



- Serving --
- ★Black Mountain
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Section A

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Slagle report on tractor sent to Edmiston

by Dan Ward

Mayor Margaret Slagle of Black Mountain has sent to Attorney General Rufus Edmiston a copy of the results of an investigation into the sale of a tractor by the Town of Black Mountain to Gene Ervin, supervisor for Crime Control and Public Safety for the western district. Charges accompanying that evidence were dismissed as too frivolous to prosecute last month by District Attorney Robert Fisher.

In addition to the earlier investigation and evidence, Mrs. Slagle submitted a copy of a letter from former Town Manager Charles D. Lindsay to Gordon stating that he had bought an automobile for himself, through the Black Mountain Police account, from the Department of Transportation. The letter was to then Alderman Gordon Greenwood, Lindsay said.

Mrs. Slagle in her letter asked that a legal opinion be made and that the legal status of the actions of Lindsay and former Mayor Richard B. Stone, who countersigned the town check authorizing the purchase, be made public. She told the news that with her report to Edmiston, she had "washed her hands of the whole matter." The investigation results

indicated that Ervin had arranged to buy a used tractor, at cost, from the Department of Transportation surplus property through the Town of Black Mountain. Section W, Article 12 of the State Purchasing Manual requires that property bought from the Department of Transportation cannot be resold immediately. State law also prohibits selling public property without advertising and accepting competitive bids.

At the time the tractor transaction, which took place in 1973, was revealed by the Nees recently, Lindsay stated that he had arranged similar purchases for others beside Ervin, and saw no harm in it as long as town accounts suffered no deficit. He said he practiced a policy of "swapping checks" to prevent any deficit from occurring.

The letter reads:

"In March 1973 I purchased two 1972 Dodge automobiles from the License and Theft Division through surplus, and charged the amount to the Police Department. On the same date I turned over to the Town of Black Mountain my check for \$2,000, which was the price of each vehicle.

"I know that Surplus has a policy for Towns and Counties not to immediately transfer surplus property therefore, I waited (sic) until May 1973 to



Only two to three feet of usable water remains in the Black Mountain Reservoir. (Dan Ward)

Reservoir almost empty, Asheville hookup likely

by Dan Ward

Since the Town Board passed an ordinance prohibiting washing cars and watering lawns August 24, residents have used about four glasses of water less per day--and will be buying Asheville water soon.

Water Superintendent Al White, who with Ald. John Mundy has been keeping close tabs on inflow and outflow of water at the Black Mountain reservoir, warned that water users must voluntarily cut back at least 30 per cent in their water consumption--or possibly risk not having any water at all.

White said he foresaw little chance of households cutting water use to that extent, making use of Asheville water a certainty. He said that Black Mountain's water pressure is stronger than Asheville's, making it impossible to supplement Black Mountain's water flow simultaneously with the needed 30 per cent from Asheville.

An option, according to Mundy, is to shut off the Black Mountain water supply and rely on Asheville water for a few hours each day to make up

the 17,000 gallons per day deficit in the reservoir.

However, White said that Asheville's pressure is too low to supply the higher altitude households in Black Mountain. If water in the Black Mountain reservoir were to run out entirely, carrying water to those areas in tank trucks, such as happened in Mars Hill last month, would be the only alternative.

Mundy noted that once Black Mountain begins buying water from Asheville, it must continue to do so for at least two to three months in order to restore the reservoir to its proper level. A dry fall could prolong that period.

Mundy estimated that purchasing 50 per cent of its water from Asheville will raise Black Mountain's water bills by 18 per cent. The Town Board suggested at its emergency meeting on the water crisis August 24 that the town may absorb the first month's surcharge, but would have to include it on water bills if a long-term purchasing of water is necessary.

Since the first public announcements of the water shortage were made, residents have cut water

consumption from about 380,000 gallons per day to about 360,000. The average last week was about 350,000 gallons.

The ordinance passed last week, numbered G.S.14-4 and G.S. 160-a-175, outlaws the use of Black Mountain water to wash motor vehicles; operate a car wash; water lawns, shrubs and sidewalks, fill swimming pools, fountains or ponds; or for any other use than domestic reasons--such as drinking, bathing or food preparation.

One of the major water users, Robo Car Wash, ceased operating after the ordinance was passed. It had used about 4,600 gallons per day--the equivalent of 32 families. Considering savings in water made by the closing of the car wash, the rest of the town has cut back only about two tenths of a gallon per household per day--about four glasses of water. Much of those savings may be attributed to the closing of the town pool.

White and Mundy have been monitoring water inflow at the reservoir with a sluice, bucket and stopwatch at each of the creeks that feed it.

After heavy rains last week, it was found that inflow from the streams has increased, but has been more than offset by a reduction in the amount of water pumped into the main reservoir from the lower reservoir. The lower reservoir, which is small, is almost empty. It has been supplying one-third of Black Mountain's water.

Water in the main reservoir has been dropping at a rate of two inches per day. White said that the water level may drop another two to three feet before a whirlpool effect begins near the intake drain. Such a whirlpool would introduce air and excess sediment into the water supply, making it necessary to shut off the intake. At that time, the town would have to rely exclusively on Asheville water.

To combat microorganisms pulled in with extra sediment in recent weeks, about a third more chlorine has been added to the water than normally used.

Escaped murderer caught

The FBI captured an escaped convicted murderer at a construction site near Black Mountain August 29.

Jeremiah Eady, who had escaped from the Zephyr Hills, Florida, Correctional Center last month, was captured in an FBI stakeout at 9:30 a.m. He had been serving two life sentences in Florida for first-degree murder.

An FBI spokesman said that his office had received information a week ago that Eady may be in the Asheville area and seeking employment in construction.

Eady was arrested without incident, the spokesman said. He is being held without bond in Buncombe County jail pending removal by Florida officials.

Max Twitty -- from produce to property

by Dan Ward

Max Twitty is one of the Valley's greatest business success stories.

The fact that he is Black makes his story all the more remarkable.

Twitty was born a farmer's son in Rutherford County. After trying his hand at bus driving and managing another man's produce stand in Winston-Salem, he came to Black Mountain 30 years ago to help his future father-in-law, W. Pink Dogett, operate a stand selling vegetables grown on the Twitty farm in Rutherford County.

Soon the stand, located on Broadway where the flower shop now stands, belonged to Twitty. He was driving each

morning to Asheville farmers market and once a week to Columbia, S.C. to buy fresh fruits and vegetables to supplement what came off the farm.

"I'd be there at 4:30 in the morning when the farmers first got there. They'd open their trucks and say, 'Mr. Twitty, look what I got here,' Twitty said.

Twitty said his uncanny ability to get the freshest and least expensive produce around almost put the Ingles and A&P produce section out of business.

"They got to where they wouldn't even sell produce, he said.

"My philosophy was to serve the people and give them the best," he said.

"They (white politicians, bankers and landowners who would not rent to him) drove

me to buy all that land. They did me a favor,' Twitty said with a smile.

Twitty's business flourished to a point where he could afford to send his three daughters through college and send his wife, Ruth, through graduate school at New York University. In winter months, he would drive a bus and do janitorial work at Carver School.

Most of his business was with white people, including the Montreat, Ridgecrest and Blue Ridge Assembly Conference Centers. Folks would drive out from Asheville to buy his produce.

For every segregationist who gave Twitty a hard time, there were many more who backed him.

"People have bent over backwards for us," said Ruth Twitty. "They've been good to us."

Twitty considers earlier racist encounters to be "water over the dam," and notes that his leaving the produce business came not from discrimination, but competition.

When local grocery stores followed his example of selling produce on Sundays and Holidays, he could no longer compete. He quit selling produce to administer a number of rental properties he had bought through the years. He now owns the apartments that stand on the site of his produce stand--torn down three years ago.

"I still get calls from people wanting produce," he said. "Conference organizers from all over the country will call and say 'Mr. Twitty, I want to place an order.'"



ALD. JOHN MUNDY and Water Superintendent Al White measure the rate water flows into Black Mountain's reservoir. (Dan Ward)

Blue Ridge officials speak "No solution" to wine problem

by Dan Ward

About 20 persons packed into the office of the Black Mountain ABC store at the regular ABC Board meeting August 23 to voice concern over the problems caused by drunks at Lake Tomahawk, highlighted by a stabbing incident last week.

Larry Thompson, director of the Blue Ridge Community Health Center, and Harry Woggon, administrator of the Alcoholism program there, answered questions on what services the center provides and the options open to the public and police in dealing with chronic drunks. The Black Mountain ABC Board submits 7 per cent of its profits to the center.

Woggon suggested that the best way to deal with Lake Tomahawk "Winos" was to initiate a half-way house in Black Mountain--a project he estimated would cost \$35,000 per year.

Woggon also told the audience that the center operates a traveling alcoholism education program to inform interested groups on alcoholism, as well as one to dissuade schoolchildren from alcohol and drug abuse. He said no groups in the Swannanoa Valley have requested an educational visit in at least two years.

Mayor Margaret Slagle requested that representatives of the Blue Ridge Mental Health Center, located in Asheville, visit an ABC meeting to explain what services the town is receiving for its contribution. The center had earlier rejected an attempt by the mayor to have a chronic alcoholic placed in the center.

Woggon explained that persons must be referred to the center through the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center in Black Mountain and must come on a voluntary basis. According to state law, Woggon said, a person may only be institutionalized against his wishes in a state mental hospital, such as Broughton in Morganton, or in jail.

He said the maximum jail term for public drunkenness is usually three days, and commitment to a mental hospital is 10 days--providing too little time to rehabilitate.

Detox may keep a drunk, voluntarily, up to 72 hours.

Most chronic alcoholics that can be categorized as "winos," he said, will not volunteer for long-term rehabilitation programs such as the one incorporated at the First Step Farm, but will take advantage of hospitals and half-way houses where detention is minimal. Although it is unlikely that winos will become rehabilitated at a half-way house, they can be better overseen and counseled, Woggon said. He added that a half-way house is more successful in the community the winos consider their own.

Only 3 to 5 per cent of drinkers are winos, Woggon said. However, they tend to be the greatest social problem. He emphasized that the ABC store was not responsible for public drunks such as those at Lake Tomahawk. Those persons

will usually drink nothing but the cheapest wine, he said.

Woggon said that 20 per cent of the center's cases are from the Swannanoa Valley--an amount he called "average" for the Asheville area.

He said that there are five open cases from Black Mountain and Montreat, and nine from Swannanoa.

Det. Bill Stafford said that the police are very concerned about the problem with drunks at Lake Tomahawk, and called the recent stabbing there the "most serious cutting so far." He said the police spend a great deal of time transporting and checking drunks into Detox, only to find in some cases that the drunks have returned to Black Mountain earlier than the police--because they are not obligated to stay.

Woggon said that many winos, including some Lake Tomahawk regulars, make a circuit from the lake to Detox to jail to other hangouts to an institution--a circuit for which there is no adequate solution or end, until death.



MAX TWITTY'S last produce stand, sketched by Montreat artist Bob Jones.