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Inmates escape from county jail

Two inmates escaped from the Nicholas County Jail in the early morning hours Friday by breaking through the jail's back wall. The pair remained at large for only a few hours before being arrested in Paris around 5 a.m. the same morning.

The incident occurred between 2 and 3 a.m. Friday, when Jackie Flora, Route 4, Carlisle, and Johnny Morris, Siner Avenue, Paris, dug through a section of the jail's wall located directly behind the "bull pen" area. The pair apparently used an animal metal bracket to dig through the inside wall and then chipped away at the brick and mortar.

The bracket, said Jailer Charles Lenz, once held a sink to the wall in the jail. However, it was dislodged from the wall during the violent outbreak at the jail June 12, in which the facility's plumbing suffered considerable damage.

Jailer Lenz said Friday that he suspected the prisoners had hidden the bracket since last month's incident, in preparation of the escape attempt. He said that both he and his wife inspected the jail carefully following the plumbing repairs, and that neither saw the metal bracket lying around.

The inmates apparently had little trouble in knocking out the wall, because the whole process took them little more than an hour. Lenz said that he was still awake at 12 a.m. and that at that time he heard nothing unusual going on in the cell area. But by the time City Patrolman Billy Mac Gaunce discovered the break at 3:10 a.m., the inmates had already escaped.

Lenz found a blanket and a towel alongside the hole in the wall, and he surmised that the inmates used them to muffle the sound of their digging. He also said that there were three fans running in the cell area that helped to cover the noise.

"This mortar is old and loose," Lenz said, as he easily crumbled some of the mortar surrounding the escape passage. "It didn't take them long to pick through."

Patrolman Gaunce said that he discovered the opening in the wall as he was making a routine check of the alley behind the jail. He considers the swift spotting of the hole "just lucky." However, he said that he "just missed catching" the inmates as they were escaping.

Gaunce said he felt that if he had been there only moments earlier, he would have caught them before they fled the area. On the other hand, he said that had the escape not been discovered when it was, there would have been nothing to stop all of the other inmates from getting out through the same passage.

Once Gaunce discovered the impropriety, he radioed dispatcher Harry Ducon, and Ducon immediately contacted the state police and law enforcement officers in Bourbon County. Lenz said that local officers had a hunch that the pair would be headed back to Morris' trailer in Paris.

That hunch proved to be correct, as around 5 a.m. Paris Patrolman Steve Barz, assisted by Lt. Melvin Howard, arrested both suspects at Morris' Siner Avenue address. Barz said that neither of the two men offered any resistance, and that both were quickly apprehended.

Also arrested with the pair was one Everett Daley, address unavailable, who was charged with hindering apprehension. Daley allegedly drove the two escapees from Carlisle to Paris, and was found at Morris' trailer when the police arrived.

All three men were taken to the Bourbon County Jail to await a scheduled hearing Tuesday in the Nicholas County Circuit Court. The outcome of that court appearance will be published in the "court news" section of next week's Mercury.

Flora was originally lodged in the local jail on a charge of public intoxication, but received additional jail time as a result of his involvement in the violent eruption at the jail June 12.

Flora, who is also on parole from the state penitentiary at LaGrange for second degree assault, was recently brought before the parole board for several violations. His parole officer, Dempsy Earl, said that Flora had violated the terms of his parole, but that the decision of the parole board was still pending. If the board decides that Flora's infractions are serious enough, he will be sent back to LaGrange.

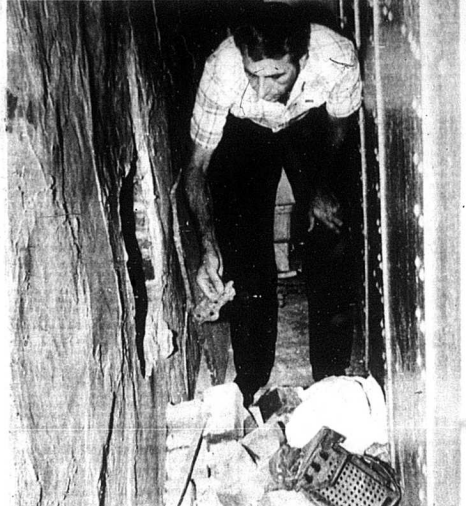
Morris was originally lodged in the jail on a bench warrant issued for his failure to appear for sentencing after a conviction of operating a motor vehicle without a license and with no insurance.

The meeting is set for 7 p.m. at the courthouse, and all concerned citizens with constructive suggestions are urged to attend.

City, county to discuss ambulance possibilities

The Nicholas County Fiscal Court and the Carlisle City Council are set to join hands tonight, July 23, in order to discuss some possible resolutions to the problem the county will face at the end of this year, when ambulance service ceases to be provided by the local funeral homes.

The meeting is set for 7 p.m. at the courthouse, and all concerned citizens with constructive suggestions are urged to attend.



Nicholas County Jailer Charles Lenz discovered a small metal bracket Friday which two inmates used to dig their way through the jail's wall earlier that morning. The inmates escaped, but were apprehended a few hours later in Paris. — Mercury photo.

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CETA comes to an end Judge, Sheriff ask for secretaries

The impact of the current budget cutting stance of the federal government is beginning to make its effects felt locally. And one of the first major programs slated to be eliminated entirely is the CETA program.

The Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) has provided the county with eight workers in the recent past, but come September 30 all that may change. Nicholas County Judge Executive Reece Smoot told the Fiscal Court last Wednesday that he expects the county will lose all of its CETA funds by the 30th day of September.

Two of the positions furnished by CETA were a topic of discussion at the Fiscal Court in its regularly scheduled meeting last week, as Sheriff I. W. Ecton and Judge Smoot both petitioned the Court to hire secretaries for their offices with county funds when the federal funds for those secretaries ran out.

The two secretaries currently employed, Sally Jones in the Judge/Executive's office, and Imogene Green in the Sheriff's office, are currently paid by the CETA program.

Sheriff Ecton told the Court that the program will come to an end during the busiest time of the year for his office — tax time. He said that there was no way his office could handle the collection of taxes and "answer calls too" without a secretary. Ecton said the amount of paperwork involved in the Sheriff's office has grown enormously since he has been in office. Judge Smoot also requested that the Court hire his CETA secretary. However his problem was even more acute. The money for Ms. Jones' position ran out last week.

Judge Smoot explained that his

secretary was responsible for coordinating all other CETA workers in the county. She keeps all of the records for the program and handles the payroll.

Until last week, Judge Smoot said, "There was enough money in the administrative account of CETA for her salary." But with that money gone, Judge Smoot asked the Court to hire her to finish out the program. At the end of the program, Judge Smoot requested that the Court hire Ms. Jones as a full-time secretary for his office.

Magistrate Orville Atkinson told both men that his constituents had expressed their opinion to him that "those secretaries should be paid out of your bill's offices."

Sheriff Ecton interjected his observation that the county furnish secretaries to their particular offices.

Ecton said further that it might be possible for the Sheriff's office to handle the expense "if all the taxes can be collected." However, he pointed to the large number of delinquent tax claims that have still not been settled for 1980.

Magistrate Harold Mitchell pointed out to Sheriff Ecton that whether or not there is a secretary, "it's still the Sheriff's duty to collect the taxes. Sheriff Ecton did not argue this point but countered by saying that the paperwork involved, when combined with the other law enforcement duties of his office, made the task too much to handle.

Magistrate Atkinson asked if the two offices could not share one secretary. Neither official seemed to like that idea, and Judge Smoot was quite insistent. — See CETA Court, page 12

Assessments finished Tax rolls open August 3

Property Valuation Administrator Rose Hradky announced this week that the 1981 property assessment for all commercial and residential property in the city and county has been completed, and that the tax rolls will be open for inspection beginning August 2 and running through August 15.

The rolls will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Any person receiving an increased assessment will be notified by mail.

Deputy PVA Doris Whaley said Monday that persons not happy with their assessments, and who wish to file an appeal with the local Board of Assessment Appeals, must file during the period when the rolls are open. The rolls will now be opened for a full two weeks, as opposed to only one week in the past.

Deputy PVA Whaley said that each parcel of property was assessed individually this year and that "generally" there was "a 10 to 20 percent increase" in assessment values. However, she did say that "some few homes were not increased at all" above last year's levels, and that a 20 percent increase was the extreme exception rather than the rule. No farm received an increase this year.

This year's assessment comes on the heels of a state Supreme Court ruling that clearly gives the state Department of Revenue the power to order PVA's to increase their assessments at risk of losing their official certification.

Mrs. Whaley said that this ruling gives PVA's very little leeway, since they are required by law to assess all property at 100 percent of its fair market value.

Mrs. Whaley also said that she felt reasonably certain that people would not be too upset with this year's assessment. "There will always be a few appeals," she said, "but we can't foresee any problems."

After the tax books are closed and the Board of Assessment Appeals has discharged its duties, the local PVA's office has five days in which to make all corrections and submit the final assessment to Frankfort for official certification. Once that certification is approved the assessment is returned to the county for the various local agencies to set their tax rates for the year.

Barry any unforeseen complications, Mrs. Whaley said the tax bills should be out on time this year. If they are, local residents' taxes will be due by September 15.



The process of raising tobacco is still performed one of the crop's many back-breaking tasks — chopping out weeds. — Mercury photo.

Library board tells court of troubles

Library Board member Bob Darbro appeared before last Wednesday's meeting of the Nicholas County Fiscal Court and informed the court that the Library Board could possibly be in dire need of funds in the near future.

The problem lies in the need of repairing the library's roof. The roof was found structurally unsound on a recent inspection and was forced to close its doors June 29 for the situation to be corrected. The Library reopened July 11.

Darbro said the estimated cost of repairing the roof was \$20,000. However, he said the actual bill should be less than that amount because the work only took about half of the time estimated.

The Board is reasonably certain that it will receive a grant from the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives to cover 65 percent of the costs. Darbro estimated the local Board's share of the burden at \$9,000 to \$10,000.

The money will come in the form of 10 days donor work and 1,000 hours of work to be used in the construction of a parking lot for the facility.

Magistrate Atkinson also informed the court that a snag had already been reached in the plans for the new park, when it was learned that the local National Guard would not be able to provide the land. — See Fiscal Court, page 12

Fiscal court states policy for park board

At the urging of Magistrate Orville Atkinson to come to some definite decision on what to furnish the Park and Recreation Board for generating "in kind" federal matching funds for the construction of a new ball park near the new armory, the Nicholas County Fiscal Court agreed to furnish \$10,000 worth of labor and materials to the Board.

The money will come in the form of 10 days donor work and 1,000 hours of work to be used in the construction of a parking lot for the facility.

Magistrate Atkinson also informed the court that a snag had already been reached in the plans for the new park, when it was learned that the local National Guard would not be able to provide the land. — See Fiscal Court, page 12

"Frankly," he told the Court, "we just don't have the money." The \$5 percent grant from the state will not be made available until the first quarter of next year, and the entire bill is payable upon receipt.

— See Fiscal Court, page 12

— See Library Board, page 12