



Don't Like The Weather? Wait Til Tomorrow

Weather Alternates Between Warm And Cold

By JACK GROVE

A Norfolk TV weatherman this week termed recent conditions "a ridiculous roller-coaster" and few in the Albemarle area would disagree with him.

The beginning of last week saw cold temperatures which gave way to highs in the 70's mid-week and then switched back to cold on Friday and into the weekend. A warming trend set in Sunday until Tuesday when thermometers were again registering in the 70's.

Clashes of warm, moist air coming in from the Atlantic and cooler, moist air from the west spawned severe thunderstorms and tornadoes in eastern North Carolina on Tuesday.

Forecasts Wednesday called for a return to cold weather today and tomorrow with a major snowstorm possible across the state.

Edenton saw a steady fall of sleet, mixed with rain most of Friday that turned into a steady snowfall by 5 p.m. Before it was over, as much as six to eight inches had fallen Friday and Saturday. Tidewater Virginia experienced 15.4 inches of snow.

A highway patrol dispatcher Friday evening said that all troopers and patrol sergeants were out working accidents. While the main highways were rapidly cleared and sanded, bridges iced over and secondary roads were the main source of accidents.

This week has been designated "Severe Weather Awareness Week." Wednesday was designated for a statewide tornado drill. That drill was not held locally. Too close to the real thing happened Tuesday.

The eastern part of the state was put under a Tornado Watch mid-day which lasted until 5 p.m. A "watch" indicates that conditions are favorable for the formation of tornadoes. An intense thunderstorm struck Chowan County between 1 and 2 p.m.

County emergency management coordinator Doug Belch notified the school system's central office shortly before 2 p.m. concerning the tornado watch. Associate Administrator James Kinion then notified schools over a one-way radio to implement tornado drill procedures.

Students were sent into hallways away from windows just before 2 p.m. John A. Holmes school secretary Ethel Lavoie said that students remained in the halls for 20 to 25 minutes. As the procedures were implemented at each school, telephone reports went back to the central office.

A spokesman for the school system said that all students took the procedures seriously and reacted quickly and in an orderly manner. "We got good results," she said.

Strong winds from the storm knocked over fences, tore sheet metal and shingles from some roofs, and brought down trees and tree limbs in the airport area of the county. There was also an unconfirmed report of a water spout in the Albemarle Sound near Cape Colony.

Boyce said that falling limbs caused power outages in the airport and Rocky Hock sections of the county.

Bertie EMS coordinator, William J. Smithwick said that there were two unconfirmed reports of tornadoes in his county. Asked if severe storm damage occurred, he replied, "Overall, no." He said that trees and some power lines were downed and some old outbuildings in the county were damaged. Also, "One

hog and one chicken house had some damage." Smithwick said that no injuries resulted and "We were pretty lucky." Tornadoes were reported in counties south and east of Raleigh.

Belch said that, while the statewide drill would be conducted Wednesday, Chowan County would not participate. He said that the schools' response Tuesday satisfied requirements. Wednesday he said, "They did an excellent job yesterday." Belch urged citizens sighting funnel clouds to report them immediately to the 911 communications center. He said that this would help confirm the presence of tornadoes and allow warning to adjacent areas of the dangerous storms.

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WINTER WEAR--The Courthouse Green wears a winter mantle of white after an overnight snow fall Saturday. The area received from six to eight inches in the largest snow of the winter season. More snow is predicted for today and tomorrow. (Photo by Pete Manning)

Roads Prove Treacherous

State highway patrolmen had their hands full on Friday and Saturday with accident investigations as drivers sought to cope, some unsuccessfully, with ice and snow on roadways.

Trooper W.F. Whitley estimated troopers investigated

eight to ten accidents in Chowan County over the snowy weekend. "There were several that went in the ditch and got themselves pulled out that were not reported," he noted.

Whitley said that most accident calls on Friday were

between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. "When the snow hit, it was right at the 5 o'clock rush."

Where accidents occurred, he said "People were going just a little too fast and hit the brakes. When they did, most of them lost control and hit the ditch. Most of them that I saw were either at the base of a hill or in a curve."

The number of accidents "certainly wasn't bad considering the rain, sleet and snow," the trooper commented.

One accident Whitley investigated was a two-vehicle pileup on the Crisanti Curve on Base Road at 5:40 p.m.

His report indicated that a 1984 Ford pickup truck driven by Aubry James, 41, of Route 4, Edenton, was traveling south when it entered the curve, skidded across the north-bound lane and collided head-on with a 1989 AMC passenger car driven by Frederick Powers, 38, of Route 4, Edenton.

Whitley said that James was driving at a greater than reasonable rate of speed and that Powers was traveling at a normal rate of speed.

James, a passenger, Na-

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Medics Assisted

Edenton Police were called in to render assistance to the Rescue Squad at 1:45 p.m. last Friday.

James B. Jones, 29, of 319 So. Broad Street, had collapsed in an upstairs apartment and squadsmen were unable to lift the rather large man on the stretcher. Officers assisted in getting the stretcher downstairs and into the ambulance.

Jones died shortly thereafter at Chowan Hospital. Acting Police Chief C.H. Williams said that preliminary autopsy results, relayed to him by Chowan Medical Examiner Dr. L.E. DeVine, indicated that Jones died of natural causes involving a blood clot.

Williams said Wednesday that the complete autopsy from Pitt Memorial Hospital had not as yet been received.

While Away, Family Loses Home, Possessions

Fire ravaged the home of Ernest Swanner, Jr. and his family at Chowan Beach Saturday morning. The family was in Hampton, Va. at the time of the blaze which destroyed the home and most of their personal possessions.

Swanner's parents live next door on the main road at Chowan Beach and Ernest, Sr. spotted the smoke at 6:30 a.m. After notifying the Center Hill-Cross Roads Fire Dept. he rushed next door and turned off propane gas tanks.

Firemen had to battle weather conditions in bringing the blaze under control. A tanker made as many as nine trips to a hydrant near the entrance to Chowan Beach to replenish. Snow clogged roads reportedly made it difficult in reaching the hydrant.

The fire is believed to have

been caused by a battery eliminator to a tape recorder that had been plugged in behind the Swanner's bed board.

Jerri Swanner said that she, her husband and two children went to Hampton Friday to conduct business and visit her parents. "And then snow trapped us."

Ernest Swanner said that he received a call from his brother Saturday morning with the cryptic questions of "Where was I and how much money did I have?" Then he

was told, "You've got major problems. He simply said, 'Don't hurry home. The house has burned down,'" Swanner continued.

Jerri Swanner said that, when told of the fire, "It took me a couple of minutes and then I sat down and cried." She said that she realized that she had lost all of their baby memorabilia. It was the "sentimental losses" that counted most, her husband added.

Mrs. Swanner said that it was difficult to "see everything turn to dust." Among

personal possessions lost were 100-year-old lithographs, baby books, including her husband's, her personal computer that "melted down" as well as all of the family's clothing, furniture and other household goods.

One thing salvaged was Ernest Swanner's personal computer that was housed in a recent two-story addition to the house which was untouched by flames.

Swanner said of the fire, "I was underinsured." He said that he had been in the process of increasing the house insurance but didn't do it in time. For others, he recommended that "sufficient coverage should be arranged annually."

Meanwhile, he was philosophical. "We'll live through it, I'm sure."

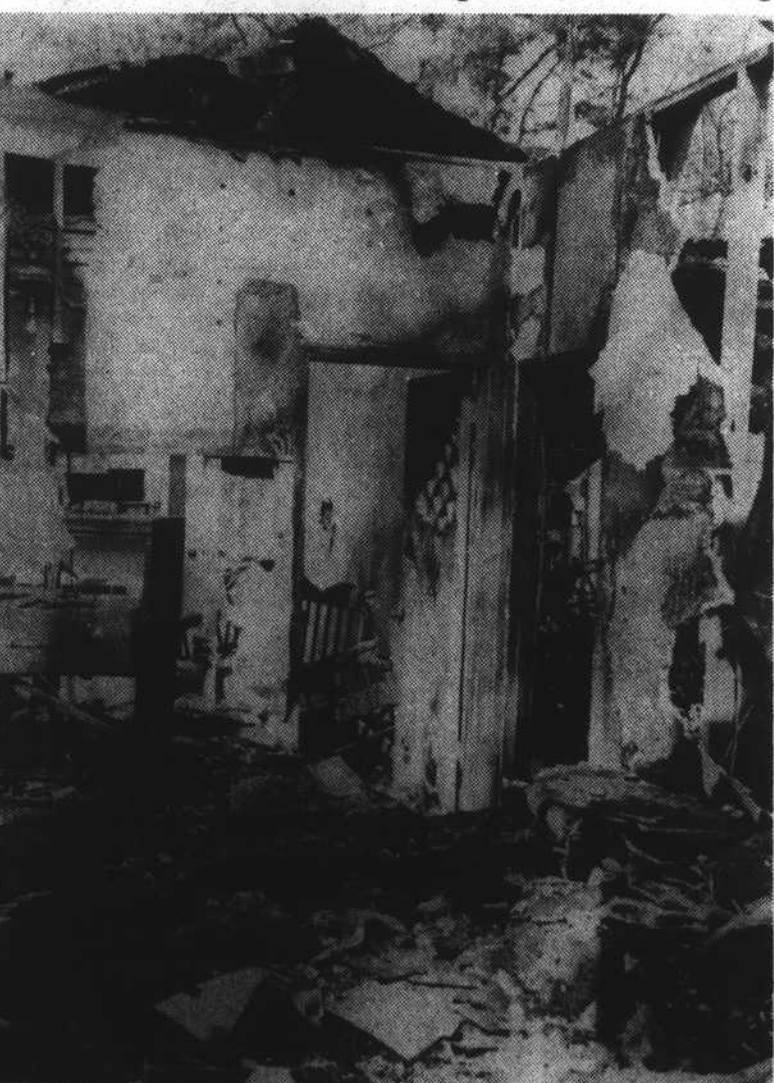
Jerri Swanner believes the loss has brought the family even closer together with her husband's parents. "They have really come through when the chips are down. When we've needed help in the past they've always been there. They've always helped us before."

Friends of the family want to help also. They are asking the public to donate clothing, blankets, a single bed, books for an 11-year-old, an infant's high chair, cookwear, utensils, dishes and other household items. Drop-off points for these articles have been established at the WZBO radio station on Paradise Road and The Cock's Roost at Small's Cross Roads on N.C. 32 north.

Clothing is needed for a 5-month-old baby boy, sizes 18 to 24 months and shoe size, 3.

The 11-year-old boy wears sizes 14 to 16, shirts and pants and 6 to 6 and a half for shoes.

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GONE--All of the personal possessions and household goods of the Ernest Swanner, Jr. family were lost on Saturday morning when their house was destroyed by fire at Chowan Beach. They were in Hampton, Va. at the time of the blaze.

Time For Tradeoff

As long as we were in the legislature we always voted against giving the governor veto power. We felt so strongly about it that we were not willing to submit the issue, which requires a constitutional amendment, to a vote of the people.

And, except for Jim Holsouser's term, that was when we routinely had Democrats for governor, every one of which sought the authority to veto legislation. Back then the governor had a virtual veto on legislation before it was passed. If you introduced a bill the governor didn't like, you were going to have a heck of a time trying to get it through against his seemingly unlimited supply of green stamps.

Now that we have become a two-party state -- at least insofar as the governor's office is concerned -- we have changed our mind somewhat. We have come to feel it might be helpful to give the governor general veto power. It not only might help to keep the legislature on its toes, but it would become a means of holding the governor accountable for his actions.

As things now stand, it is possible for a governor to pick and choose among the actions he wants to take credit for or put himself at a distance from -- all after the legislative horse is out of the barn. If he had to sign every bill before it becomes law or refuse to sign the ones he does not want to become law, then he leaves a paper trail that is difficult to deny.

We do not believe the governor ought to be given the authority to veto only parts of bills. For example, he ought not to be able to go into the budget bill and take out a line appropriating funds for renovating a historic site in Edenton just because similar funds were not made available for a project in Wilmington. With a line item veto, he could do just that. And, in a way, that is the very sort of thing they criticized Billy Watkins for doing in reverse. In either case, it would be a way of holding individual legislators in line.

Nor do we believe the veto should be made too difficult to override. The proposed bill under consideration in the senate would make it possible for three-fifths of those pre-

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State Awards Given

Out of 34 awards presented to groups and individuals in the state for participation in "Take Pride in America", representatives of Chowan County came home from Raleigh with three firsts, an honorable mention and a special award.

A first went to Edenton's American Legion Post 40, sponsor of the annual county fair. The fair's theme was the same "Take Pride in America." The theme was carried out in many of the display booths at the fair.

Tony Copeland, a John A. Holmes student, who was accompanied by his parents, picked up a first place award in the individual youth category.

The Pembroke Cloverbuds 4-H Club received a first place

in the youth organization category for adopting and keeping clean a local park. They were represented by Jeremy Ashton, Alton Wilder, Caren Roberts and Brian Ward along with adult leaders Fran Ward and Cherrie Martin.

Receiving the honorable mention was White Oak School for the recently completed nature trail constructed at the school. The school was represented by Krista Perry and Malinda McGlone.

A special award, the Lathan F. Smith Award, went to Roger Spivey and Fran Ward for outstanding promotion of Take Pride in America on the local level.

These award winners were responsible for Chowan County's having more winners than any other county in the state.