



Happy New Year



West Craven Highlights

News From Along The Banks Of The Neuse



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25 CENTS

SIX PAGES



Ric Carter photo

Winter's artwork

Even in bitter cold and a winter storm, Mother Nature finds the time to provide a little winter beauty by using melting snow, wind and sub-freezing temperatures to produce these curvy icicles. A

few more glances here and there can result in other natural artistic works using snow, ice and other winter mediums. But it's hard to beat the traditional white snow at night for beauty — but Mother Nature keeps on trying.

Basnight says he will not run against Jones

By Betty Gray
Special to the
West Craven Highlights

State Sen. Marc Basnight announced recently he will not run next year for the U.S. 1st Congressional District seat against Democratic incumbent Walter B. Jones. In a telephone interview from his office in Manteo, the senator said he will probably run for the seat in 1992, when Jones is expected to step down.

Basnight also said he would file for re-election to the N.C. Senate from the 1st N.C. Senate District in the 1990 campaign.

Jones, who has represented the 21-county 1st District in the U.S. Congress for 23 years, said Dec. 7 he would seek re-election.

Top Down East Democratic Party officials, facing a hotly contested race between two popular Democrats if Basnight had run, said Basnight's decision will help preserve party unity going into the November elections.

"My first reaction is I'm very happy we're not going to have a primary, assuming no one else

runs," said Bill Hodges, chairman of 1st Congressional District Democrats.

"Marc is a mighty fine young man and he has plenty of time," Hodges said. "Now we can put all our energy into the party."

In neighboring Beaufort County, Joyce Cutler, Beaufort County Democratic chairman, said, "Marc has shown excellent concern for the unity of the party. This unites us together behind Walter Jones."

Another county Democratic chairman, Bill Joyner, said he was looking forward to an exciting race between Basnight and Jones in the May primary. But Basnight's decision not to run is better for the party, he said.

"I think he's doing the right thing," Joyner said. "And I think he's doing what he thinks is right."

During the last few months, Basnight has traveled throughout the 1st Congressional District, which includes 21 counties in eastern North Carolina, measuring his chances and talking with Democratic leaders.

See BASNIGHT, Page 5

Fisheries division faces controversial shellfish-leasing issue

After reopening many of the state's waters to mechanical harvesting of oysters, the Division of Marine Fisheries faces another controversial decision — on shellfish leasing in one Down East county.

The issue could expand to include other public trust waters bordered by other counties, including Craven County.

That question as well as lengthening the menhaden purse seine season and restrictions on shark, snapper and grouper will be taken up at a series of DMF hearings next month.

Requests for four shellfish leases in a tributary of Swan Quarter Bay will be discussed at a public hearing in Swan Quarter 7 p.m. Wednesday Jan. 10.

This is one of four shellfish hearings sponsored by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries next month.

Others are planned for Jacksonville, Hampstead and Hatteras.

DMF will also hold public hearings on lengthening the purse seine season for menhaden by six weeks.

Those hearings will be 7 p.m. Jan. 17 in Beaufort at the Carteret County Courthouse and Jan. 18 in Wilmington.

The proposal would open the season April 1 instead of May 15 for menhaden in the ocean and sounds, with a Jan. 15 closing. The fishery will continue to be closed some weekends during the summer and on some holidays, DMF officials said.

Menhaden fishing in the state's rivers will not be affected by the proposed regulation.

Another proposal to be considered at the public hearings would grant proclamation authority to restrict the shark, snapper and grouper fisheries by imposing restrictions on

sizes, seasons, areas, quantities and fishing methods.

While some fishermen say leasing land under the state's waterways shuts off small fishermen from prime fishing areas, others see the state program as a means of replenishing the state's oyster resources.

The week's low temperatures and bad weather have kept most fishermen off the area's waterways and unable to take advantage of the proclamation reopening the mechanical oyster harvest season, said Margaret Hopkins, owner of Hopkins Seafood at Wright's Creek.

The season was closed just five weeks after it opened because most of the oysters being caught were under legal size, division officials said at the time. The division reopened some of the state's waters to mechanical harvest fishing last week.

Most fishermen could not go out

Tuesday and Wednesday, Mrs. Hopkins said.

"We've got some oysters," she said. "And we're selling all we can get and the fishermen are tickled with what they can get," she said.

Four fishermen — Dell A. Newman, Lyle D. Cahoon, T. Edward Newman Jr. and Larry Gill — have asked to lease about 15 acres of water bottom each in Eastard Bay, a tributary of Swan Quarter Bay, said Jeff French, DMF marine biologist.

The four applied for the leases July 7 which, if approved by the Marine Fisheries Commission, will run for 10 years, French said.

Only one lease has been issued previously in Hyde County waters.

Leases are only issued for nonproductive water bottoms, meaning if the area naturally contains shellfish producing 10 bushels or more per acre, it cannot be leased, French said.

Fishermen receiving leases must bring the area into production within three years and a leased shellfish area must produce at least 25 bushels per acre each year for the lease to be valid, he said.

This year, leases cost \$5 per acre per year, he said.

When an area is leased, only shellfish harvesting on the waterway bottom is designated for private use. Others can still use the area to set crab pots, for boating and swimming, French said.

If the lease request is approved by fisheries director William T. Hogarth, it will be submitted for approval by the state Marine Fisheries Commission.

The tradition of shellfish leasing in the state dates back to the early 1900s, becoming more frequent in the last 10 to 15 years, French said. "The division is obligated by law to consider shellfish lease requests

when we receive them," French said. "We have to respect the rights of people who want leases and protect the public trust at the same time."

"We encourage public comments on this," he said.

The division will study its shellfish lease program in conjunction with studies of its oyster rehabilitation program, said Jess Hawkins, head of the Division of Marine Fisheries regional office in Washington.

The division is able to plant about 70 to 80 acres of bottom material for oysters each year and relies on shellfish leasing as part of its oyster rehabilitation program, he said.

Other states also offering shellfish leasing include Virginia and Louisiana.

"We have had several comments from the general public concerning removing the water bottom from public use," Hawkins said.

Cold weather sparks usage of fireplaces

Nothing spells home like a fire crackling in a fireplace. But a fireplace requires care to keep it at its best. Here are some tips that will help ensure that your fireplace looks good and works well.

Chimney Care
— The chimney should be cleaned once a year and more often if you use your fireplace frequently. For best results, call in a professional chimney sweep to do the job.

— Inspect the interior of your fireplace with a flashlight. Look for bricks and gaps in the mortar. If the chimney passes through the house, inspect it for loose mortar or bricks wherever it is visible, for example, in the attic. Repair any defects.

You should be able to look up a chimney and see daylight, even if the chimney has an offset. If you can't see daylight, it may mean an obstruction, such as a bird's nest, which must be removed.

Fireplace Care
— Before you start the first fire of the season, clean the walls of the firebox with a dry bristle brush or the dusting attachment of the vacuum cleaner. Wash and dry the attachment before using it on any other surfaces. Don't scrub the firebrick or cement block with water; it may reduce heat retention.

— Clean the fireplace at least once a week during the months you

See FIREPLACE, Page 5

Curiosity did not kill this traveling feline

By John Perry
Staff Writer

WILMAR — Curiosity killed the cat — except for one cat. It's 6 a.m. on a cold day last week and Hubert A. Perry of Wilmar goes out to start up his company truck for work. An ordinary morning it seems, yet an extraordinary morning in the making.

Perry is ready to begin another day of making sales calls for Standard Electric Co. of Rocky Mount. One day last week Perry had several calls to make and any setbacks in his daily schedule would be costly.

Enter Murphy's Law. When

Perry started the truck, he heard a sound — a sound of a cat. The sound did bother Perry to the point where he turned his truck off and popped the hood to look for the cat. When he popped the hood, there was no sign of a cat, or even the sounds that a cat makes. So, he started the truck again — again he heard a cat's meowing under the hood. He turned the truck off a second time and looked for the cat and once again there was no sign of a cat.

The search for the elusive cat went on for about 30 minutes and because of his dislike for cats and

See CAT, Page 5

Gas shortage is blamed on record cold weather

By Betty Gray
Special to the
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Record low temperatures across the nation combined with increased demands for fuel to heat homes and offices have combined with distribution problems to create a shortage of natural and liquid propane gas in the Down East area.

Down East gas suppliers say conservation by their customers and warmer weather could alleviate most of the problem. But despite shortages, area propane gas dealers say they can serve their customers on a routine basis and have asked customers not to disrupt delivery schedules except in an emergency.

"They've been great," said a spokesman for D.S. Swain Gas Co.

in Vanceboro. The spokesman, identifying herself only as "Pat," said there have been no problems meeting requests for gas in the Vanceboro area.

"A few degrees will make a big difference," said Wilber Logan, district manager for Petrolnne Gas of Belhaven of the weather. "Our biggest concern is to convey to the public to conserve energy any way they can."

Many of the conservation measures Americans used during the gas and oil embargo of the mid-1970s could help conserve propane gas now — including caulking around windows and doors, closing off rooms not used, lowering window shades and curtains — Logan said.

See GAS, Page 5

Half Moon's Spalding lives history

By Mike Voss
Editor

Troubador, curator, sailor and historian.

Those words either together or separately can describe Simon Spalding. But Spalding's work with the Half Moon at Haven's Wharf is much more than those four words.

Spalding has done a little design work, scrounging for material and public relations since arriving in Washington from San Francisco the day before Thanksgiving Day. Now that the Half Moon is tucked away safely at Haven's Wharf, a few of the problems that Spalding faced are gone.

Just who is Spalding? If you've seen a young man walking the streets of Washington lately dressed

as somebody from the 17th Century and probably playing one of several instruments he plays, then that's Spalding. If you've been at the museum at Haven's Wharf and saw a young man trying to decide where the exhibits go and what needs to be done, that's Spalding.

And if you think you've seen someone living on the Half Moon, that's Spalding.

"Some of my earliest memories are visiting other historians and seeing their incredible displays of history," said Spalding who has a music degree from the University of California-Berkeley. Growing up just a few blocks away from the San Francisco Maritime Museum also influenced Spalding at an early age.

"The curators must have felt like my babysitters. I would arrive in the

morning and not leave until night," said Spalding. "I used to spend hours looking at everything, especially the ship models."

How did a person with a music degree become enthralled with history? Spalding's parents, particularly his father who is a military historian, are responsible for some of his interest in history. The other part is just Spalding's own natural curiosity.

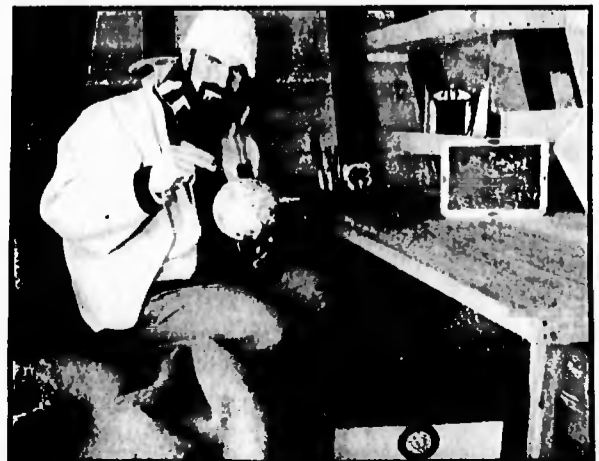
"I had a chance of graduating early with my music degree," said Spalding. And that's what he did. "I do regret that I didn't stay and get a double major in music and history," said Spalding. Already performing professionally, Spalding said he graduated early because he "was chomping at the bit" to spend more time performing.

Among the instruments Spalding plays are the fiddle, five-string banjo, dulcimer, cittern (English guitar), nyckelharpa and hardingfele from Sweden and Norway, a replica of a 17th Century pocket fiddle and other ethnic and early-bowed string instruments. He has also studied and taught 17th and 19th Century dance, marlinspike seamanship and traditional skills and crafts.

His travels over the world include performing in Renaissance festivals from Texas to Europe. He has several recordings of his music and has scored music for three stage productions, including a performance of *The Glass Menagerie*.

Spalding was hired to direct the

See SPALDING, Page 5



Spalding finds North Carolina on globe in captain's quarters