Science, technology, farmers can't control nature

Jim Dey

... I can't remember ... the water level in ... ever so low ... farmers will get the water they need ... until his crops get the water they need. And neither ... nor the rest of the farmers ... there's little else to say about it ... but it will happen.

"It's one thing we still have no control over is Mother Nature," said Riggs. Who also serves as the information director for the Champaign County Farm Bureau. "There's a lot of science and technology, but it still comes down to sunlight and rain to make a crop. And we've only got half of that."

The story by now is a familiar one: Farmers need rain for the corn, soybeans and alfalfa they've planted. So far, Illinois has received less than half its normal rainfall for the year and if it doesn't soon the crops will be badly damaged.

"I don't think there's actually panic out there," said Riggs. "But we're very concerned. You give me another two weeks of no rain and we'll have panic."

THERE MAY NOT be panic so far. But farmers are literally praying for rain. Twice last week, once at the St. Joseph Church of Christ and later at a farm near Penfield, area farmers gathered to call on the Lord for relief for their crops.

St. Joseph farmer Roger Dennis said he helped organize a prayer service because of concern about the stress the drought is placing on farm families and the food supply. He said he discussed his concerns with farm friends, and they agreed a prayer meeting would be helpful.

"We said, if we're feeling this way, a lot of other people may be feeling this way," he said.

While they prayed for relief from the weather and sang hymns, they also listened to the recollections of farmers who've lived through droughts before.

The message delivered by Ernie Barcus, 73, who lives on a farm north of St. Joseph, was that he'd been through hard times before and survived. And they would survive too.

"I simply said, I'd seen dry weather before and we got through it," said Barcus. "We had small crops and we did without ... In the Depression, we sold hogs for 3 cents a pound and corn for 13 cents a bushel and you worked for 50 cents a day. And you were tickled to death to get the work."

Glen Dillman attended the St. Joseph service, not because he has crops in jeopardy but out of sympathy for his farm friends.

"I'm behind them all the way," said Dillman, who works at the University of Illinois. "I feel for them. I understand the situation.

"I'd say spirits were high. I think they showed their faith."

DESPITE THE LACK of rain recently, the crops still look to be in decent shape. But they're in the early stages of development and each day without rain diminishes the chances of producing the big yields farmers expect.

"The problem is the crops are under stress," said Riggs. "In this stage of the corn plant's life, it is determining the size of ear and the number of ears it is going to produce. We're reducing yield right now."

There is, of course, nothing wrong with the crops that a good healthy rain couldn't help fix. And although the rain prayers haven't been answered yet, farmers haven't given up faith.

"We haven't gotten any rain yet (in Champaign County). But I imagine there are some people who got rain," said Leland Collins Jr., who farms southwest of St. Joseph. "It's not here. But we're not hurting that bad yet. There are other places hurting worse."

Jim Dey is the assistant city editor at The News-Gazette. His column appears on Saturdays and Mondays.

Members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 401 E. Park Ave., C, pose for a group photo outside the church in the early 1900s. The church was torn down but rebuilt on the same lot.

North End history

(Continued from A-1)

Although Rivers maintained that blacks moved to the North End because of their jobs, Cromwell wrote that blacks were being segregated from whites and were purposely moved to neighborhoods near the railroad tracks.

"On the whole, the Negro sections in any town are usually the districts which are located in the areas least esteemed for residential purposes," Cromwell said. "This statement is quite true of Champaign-Urbana."

Despite Cromwell's observations, Rivers said blacks were content living in the North End then. Many had jobs and worked hard to maintain their homes.

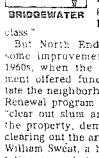
By 1951, the government began building low-income housing units to accommodate residents — primarily blacks — who needed places to live. Because the North End had become the "black" area, that was the logical place to build them, according to David Murrell, director of the Housing Authority of Champaign County.

"Back then, they (housing projects) were designed to be 'Negro' housing," Murrell said. "So they were built in an area the city called the Negro community."

ONCE PEOPLE BEGAN labeling the northeast side as the "Negro" community, it became the only place they could live.

"You just get to know this is where you're going to live," said longtime resident Erma Bridgewater, who bought her home on East Washington Street in 1945. "You get mad, but what else are you going to do?"

A former city official agreed.



BRIDGEWATER

"You couldn't buy houses outside the area," said Kenneth Stratton, Champaign's first black alderman, who served two terms from 1960-65. "We weren't allowed to. It (the North End) was a conglomerate of the poor and middle class."

But North End residents saw some improvement in the early 1960s, when the federal government offered funding to rehabilitate the neighborhoods. The Urban Renewal program was designed to "clear out slum area by acquiring the property, demolishing it and clearing out the area," according to William Sweat, a housing rehabilitation specialist with the city of Champaign.

"The entire northeast area was designed as an urban renewal area because of dilapidated and slum conditions," Sweat said.

Roughly 225 acres in the area south of Bradley Avenue, east of Virgil Wikoff approved a fair housing ordinance that prohibited discrimination in housing.

THE ORDINANCE STATED that it was "unlawful real estate practice and a violation ... for any owner or other person to sell or lease a real property on terms, conditions or privileges that discriminate between persons because of race, color, religion and national origin."

Some displaced black families moved to the Garden Hills area in northwest Champaign. Others moved to homes on State and Randolph streets and to the Southwood area in southwest Champaign.

Most of the blacks, though, remained on the North End because it had become their home, Bridgewater said. The blacks involved in urban renewal were anxious to move out, she said, because it was the first chance they had to move to other neighborhoods.

"Before, they (blacks) couldn't move, and that's why they wanted to," Bridgewater said. "Now there's a choice and their choice was here.

"I'm happy here," she continued. "If I won the lottery, I'd still stay here."

Tuesday: The future of the North End.

Associated Press

Police officer Allen Rivers, right, stands guard at a murder trial in 1951. Andrew 'Pete' Parmer, seated in folding chair, was sentenced to 149 years for the rape and murder of 17-year-old Janet Clark of Champaign.

Neighborhood, businesses once thrived

When Allen Rivers bought his house on East Park Avenue in north Champaign in 1950, the neighborhood was thriving.

His grandfather and brother had a "nickel and dime" store on Poplar Street. And Davis' Grocery Store was just a block away.

There also were black-owned barber shops and beauty salons, and several taverns.

There was even a black-owned newspaper — The Illinois Times — published out of Blanche Harris' North End home.

And 91-year-old Ida Banks remembered how the neighborhood teen-agers would gather at her husband's Bank's Old-Fashioned Barbeque on East Washington Street to eat and "dance the night away."

But no more.

"When the Negroes started moving in, the businesses were flourishing," Rivers said. "Now we haven't got a decent business place in the North End."

Rivers said he doesn't know what happened to the business section of the North End.

But longtime resident George Pope said the businesses were run out by larger companies.

The lot where the Douglass Center Annex now sits, at 804 N. Fifth St., C, once housed a grocery store.

Another grocery store on Eureka and Bradley streets was forced out of business because of larger grocery stores, he said.

There were also three black-owned funeral homes — McFaney, Campbell and Parker. Only Parker, which became Blunitt-Parker Funeral Home several years ago, remains, Pope said.

Rivers said part of the problem was the lack of financial support from the community. No one seems interested in investing in the North End anymore because of its appearance, he said.

In addition, many of the North End houses that once belonged to families who "took pride in" their neatly kept lawns and yards are now rundown. Some of the houses are boarded up.

The streets have potholes. And the cracked and broken sidewalks and curbs that pose a hazard to pedestrians haven't been repaired in years, Rivers said.

"It (North End) has gone down," Rivers said. "The city didn't do some of the things it was supposed to. But we've done some of the damage ourselves."

Despite the grim outlook, however, there is hope for the North End, Rivers said.

He predicted the University of Illinois would continue to move north, buying up property and rehabilitating north Champaign.

"I say there's a chance for improvement," he said. "The University of Illinois will put money into it. Someday where I'm sitting will be the university."

— CHERYL THOMPSON

Police and courts

Collision injures bicyclist

A 13-year-old Urbana girl was injured when her bike collided with a car at Park and Race streets in Urbana.

According to the police accident report, McKenzie Satterthwaite-Phillips of 1106 W. Hill St., U, was riding her 10-speed east on Park when her brakes failed. The bike collided with a car stopped at the intersection of Race and Park. The girl hit the right side back door and flew over the trunk, chipping two teeth, the report said.

The car was driven by Ora H. Brown, 47, of 1207 N. Market St., C.

Satterthwaite-Phillips was taken to the Carle Foundation Hospital — emergency room, where she was treated and released, the report said.

No citations were issued.

Film taken from DI photographer

Film was taken from a Daily Illini news photographer over the weekend after he took pictures of a group of teens involved in a fight.

According to Champaign police reports, the incident happened shortly before midnight Saturday. Two DI employees were driving around the University of Illinois campus taking pictures.

One of the photographers got out of the car and took a picture of four teen-agers using a traffic barricade to beat up a man. When the teens saw the photographer, they threatened to beat him up if he didn't turn over the film. He gave them the film and the teens fled.

The teens were described as black males, 16 to 18 years old.

Truck company burglarized

Urbana police are investigating a burglary at a University Avenue business.

According to police reports, the burglary occurred sometime between 6 p.m. Thursday and 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Pacific Eastern Co., 1207 E. University Ave. The national truck company, which also has an office in Monticello, began leasing the property in the last month.

The burglars apparently broke into a semi-tractor trailer parked in a lot. Trailer tarps, a chain and a spare tire were taken.

Arrest made for sexual assault

A Champaign man was being held in the county jail this morning awaiting a court appearance after he was arrested for sexually assaulting a woman.

Jimmy Ross Jr., 30, of 38 Blue Spruce Drive, C, was arrested at 1105 N. Fifth St., C, shortly after 4:15 a.m. Sunday for aggravated criminal sexual assault.

The victim — a 35-year-old Champaign resident — told police she was walking in the 700 block of North Walnut around 11:40 a.m. Saturday when she was assaulted by Ross.

Packets suspected to be cocaine

Two Chicago men remained in custody in the Champaign County jail following an arrest early Monday morning for suspected drug dealing.

Stewart Holden Jr., 39, and James E. Stennis, 29, faced a Monday afternoon court appearance on preliminary charges of possession of drugs with intent to deliver.

The arrest took place about 1:30 a.m. in a parking lot at Kirby and Mattis avenues in Champaign after an officer spotted the suspects' car missing a front license plate, according to a police report.

A routine check showed Holden lacked a valid driver's license and Stennis had an outstanding warrant for failure to appear in court the report stated.

Police confiscated from the car a knife and several packets of a white powder substance suspected to be cocaine.

He was wearing a navy blue jogging suit with stripes on the sides.

Any person with information on this incident is asked to contact Crimestoppers at CATTS.

Callers do not have to give their names and are eligible to receive a cash reward of up to $1,000 for a tip leading to an arrest.

Rewards also are paid for information on other crimes and fugitives in the area.

Information sought on home invasion

By The News-Gazette

Information on a recent Urbana home invasion is being sought by Crimestoppers.

The incident occurred at 1:45 a.m. June 11 in the 400 block of South Webber Street.

The intruder knocked at the front door, identified himself as Robert and asked to speak to one of the residents.

The intruder then pulled out a semi-automatic handgun and forced his way into the house, police said.

A scuffle ensued and the victim was pistol whipped by the suspect who then fled the home.

The victim was taken to the hospital.

The suspect was described as a black man in his 20s, about 6 feet 2 inches tall with a slender build and short hair.

He was wearing a navy blue jogging suit with stripes on the sides.

Any person with information on this incident is asked to contact Crimestoppers at CATTS.

Callers do not have to give their names and are eligible to receive a cash reward of up to $1,000 for a tip leading to an arrest.

Rewards also are paid for information on other crimes and fugitives in the area.

Chicago man faces charges in high-speed chase

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A 24-year-old Chicago man faced 19 charges including six felony counts of wanton endangerment after a police chase that reached speeds of more than 100 mph ended with his arrest in Louisville officers said.

Francis P. Shea, who was lodged in the Jefferson County Jail, was to be arraigned Monday in Jefferson District Court.

No injuries were reported.

The News-Gazette

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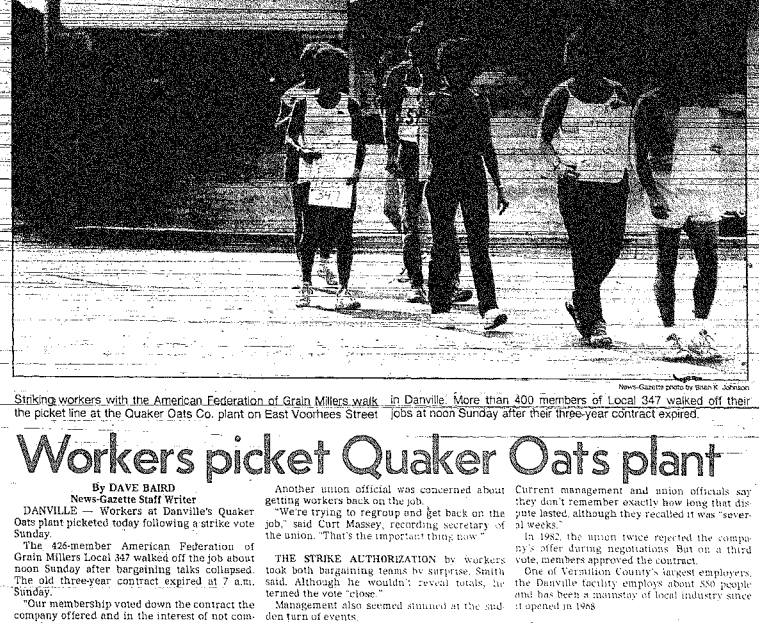
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The News-Gazette strives to present fair and accurate reporting, and to correct any errors as promptly as possible. Corrections and clarifications for all sections run on this page. To report an error, please phone the appropriate department. Local news: 351-5211; state, national and international news: 351-5212; features: 351-5221; sports: 351-5232.

IN TOMORROW'S NEWS-GAZETTE

- IN FEATURES, a St. Joseph student does two years in one.
- IN SPORTS, a look at former Centennial basketball star Roger McClendon.



News-Gazette photo by Brian K. Johnson

Striking workers with the American Federation of Grain Millers walk the picket line at the Quaker Oats Co. plant on East Voorhees Street in Danville. More than 400 members of Local 347 walked off their jobs at noon Sunday after their three-year contract expired.

Workers picket Quaker Oats plant

By DAVE BAIRD
News-Gazette Staff Writer

DANVILLE — Workers at Danville's Quaker Oats plant picketed today following a strike vote Sunday.

The 426-member American Federation of Grain Millers Local 347 walked off the job about noon Sunday after bargaining talks collapsed. The old three-year contract expired at 7 a.m. Sunday.

"Our membership voted down the contract the company offered and in the interest of not compromising our position, we'll have no further comments now," said Randy Smith, union president.

Smith declined to discuss the issues involved or what specific items caused the rank-and-file to take the job action. He said the union and the company will release a joint statement "within the next few days."

No new talks have been scheduled, and Smith said pickets will remain at the plant's two entrances on the city's east side "24 hours a day."

Another union official was concerned about getting workers back on the job.

"We're trying to regroup and get back on the job," said Curt Massey, recording secretary of the union. "That's the important thing now."

THE STRIKE AUTHORIZATION by workers took both bargaining teams by surprise, Smith said. Although he wouldn't reveal totals, he termed the vote "close."

Management also seemed stunned at the sudden turn of events.

"We've got to sort things out," said Quaker's plant manager, Jim Blasingame, who expressed surprise at the union's rejection of the company's latest contract package offer. "And until we do that and can get together with the union, we won't have anything to say."

Blasingame said he was unsure if the strike will idle production at the plant which manufactures a variety of products, including Chewy Granola Bars and instant cereal products.

The last strike at Quaker Oats was in 1974. Current management and union officials say they don't remember exactly how long that dispute lasted, although they recalled it was "several weeks."

In 1982, the union twice rejected the company's offer during negotiations. But on a third vote, members approved the contract.

One of Vermilion County's largest employers, the Danville facility employs about 550 people and has been a mainstay of local industry since it opened in 1898.

WHEN THE PLANT OPENED, fewer than 50 employees were hired. But the work force nearly tripled in 1972 when the company introduced Quaker 100% Natural cereal.

Quaker owns four oats plants — including Danville — with a total of 31 manufacturing facilities nationwide.

Local workers produce about 250 million Chewy Granola Bars each year in seven flavors. Unique to the Danville plant is Quaker Oat Squares, a new product for the company.

FAA altitude device rules OK for Willard — officials

By The News-Gazette
and The Associated Press

New rules requiring small, private airplanes to have altitude-reporting equipment on board should be broad enough for the University of Illinois-Willard Airport, airport officials say.

A new Federal Aviation Administration rule requires planes flying within 10 miles of mid-sized airports, such as Willard, to have "Mode C" transponders on board that will communicate the planes' altitude to air traffic controllers.

The rules have been criticized as too lax by the head of the National Transportation Safety Board. But Willard Airport manager Nick Merrill said the rules should be sufficient for his airport.

"I would think 10 miles is adequate for Willard," Merrill said. "The purpose (of the equipment) is to see airplanes they (air traffic controllers) are not talking to."

Most small planes flying into Willard are already equipped with the transponders, Merrill said.

Some critics of the new rules have said the 10-mile radius isn't broad enough since large commercial jets sometimes take 25 to 30 miles to ascend and descend.

But Merrill said most large planes flying from Willard ascend and descend fairly steeply, usually reaching an altitude of 4,000 to 5,000 feet within 10 miles of the airport.

Ed Smith, flight training manager for the Avistar Air Center at Willard, said the FAA is "barking up the wrong tree" by requiring the transponders. The FAA would be better advised to put more effort on pilot training, he said.

BUT TOM GLAZE, the assistant manager for the FAA air traffic control tower in Springfield, said he's all for Mode C regulations.

"There's no doubt it makes it a lot easier for controllers," he said. "If a pilot has Mode C, it gives an indication on the radar scope what the altitude is."

Still Glaze is leery about the 10-mile limitation.

"Our approach control areas go out 25 to 30 miles. I think 20 to 25 miles of a radar facility would be a better distance," he said.

Some aviation safety experts say the new requirement still leaves commercial jets exposed to danger from small planes.

"We thought (the FAA rule) was going to go much further," Jim Burnett, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said in an interview.

He called the aspect of the regulation that applies to 116 airports with moderately busy air traffic "clearly inadequate" to protect jetliners from small planes.

The Air Line Pilots Association, which represents 40,000 pilots, and the Air Transport Association, the trade group for the airlines, joined in the criticism, although FAA officials called the rule a significant safety improvement.

"It brought some improvement, but didn't go as far as it should have," said John Minor, a spokesman for the pilots union.

The ATA issued a statement saying the new requirement for small planes, all of which does not go into effect until after 1990, "clearly does not go far enough. ... The potential for conflicting incidents (between aircraft) remains."

The FAA rule, announced last Thursday, was an outgrowth of the 1986 collision of a small Cessna and an Mexican airliner over Cerritos, Calif., in which 82 people were killed. The small plane had no device which would show controllers its altitude on the radar screen.

After the accident, aviation safety advocates and members of Congress began calling for private planes flying in the same airspace with commercial jets to have so-called Mode C transponders that provide controllers with altitude information.

Last February the FAA suggested a sweeping rule that would have required the equipment on all planes flying within 40 miles of 256 airports and above 6,000 feet.

THE SUGGESTION unleashed a storm of protest, including 80,000 complaint letters to Congress and the FAA from private pilots, who argued their freedom to fly was being threatened. The devices cost from $600 to $2,000 per aircraft.

The FAA's final rule rolled back the number of airports covered to 143 and the airspace to a 30-mile radius around the busiest airports and a 10-mile radius around 115 mid-sized airports.

The critics said they are not alarmed by the FAA narrowing its new requirements to more than 100 fewer airports. But they are critical of the FAA limiting the airspace in which small planes must have the Mode C equipment to a 10-mile radius around 116 airports with moderately heavy air traffic.

"There will be a significant part of every approach (at these airports) where the airplane and passengers will be exposed to airspace where other aircraft will be operating with no requirement for them to report their altitude to air traffic control," said Stephen Hayes, a spokesman for the Air Transport Association.

New owners of Chuckles lay off part of work force

By W. DAVID BAIRD
News-Gazette Staff Writer

DANVILLE — Less than two months after receiving a $500,000 Build Illinois loan to help protect 200 jobs, the former Chuckles Co. plant has laid off at least one-fifth its work force in the past two weeks.

Officials with Grayland Manufacturing Co. said the layoffs are temporary and should not be interpreted as a negative economic sign. But one labor leader said the layoffs signal the closure of the company.

Grayland, formerly known as The Chuckles Co., manufactures jellied candies and cough drops for Leaf Inc. under the Chuckles and Pine Brothers labels.

"Nothing is unusual about these layoffs," said Brad Dixon, the company's vice president and general manager. "These are seasonal layoffs ... something we usually experience this time of year when we experience a slowdown in customer volume. Business is still good."

LaVerne Shank, a retired employee of the company and consultant for Local 455 of the Bakery, Confectionary and Tobacco Workers Union doesn't believe the company will be in Danville much longer.

"They have a contract coming up in just one year," she said. "And I do believe the plant is gone."

Shank blames the company's woes on management, adding "They don't know how to sell candy." She said management is not living up to its side of the bargain that was reached when workers agreed to a number of concessions.

There are 20 grievances going to arbitration and they're all due to contract disputes," she said. "The company hasn't tried to work with us."

The Build Illinois loan, coupled with $500,000 in private bank financing and $350,000 in corporate equity, is being used as operating capital, according to Dixon. The state loan was touted as a way of saving 200 jobs, and company officials say they will grow and prosper because of the loan.

Shank, however, expressed only lukewarm enthusiasm for the company's future when that loan was announced in late April.

"I'm here to tell you they'd better make a go of it this time," she said then. "If they don't, let them shut down. If you're working for nothing, what's the use of working?"

In 1986, the company's former owner, RJR Nabisco, sold the firm to a management group. The purchase was financed with a $1 million Build Illinois loan, which has been repaid.

Campus notes

Bloomington resident Andrea Xamplas, who is 13, guards her cello and gear. She was waiting Sunday to register for the University of Illinois Summer Youth M... are attending the two-we...