



SON OF A GUN

By Joe Lanier

Where to start and where to stop... There are so many stories in this disaster than fell from the sky onto Duplin County this past week... The Highway Patrolmen standing in the pouring rain trying to direct traffic in pitch dark with the temperature dropping... The Sheriff's Department deputies out helping, watching over the mess and keeping looters away... Volunteers from all over giving their time and talents... A van with eight men and a pickup truck filled with chain saws that drove on the site and worked all day (they were from another county)... Two nurses driving through stopped the night the sky fell and helped with those injured, even though they were from Roseboro, which was also hit by the twister... Telephone operators who were flooded with calls, many from which the caller could not see the dial on the phone... The victims who said "I am OK, see about the other person." Rescue and fire departments disregarding where, just as long as they were needed. Some of these folks were paid. Many and most were not. None were paid to do as well as they did... The Winnebago van that was used as an ambulance... The fire rangers with their heavy equipment... The dog rescued from a well by a deputy... The churches and other groups who have gone into the area to give a few dollars and a few necessities — here again — some saying, "Someone else may need it worse than I"... Some who were given money by two organizations returning it, saying "Someone else already gave us some"... The sign that was on Highway 403 near Poplar Grove that was found near Goldsboro... The cancelled checks from Calypso that were found in Greenville... The pickup truck and the mobile home that have not been found, yet... The stories are there. This does not even break the surface... The giving of all is probably the biggest story or best story to me, and most want to remain anonymous — just wanted to help and didn't want credit or recognition... The national organizations are needed, but the big story is in the folks of Duplin and other areas that poured out to help with whatever they had... The night it all began or happened, Duplin rescue people were meeting at the hospital (Duplin General) and the Firechiefs were having a feed at the Southern Bell Restaurant in Mount Olive... Glenn Jernigan of Faison was returning when he heard the first call. It came in as an auto accident. The rescue unit went out. It found a mobile home in the middle of Highway 403, demolished... Another call when help was needed in East Pine Forest... Still the impact of a twister was not known... Also returning from the restaurant was Jimmy Pate, fire chief of Calypso. He and his wife were driving on Highway 117. Suddenly his auto went out of control. Braking would not stop it. He jammed it into "park" and he and his wife dove to the floor. Wham! All the windows of the car blew out and the vinyl top left too... The car was thrown around like a marble in a drink bottle being shook up... Just before the violent winds struck, it was very calm, with no rain... Well, this is it, the pair thought as the wind jerked the car around... But, just as quickly, it was over. There were no headlights in the auto. It was pitch dark with no lights any place. The only light working on the car was a blinker light... So, by the light of this they drove on to a relative, and then home... While changing into firefighting clothing, the fact of what had happened came to the surface... Emotions poured out... "Don't have time for this... Get yourself together... There are people out there needing help"... As the twister had moved on by, the sky lit up with lightning and he could see the terrible sight at East Pine Forest (This was back when he was in his auto on Highway 117)... There was no power so one fireman drove a fire truck around the town with the siren on... Soon the other firemen showed up... And the thoughts of what happened to each were shoved back and helping others was all that was on anyone's mind... Back in Faison the rescue and firemen were off to East Pine Forest to help... Soon it was discovered there were many in dire need in the Faison area on Highway 403... The rescue people and equipment from all over Duplin were called into the area... Off-duty deputies were called... Through the night people worked unselfishly... giving. A lady is pinned in a car when a tree was blown over on it when she drove into the yard... Chain saws to saw the tree. Power tools to rip open the car... It took three hours... A man is missing... We can't get into the area... Call the town front-end loader... Push some trees aside so the rescue vehicles can get by... We found the man. He was dead, lying some 150 yards from where his house once stood... On and on, until the light of dawn... It was not as shocking as I thought it might be. I guess my "shocker" wore out during the night... It's bad, really bad, but I am alive... How many?... How much?... Who?... When?... Better make one more check through the area... The night will live on in many minds... Thoughts will wander back to the sights revealed by the car lights or flash lights, a match or a cigarette lighter. When there are no lights and the sky is cloudy, it is dark... It's so dark you can feel it... Yes, actually feel it... After all the disasters and destruction, the realization there is no escape from a twister... Why and how did it blow the house away and leave a hanging pot with the flower blooming in the porch still intact... Son-of-a-Gun...

Cable TV

Firm Gets Extension

Univision Cable Television Co. of Richlands last week obtained a six-month extension to finish service installations in rural Duplin County. The county board of commissioners approved the time extension in response to a request by Gail Bailey, vice president of the firm, which holds a franchise to install cable service in much of the county. The company was to have made service available to 80 percent of the homes in the rural area of the county within two years after work started. That time has expired. The company and the county do not agree on the number of dwellings that make up the 80 percent figure. Ms. Bailey told the board the company might install a micro-wave receiving antenna in the Summerlin area between Kenansville and

Calypso if enough people are interested in connecting to the cable in that area.

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