the season, he pointed out.

Literally millions of them are in the pines in Cherokee County now, their presence marked in many spots by the pine needles turning yellow and brown.

The infestation, Hatchett said, is on the east-west axis and south of this, there are no beetles. Many infested spots can be seen between Murphy and Andrews from the highway, discolored patches surrounded by healthy green trees.

At the present, there are

about 50,000 acres of pines in this county. Their average value is \$307 per acre for the average 15 cords per acre, which can be sold at \$20.50 per cord delivered at the lumber yard.

These figures, Hatchett says, will probably be revised next year by the pine beetle.

Landowners should contact the ranger or the county extension office for additional information, cut out the infested trees they can and hope for cold weather.



Woodpecker Patrol

Cherokee County Forest Ranger Harold Hatchett looks over the marks left by woodpeckers, who cut through the bark to eat the beetles. The birds help, he says, but the county would need "about a billion" to control the beetle invasion. (Staff Photo)

Christmas Closings

Most retail stores in Murphy will close on Christmas Day, which is Thursday, Dec. 25, and also will be closed on Friday.

They will reopen for business on the Saturday after Christmas, according to the merchants association chairman Lena Lovingood.

She added that most Murphy stores will be open until 9 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday of next week but will close at the regular hour on Wednesday, Christmas eve.

Citizens Bank & Trust will be closed on Christmas Day, Friday and Saturday but will open for business on Wednesday, Christmas Eve.

First Union Bank will be

closed on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday but will be open on the regular schedule on the Saturday after Christmas.

The Cherokee County Courthouse will be closed on Wednesday, Christmas Day, Friday and Saturday.

At the Town Hall, the water department will close Wednesday at noon and will be open for business as usual on Friday. The Power Board office will be closed Wednesday, Christmas Day and Friday but will be open for half-a-day's business on Saturday.

Cherokee County schools

will recess for Christmas at the end of the regular day on Friday, Dec. 19 and will reopen on Jan. 5.

The Employment Security Office will be closed on Wednesday, Christmas Day and Friday.

The Murphy Carnegie Library will be closed all of next week for Christmas and will reopen on Dec. 30.

Defy Dynamite

Dam-Building Beavers Flood Cornfield

By Wally Avett
Staff Writer

A tribe of beavers has set up housekeeping on a Cherokee County farm, flooding out compacting operations.

That's right—beavers.

The furry engineers, once almost extinct in North Carolina, are making a comeback and these particular beavers have built six dams on the Townson Farm in the Mission Community, flooding a section of a hugh cornfield.

Wayne Mauney, manager of the Townson Farm, sometimes uses the word "dam" in speaking of his unwelcome tenants but it isn't always in specific reference to the actual barriers which form the small lakes.

"I don't know what I'm going to do about them," he admits. "We'll probably just dynamite their dams out again and pick that corn by hand some morning while the mud is frozen, before they back the water up again."

The six dams he pointed out are all on one stream, built so each one is only two feet or so tall. The water in the biggest, and sixth lake, therefore is several feet above the level of the nearby Hiwassee River but the beavers did not have to build a tall dam equal to the total drop.

The dams are constructed in the night, Mauney said, with small trees gnawed down by the animals along the creek. According to authorities, the beaver's chisel-like front teeth continue to grow throughout his life and if he doesn't keep them worn down with chewing, they will eventually grow so long he cannot eat and will starve.

The Townson Farm beavers also use corn stalks in their dams, which is a neat trick since they apparently like to

eat the corn itself.

Their dams are rather leaky by human standards and they won't win any prizes for appearance but Mauney says they are substantial and apparently the beavers value them quite highly.

"We dynamited all their dams out a few weeks ago on a Saturday, all six of them," he said. "We returned on Monday afternoon and they had been

working at full speed, not just on one or two, but to put back the whole six."

In other states, where beavers are plentiful and trapped for their pelts, the animals live in lodges built of mud and sticks in their lakes, the lodge having an entrance which is underwater. The Townson Farm beavers have not yet built a lodge and Mauney thinks they must be

living under the creek banks.

He has set a number of traps for them but has caught only one, a young animal which weighed about 20 pounds. He says according to their tracks, his particular beaver crew must be composed of two older animals, much larger than the one he caught, and a band of smaller ones.

"I've found a lot of toenails torn off in my traps," Mauney

says hopefully. "Maybe if enough of them get sore feet, they'll leave."

Cherokee County Wildlife Protector J.J. Jeffries reminds would-be beaver trappers that the season on the animal is open only for the month of February and a trapping license is required. Farmers, however, may protect their crops by killing pests with any method short of dynamite or poison.



Engineering Feat Surveyed

Wayne Mauney, left, manager of the Townson Farm, points out part of the beavers' dam to Ephraim Crisp, of the Mission Community. Part of the flooded

cornfield can be seen at the right. The men are standing on the beaver's dam made of sticks, corn stalks and mud.



Penny Packers

Some of the volunteer workers are shown who labored last week to tape 8,000 shiny new pennies to appeal

letters mailed out by the Murphy Hospital Authority, seeking funds for the renovation of Providence Hospital.