



Bad News In Double Dose

Fortunately nobody lined up to shoot the bearer of bad news last week when the Chowan Herald carried two stories nobody along The Public Parade enjoyed reading. One told of plans to close the Bayliner boat plant and the other added another chapter in the long record of pollution of the Chowan river.

U.S. Marine, parent company of Bayliner, one of Chowan's major industries, revealed in a press release that the boat manufacturing facility would close permanently on September 10. It is always bad news when a good pay roll is lost in a small community, due to no fault of its own.

But this is not the first time Edenton has suffered an industrial setback, nor will it be the last. We are confident the community will bounce back, that good people such as the Bayliner workers will not be left without a job for long.

Bad as the Bayliner closing will prove to be, word that the Chowan river's high level of dioxin is worse. Little comfort can be taken from the fact that both the Trent and Neuse are also affected. State environmental authorities say the hazard to health is such that warning signs may have to be posted and the Chowan closed to fishing for catfish and other bottom feeders.

This is a problem that has been developing for more than a decade, beginning with algae blooms and building to the present situation. The algae problem was attributed to nutrient-rich agricultural run-offs, aided by waste from a fertilizer manufacturing plant located upstream.

But the source of the current burden of dioxin was not revealed in news accounts furnished Chowan residents on

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Paper Mills Pointed To As Source Of Dioxin

By JACK GROVE

Interviews with industry and state officials point a finger at the pulp mill industry as the source of dioxin in the Chowan River.

Joe Stutts, spokesman for Union Camp, a paper company with a mill on the Blackwater River at Franklin, Va., acknowledged that the chlorine bleaching process used by his company, produces dioxin as a by-product in the effluent released from the plant into the Blackwater which empties into the Chowan.

He said that Union Camp has developed an exclusive process to replace chlorine bleaching which will eliminate dioxin dumping and will also reduce water use in the process by as much as 70 per cent.

The new process, which uses oxygen and ozone, will

replace three of four chlorine lines. He said the fourth will process only hardwoods and the dioxin discharge will only be 1.2 parts per quadrillion in that line.

The ozone bleaching process is expected to be in operation by 1992. It will cost Union Camp \$158 million, Stutts said.

He noted that his company has been taking fish samples from waters from Franklin to the Chowan River Bridge since last summer. Catfish from eight selected spots are caught, filets ground up and frozen and sent to two labs, one in California and one at Research Triangle Park. There they are tested for dioxin.

Stutts noted, "We're not required to do this testing. It's strictly voluntary." He said that reports are sent to Virgin-

ia state officials with a "courtesy copy" to North Carolina.

He noted that figures used in recent press articles coincided exactly with figures provided to this state. One sample taken at the Chowan River Bridge at Edenton showed 57.5 parts per trillion of dioxin, far above the percentage that a state study said could be safely ingested by humans on a regular basis.

Stutts said that his company had spent "hundreds of thousands of dollars" on their voluntary testing program. He said that it was premature to sound warnings about eating fish since there were "statistical problems" in that not enough samples had yet been analyzed to produce reliable health forecasts.

While the State of North Carolina is also conducting some testing, "It appears that

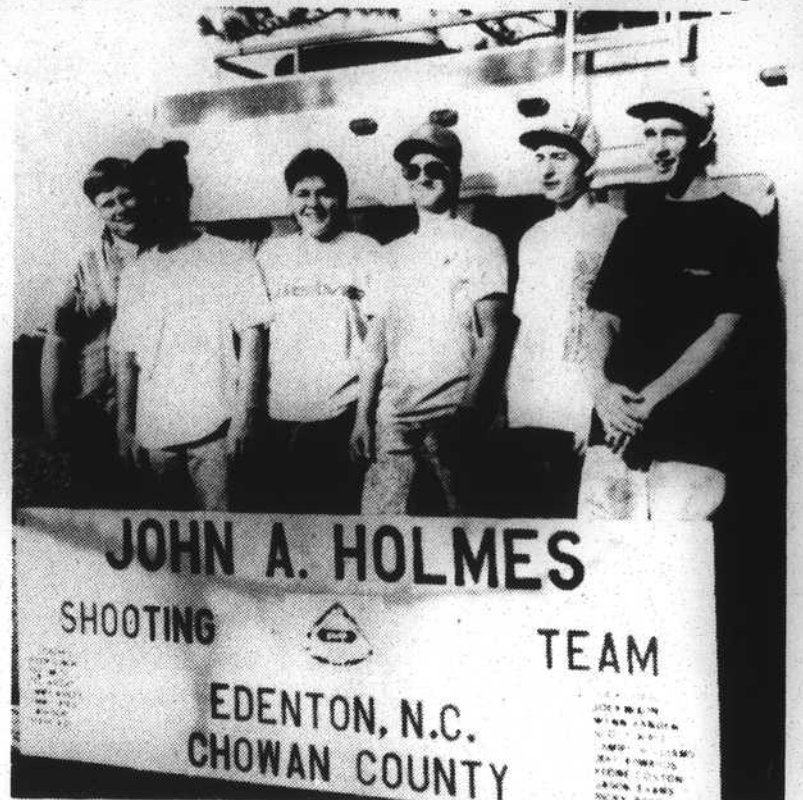
we're doing the bulk of the sampling," Stutts said.

In response to a request from The Chowan Herald, the N.C. Division of Environmental Management's Public

Information Officer, Debbie Crane, provided a copy of the state's study.

In her cover letter, Ms. Crane noted that the study's

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SHARPSHOOTERS -- Members of the John A. Holmes High School senior shooting team are shown prior to their departure to Grenada, Mississippi, where they competed in a national meet. They returned on July 28, bringing honor to their state and school. Traveling in Carroll Byrum's Winnebago, (left to right) Sammy Williams, Joey Byrum, Scott Waff, Joey Nixon, Wynn VanDuyn, and Jeff Edwards made sure Edenton and Chowan County were publicized from here to Mississippi. (Staff photo by Marguerite McCall.)

Toxin Problem Discussed

Town and county officials traveled to Raleigh on July 19 to meet with state officials after press reports that dioxin, believed to be a carcinogen, was building up to dangerous levels in fish, especially catfish and other bottom feeding fish, in the Chowan River. The reports indicated that the state might post warning signs on the suspected hazard or even post signs prohibiting fishing.

Among the local officials attending the meeting were Town Manager Anne-Marie Kelly, Mayor John Dowd, County Manager Cliff Copeland and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Richard Bunch. Commercial fishing interests were represented by J.D. Peele and Ricky Nixon. State Rep. R.M. (Pete) Thomson of Chowan also attended.

Fourteen state officials who

were there included, Sec. William Cobey of the Dept. of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, William Hogarth, Director of Marine Fisheries and George Everett, Director of the Division of Environmental Management (DEM).

Ms. Kelly said last week, "The main purpose was to find out exactly what was going to happen." She said that the DEM had determined that federal guidelines for risk assessments of dioxin contamination of fish were not satisfactory.

The federal guidelines say that warnings should be issued if dioxin levels are from between 25 and 50 parts per trillion. A state study recommended that the warnings should be issued when levels are from three to 30 parts per trillion. Levels above 30 would call for health adviso-

ries against consumption of the fish.

The local contingent was told that studies were incomplete and that more data needed to be obtained, requiring more testing of fish samples.

"They (state officials) recognized the problem that had been created by the (statewide) publicity" from the study, produced by state toxicologist Dr. Ken Rudo. The publicity was attributed to "a tenacious reporter" and was first published in a Winston-Salem newspaper and picked up and distributed by the Associated Press.

Ms. Kelly said that the local delegation was promised prior notification of additional information or further actions by the state in the future. She said that Mayor Dowd had emphasized "that we want to be part of the dialogue."

The local fishermen "gave very persuasive statements about the impact on their livelihoods," the town manager reported. Ricky Nixon of Murray L. Nixon Fishery, she said, told the state offi-

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Team Takes 2nd At Nat'l Competition

The John A. Holmes High School senior shooting team brought further honor to the school during last week's National Shooting Competition in Grenada, Mississippi.

Regarding the five events held, the team placed first in archery, third in a written test (a 100 question test counting 2.5 points per question), tied for third in rifle, fourth in shotgun (trap shooting), and fourth in the hunter trail course (a test for alertness on wildlife, hunting, and tracking).

"Each boy could score a

possible 250 points in each event," said Ray Smith, a team coach. "There were 22 teams from six states, with four on a team.

"Our team, which placed second in the state competition, represented North Carolina. In the overall scoring, Virginia came in first with 3977.5 points, North Carolina placed second with 3627.5 points, and Mississippi finished third with 3575 points. Utah, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania also competed."

Although the entire team

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Clark Purchases Flying Service

First you hear the sound of the engine as it grows louder and then the single-seat plane appears low over the trees, crosses power lines, dives toward the ground and levels off over a cotton crop with its spray nozzles open, dealing death to insect pests.

This is the crop duster or, as some prefer, "aerial applicator" of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and even seed.

Even though there are several flying services in the area that provide agricultural spraying and dusting, a 1972 silver Cessna "Ag-Wagon," with Mike Clark at the controls, is likely the one you will see in Chowan County.

Clark purchased the Whitfield Flying Service, based in Rocky Hock, in mid-June. The former owner, Fred Whitfield of Roanoke Rapids, operated the business for seven years. Clark joined the

company in its second year as the primary pilot.

The plane is operated from a landing strip located on Rocky Hock Road near the entrance to Arrowhead Beach.

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PULLOUT--A Cessna Ag-Wagon pulls out after a spraying run with insecticide over a cotton field just off of U.S. 17 North. The plane is piloted by Mike Clark.

Electrical Interruption

Some town residents and businesses were without electricity for a short time Tuesday afternoon due to an electrical fire in a junction box on Water Street next to Edenton Office Supply.

Power was disrupted in a several block area surrounding the junction box from 4:40 p.m. to 6:34 p.m.

The Edenton Fire Dept. extinguished the blaze after the cover was removed by Utilities personnel. It took Utilities workers less than two hours to replace electrical connectors and restore power.

Double Taxation Topic Of Joint Meeting

In what may have been the first-ever official meeting of the two boards, Edenton Town Council met jointly with the Chowan Board of County Commissioners at the Swain Senior Center Tuesday evening.

The only topic for the session was town-county agreements on joint funding of projects.

After County Manager Cliff Copeland and Town Manager Anne-Marie Kelly gave summaries of their budgets, Mayor John Dowd launched into a presentation, using a flip chart, on "the concept of double taxation."

Using bar graphs he pointed to the recreation department and 911 emergency that both political entities contribute to. Pointing out the town and county's share, he said that about 35 per cent of the cited agencies' revenues came from taxes of town citizens paid as county taxes.

The recreation budget drew immediate reaction from commissioners. Alton Elmore and Pete Dail indicated that the county might not have the greatest interest in that funding. Commissioner Joe Hollowell noted, "Our priorities are more necessity type items" as opposed to "quality of life items."

"That's why we didn't come in demanding something from you," Dowd replied. He explained that town-

county mutual cooperation, already established, was important to the council.

"There must be some dissatisfaction or we wouldn't even be discussing it," Hollowell countered. Dowd told him that the purpose was to bring the subjects up and let the commissioners go back and talk about them.

"I don't think anybody can argue about double taxation," offered Dail.

In addition to 911 and recreation, Dowd laid the following subjects on the table:

- Fire Dept. - Dowd told commissioners, "We're here tonight to ask for your help in capital outlay." He noted that a very expensive fire truck was needed, a truck that the city is funding little by little over several years. Elmore acknowledged that the truck was needed but that perhaps a no-frills truck would reduce the cost;

- Tax collections - (As a cost-saving measure, the county is now handling collections for the town.) Dowd asked the county to re-evaluate the cost to the county for collecting the town taxes. He said that he believed that county's bill to the town of one and a half per cent of collections was to include start-up costs associated with computer software which is now paid for;

- The mayor asked the

commission board to "look at" sharing ABC operation revenues.

As the discussion between the two boards progressed, Councilman Willis Privott suggested that the meeting not adjourn before a future meeting date be set. Mayor Dowd said that the established town-county committee, which would consider the issues, should set the time table.

Councilman Roy Harrell prefaced his remarks by saying that he felt that he was speaking for the council but maybe not. Concerning the issues on the table, "We're not talking about next year's budget. We are expecting a finalization" after the joint committee does its work.

Dowd noted that the councilman was certainly not speaking for him. He said that the joint meeting and the town-county committee work might be setting the groundwork for the next fiscal year's budget for each board. "Any unplanned for expenditure upsets the (current) budget," he observed.

Turning to commissioners, the mayor stated, "Recreation is a two-fold program. I wish you'd look at it as not just desirable." He noted that the recreation program gave an alternative to kids who might otherwise turn to drugs.

The county manager said

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