

Calabash Man, 72, Charged In 8th River View Mobile Home Arson

BY ERIC CARLSON

After a half-dozen late-night stakeouts in the woods surrounding a Calabash mobile home park, Brunswick County sheriff's detectives last week captured a 72-year-old man believed responsible for setting fire to eight trailers near his home.

Burqueen Reeves of Bennett's Mobile Home Park on River View Drive was charged with one count of second-degree arson after witnesses allegedly saw him leaving the scene of the eighth trailer fire in the park since February, according to Det. Tom Hunter.

"We are investigating the possibility that all the fires might be connected," Hunter said. "So far, Mr. Reeves has refused to give us a statement."

Reeves lives in a mobile home within 100 yards of

where three trailers were destroyed in a suspicious fire last February and four more burned in the early morning hours of three consecutive Wednesdays, April 14, 21 and 28, Hunter said.

The following Tuesday night (May 3), three sheriff's detectives, an Ocean Isle Beach officer and the county fire marshal stationed themselves around Bennett's trailer park along with two agents from the State Bureau of Investigation. It was a familiar routine for Hunter, who had been investigating what he had determined to be the work of one or more arsonists.

"I spent a lot of nights sitting out there in that trailer park," he said.

Shortly after midnight Tuesday, Hunter and Det. Gene

Cainson heard someone walking up Ivy's Lane, a dirt path near what remained of the trailer that burned in the April 21 fire. They jumped out of the bushes and confronted the man, who turned out to be Reeves, Hunter said. Knowing that he lived nearby, they allowed him to walk back to his home.

At about 3 a.m., the detectives received a radio call notifying them that a 911 caller had reported a prowler in the trailer park. Using a night vision scope to survey the area, Hunter said he spotted Reeves entering his trailer.

Then he saw movement next to a neighboring trailer and found two local residents, Waybon and Kellers Thomas, trying to put out a fire on the side of the mobile home. They said they had just seen Reeves near the side

of the trailer where the fire started, Hunter said.

Reeves was arrested a short time later. He was still being held in Brunswick County Jail in lieu of \$25,000 bond Tuesday afternoon.

The Calabash Volunteer Fire Department was called to assure that the fire was extinguished. Damage was estimated at about \$500.

Hunter said he had recovered a piece of "wick material" he believes was used to start the fire by stuffing it behind the trailer siding and igniting it. Several of the other River View Drive fires appear to have been started in a similar manner, he said.

The wick material has been sent to SBI laboratories for analysis along with items found at the other mobile home fires, Hunter said.

Rental Occupancy Problem Draws Scrutiny Of County Health Board

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department has investigated their wastewater treatment system and outlines the nature of the violation. It orders the owner to correct the deficiency within 60 days.

"They can do one of two things," Robinson said. "They can upgrade their septic system to accommodate the advertised use or they can scale back their operation."

Violators will be given "20 to 30 days" to respond in writing to let the health department know how the owner plans to correct the problem, Robinson said. Failure to respond or correct the violation within 60 days "will result in legal enforcement against you, including: injunctive relief, administrative penalties, suspension and revocation of permit and criminal penalties," the letter states.

"This is not just something we

dreamed up," Robinson said. "We are strictly enforcing state regulations for on-site sewage treatment and disposal systems. There are no local ordinances governing this. We're the ones who have to enforce it."

Robinson said the state has not put pressure on the health department to enforce the regulations, but had indicated "100-percent support" for the effort. He said the state also would "provide legal assistance" in enforcing the septic tank rules.

In other business the board:

- Set a public hearing for June 9 at 7 p.m. on a revised set of regulations governing food service manager certification for restaurants and other food-handling establishments. Under the new rules, training for required manager certification will be offered free of charge for the first 12

months. All food-handling operations will be required to have a certified manager on the premises whenever food is being prepared for public consumption. The hearing will be held at the public assembly room at the county government complex in Bolivia.

- Approved Health Director Michael Rhodes' request to prohibit smoking throughout the health department building beginning June 1. The board also endorsed Rhodes' plan to offer smoking cessation classes to all county employees. The board of commissioners recently adopted a no-smoking policy for the county complex.
- Scheduled a free blood pressure screening program to be held at the Long Beach Recreation Center on Oak Island Thursday, May 20, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Government Says It's Making Effort To Reduce Lockwood Folly Pollution

BY DOUG RUTTER

Government officials point to a county zoning ordinance, improved wastewater treatment systems and engineering studies as proof they're making an effort to clean up pollution in Lockwood Folly River.

But some area residents who have joined forces to fight for clean fishing waters and productive shellfish beds aren't convinced the government is doing everything it can to serve the taxpayers.

Members of the Brunswick County Environmental Coalition met with county, state and federal officials Tuesday in Supply to find out what's being done to help a river that's been plagued by pollution for a past decade.

A 1989 state study concluded that septic tanks and stormwater runoff were the most likely sources of bacterial pollution, which has forced the state to close large areas to oyster and clam harvesting.

Wallace Smith and other coalition members wonder why specific pollution sources still haven't been identified.

"Why can't we find where the pollution is coming from?" Smith asked. "This shouldn't be too hard with all the technology and scientists we have."

Smith said taxpayers aren't getting their money's worth from agencies charged with protecting water quality. "I've seen the lip service given to it, but no actual work. The answer is go find the pollution and stop it."

Bob Jamieson, regional director of the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, defended the state. "I think the agencies involved are trying their best to get the solutions. That's why we're here."

Jamieson said locating pollution sources isn't easy because there are so many contributing to the problem. "We should continue doing what we've been doing—attacking at all fronts."

The fronts include county, state and federal efforts to try to cut down on the fecal coliform bacteria that enters the river on a daily basis and causes frequent closures of shellfish waters.

Locally, Acting County Manager John Harvey said zoning in unincorporated areas of the county should be in place by October 1. A special "water quality protection district" has been created for the area along Lockwood Folly.

It would extend 575 feet from the water and require minimum lots sizes, buffer zones and restrict how much land could be covered by buildings, pavement or other hard surfaces.

Brunswick County also plans to add two staff members to its environmental health section, Harvey said, and help area towns form a regional sewer and stormwater management program in the South Brunswick Islands.

"Government does not work fast, but I think the initial steps have been taken that are going to be great for Brunswick County," Harvey told the small gathering at Lockwood Folly

Community Building.

Bob Benton, director of the state's shellfish sanitation program, said Lockwood Folly has shown some signs of recovery in recent months, but not enough to get excited about.

"We have seen a little improvement. It may just be happenstance," Benton blames the pollution on a 43-percent population increase in Brunswick County between 1980 and 1990.

Most of that growth has occurred between Lockwood Folly and the South Carolina state line. "The impact of that 43 percent was not spread evenly over Brunswick County," Benton said. "The coastal area got the brunt of it."

Rick Shiver of the N.C. Division of Environmental Management (DEM) said the state is working to correct wastewater management problems at Bolivia Elementary School, which is situated in the river basin.

The DEM also hopes it can convince the State Bureau of Investigation to fly over Lockwood Folly and use its new, infrared photography surveillance equipment to locate pollution sources.

Rich Carpenter, district manager with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, said 5,700 bushels of oysters were moved from polluted to clean waters last spring and clams were moved prior to the recent river dredging.

Lockwood Folly was open to shellfishing more in the past year than it has been in recent years. "The majority of the oyster season it did stay open," Carpenter said.

Harold Jones, director of the Brunswick Soil and Water Conservation District, said his agency is working with about two dozen farmers in the river basin to cut down on soil and chemicals running into the river.

There are 3,100 hogs at the three, known swine operations located in the watershed. Benton said each 200-pound hog produces 6.8 billion

Seasonable Weather Is In Forecast

Normal temperatures and rainfall are anticipated over the next few days across the South Brunswick Islands.

Temperatures are expected to range from around 60 degrees at night to around 80 degrees during the daytime, said Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady, with about a half-inch of rainfall.

For the period May 4-11, he recorded a high of 84 degrees on May 8 and a low of 58 degrees the night of May 9.

A daily average high of 83 degrees and a nightly average low of 63 degrees resulted in a daily average temperature of 73 degrees, or about 4 degrees above the long-term average for this time of year.

He reported no measurable rainfall.

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Obscenity Charges Follow Club Raid

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at the club. Officers determined that at least ten different "rump-shaker" contests were depicted in the videotape.

The tape allegedly shows Burgess holding a microphone and directing the contestants, according to Brunswick Alcoholic Beverages Control Officer Mike Speck. During one of the taped contests, Burgess reportedly announced that photographs of the winner would be taken "upstairs in the club."

An ALE agent later telephoned Al's Video and asked to purchase photographs of the participants. He was told that the photos were being used in a book that would be made available only to Club New World employees, according to Speck. The person on the phone allegedly said he would be at the club May 9 to film the "grand finale."

A local radio station reportedly broadcast numerous announcements of the "rump-shaker" finals, at which the past weekly winners competed for a \$1,500 first prize. The raid was scheduled to take place after the

Sunday night contest.

Among the items seized at Club New World were a video camera, a video cassette recorder, two portable televisions, Polaroid film, a 9mm Luger semi-automatic pistol and assorted papers and files.

Bryant has been charged with one count of creating obscenity with intent to disseminate and two charges of selling alcoholic beverages during entertainment that simulates sexual intercourse. He has been released on \$4,000 bond.

Burgess was charged with six counts of selling alcoholic beverages during entertainment that simulates sexual intercourse, one count of creating obscenity with intent to disseminate and one count of permitting a minor to assist in an offense against public morality. He was freed on payment of a \$7,000 bond.

Richardson was charged with one count of permitting a minor under the age of 16 to assist in an offense against public morality, one count of preparation of obscene motion pictures and one count of possessing obscene videotapes with the intent to disseminate. He is out on \$4,500 bond.

Calabash OKs Sewer Plan With Little River

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engineering maps to allow the towns to seek permits for the discharge of 300,000 gallons per day of sewage into the Little River (S.C.) Water and Sewerage Co. treatment system.

The permits will allow Calabash to provide sewage disposal service for the downtown restaurant district and other selected areas on a temporary basis for four years while a joint treatment facility is constructed to serve the two towns. The project would include the construction of 8,000 feet of sewer main connecting downtown Calabash with the Little River system at an estimated cost of \$112,000.

The commissioners agreed to pay project engineers Powell Associates of North Myrtle Beach, S.C., half of the firm's \$10,300 fee to document and apply for the necessary construction permit from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. Sunset Beach has agreed to pay the other half of the engineering costs.

Powell engineer Joe Tombro noted that the permit "does not mean the line will have to be constructed

immediately" and recommended that it not be installed until funding is approved for the joint sewerage system "and all local issues relating to implementation of the waste water program are resolved."

The commissioners scheduled a workshop with Powell engineers for June 16 at 7:30 a.m. to discuss possible changes in the proposed management of the joint system.

In another matter, the board adopted new ordinances governing private sewerage treatment systems, the keeping of dogs and livestock, open burning and charcoal fires, health and sanitation, weeds, the de-

struction of out-buildings and removal of debris, animal trapping and the discharge of firearms.

A public hearing was set for 6:30 p.m. June 8 on proposed amendments to the zoning code regulating trailers, campers and temporary buildings.

A copy of the proposed and adopted ordinances is available for public inspection at the town hall.

The board also agreed to spend up to \$3,000 on improvements to the town's recycling site. The project includes asphalt paving, additional fencing and general re-design to improve traffic flow.

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THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Established Nov. 1, 1962
Telephone 754-6890
Published Every Thursday
At 4709 Main Street
Shallotte, N.C. 28459

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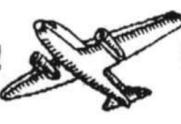
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