



Just Another Abandoned Barn

There seems to be a continuous crop of abandoned barns. They sit, slowly decaying, tin tearing away from the roof, getting a bit more decrepit with each storm or burning summer, a marking the

losing struggle of yet another family farm. Eventually the last old barn may disappear, sacrificed on the altar of another trailer park. (Ric Carter photo)

Cove City's Suit Receives Continuance

More Time To Review Evidence Is Requested

By MIKE VOSS
Editor

COVE CITY — The lawsuit the Town of Cove City filed last year against the City of New Bern over water has been continued, said the lawyer for Cove City.

The suit was scheduled for this week's session of Superior Court was continued, said Cove City's lawyer, Tom Crawford.

No date has been set on when the case will be heard, said the para-legal for Kenneth R. Wooten, the lawyer handling the case for the town. Attempts to contact Wooten were unsuccessful.

However, Crawford said he thought the case was continued to allow more time for discovery. "I don't think discovery is complete," he said. Discovery is a legal term for parties in the suit being allowed to review evidence

pertaining to the case.

The town was recently turned down on its grant request of \$600,000, part of which was targeted for drilling a well and hooking up to the Northwest Craven water system. The denial of the grant has left the town seeking its own water source instead of depending on New Bern.

The town's water woes came to light last February when it filed suit against the City of New Bern and City Manager Walter B. Hartman Jr. after the town and New Bern were unable to reach an agreement on a water rate increase and New Bern threatened to shut off Cove City's water supply.

Alleged non-payment of water bills since July, 1987, was the reason New Bern said it would

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Research Key To Understanding Rivers' Changes

If you had asked researchers five years ago how serious the pollution problems in the Neuse or Tar-Pamlico rivers were, most would have estimated them as being fairly low. Ask a researcher today, however, and the answer will probably be that the problems are at least moderate, possibly worse.

Though several factors are responsible for this more disturbing outlook, surely the most visible symptom of declining water quality in the Neuse and Pamlico have been the number of fish kills and disease epidemics seen here since 1984. The Pamlico has had more kills on it than any other river in the state since that time, and it was in 1984 that the first outbreak of the skin disease known as ulcerative mycosis

Analysis

(UM), was observed in juvenile menhaden.

But Jess Hawkins, a member of the Pamlico Emergency Response Team, said the Neuse River is facing the same problems as the more-publicized Pamlico. The team is made of employees from the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries and the Division of Environmental Management and was formed last year to begin troubleshooting problems in the river.

Up until 1984, UM had been recognized as a not uncommon fungal infection of freshwater fish which normally appeared as a small red sore causing only su-

perficial damage. The 1984 Pamlico outbreak was particularly significant, then, since it marked not only the first time UM had ever been recorded in brackish (fresh-salt) water, but also was characterized by unusually virulent sores which ate huge hunks of flesh out of the fish and affected nearly 100 percent of some schools.

If those two elements were not enough of a hint of trouble in the Pamlico, the fact that UM has reappeared every year since and that it reached a level in 1988 not seen since 1984 have certainly opened some eyes.

Hawkins said UM is found on fish in the Neuse and it is difficult to determine actual numbers on a scientific basis. Studies on UM are being conducted mostly in

the Pamlico, but Hawkins said any information gathered would probably benefit researchers in the disease's occurrence in other rivers, including the Neuse.

Equally disturbing is that skin diseases of a lesser but still serious nature have been found on virtually every other major species that inhabits the Pamlico estuary as well, including flounder, spot, shad, herring, croaker, perch and eel. And beginning in 1987 a disease known as "burn spot," which literally eats through the hard outer shell of blue crabs, was observed on crabs in the South Creek area of eastern Beaufort County.

Interestingly, though, while the fungus which causes UM in menhaden is suspected of triggering some of these other lesion

outbreaks, it apparently is not the only culprit. Various strains of bacteria have been implicated in a few cases, particularly the burn spot problem of blue crabs.

But since UM has been the most persistent and most severe problem in the Pamlico and could become a major problem in the Neuse, it is the one that has received the most attention to date. Current research funded by the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study is looking at several aspects of UM, most particularly why it is occurring in a habitat it has never been found in before and why it is striking with a severity it has never shown before.

Unfortunately, answers have been hard to come by regarding these questions. The most defini-

tive aspects of this outbreak of UM to have been determined so far are that it occurs almost exclusively in water with low-level salinity (2-8 parts per thousand, a range found anywhere from Grimesland to South Creek), and that the disease is non-existent in ocean-going adult menhaden.

(Menhaden are hatched at sea, whereupon the juveniles "recruit" to estuaries to mature and then swim back to sea when they reach adulthood.)

Samples taken from between 200 and 250 stations in the Neuse also show patterns similar to the Pamlico.

Beyond that, most of the important questions about UM remain unanswered. Some of the

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Ernul Woman Shot; Classified Homicide

ERNUL — Investigators are classifying the shooting death of a 28-year-old Ernul woman as a homicide.

Susan T. Toler of 1855 Hill Neck Road died Monday apparently from a gunshot wound to the head. She was pronounced dead on arrival at Craven Regional Medical Center, said a hospital spokesman. Ms. Toler died about 3 p.m., said the

spokesman.

"We are conducting a homicide investigation with the assistance of the State Bureau of Investigation," said Capt. George Brown of the Craven County Sheriff's Department on Tuesday. Attempts to contact investigators Wednesday were unsuccessful.

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Former Eagle To Play For Pirates Next Year

By MIKE VOSS
Editor

East Carolina University's football team may have stolen a top-notch football player from other schools when they landed former West Craven High School star George Koonce.

The West Craven product spent the last two years honing his defensive skills at Chowan College — a school that has sent ECU many outstanding players

and which ECU has sent on the pro football.

Koonce, who played linebacker for the Braves, verbally committed to the Pirates last week and is expected to ink with ECU this week, if not already. The signing period opened Wednesday. In picking up Koonce, head coach Bill Lewis apparently is making good on a promise to

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Well In Hand

Although West Craven Middle School's Mike Mills (face showing) is under his opponent, he recovered to win the 152-title at the P.S. Jones Invitational Tournament last week. While Mills

appears to be falling toward the mat, the opponent appears ready to be flipped on his back. See results, page 4.

(Jim Green photo)

Jobless Numbers Decline

Craven Rate Declines 1%

Unemployment was down in Craven, Jones and Lenoir counties and up in Pamlico County during December when compared to the previous month, according to figures released by the N.C. Employment Security Commission in Raleigh.

Craven County's unemployment rate decreased from 3.6 percent in November to 2.6 percent in December. Jones County saw its unemployment rate fall from 4.3 percent to 3.9 percent. Lenoir County's jobless figure fell from 3.8 percent to 3.7 percent. Pamlico County's unemployment rate increased from 2.8 percent in November to 3 percent in December.

In December, Craven County's work force totaled 30,920 and 800 were unable to secure employ-

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APES Committee Suggests Studies On Neuse River, Trawling

By MIKE VOSS
Editor

The Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study is being asked to study the effects of trawling in rivers and creeks.

The resolution asking for the study will be forwarded to the technical and policy committees of the study along with a priority list adopted Tuesday night by the Pamlico Citizens Advisory Committee of APES. The list shows projects that the committee would like to see studied in the coming year.

Several projects to study the Neuse River are also being consi-

dered, including one that would study flow patterns of the Neuse.

The committee wants the study on trawling to include effects on the habitat of the waters, water qualities and fisheries.

The advisory committee met Tuesday night at Beaufort County Community College.

APES, a federally funded study, was started about two years ago. Its purpose is to find ways to preserve the natural productivity of the estuarine areas of the Pamlico and Albemarle sounds.

The advisory committee also

called for money to begin three proposals — an animal waste management project, an urban stormwater runoff project in Greenville and land acquisition of critical natural areas. Although the amount of available money is not yet known, the committee said the projects would be useful.

The committee, headed by Derb Carter, broke into two groups to discuss the five areas of the study. One group discussed critical areas, fisheries and water quality. The other group discussed human environment and public participation.

After reviewing 59 project proposals, the subcommittees assigned priorities to the projects. Those priority lists and requests for funding will be forwarded to the technical and policy committees of APES. There is about \$2.2 million in state and federal money earmarked for APES this year, but not all of it goes to the recommended projects.

The proposals come from different sources and were sought by APES, with some proposals specifically sought.

In the critical areas the projects endorsed included a natural

areas inventory, a soil survey in Hyde County, a wetlands survey (mapping) and land use mapping.

In the water quality area the projects endorsed included a citizens' monitoring program, a heavy metals and sediment study, a study on the potential for eutrophication in rivers, a river flow study for the Pamlico and Neuse rivers, a study on the off-site effects of best management practices, preparation of a nutrients budget and a toxics inventory.

In the fisheries areas, projects endorsed were a study on scallop

losses related to red tide, establishing oyster beds in sounds and a study of young striped bass in the Roanoke River.

In the human environment area the projects endorsed included two public attitude surveys, a management plan for Currituck Sound and a Neuse River management plan.

In the public participation area, projects endorsed included a press tour, several teacher workshops, radio spots and development of bumper stickers and posters.

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