

BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

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Task Force report

Hospital upgrading recommended

by Dan Ward

A special task force appointed by Secretary of Human Resources Sarah Morrow has recommended that the state's specialty hospitals, including Western North Carolina Specialty Hospital, be revitalized to continue to meet accreditation standards—and that emphasis on the treatment of tuberculosis (TB) be phased out over an extended period.

The recommendations, due to be sent to task force committee members this week before being turned over to Dr. Morrow, were the result of a four-month study by a group including state legislators, doctors and administrators. The News received the recommendations from a source close to the task force.

The task force has recommended that the treatment, prevention and

control of TB be moved as much as possible to community hospitals and homes.

Dr. O.L. Henry, medical director for WNC Hospital, when asked about the recommendation, said it would have little bearing on treatment of TB patients at the hospital. He said the hospital is already geared toward community-based treatment of TB patients, and would continue to treat special cases in the event the recommendations are followed.

While no figures accompany the task force suggestion that the hospitals be upgraded to maintain accreditation, N.C. Rep. Gordon Greenwood, a member of the task force, said an overall figure of \$8 million, and a figure of \$2.3 million for WNC Hospital, had been discussed earlier as the amount needed to do immediate renovating.

An aide to U.S. Rep. Lamar

Gudger, who had earlier issued a newsletter to media throughout Western North Carolina saying that the treatment of all respiratory diseases, not just TB, were recommended to be phased

out by the task force, said the congressman regretted passing on incorrect information, but was "delighted" that it was recommended that the hospitals continue and expand treatment. Gudger

fully supported a recommendation to spend "several million dollars" to maintain accreditation standards at the hospital, the aide said. The task force has also recommended that the

operations of the state's three specialty hospitals be "maintained and expanded as changing health care needs dictate", apparently asking that the facilities remain open indefinitely—regardless of the

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Smith speaks on energy, health

McNeill Smith, Greensboro Democrat campaigning for the U.S. Senate, told 30 persons at the Black Mountain Library February 24 that he will support tobacco price supports, national health insurance, alternative energy development and federal subsidization of education, if elected.

Smith, known for his energy proposals in the N.C. Senate, came out against further building of nuclear power plants in lieu of developing alternative energy sources

such as solar and distilled forest waste.

He also said he would, if elected, propose a type of counter-embargo on Cartel oil requiring oil-producing nations to bid on import contracts. spiralling energy costs are a major cause of inflation, reducing oil imports would bring the country closer to a balanced budget.

Smith also came out in favor of tobacco price supports, saying that penalizing the farmer is not the best way to fight cigarette smoking. He did say he supported continued public education on the hazards of smoking.

Smith also said that he would propose a national health insurance plan that would provide free medical care to pregnant women and children, and would pay the cost of "devastating illnesses" beyond 20 percent of the affected family's income.

Smith also called for federal subsidization of education. He noted that tax money applied to education is much greater per capita in Northern cities than in the Southeast. To offset the difference in taxable property values, federal money should be distributed to areas of the country with poorer facilities, he said.

Smith also came out in favor of removing expensive business lunch and air travel business deductions on income

taxes.

To fight unemployment, he said, the government should initiate an alternative energy exploration and construction program similar in nature to the space program. Smith, who stopped in Black

Mountain while on a campaign trip through the Asheville area, criticized Republican Jesse Helms, saying the senator has failed to provide answers to the country's problems while opposing all proposals offered.



Final hearing held

by Dan Ward

At the last in a series of hearings for a Community Development Grant, requests for sewer, water and street improvements for the Craigmont Community were echoed February 27 at Black Mountain Town Hall.

The hearing, marked by the absence of four Citizen Participation Committee members and Jim Allman, grant authority with the Land of Sky Regional Council, consisted mainly of clarification of the grant process.

One member of the audience of 10 asked whether the Citizen Participation Committee will be obliged to follow the

strongest recommendations in making its grant proposal to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Chairman Jean Standley said that although the committee is supposed to choose the proposal they think is most needed and most likely to be funded, installation of water lines, fire hydrants and sewers in the Craigmont Community will obviously have to be a main consideration.

She added that she was told that, based on income figures for Black Mountain and HUD requirements for funding, the Craigmont Road area and Flat Creek community are the

only areas likely to be in favor of HUD grant-givers.

Ms. Standley noted that Black Mountain should stand in good favor with HUD because it demonstrated that it could utilize money well when it spent \$15,000 in grant money three years ago to pave two streets.

Ald. A.F. Tyson noted that there are other parts of town, including downtown and the Kerlee Heights area, that are in need of water lines and fire hydrants. He recommended that the town apply for general water improvement funds to be spent wherever needed in town, rather than solely in the Craigmont Community.



Black Mountain firemen put out a fire in a moving van on U.S. 70. (Charlie Taylor)

Black Mountain Fire

Black Mountain Fire Chief Sterling Poe was injured while fighting a fire in a Mayflower moving van on U.S. 70 west February 28.

Poe suffered a cut on his mouth requiring five stitches while pulling furniture from the burning trailer. The fire, fought by firemen to have started from faulty wiring to the lights, caused an estimated \$8000 damage. One truck and 23 men responded to the fire.

On February 21, one truck and five men put out a fire caused by a faulty dishwasher motor at the Dickerson residence at 202 Border St. The fire, which caused \$75 damage, was responded to by one truck and five men.

An estimated \$200 damage was done to a Merita Bread truck that caught fire on U.S. 70 west February 24. One truck and 15 men responded. A fire alarm was set off at Highland Farms February 26 when a resident burned his coat. One truck and seven men responded.

A 1975 Fiat owned by Charles Ray was totally destroyed by fire on February 26 on Pleasant Drive. One truck and 13 firemen responded.

Also that day, one truck and five men returned to the moving van that had burned earlier on U.S. 70 to wet down smoldering mattress.

The department has gained and lost firemen. Ricky Carson was approved as full-time fireman at a special meeting on February

13. Carson, who has served as a volunteer fireman in Black Mountain, began paid duties on February 16. Fireman Charles Shook has

offered a resignation, taking effect March 3, to accept a position with the Buncombe County Ambulance Service as a dispatcher.

by Dan Ward

"Sometimes I have to pinch myself to believe it's come this far in so short a time," William Johnston, director of the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center (ARC) in Black Mountain said of the program at the institution.

Many employees at the ARC feared for their jobs, and some quit, in the wake of the firing of previous director, Herb Moore, for protesting a revision in the State Employment Act last July.

"I assured them when I came here that if they were effective, diligent and accepted (an Alcoholic's Anonymous oriented) philosophy, that no friendships or favors could cause them to be fired," Johnston said.

Acceptance and enthusiasm for the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) philosophy has helped restore employee confidence in the institution, Johnston said.

"AA is basically a program where a person is forced to look at himself and see his character defects rather than blaming the whole world for all his problems," Johnston

said. "We try to convince the alcoholic here that his life is unmanageable and by his own will and wits he is a total failure. Then we go to the AA spiritual concept," he said.

Contrary to misgivings by some that the "spiritual concept" is a violation of the separation of church and state, Johnston said that the program requires that the person recognize a power greater than him, not necessarily through a given religion or even through God.

"I know people in AA who would look to a Fifth Avenue bus as a power greater than he—it could run him over," Johnston said.

"The secret seems to be surrendering, rather than a temporary submission."

Another change at the ARC that Johnston said has worked out well is in requiring patients to follow up institutionalization with at least three months of biweekly meetings with their families and those of other alcoholics. Pastors from the community also attend the meetings, held on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Volunteer meetings for alcoholics and their families are held weekly at the United Methodist Church in Black Mountain.

"There is a camaraderie among the patients here that the staff supports. Once they get this dirt out in the open and realize that others have the same problems, they no longer feel like square pegs in round holes," Johnston said.

The program at the ARC, Johnston said, is modeled after a private treatment facility, Fellowship Hall, that was providing excellent treatment for alcoholics at a

cost \$20 per day less than the state.

Johnston said that the effectiveness of the Fellowship Hall program could not be compared, with the state facilities because the private center had the right to reject those who were not serious about giving up drinking, while he state institutions could not.

If the enthusiasm of the patients and staff, as well as the number of persons claiming to stay sober for three months after discharge is any indication, the new program has been very successful, Johnston said.

"I kind of feel like a chosen person," he said. "I'm thrilled to death with the program here."

by Dan Ward

Although Don Pagett, new director of the Juvenile Evaluation Center (JEC) in Swannanoa, hates to see all problems written off as a "communication gap", he indicates that better communication is the key to making the institution reach its potential.

"The main thing is to provide a healthy environment for the staff to exercise their talents," Pagett said.

To do that, he said, staff and residents must feel that there is an air of trust, cooperation and a receptivity to new ideas. That, Pagett said, will come through effective communication.

"I know the outcomes I'm

looking for. Some of those may have already taken place," he said.

Acknowledging that a morale problem has existed at the JEC, Pagett said that he is trying to give more authority and responsibility to staff to remove feelings that policy is determined by him and Raleigh authorities.

"I think it's a straw dog—state level interference," he said.

"I've done my best since I started here to assure the staff that we have a great deal of latitude here in what we do and how we do it. But we need the creative tension from the state level so that we don't get stagnant."

Pagett said that, again, feelings of state-level meddling are usually a product of poor communication.

Sometimes a person in some level of the department hierarchy will reject an idea passed on by a person working at an institution and fail to give a reason why the idea was dropped. The state employee is left with the conclusion that, because he was not given a reason, the motive for rejection was political, Pagett said.

Pagett said he prefers not to dwell on the negative. "I don't want to be problem oriented. I want to get at issues—to say 'what resources do we have to accomplish what we want?'" he said.

Pagett, who came to the JEC as acting director 10 weeks before his appointment as director two weeks ago, praised relations between the JEC and the community. He noted that about 150 volunteers help out at the facility, and the organization-

sponsored Christmas contributions and parties for the children at the JEC were overwhelming.

"What I don't want to see here is what's happened in other institutions. It's the 'we-they syndrome', he said. "We don't want it to become 'We the institution' and 'they the community'. We are part of the community."

"I'm going to have that sign out front that says 'unauthorized persons keep out', or whatever, torn down. I want to encourage the people to come see what we have going here," he said.

When Pagett took the position made vacant when Secretary of Human Resources Sarah Morrow fired Bill Noland for failing to carry out a directive, he listed four goals to the JEC staff- goals he said are long-term and on-going.

The first was to see that the facility is staffed with well-trained, interpersonally competent and cooperative persons.

The second was to see an administration and series of programs that could respond to all needs of the children.

Third was to establish an organization that encourages and utilizes staff expertise in initiating plans.

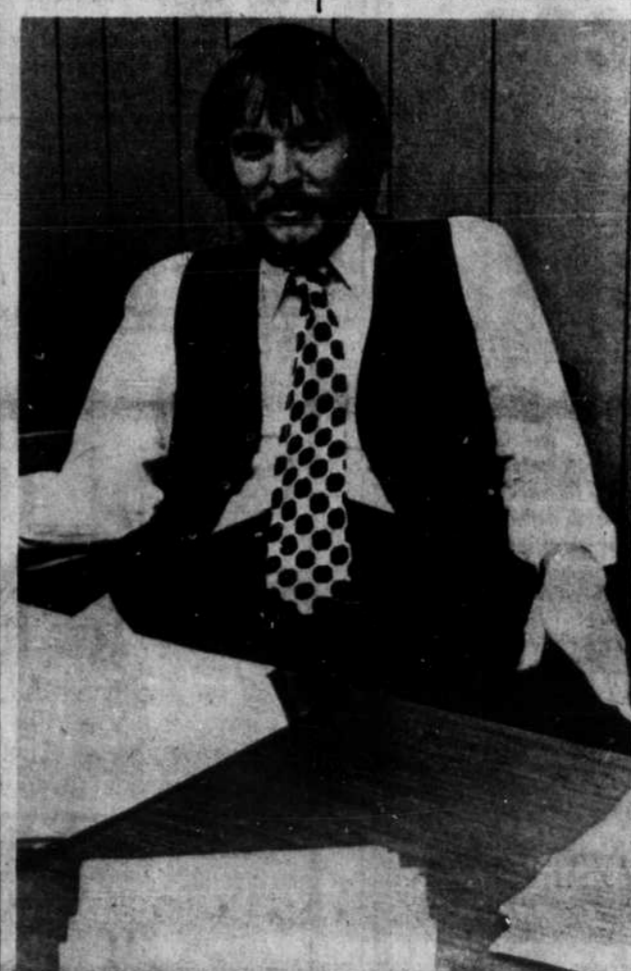
The fourth was to see an organization of persons who fully believe in individualized care of the residents, and are able to apply that belief to practice.

Reaching, or reaching for, those goals will accomplish many things, Pagett said.

Top priority, Pagett told his staff the day he was made director, "is children-what we do to them, for them and with them."



Bill Johnston



Don Pagett

Swannanoa Fire

The Swannanoa Fire Department made six runs last week.

On February 21, a trailer at 90 Wilson Ave. was totally destroyed by a fire. Damage done by the fire was estimated at \$4500. The trailer was owned by Rex Smith, and was rented to Delores Lee. Three trucks and 23 men responded to the fire, which had already engulfed the building before

trucks arrived.

On February 20, two trucks and nine men put out a grass fire on U.S. 70 at Buckeye Cove Road. Brush fires on Northeast Avenue February 25 and at the ball field behind Beacon Manufacturing February 26 were answered by two trucks and 20 men and three trucks and 17 men, respectively.

Two false alarms were called last week.