



Cap-And-Gown Time

Miss Kathy Green, left, is shown receiving her diploma as 70 Seniors graduated at Hayesville High School Tuesday night. Mrs. Josephine Thurman handed out the diplomas as

Superintendent Hugh Beal was sick. It was a typical scene as Seniors graduated this week also at Murphy and Andrews and schools closed for the summer. (Staff Photo)

Commissioners Work Out \$1.5 Million Plan

Tentative Budget Leaves Tax Rate Unchanged

By Wally Avett
Staff Writer

The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners Monday worked out a county budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 which would keep property taxes at the present level.

And County Accountant Mrs. Barbara Stalcup explained Tuesday there is a chance the county tax rate could even be cut back a penny.

Employees of the Tax Supervisors office are now tallying the tax listings, she says, and in about three weeks will have a total figure on the tax valuation of all property in the county. Last year's total was \$33,700,000 in appraised valuation and the tax rate was \$1.58 per hundred, paid on 60 per cent of appraised value.

"This year if we find that the appraised value of all property in the county increases by a million dollars, we could actually cut the rate back to \$1.57," Mrs. Stalcup says. "And although they're not through yet, they've already found an increase of \$700,000 over last year's figure."

That means, she pointed out, that the tax rate will at least remain the same, unless

the budget is drastically changed by the commissioners.

The tentative budget hashed out Monday will be published in The Scout and also posted on the courthouse bulletin board for examination by county citizens. Anyone who wants to discuss it with the commissioners can appear at the July meeting, at which time the budget will be officially adopted and the 1970-71 tax rate fixed.

The commissioners worked practically all day Monday on the tentative budget, which totals \$1,506,457 as compared to last year's \$1,325,411.

Revenue for the county spending will come in large part from the property tax, which will produce roughly a third of the total, \$547,031 plus tax penalties. TVA also will pay the county \$46,000 in lieu of taxes, to make up for taxes lost on lands covered up by Hiwassee Lake. The Clerk of court's office (\$6,000) and the register of deeds (\$10,000) will also bring in revenue for the budget. The Forest Service is also expected to pay in about \$15,000 as the county's share from timber sales.

And well over \$700,000 will come from state and federal coffers as money for Cherokee County's welfare program, the Social Services department. The welfare program is explained as roughly paid for in the ratio of 10 per cent county, 10 per cent state and 80 per cent federal.

Cherokee County's Social Services Department for the coming fiscal year has a budget of \$926,853. This is almost two-thirds of the total county budget of \$1.5 million, yet the county share of the welfare budget, the money which must come from Cherokee, is only \$135,960. The rest comes to the county as state and federal checks, which are then administered through the county Social Services department. The \$135,960, however, is an increase from the \$110,045 the county paid last year as its share.

One of the largest increases in the total county budget is in the welfare budget, due to the Medicaid program which began this year. It

provides free medical service for needy people on welfare who cannot afford it and it is

jumping from \$72,160 budgeted last year to \$263,350 for next year. State and federal checks, however, will take care of \$226,725 of it.

The other obvious large item in the county budget this time is the money for a new evaluation of all property in the county, required by state law once every eight years. Commissioners estimate the job, which will be bid on by appraisal firms, will cost more than \$35,000.

In working out the budget Monday, the commissioners stuck firmly to a decision they reached several months ago that no county employees would be given raises in pay, although several department heads requested raises.

The General Government budget went up from \$54,430 last year to \$55,201 for fiscal 1970-71, the increases mainly due to costs of elections, auditing the county books and a water line laid recently from the Town of Murphy to the new Levi's plant. Levi's agreed to pay for a six-inch line and the county paid for the difference to make it an eight-inch line, allowing for future development.

The Courthouse and Grounds budget went up slightly, from \$15,650 to \$15,972, the difference attributed to rising cost of fuel required by the courthouse and county jail.

The County Accountant's department budget went down from \$13,111 to \$12,262, the cutback in the money allotted for supplies and equipment.

The Register of Deeds, at \$15,099, was unchanged from the amount budgeted last year.

The County Jail went up from \$13,560 last year to \$18,234. The hike was said to

be due to the increased jail fee now being paid, \$3 per day, as ordered by the last state Legislature.

The Sheriff's department dropped slightly, from \$27,525 last year to \$27,284, commissioners cutting back on the money earmarked for radio repairs.

The Tax Supervisor's office budget was cut back from the \$15,876 of last year to \$14,696. It was explained that \$1,250 had been included in this budget each year to lay back money for the countywide appraisal and this was not done this year.

In the special purposes accounts, the commissioners did agree to raise the public health department from \$32,343 to \$33,489, as Clay County commissioners were contacted by telephone during

the meeting and they had agreed to the raise. The health department is run jointly by Clay, Cherokee and Graham counties.

The Nantahala Regional Library, which is also a three-county organization, had requested last month that the Cherokee commissioners increase their share of the library's budget from \$8,167 to \$12,251. At that time the commissioners said they would raise it if Clay and Graham would agree to and it was thought that the raise would be made.

However, Monday it was learned the Clay Commissioners were not going along with the raise for the library and the Cherokee commissioners held their share of the library budget at \$8,167.

In the School budget, the appropriation for Tri-Tech will remain the same as last year, \$14,800. The remainder of the school budget jumped from \$158,000 to \$175,000. The raise, it was explained, will be needed to pay for repairs to several county school buildings and also for boilers, which are breaking down in several schools at a rapid rate.

For the county's debt service, the tentative budget calls for a payment during fiscal 1970-71 of \$102,155 as compared to the payment last year of \$107,146. Mrs. Stalcup explained that the county now owes \$910,500, the bulk of it for airport and school bonds approved several years ago. The payment in the coming year will reduce the principal by \$65,750, she said, the rest is interest.

Work Begins On Cannery

The groundbreaking was scheduled Wednesday morning for a self-service cannery at the John Campbell Folk School at Brasstown.

Dr. John Ramsay, head of the school, said bulldozing work at the site would probably begin soon. Bergen Moore, chairman of the fund-raising committee, said the cannery should be in operation this season.

The cannery will be housed in a cement block building, measuring 34 by 58 feet. The equipment is being donated by the Ball Corp. and will be

operated similar to a laundromat or supermarket, each canner paying a small fee and then canning his own produce, moving from machine to machine and sealing the food in either glass or tin containers.

Moore's committee estimates that between \$8,000 and \$10,000 will have to be raised locally, in cash, or donations or skilled labor and building materials. A plaque to be placed inside the finished building will list the names of all donors.

Moore, Mayes Behrman of

Brasstown, ASCS head Bass Hyatt and Fred Reeves, the Ball Corp. official in charge of the equipment program, appeared before the county commissioners Monday to ask for money from the county for the cannery, which will serve both Clay and Cherokee counties.

The commissioners told the group to go ahead with the fund-raising drive and come back at the July meeting, when the county budget will be in its final form and the commissioners can see how much the county could provide.

County Ambulance Service Threatened By Unpaid Bills

The Cherokee County Ambulance Service is in a financial bind, due to an increasing number of customers who won't pay their ambulance bills.

DeWitt Sharp of Andrews, who operates the

county-subsidized service, told county commissioners Monday that he has more than \$5,000 out in uncollected bills. Of the total, \$2,000 has been billed and unpaid in the last four months.

Sharp began his ambulance

service in 1968, with a \$10,000 subsidy from the county each year. Commissioners discussed the situation with him Monday and suggested that many ambulance customers may think Sharp's firm is just another department of the

county government.

They suggested that he change the name and Tuesday Sharp announced that the name will be changed, to DeWitt's Emergency Ambulance Service.

The commissioners also suggested that Sharp consult a lawyer and see how non-paying customers can be made to pay their bills. He said most of the \$5,000 is owed by "people who just don't pay their bills," adding that the ambulance service so far has not turned anybody down. "We've handled every call that's come in as best we could, money or not."

John Carringer of Townson Funeral Home and Peyton Ivie of Ivie Funeral Home appeared at the commissioners meeting with Sharp and urged that Sharp be given any help needed to keep him in business. "The private funeral homes can't afford to go back into the ambulance business," Carringer said.

The two funeral directors also said that people need to be reminded to telephone the ambulance service when they need an ambulance, and not the funeral homes. Carringer said in Murphy about 75 per cent of ambulance calls are still made through the funeral homes.

Sharp said he can maintain the ambulance service with the present county subsidy, if the unpaid bills can be collected. He added that if the bills can be collected, he will also be able to add a standby ambulance for Murphy.

He recently purchased two new ambulances at a total cost of more than \$11,000, he said, one for Murphy and one for Andrews.

Gibsons

Convicted

In Tax Case

Roy Gibon and his son Virgil, both of Andrews, were convicted in federal court Monday in Bryson City of filing false income tax returns.

Roy Gibon, 65, was given five years in prison, suspended, put on probation for three years and fined \$4,000 and ordered to pay \$11,966 in back taxes, plus penalties.

Virgil Gibon, 31, drew the same prison sentence, suspended, and was fined \$2,000 and ordered to pay \$5,349 in taxes plus penalties.

The Gibsons were indicted by a federal Grand Jury in Asheville last November, the father charged with filing fraudulent returns in 1962 through 1965, the son charged with false returns in 1964 and 1965.

Racks Stolen;

Reward Offered

Two new paper racks, owned by The Cherokee Scout and valued at more than \$60 apiece were stolen last week.

One was located at the A&P Store in Andrews, the other was taken from the A&P in Murphy. Law enforcement officers are investigating.

The Scout is offering a \$100 reward for information leading to the arrests and convictions of those responsible for the thefts.

Democrats Set

Precinct Meetings

Democrats in Clay and Cherokee, as in all other counties of the state, will hold their precinct meetings on Saturday afternoon at 1 o'clock.

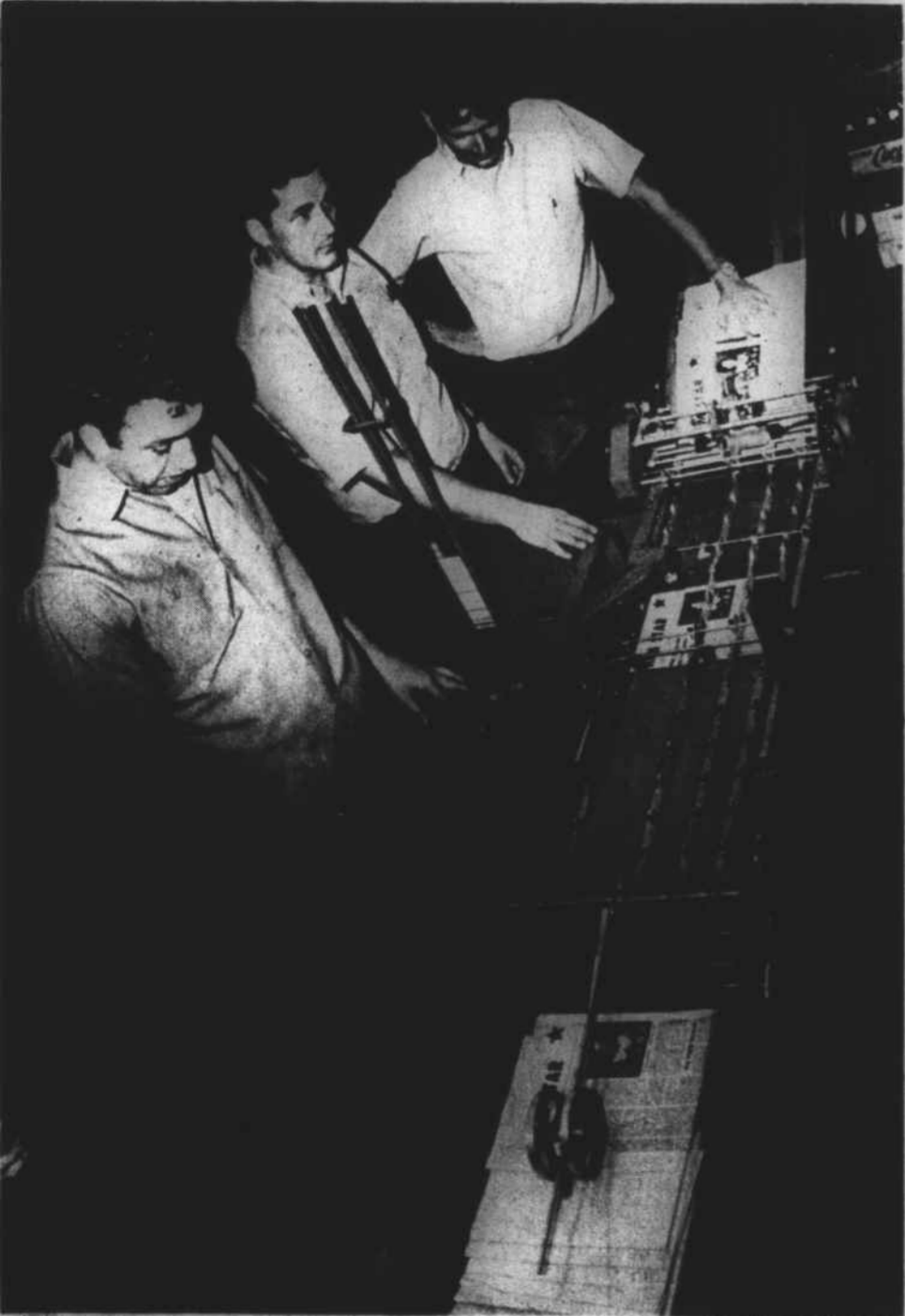
The meetings will be held at the regular voting places in each of the seven precincts in Clay and the 17 in Cherokee County. Precinct officers will be chosen, as well as delegates and alternates to the county conventions, which are set for 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 20.

Galloway Fined

On Liquor Count

Frank Galloway of Hayesville, a former Clay County Justice of the Peace, was fined \$500 in federal court in Bryson City last week on a non-tax-paid liquor charge.

Galloway was arrested at Peachtree on Feb. 20 by Chief Cherokee Deputy Sheriff Glenn Holloway and federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms officer Kolen Flack. The officers found 12 gallons of non-tax-paid liquor in Galloway's car.



Automatic Addressing Installed

The Cherokee Scout this week has installed automatic addressing equipment, capable of imprinting subscribers' addresses on folded papers at the rate of 12,000 per hour.

right, Lonnie Britt, graphic arts pressman; Jimmy Simonds, Scout production manager; and Hugh Carringer, compositor and photographer. (Staff Photo)

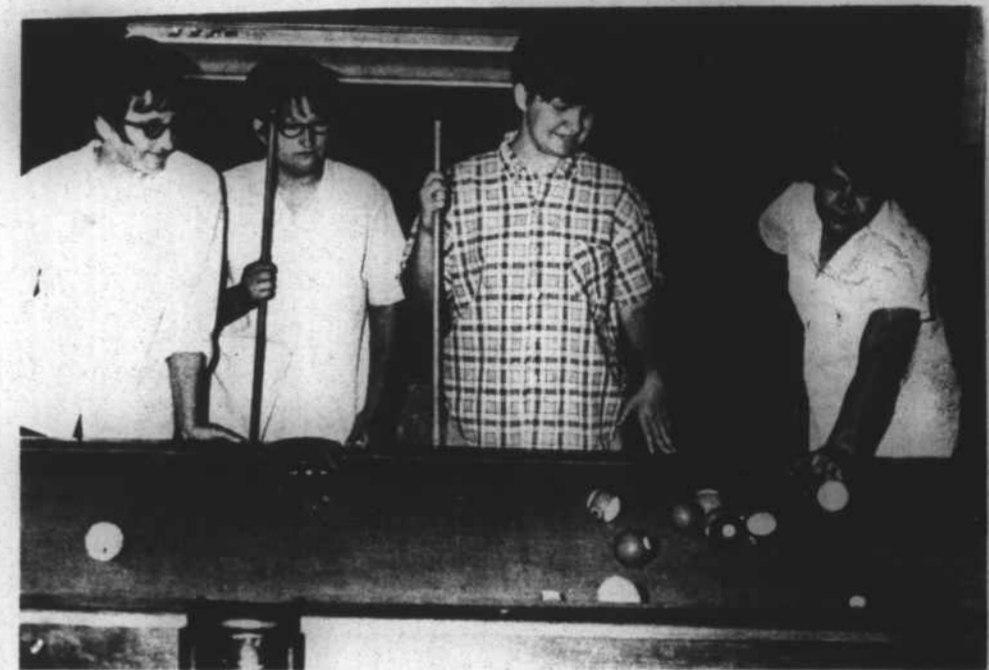
MHS Raises Money

For Danny Forrister

Students and teachers at Murphy High School raised \$438 among themselves during Class Day last Friday, raising the event Danny Forrister Day.

Forrister is the school principal's brother, a 23-year-old Western Carolina University student now served by an artificial kidney machine as he waits for a kidney transplant operation to be arranged.

Student Body President Katherine Cole presented the money to Principal Charles Forrister, who was unaware that the fund-raising effort was being made.



Ladies Night

Mrs. Waldron McAfee, right, is teaching pool to interested members of the fairer sex every Wednesday night. The McAfee poolroom, usually a male domain, is closed that night to men as

the girls come in to learn rotation and eight-ball. "After the girls have learned, we plan to have man and wife teams," Mrs. McAfee says. "Only couples will be eligible to play in particular games."

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Will Speed - son of Mrs. Nancy Speed. Lari Anne Fisher - daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Harold Fisher. Joseph Reavis - Son of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Reavis.