



West Craven Highlights

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Two Arrested In Death Of Woman Found Outside Vanceboro

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Special to the
West Craven Highlights

TRENTON — One of two suspects arrested in connection with the death of a Trenton woman who disappeared from New Bern on Thanksgiving morning last year has been released on \$40,000 secured bond, the Jones County Sheriff's Department reported this week.

The other suspect remained in the Craven County Jail under a

\$20,000 secured bond, a sheriff's department spokesman said.

Dennis Ray Gaskins, 28, of 303 Armstrong Ave., New Bern, and Tracey M. Baysden, 30, of Riggs Road in Alliance, both were arrested on the morning of July 19 in connection with the death of Sandra Cheryl Foy, whose body was recovered from Swift Creek near Vanceboro on Dec. 22. Gaskins, who was released on bond July 21 following a first appearance in Jones County District Court, has been charged with man-

slaughter. Ms. Baysden has been charged with accessory after the fact of manslaughter.

Both are scheduled to appear in Jones District Court on Aug. 4 for a preliminary hearing before Judge Robert L. Warren, a spokesman in the Jones Clerk of Court's office told The Jones Post this week.

Miss Foy, 37, of Route 2, Trenton, last was seen alive early on the morning of Nov. 24, 1988, when her sister, Jan Foy, watched her drive away with an unidentified person

from the parking lot of the Sheraton Hotel and Marina in New Bern. Both women had been at the Sheraton lounge for several hours.

Miss Foy's clothed body was discovered four weeks later in Swift Creek near Spruill's Landing by a Kinaton duck hunter. The autopsy report showed that she had a blood alcohol level that would have been the equivalent of .09 on a breathalyzer test, but all the other toxicology tests performed on the body had been negative. Miss Foy

also was taking "thyroid medication and nerve pills," according to the autopsy report, at the time of her death.

In March, Detective Mike Rice with the Craven County Sheriff's Department had told news media that authorities had determined from the evidence in the case that Miss Foy might not have been murdered, but that someone might have concealed her death to prevent any incrimination on their part.

"I didn't think she'd associate

with no such thing as that," her father, Randolph Foy, said earlier this week.

Investigator Denise Harris with the New Bern Police Department said in an interview that she and other law enforcement agents "had a lot of speculation" during the investigation. No arrests could be made, she said, "till we could get someone who knew something who

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Weyerhaeuser Faces Lawsuit Over Accident

Widow Seeks Damages For Death Of Husband

By Greg Stroud
Staff Writer

Weyerhaeuser has been accused in a lawsuit with negligence in the death of Lonice E. Thomas Jr. who was killed in an industrial accident at the company's New Bern plant May 17, 1988.

The suit, filed by Thomas' widow, Maria Thomas, seeks in excess of \$10,000 in damages, but does not specify an amount. It requests a jury trial. It was filed in Craven County Superior Court earlier this month.

Thomas was employed by Weyerhaeuser as a plant maintenance worker at the New Bern plant.

Also named as defendants in the suit are John Krofchick and Spencer Adsit. Krofchick was the bleach plant supervisor at the time of the accident and Adsit was the plant engineer responsible for maintenance at the time of the accident.

The accident occurred when a chlorine tank used in the paper bleaching process malfunctioned and erupted near its base. Thomas was killed when the 90-foot high tank released a 450-ton flood of liquified pulp and the sodium hypochlorite solution being used to bleach the wood. Two others sustained serious injuries and permanent damage. One still sits in a coma. Thomas was the only fatality.

Part of the suit states: "Thomas was immediately engulfed by tons of liquified pulp which flowed from the ruptured area. The rupture caused a hole approximately five (5) feet by seven (7) feet in size. A wave of pulp crushed Mr. Thomas and several other workers. The magnitude and force of the flowing pulp propelled Mr. Thomas and the crew into stationary piping and equipment at great speed, causing grievous bodily injuries. The flow of pulp reached a height of six feet above the concrete floor of the bleach plant."

The suit contends Thomas was unable to free himself because of the weight and density of the pulp mass

and suffocated.

The suit alleges that Weyerhaeuser was aware of the tank's condition and that the external walls of the tank were weak prior to the accident, but did not take proper actions to see that the tank was safe. In February of 1988, the walls were so thin that one worker actually punched a hole in the side of the tank with a putty knife while trying to remove surface rust, according to the suit. The incident was reported to plant officials at that time.

The tank had just been reactivated after a two-week shutdown for maintenance.

Krofchick and Adsit acknowledged that they were aware of the deterioration prior to the accident occurring, said the suit. The suit said the deteriorated conditions of the tank "were readily observable and specifically known by and discussed among each of the defendants and other management and corporate officials of Weyerhaeuser."

Government officials from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) cited Weyerhaeuser for safety violations and for "failure to provide an adequate inspection of the tower to see that it was in a safe and serviceable condition, resulting in a workplace imperiled by a recognized hazard which could cause death or serious harm to employees." The company was fined \$500, which it paid without contest.

"In a report prepared by OSHA, officials of Weyerhaeuser admitted they were aware of the grossly deteriorated condition of the tanks, but misled OSHA investigators concerning the full extent of such knowledge," said the suit.

Weyerhaeuser and the other defendants are accused in the suit of intentional, willful, wanton and reckless conduct which resulted in wrongful death.

As of yet, the complaint has not

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Ric Carter photo

Lost in his work

Donnie Little, yes that's him hidden among the tobacco leaves, finds a little relief from the heat and sweltering sun from the shade offered by the big leaves and equipment overhead. Little was busy at work Tuesday morning working an area tobacco field. Tobacco workers dot many fields as they harvest one of the state's top crops. Farmers are hoping the green on the fields will translate to green for their bank accounts.



Lee Schwelzer Jr. photo

Night flight

Although the moon may have looked a little wobbly to the pilot of this plane last week, it was the hazy skies caused by hot and humid weather that caused the effect. The pilot just happened to be flying on the 20th anniversary of man's first steps on the moon. Wonder if the pilot remembered the historic step in flight, less than 75 years after the first plane flew at Kitty Hawk?

Deputy Attacked At Store

Craven County law enforcement officers were joined by Beaufort County deputy sheriffs, Chocowinity police, Pitt County deputies and N.C. Highway Patrol officers in a three-county search Friday for a Vanceboro man after a Craven County deputy was injured in a fight.

The man, Prince Lee Whitley, was still at large last night, a spokesman for the Craven County Sheriff's Department said. Craven County Sheriff Pete Bland could not be reached for comment this morning.

Whitley was not in Craven County jail this morning, a spokesman said.

For almost four hours Friday afternoon, local law enforcement officers blocked U.S. 17 and N.C. 33 near the Craven County and Beaufort County line, Beaufort County Sheriff Nelson Sheppard said Friday.

Craven County deputies asked for help about 12:30 p.m. Friday looking for a red Ford Mustang G.T. reportedly driven by Whitley, Sheppard and a spokesman for Craven County said.

The search was called off about 4:30 p.m. local law enforcement officials said.

Whitley was being sought in connection with injuries to Craven County Sheriff's Deputy Willie Morris who was taken to Pitt County Memorial Hospital for back injuries he received in a fight, a Craven County spokesman said.

Morris was taken to the hospital by helicopter and was released late Friday, a spokesman for the hospital said Saturday.

The deputy apparently went to a house to serve an outstanding warrant for nonsupport, the Craven County spokesman said. Morris followed a man, who left the house, to a convenience store in Vanceboro, the Craven County spokesman said.

At the convenience store, the man reportedly fought with Morris and left in the red Mustang with a female passenger. A Craven County woman, Allison Hogans was charged Friday afternoon with assault on a law enforcement officer, the spokesman said.

The car was found Monday in Washington by Washington police.

County School Bus Situation Said Good

By Greg Stroud
Staff Writer

Approximately 700,000 North Carolina public school students will ride 121 million miles to school during the 1989-90 school year, and for the second year their drivers will all be 18 or older.

Last year, North Carolina fielded an all-adult bus driver corps for the first time and faced some driver shortages at the start of the school year. A ruling by the U.S. Department of Labor required the state to hire only drivers 18 or older. For the 1989-90 school year, most systems are expected to have little problem employing the drivers they need according to Norfolk Gardner, Department of Public Instruction transportation director.

One more change is slated for the bus driver program within the next two years, if passed by the General Assembly. Drivers will probably be required to hold a commercial Class B license and be over 21 years of age instead of 18. At the present, any adult driver with a license in good standing and who has been issued a School Bus Driver Certificate can operate a school bus.

The Craven County school system reports that the driver situation for this year looks good and the year should run smoothly, according to County Transportation Director,

Billy Eutsler.

"We are very proud of our system. The new adult drivers are proving to be very valuable to us. This past year the accident rate dropped 50 percent from the previous one. We don't want to speak prematurely, but the prospects are promising for a great year ahead," said Eutsler.

A total of 13,200 buses and drivers will be needed to transport North Carolina children this year. Craven County accounts for 157 buses and transports around 8,500 children daily.

The crucial need school systems have now, says Gardner, is substitute drivers. Because of the difficulty involved in attracting people to be substitutes, many school systems, including Craven County, rely on employees in other positions such as teacher assistants, cafeteria workers and others to act as drivers.

"School systems need a list of people who could fill in when a bus driver is sick or has jury duty or for some other reason cannot work for one day," Gardner said.

Persons interested in becoming a school bus driver or substitute should contact the board of education at 638-2133 or contact the principal of a nearby school. Training required includes a full day of class-

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School Doors Open Aug. 31 In County

By Greg Stroud
Staff Writer

Even though it seems summer has just begun, in less than a month, students across the state will return to the classroom.

Classes in Craven County will begin on August 31 for grades 1-12. Kindergarten students will begin either August 31 or September 4, depending on what school and class the student is assigned to. Parents will receive a notice from the school principal as to which date their kindergarten children will need to report to class.

Most school children feel somewhat anxious about returning to the classroom in the fall, say school officials. This nervousness is likely to increase if the child is entering a new school or making the transition from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school, said the officials.

Whether your child awaits the first morning bell with eager anticipation or overwhelming dread, the first few days are likely to be stressful adjusting or readjusting to the structured schoolroom environment.

Parents can help to reduce back to school stress, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. To reduce back to school stress, parents can help with an en-

couraging attitude and by establishing clear expectations for their children. It is also a good idea to take children to school ahead of time to walk around the halls, go into their classroom(s) and meet their teacher(s). This will make the child more familiar with his surroundings and will help him feel more at ease during those first few days of school.

If a child has become accustomed to sleeping late during the summer, getting up on time may be somewhat of a problem for them and can cause a harsh experience for both parent and child. This problem can be avoided if parents enforce earlier bedtimes and awakening times during the summer as the new school year approaches.

A child must have sufficient rest and sleep to be alert in school. It is important that they get up in time to eat a good breakfast and not feel rushed to get to class on time.

For new kindergartners, going to school for the first time marks a real milestone in their lives. For many children, this will be the first time they have had an opportunity to be independent from "mommy and daddy." For many children, starting school can be a very scary feeling. Encouragement and nur-

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