

# Retired mailman receives praise and thanks

by Cynthia Reimer

R.B. Edwards has left a lot of shoe leather on the streets of Swannanoa.

He served for 20 years there as a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service. When he received his retirement certificate Monday, many of the Swannanoa residents he served came to the ceremony to thank him personally.

After William H. Hoover, Jr., sectional center manager and postmaster, Asheville, presented him with the certificate, Swannanoa Postmaster Roy Blankenship gave him a gift from his co-workers: an inscribed clock.

"That's one you won't have to punch!"

joked another mail carrier.

Neighbors brought him gifts in brown paper bags, and words of thanks:

"You could depend on him. He was on time every day."

"Anybody was sick, he wanted to know about it."

"He always had time to stop and talk to you."

"He'd even feed the dogs!"

Edwards began his post office career at the old Moore General Hospital (now the Juvenile Evaluation Center) where he ran a contact station.

He came to the Swannanoa Post Office in May, 1960 and became a letter

carrier in 1961. In 1979 he received a Special Achievement Award from the postal service.

Carrying the U.S. mail has been more than a way to earn a living for Edwards. "I've just enjoyed it," he said, "meeting the people and carrying the mail. You come in close contact with a lot of people."

"I've always tried to do the other man's mail just like I'd do mine," he added.

It's not only the people on his mail route who miss Edwards since his November retirement. A big friendly dog named Brownie has faithfully

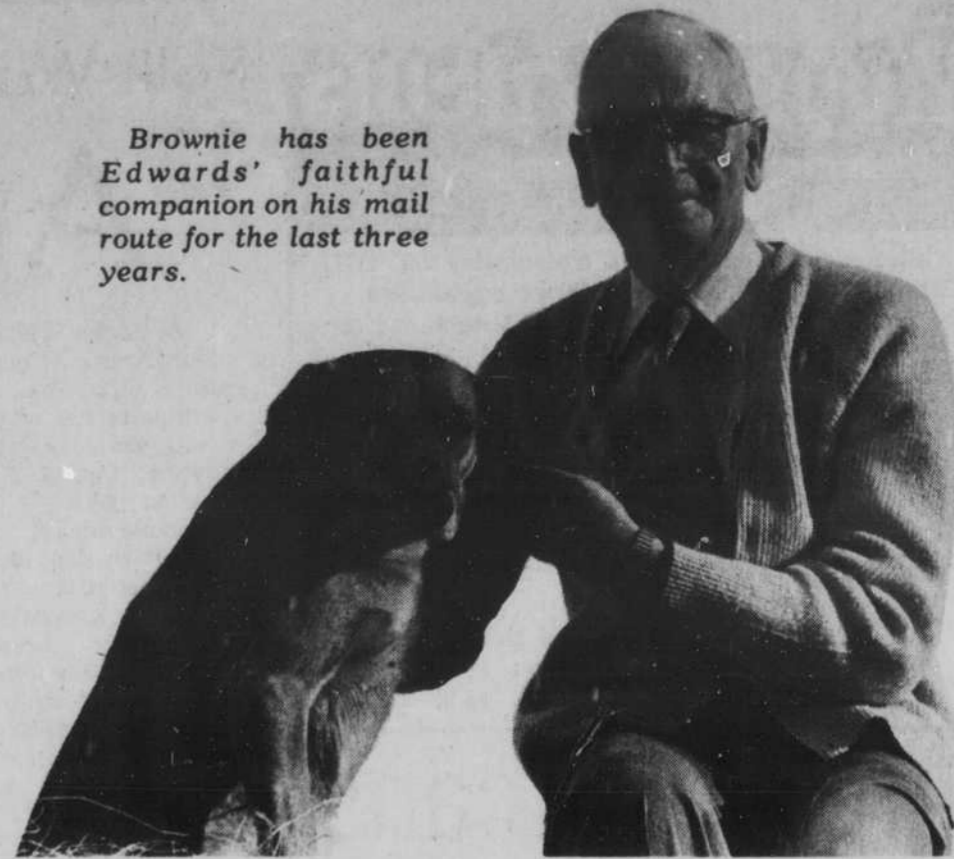
followed Edwards on his rounds for the past three years.

Although Brownie usually follows the new carrier on the route now, while Edwards was receiving his award Monday, Brownie was lying in the sun near the post office.

"I don't know what he's doing here," Edwards said.

Well, maybe Brownie has decided the new carrier knows the route and he is ready to retire, too. If so, Edwards would like to take Brownie home to his flower gardens where he plans to spend a happy retirement.

Brownie has been Edwards' faithful companion on his mail route for the last three years.



Roy Blankenship, Swannanoa postmaster, and William H. Hoover Jr., Asheville postmaster, congratulated R.B. Edwards, retired Swannanoa mail carrier for his 20 years of carrying the mail.

## Swannanoa man surprises burglar

Robert George DeGroot, 18, was arrested Jan. 13 and charged with breaking and entering after a witness saw a man crawling out the window of a house on Buckeye Cove Road in Swannanoa.

Ben Spivey, the son of Belzie Spivey, said he drove by his mother's house about 1:30 p.m. and noticed a vehicle parked in the driveway. He got out to investigate and saw a man climbing out of a window.

Spivey asked the man what he was doing there, a sheriff's deputy said, and the man replied that he was looking for the owner of the garage next door to ask for work.

Spivey noted the license number of a truck the suspect fled in and reported it to the sheriff's department, who stopped the truck about 10 minutes later on U.S. 25-A near Arden.

Nothing was reported stolen in the

incident. DeGroot was charged with breaking and entering with intent to commit larceny and jailed in lieu of \$1000 bond.

DeGroot's last address was Tallahassee, Florida. The sheriff's department said that he has been in this area for about six months.

## Montreat votes YES on water bond referendum

Of the 113 residents who voted in the Montreat water bond referendum last Thursday, 102 were in favor of the issue and 11 were against. The bond will authorize \$650,000 for construction of water tanks and wells, as well as line repair and replacement.

Construction could begin in the fall of this year, Montreat Mayor John Abernethy said.

The \$650,000 is part of a \$1,047,000 plan to make improvements. The rest of the money will come from state and federal grants.

## Case against Mountain Retreat Assoc. dismissed

Montreat Management Council Chairman Charles W. Bell and Mountain Retreat Association President Samuel R. Hope announced that the lawsuits instituted by Dr. Kenneth J. Foreman and the North Carolina Attorney General's Office against the Association and its Trustees of Stock have been dismissed.

Dr. Foreman has given notice of appeal to the North Carolina Court of Appeals. The Association has entered a counter-appeal on the ground that Dr. Foreman's suit should have been dismissed because he was not a stockholder of the Association at the time the matters he complained of first arose.

The suit was instituted by Dr. Foreman in June, 1979, as a stockholder of the Association, after he became a stockholder in January, 1979. The suit challenged the manner in which Trustees of the Association's stock had been elected since 1960, including objections to the 1973 reorganization of the Association undertaken at the request of the 1972 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States.

## Scout banquet honors Vaughn

The Annual Daniel Boone Council Recognition Banquet was held on January 21 to recognize the volunteer leaders who provide the Scouting program for boys in Western North Carolina.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the Silver Beaver Award, an award based on outstanding service to youth in the Council. It is the highest award the Council can bestow on its leaders. Three were selected to receive the award, including Dr. Silas Vaughn of Montreat.

Dr. Vaughn, president of Montreat-Anderson College, has had vast Scouting experience in both the Cape Fear Council in Wilmington, N.C., and in the Daniel Boone Council. Dr. Vaughn presently serves on the Advisory Board and was president in 1975.

Dr. Vaughn has a long history of serving his community. A few of his credits are: board of directors, Swannanoa Valley Medical Center; YMCA, Y-Men president; regional vice-president of Austin College Alumni; United Fund Division Chairman; Community Library Building Fund Division chairman; Chamber of Commerce board of directors; Who's Who in U.S. 1974; and

Board of Trustees Asheville Day School. He presently serves on General Assembly Mission Board, which is the highest governing board in the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Vaughn's concern for his community, his Church and the youth of today have been a constant part of his life.

## Weather Review

Jan. 8--high 43, low 9 degrees; no precipitation.

Jan. 9--high 40, low 18 degrees; no precipitation.

Jan. 10--high 30, low 16 degrees.

Jan. 11--high 30, low 5 degrees; trace of snow.

Jan. 12--high 22, low 4 degrees; trace of snow.

Jan. 13--high 42, low 7 degrees.

Jan. 14--high 52, low 17 degrees.

Jan. 15--high 43, low 32 degrees, trace of ice and snow.

Clingman's Peak: high for the week, 30 degrees; low, -15; 8 inches of snow.

Courtesy of WFGW Radio, Black Mountain.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

Dedicated to the growing Swannanoa Valley

Second class postage paid at Black Mountain, NC 28711 25¢

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## 'Four-four, 10-55 Montreat Road'

by Cynthia Reimer

It is 2:30 a.m. The telephone rings at the police station. A citizen reports a pick-up truck weaving all over Montreat Road. He gives the police dispatcher the truck's Tennessee license number.

Within minutes, the dispatcher has radioed a patrolling officer and dispatched him across town to Montreat Road. While the officer is enroute, the dispatcher relays the information, delivered to her by a computer terminal at the station, that the truck belongs to John Doe who has been arrested nine times for drunk and disorderly conduct in Tennessee and has had his driver's license revoked.

The officer approaches the truck knowing that Doe has a history of violent reactions, armed with information from the dispatcher that may save his life.

"The officers' lifeline" is what Police Chief Sonnie Slagle called the police dispatchers who are on duty 24 hours a day at the Black Mountain Police headquarters.

"You're only as good as your information," said Investigator Jim Dolan, "and we depend on these dispatchers."

The dispatchers use modern equipment that includes a Police Information Network (PIN) computer terminal to provide officers out on the road with vital information.

By typing in a code, a dispatcher can get information from anywhere in the United States, from the FBI in Washington and the SBI in Raleigh. Dispatcher Regina Wilson estimated she and her fellow dispatchers have hundreds of these codes stored in their heads. After the code is typed, an answer appears on a television-like screen, part of it in code and part in everyday English.

Black Mountain got its first police dispatcher, Judy Price, and the PIN terminal at the same time--April of 1978. Prior to that, the Fire Department dispatched officers. Information requests went to the Buncombe County Sheriff's office or to the Highway Patrol. Answers would take many sometimes crucial minutes to come back.

Chief Slagle recalled that only a few years ago an officer had to search through fat, out-of-date books for license tag checks. To make a driver's license check, the officer had to write a letter to Raleigh--and wait for a reply by mail.

Today either of those checks takes a matter of seconds.

Slagle also remembers that before officers carried walkie-talkies, when he was away from his car he had to keep his eye on a red light atop the fire station. When there was an emergency call, the fire department dispatcher turned on the light to bring Slagle back to his car radio.

Not all towns the size of Black Mountain have the sophisticated equipment that the Black Mountain Police Department has. Chief Slagle credits

the Town Council with a continuing interest in efficient law enforcement.

Montreat Police are also dispatched by the Black Mountain Police Department and in return, Montreat officers "back up" Black Mountain police on duty and provide a dispatcher one night a week.

"But, as sophisticated as the equip-

"It's a thankless job," Mary said. "They might thank the officer but not the dispatcher."

Besides sending and receiving 7,000 messages a month on the PIN, making sure the officers have the information they need and get where they should be, dispatchers have a few other duties. Every transmission, every telephone



Judy Price (foreground) and Mary Smith, Black Mountain Police dispatchers: "extension of the officer's arm and his life."

ment is," Dolan said, "it would be of no use without the trained dispatchers."

Regina Wilson was a police officer before coming to Black Mountain in 1979. Besides working as a dispatcher, she works part time as an officer. Ernest Reed was a Black Mountain police officer who also became a dispatcher in 1979. Mary Smith and Judy Price both became dispatchers in 1978.

The women spoke of the job. "The stress gets to you sometimes," Judy said. "It can be eight hours of tragedy on a bad day."

"Anything at night is going to be a crisis," Regina, the night dispatcher, explained. "Burglaries, break-ins, most of them occur at night."

In the long quiet nights she stays alert because she knows she is needed. "You worry about them (the officers)," she said. "You care about them or you wouldn't be here."

call must be logged in detail. Monthly, local facts and figures used for North Carolina crime statistics have to be reported.

They assist the U.S. Forest Service, the Fire Department and ambulance crew. After 5 p.m. the dispatchers answer City Hall phone calls. On holidays and weekends, they arrange for repair of broken water lines and other emergencies.

Once Mary assisted a U.S. Marshall in the escort of a female prisoner.

Dispatchers find food, gas and lodging for stranded transients. They have given shelter when none other is forthcoming to sick kids, kittens, dogs and uninjured accident victims.

In the summer, they are the main source for directions to tourists in the area.

The most commonly asked questions? Direction to Montreat, and "Where can I see Billy Graham."

## Hendon: hostage return marks new beginning

Congressman Bill Hendon issued the following statement on the end of the U.S. hostage crisis:

"Our reports indicate that the hostages are finally on their way home. Like all Americans, I am relieved that this tragic chapter in American history is now behind us. We must do all within our power to ensure that this type of occurrence never happens again.

"In that regard, the congressman from western North Carolina will do his

best to see to it that from this day forward America has the world's best intelligence agency, the world's best rapid deployment force and the will to use them to ensure the protection of American lives anywhere in the world.

"In his Inaugural Address, President Reagan called for 'a new beginning' in America. The safe return of the hostages certainly marks the first step toward that new beginning."