

# Strawberry Festival-Rescue Day In Vanceboro Saturday



## West Craven Highlights

News From Along The Banks Of The Neuse



VOLUME 11 NO. 20

MAY 19, 1988

VANCEBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

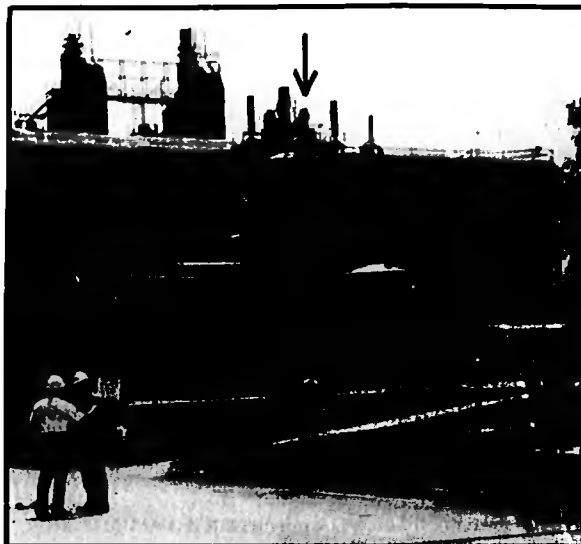
PHONE 244-0780 OR 946-2144

(UPSP 412-110)

25 CENTS

SIX PAGES

# Accident Leaves 1 Dead, 8 Injured



Arrow identifies ruptured tank and (right) Cove City rescue personnel leave site

By MIKE VOSS  
Editor

A man died Wednesday morning of injuries that he suffered Tuesday when a tank at the Weyerhaeuser pulp mill between Vanceboro and New Bern ruptured, spewing a hot mixture of wood fiber and bleach.

Eight other Weyerhaeuser workers were injured, two critically.

Lonice E. "Butch" Thomas Jr., 37, of New Bern, died at 1:15 a.m., said Linda Stauch, spokesman for the Craven County Hospital. She said Thomas died of complications from suffocation. He had worked at the plant since 1969.

Ms. Stauch said two of the injured were in the intensive care unit in critical condition, one was in a medical ward in stable condition, three were treated and released Tuesday and one was kept overnight and released about 7:15 a.m. today.

Weyerhaeuser identified those

(See DEATH, Page 5)

## 8 Pakistanis Journey Through Southeast On Way To Mecca

By MIKE VOSS  
Editor

Their calloused and cracked feet give evidence of their long journey. So do the well-worn sandals and bedrolls.

Ten miles each day the eight-man Muslim caravan from Pakistan travels along U.S. 17 on its way to an eventual pilgrimage to Mecca, the holiest of Islamic shrines. But before the travelers arrive for their 40-day stay in Mecca, they are traveling in the United States "to better understand our American brothers."

The men made their way through Craven County last week on their way north and eventually to home.

Wednesday they stopped to spend the night in Chocowinity. Thursday they slept in Washington. They usually call towns a day in advance to set up lodging. Their home Wednesday was in the town garage in Chocowinity.

They arrived in New York in December and went from there to Miami to begin their walk.

They were advised by other Pakistanis who visited America to follow U.S. 17 during their walk from Miami to Norfolk, Va. The route was suggested because of the small towns that dot the trail and because of the climate.

The men have seen more "trees and jungle along the

way" than they have seen anywhere in Pakistan, said one. They plan to arrive in Norfolk on June 21. After leaving Norfolk, they travel to Washington, D.C. to obtain visas from the Saudi Arabian embassy for the trip to Mecca. After their hajj (trip) to Mecca, they return home.

The highway has become a path of knowledge for them, said the group's interpreter, Faiz Muhammed Khan.

Muhammed, who wears a turban and beard, is an assistant professor of philosophy and psychology at the government-run university in Dera Ismail Khan, the city where the men live. The group's spiritual lead-

er Jehan Zeb Khan owns two rice factories and a brick factory. All are professionals and businessmen, said Muhammed.

Jehan Zeb Khan, asked about the politics of the Middle East, said it would be inappropriate to answer on behalf of the others but added, "We do not think the American presence is a threat to peace in the Middle East," according to Muhammed's translation.

The trek is part of a planned tour of the world. Their trip through the United States is to "study the complicated machinery of mankind" and to learn about the West for themselves, Muhammed said. They

are also concerned about the image that Westerners have about Muslims.

"We have come to show Americans that all Muslims are not the kind of people portrayed in the Western media," said Muhammed. "We are good people, like any other people. We are not terrorists and do not like being associated with people who do bad things. It is unfair for the actions of a few men to represent the whole of a people."

The men are impressed with the hospitality "and responsiveness of your nation," said Jehan Zeb Khan. But hospitality does little to ease their minds when they think of

home. "We certainly feel the absence of our families," he said. Muslims and Pakistanis in the United States have shown them home-style hospitality. "They honor us," said Jehan Zeb Khan.

What reactions do they get from passers-by on the highway?

"Sometimes we have our hands and they wave hands," said Jehan Zeb Khan. Watching cars stop on the shoulder, people jumping out and taking pictures and asking questions has become routine.

"When in our country, we heard that Americans are a

(See PAKISTANIS, Page 6)

## Club Members Driving Force Behind Car Show's Success

NEW BERN — The oldest entry at the West Craven High School VICA Club car show Sunday literally outshined the competition and earned the Best of Show trophy.

Gene Howard's 1941 Ford pickup took the top honor and first place in the full-size truck category at the VICA club's first car show. If it didn't shine, the car wasn't made of metal.

To call Howard's entry just a truck would be an insult. It was more like an experience. It looked as if an interior decorator worked overtime on the truck.

Although periods of drizzling rain might have hampered participation in the event, organizers were happy with the participation. As the gray skies began slowly moving out, more and more spectators stopped at Twin

Rivers Mall to view the collection of cars.

Entries began arriving about 10 a.m. and those showing the cars and trucks began wiping, waxing and polishing metal to get the edge they sought in the competition. Rain beaded up on hoods, was wiped away, reappeared and was wiped away again. The cycle continued through most of the day.

From classics such as a 1956 canary-yellow Ford Thunderbird to the newest offerings of Mustangs, Camaros and mini trucks, the show featured style, chrome, nostalgia and raw power. From the purr-purr-purr of the small-engined vehicles to the rocky thundering of the monster engines, horsepower was on display.

A.B. "Brownie" Futrell, pub-

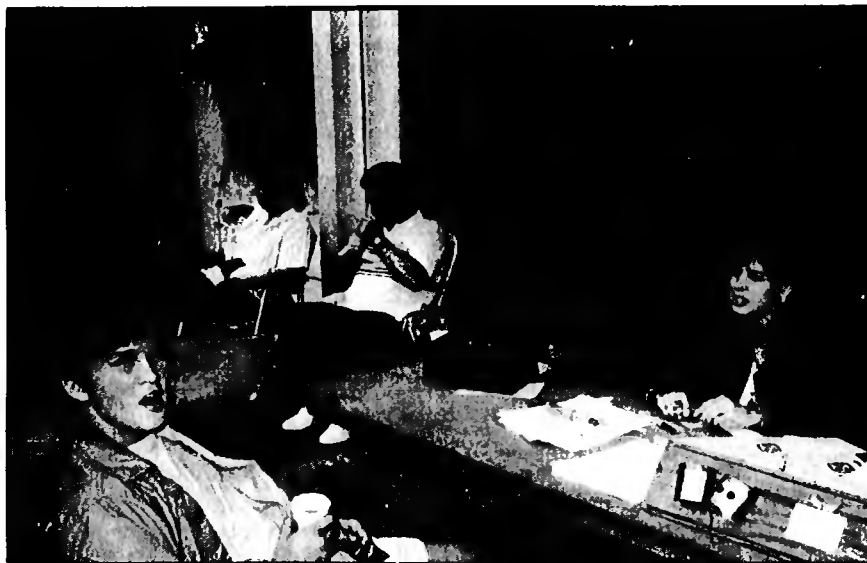
lisher of the West Craven Highlights, won first place in the original division with his 1956 Ford Thunderbird. Second place was won by Landers Gaskins and he also took first place in the street rod division with his 1966 Chevrolet Chevelle.

In the Camaro/Firebird division, Richie Roberts took first place with his 1969 Camaro and Rodney Moore took second place. Both showed Camaros. Moore's car was a 1984 model.

Mike Edwards took first place in the Mustang division with a 1984 model, outpointing Darlene Wetherington's 1985 model that took second.

Jeff Dunn finished second behind Edwards in the full-size truck division with his 1986

(See CAR SHOW, Page 5)



VICA Club members wait for entries to be registered

## Lots Of Class(es) Found At Reunion Of Farm Life Alumni

By TERRI JAMIESON  
Staff Writer

Two hundred and sixty-four people attended the Farm Life School Alumni Association banquet Friday night at Vanceboro's Farm Life Elementary School. About 150 attended the dance that followed in the school gym.

The gathering was the 68th annual meeting of the association. The banquet and dance allows local and out-of-town alumni a chance to renew friendships. Out-of-state visitors came from as far away as California, Ohio, Maryland and Virginia. The annual banquet and dance are held on the second Friday in May.

The annual meeting began at 7 p.m. with the banquet held in the school cafeteria. Mrs. Sybil Hardy gave the invocation. The banquet was served buffet-style by Bum's Restaurant of Ayden.

After the banquet, Association President Beverly Bryan recog-

nized attending dignitaries. They included Dr. Ben Quinn, superintendent of the New Bern-Craven County Schools; Jimmie L. Morris, mayor of Vanceboro and a member of the Class of 1952 and former state Sen. Joe Thomas, presently on the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.

The audience sang the school song that was led by Morris with piano accompaniment by Etheleen Butler. Gospel music was provided by Change of Heart from Greenville.

In a business session, the nominating committee announced the 1988-89 slate of officers. They are Patricia Eaton, president; Earl Wright, vice president; Janice Morris, secretary-treasurer and Peggie Mills, assistant secretary-treasurer. The Class of 1920 was recognized as the school's first graduating

(See REUNION, Page 5)



Alumni enjoy food at banquet

## Volunteer Efforts Help Renovation Of Center

By TERRI JAMIESON  
Staff Writer

Vanceboro residents are taking note of the changes continuing at the Vanceboro Community Center and about 15 volunteers are the force behind the efforts to renovate the center.

An influx of money from a legislative discretionary fund came about at the end of the 1987 session of the Legislature. The center has been topped with a new

roof, given a facelift of paneling on the inside, been insulated and new tiles put in.

Arlene Coward, president of the Vanceboro Community Center Organization, said, "Everything is going quite well." She listed several improvements that had been made to the building — such as casing windows and the installation of a new front door.

(See CENTER, Page 5)

## Strawberries To Reign Saturday In Vanceboro

Sunshine, smiles and, of course, strawberries are only a few things that are expected to attract approximately 4,000 people from all over the state to the Strawberry Festival-Rescue Day in Vanceboro this Saturday.

This year's festival promises to be the best ever as several new events have been added. The festival begins at 7:30 a.m. Saturday with the Strawberry Festival 5K run, followed by a 10K run at 8

a.m. The runs begin on Farm Life Avenue and end at the corner of Farm Life Avenue and Buck Street.

Following the runs, Main Street will be lined with impatient children and eager adults as strains of music and wailing sirens signal the beginning of the annual parade.

Those who have an interest in (See FESTIVAL, Page 5)