



# West Craven Highlights

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SIX PAGES

## Summer's Dog Days Sirius Business To Astronomers

By RITA CIPALLA  
Smithsonian News Service

The dog days of summer are officially here.

They arrived, unleashed in early August, when Sirius — the chief star in Canis Major, "The Big Dog," and the brightest star in the heavens next to the sun — rose together with the sun in the summer sky. These are the days most of us dread — hot, steamy, ill-tempered days when nothing much happens and people drag around waiting for autumn's coolness.

Astronomy buffs know that the constellation Canis Major, which resembles a dog standing on its hind legs, follows at the

heels of the hunter Orion in his journey across the sky. On sky charts, Sirius is often portrayed as the jewel in the dog's collar or the tip of his nose.

But, ironically, "man's best friend" — astronomically speaking — has gotten a bad reputation, says James Sharp, chief of the Albert Einstein Planetarium at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

"Today, we almost unanimously use the term dog days in a negative way, but in ancient times, the advent of the 'dog days' and the rising of Sirius was a good omen. To the ancient Egyptians, the rising of the Dog

Star signaled the coming of the Nile flood, a time to sow crops and to rejoice."

Historians of astronomy note that Sirius is the only star known with absolute certainty to appear in Egyptian records. Its hieroglyph, a dog, was often drawn on monuments and temple walls dating back to 3285 B.C. Some believe that the canine title originated in Egypt because of the star's watchful care over the interests of the farmer, giving him notice of the approaching Nile floods.

A few thousand years passed before Sirius began to be seen in a bad light. Both the ancient Greeks and Romans blamed the

brilliance of the Dog Star for the sweltering heat and humidity of the midsummer sun and believed it to exert an evil influence on the health of those exposed to its burning rays. The name Sirius comes directly from a Greek word meaning sparkling or scorching.

References to Sirius's harmful influence abound in early poetry. In Homer's epic poem the "Iliad," an enraged Achilles was first seen by Priam "as he sped across the plain, blazing as the star that cometh forth at harvest-time, and plain seen his ways shine forth amid the host of stars in the darkness of the night, the star whose name men call

Orion's dog. Brightest of all is he, yet for an evil sign is he set, and bringeth much fever upon hapless men."

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, wrote in the fourth century B.C. of the star's power over the weather and its consequent physical effect upon humankind. Virgil, in his Latin epic the "Aeneid," wrote, "The dogstar, that burning constellation, when he brings drought and diseases on sickly mortals, rises and saddens the sky with inauspicious light."

Seventeen centuries later, Sirius was still doggedly being blamed for wreaking havoc. "The Dog-star rages!" Alexander

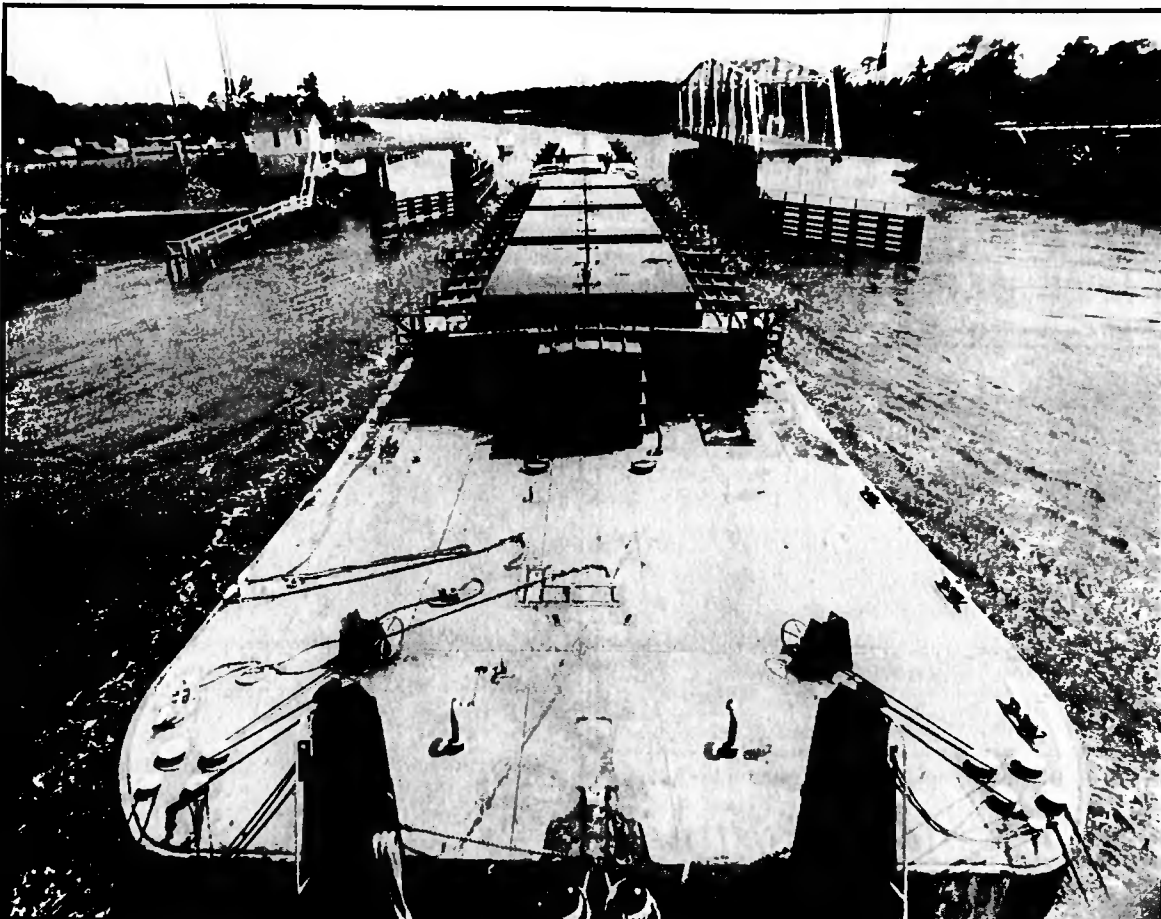
Pope penned. "Nay 'tis past a doubt/All bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out."

The notion that heat from the Dog Star caused madness in dogs is said to have stemmed from the Greek poet Asclepiades in the third century B.C. But it was the Romans who coined the words "dies caniculariae" — dog days.

**Other Heavenly Phrases**

The Romans also were responsible for another phrase derived from the heavens, this one from the constellation Gemini, or the Twins. The Gemini are de-

(See DOG DAYS, Page 5)



It's a tight squeeze for the captain, especially through the bridge at Hobucken

(Mike Carter photos)

## Barging In

### Hauling Tg's Products Through N.C. Waterway A Non-Stop Proposition

By Mike Voss  
Editor

**A**BOARD THE TUG PAMLICO — For alternating two-week stretches, Capt. Joe Morris and Gerald Mason step ashore only for a short while in port.

For those two weeks, whichever captain is on duty spends 24 hours a day, seven days a week keeping his barges in a row as they plow the waters between Aurora and Morehead City.

The two tugboat captains and the remaining crew face the creeping monotony and the quick-as-a-wink dangers that are ever-present passengers on the tug.

The crew is divided into two watches consisting of a captain, engineer and deckhand. The engineer and deckhand do a variety of jobs while the captain pilots the vessel.

Leaving the docks at the Texasgulf phosphate mining operation near Aurora, Morris took the Pamlico and two barges loaded with concentrated phosphate rock out into the Pamlico River. From the stern of the tugboat to the bow of the lead barge, Morris guided the 600 feet of vessels from the river into the first of two "ditches" along Intracoastal Waterway on the eight-hour trip to the state port in Morehead City.

Morris said the barges each contain 2,200 tons. In the Goose Creek Canal, they sucked water from the approaching shoreline,

causing it to retreat as if a giant plug had been pulled.

Seagulls flew alongside the barges waiting for the water to retreat and to get a free meal from the small fish left stranded. As the barges passed, the water would return. Had the waves been much larger they would have been good for surfing.

There is no wheel in the wheelhouse of the Pamlico. There are two steering rods instead. And if steering the Pamlico looks easy, take the helm and try it.

The barges and tug are slow to respond to a steering change, but once the bow starts moving the tug wants to keep going in that direction. The secret, said Morris and Mason, is to return to rudders to amidships once the bow begins turning.

After amateurs tried the helm on this trip, the wake of the tug looked like a giant snake slithering across the water. With all the power generated by two 10-foot-long engines, producing 2,000 horsepower, it takes a gentle hand to steer the barges. In the "ditches" where there is little room to maneuver, the captains were constantly making steering corrections to keep the barges in line.

While the captain is busy in the wheelhouse, the engineer and deckhand are busy elsewhere. The engineer keeps an eye on the two loudly humming engines. Evidence of his work is the almost spotless conditions in the engine room. On this trip the engineer was worried about a water leak and knew a repair job awaited him at Morehead City.



Capt. Joe Morris scouts for a channel marker

The deckhand paints, cleans and does whatever it takes to keep the tub shipshape. He has the "dirty" work, but the deckhand is the one who gets to go out on the barges more than anyone else. Out on the barges there is a breeze and the ride is smoother.

Unless a barge breaks away. When a "break-away" occurs, everyone lends a hand. The barge

has to be chased down before it can do any damage. A loaded barge slamming into a bridge or another vessel is potentially disastrous.

"We have to catch 'em. We can't let them run loose out there," said Morris.

Rough weather and seas are

(See BARGE, Page 2)

## Cove City Board Race Heating Up

### 3 Candidates Seeking Mayor's Post In Dover

By MIKE VOSS  
Editor

The race for the five seats on Cove City Board of Aldermen has heated up with last-minute filers bringing the number of candidates to 10.

Elsewhere, several candidates for seats on other town boards and one candidate for mayor waited almost until the last minute to file for office and announce their candidacies last week, reported election officials Monday.

In Cove City 10 candidates are vying for the five seats on the town board, including a black candidate, a sharp increase in the usual number of candidates seeking office, said Nina White, chairman of the Municipal Board of Elections.

Five more candidates filed with Mrs. White for seats on the Cove City Board of Aldermen after last Wednesday morning. Mrs. White said last Wednesday morning that five candidates had filed for the town board and that Mayor L.D. Davis had also filed. Filing deadline was noon Friday.

The five candidates that filed before last Wednesday were in-

cumbents Eugene Massey, W.A. Avery and Q.R. Russell. Ben Grady, a newcomer, filed, along with former alderman Charlton Mitchell.

Incumbent J.C. Ward filed Wednesday night and incumbent Wayne King filed Thursday, said Mrs. White. Newcomer Floyd White, Carlton Crouell and Fred Wilkerson filed Friday, said Mrs. White. Crouell is the lone black in the field, said Mrs. White. Crouell will be the first black to seek a position on the town board in about eight years, said Mrs. White.

(See ELECTION, Page 5)

Around Drawbridges

## DOT Hopes Bypass Will Aid Congestion

BRIDGETON — The North Carolina Department of Transportation has found a way to reduce traffic congestion on U.S. 17 at Bridgeton caused recently by drawbridge problems on the bridge between New Bern and Bridgeton.

Delays and traffic backups occur on the highway when the drawbridges across the Trent and Neuse rivers are opened to allow water traffic to pass. Earlier this summer traffic was halted for several hours during a two-day period when the drawbridge over the Neuse jammed. Traffic resumed after a section of the drawbridge was cut away.

Heat expanded a metal portion of the drawbridge and caused it to jam, said state DOT officials.

The DOT began erecting signs on U.S. 17 at Vanceboro and New Bern Wednesday to direct motorists onto a series of primary and secondary roads bypassing Bridgeton. The bypass will be identified as N.C. 43 to provide continuity to the route. N.C. 43 currently extends from just south of Warronton in Warren County to Vanceboro.

The bypass will be 18.2 miles long, or 2.7 miles shorter than the

(See DOT, Page 5)

## Former WCHS Student Writes Winning Slogan

NEW BERN — A former West Craven High School journalism student was introduced as the winner of the United Way Slogan Contest at the kick-off breakfast of the United Way Pacesetter Campaign July 28 at the Federal Alley in New Bern.

Loris Strum, winner of the contest with her slogan "A hundred years of being there, the United Way," was introduced to the group by Amy Oliver.

Miss Strum was a senior when her slogan was chosen in May to be used during the campaign. Ms. Oliver also introduced Larry Conway, a professional photo-

grapher, who is now living in Fairfield Harbour and who has volunteered his time to take pictures during the campaign.

The Pacesetter Campaign is a select group of community businesses which are asked to conduct their United Way employee campaign early to help set the pace for the major campaign that will be conducted in September. United Way President George Schnupp welcomed the group.

The slogan contest, according to campaign co-chairman Margaret Lamb, involved the journalism class at West Craven High School.