

# Residents Of Fletcher Oppose Airport Racing

By JOHN C. DILLS

About 95 per cent of the people of Fletcher and Hoopers Creek areas are opposed to a proposal to permit supervised drag racing at the abandoned Asheville-Hendersonville Airport, State Sen. Carroll W. Wilkie said Wednesday.

"Normally," Wilkie said, "the problem would have been handled by the City of Fletcher, but since the municipal corporation is under an order restraining it from acting, the people of the area plan to take steps to oppose drag racing there."

He said George Jarvis, a Fletcher businessman and teacher, plans to attend the weekly meeting of Asheville City Council Thursday afternoon to present the people's objections to any type of drag racing, without very strong measures of control.

"either controlled or uncontrolled, the community has considered it a nuisance."

He listed several points of objection:

"Many church services have been interrupted by the noise. And it was not unusual for the racers to go out as early as 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

"There have been at least two deaths on the drag strip, besides the large number of injuries caused by brawls.

"Property destruction. It would cost \$150,000 to \$200,000 on today's market to replace the buildings that have been vandalized. The money used to build the airport terminal building and old control tower was taxpayers' money, largely from Hendersonville, Henderson County and Asheville taxpayers.

"Wrecks on the public highways, and intimidation of in-

nocent citizens who want to drive from one part of the area to another. The racing is not confined to the drag strip, but they come out and race down the public roads. Some of our people have complained that they were run off the road into the ditch by the racers.

"Garbage along the roadways. The people of the community went out and picked up truckloads of beer cans and bottles, paper, cartons and other garbage thrown out by the drag racers or spectators.

"It's becoming increasingly more difficult to get law enforcement agencies to police the area. It's becoming a headache to the agencies."

Wilkie said the people have been asked whether supervised racing could successfully be carried out on the old airport.

He said it could be done, but it would be very expensive.

"We would need a chain link fence around the entire airport, which would cost about

guards, who were unable to cope with the brawls arising in the area.

"If the City of Asheville would furnish 10 policemen, and Henderson County would furnish six to eight deputy sheriffs, plus four or five State Highway Patrolmen to protect the people on the public roads from the spill-over, it could be handled.

"But," Wilkie said, "we don't believe any municipal government could afford to give up this many policemen."

Wilkie said he, and others in the area, believe that if the Henderson County board of commissioners and the City of Asheville "would really get their heads together and concentrate on getting the old airport industrialized, that would solve the problem.

"We don't believe our county commissioners will join Asheville in advocating permitting racing, supervised or otherwise, on the old airport," he said.

very strong measures of control.

Wilkie said several groups have signed petitions expressing their opposition to proposed drag racing.

The question came up last week, when Asheville City Council, directed City Manager Phin. T. Horton to negotiate with Henderson County officials on behalf of Gregori DeLia, who wants to run a drag strip operation there.

DeLia is a cook at Asheville City Club.

Wilkie said petitions have been signed by members of Calvary Episcopal Church, Fletcher First Baptist Church, Fletcher United Methodist Church, Hoopers Creek Baptist Church and Mountain Sanitarium and Hospital, besides letters of opposition from Fletcher Men's Club, Fletcher School PTA, and Hoopers Creek Community Club.

He said also that Stencil Aero, now leasing the property, also objects; Stencil uses the old airport as a testing site for aircraft ejection equipment for the military services.

"Ever since there has been any drag racing," Wilkie said,

## Obituaries

THOMAS F. LOFLIN JR.

Thomas F. Loflin Jr., 55, of 905 Temon St., died Wednesday morning in a Buncombe County hospital after a long illness.

Mr. Loflin was a native of Miami, Fla. He was associated with Overton Wholesale Grocery for many years. He was a member of the Elks Club, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Surviving are the widow, Mrs. Mary Turner Loflin; the father, Thomas F. Loflin of California; two sons, Thomas F. Loflin III of Chapel Hill and Phillip Edward Loflin of Winston-Salem; two sisters, Mrs. William O. Waters Jr. and Mrs. John G. Briggs Jr. of Hendersonville; and a brother, John M. Loflin of Boone.

Services were to be held at 4 p. m. today in First Baptist Church, of which he was a member, with the Rev. Ian H. C. Walker officiating.

The family has requested that flowers be omitted.

Thos. Shepherd and Son Inc. is in charge.

fence around the entire airport, which would cost about \$100,000," Wilkie said. "Racers can now go in and out at will.

—Better policing. "Under the earlier 'supervised' racing," he said, the operators had private

otherwise, on the old airport," he said.

Clyde S. Jackson, chairman of the Henderson County Board of Commissioners, said Wednesday that he has not yet heard from Horton.

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