

News from across the state

Burlington Daily Times-News:

Washington Daily News:

Alleged arsonist says blaze was accident

BURLINGTON (Nov. 2): — A Haw River man took the witness stand Thursday in an attempt to prove he is innocent of burning down his house in order to receive insurance money.

The defendant, Thomas Hudgins, claimed that the fire, which occurred thirty minutes after he and his family left to go out of town, was an accident and suggested that an electric heater may have been the culprit. The state, however, contends that Hudgins set fire to the house because he was three months behind in his mortgage payments and was on the verge of foreclosure. Supporting the state is the insurance company, which said that Hudgins had filed for \$30,000 in claims for merchandise lost in the fire, some of which was apparently undamaged.

High Point Enterprise:

Voters in High Point precinct preserve record

HIGH POINT (Nov. 7): — Voters in High Point's Precinct 13 have a long history of voting with the winners in national and state elections, and Tuesday they kept the tradition alive by picking all the winners again. Well, almost all.

The small southside precinct, which counts only 802 registered voters, picked correctly in all the major races and only missed in the race for lieutenant governor, where the voters supported John Carrington. Reagan received 70 percent, Helms 63 percent, Martin 63 percent and Howard Coble 57 percent of the vote in the precinct. Even in the race for the N.C. House, the precinct was right on the ball, supporting Richard Chalk and Steve Wood, the eventual victors.

Statesville Record and Landmark:

\$1.2 million project set

STATESVILLE (Nov. 1): — Groundbreaking ceremonies were held Wednesday for a \$1.2 million addition to the John Boyle and Co. plant, with completion of the project expected by June of next year.

William Pitt, president of the company, said the new facility would allow expansion of the company's production of knitted fabrics and expressed the hope that the expansion would eventually result in the addition of 25 employees to the Boyle workforce. "We have a lot of good people working for us, and we are continuing to grow," Pitt said. The new facility includes a wastewater treatment plant in addition to the manufacturing building.

Former Texasgulf employee criticizes proposal

WASHINGTON (Nov. 7): — How often do the discussions of a governing body in eastern N.C. touch on the affairs of a powerful European nation? Well, it happened Tuesday night at a meeting of the Beaufort County Board of Commissioners.

Texasgulf Chemicals Co. wants to issue \$20 million in tax-free bonds to finance the upgrading of its pollution control systems at the Lee Creek operation. But Hood Richardson, a former Texasgulf employee, told the board that granting the bond request would, instead of helping the people of Beaufort County, grant "financial favors to the socialist-communist government of France." Richardson claimed that the interest these bonds would save for Texasgulf would accrue to the French government since 67 percent of Texasgulf's parent company, Elf Aquitaine, is owned by the government of France. His arguments apparently did not sway the board, however, because after the hearing the commissioners adopted a resolution approving the project in principle and forwarding the matter to the N.C. Commerce Department.

The Sanford Herald:

Martin's Lee showing is surprising to many

SANFORD (Nov. 7): — Over the last three months, Rufus Edmisten's forces in Lee County had put together a political organization which had been heralded as the best organized, most energetic and enthusiastic in years. That's what made Jim Martin's victory over Edmisten in Lee County so bitterly surprising.

Edmisten's campaign manager David Riddle was gracious in defeat and commended the Martin forces in Lee County for what he called "an exceptional job." Martin's Lee manager Dennis Foushee said that Martin's victory was due to his positive campaign and his willingness to talk about the issues. Foushee also praised the Lee County Republican Women for "their tireless efforts to get out the vote." The key to the victory, however, was the crossover of Democratic voters, and in the end, neither organization had much control over that.

— Compiled by Jim Surowiecki

Education Secretary Bell resigns post

From Associated Press reports

News in Brief

WASHINGTON — Education Secretary T.H. Bell yesterday announced his resignation from the Reagan Cabinet, lauding what he called "the remarkable success" the administration had achieved in spurring school reforms.

Bell, the first member of the Cabinet to step down after President Reagan's landslide re-election, said at a news conference that "we're involved in a real renaissance in American education... but we're not there yet."

Bell said, "A four-year hitch is a long time." He said he was leaving on Dec. 31 for personal reasons.

Shuttle birthday candle for astronaut

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Space shuttle Discovery soared into orbit yesterday and set off in hot pursuit of two wayward satellites beginning a 1.6 million-mile chase to snare the fast-moving targets and bring them home

for salvage.

After a 23-hour delay because of fierce winds aloft, the shuttle and its four-man, one-woman crew, lifted off from the Kennedy Space Center only 70 milliseconds late. "We look good," said astronaut Rick Hauck, the mission commander.

"That was a tremendous ascent, we really enjoyed it," astronaut Dale Gardner told Mission Control. Gardner turned 36 yesterday, and Hauck had promised "the biggest birthday candle of his life."

The others in Hauck's crew are pilot David Walker and mission specialists Anna Fisher and Joe Allen.

The money-making work of the eight-day flight begins this afternoon with the launch of a communications satellite for Telesat, a firm owned jointly by the Canadian government and private industry.

Clean-up of state chemical wastes concerns some

By KEVIN WASHINGTON
Staff Writer

In 1976, members of the sleepy suburban community of Niagara Falls, N.Y., seemed to enjoy quiet lives beyond the city's dirt and pollution.

But as the year closed, residents became increasingly concerned about the oozing slimes in their basements and the stench in the air children had complained of for years.

As the months passed, they began to compare notes on the health of neighborhood families. Four mothers in the same block gave birth to children with serious birth defects. Miscarriages, nervous disorders, liver ailments and kidney disease were found to be above the national average.

By mid-1977, the story of Love Canal was slowly unfolding. Buried by the Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation in the 1930s and 1940s, more than 100 chemical compounds — 11 known carcinogens — had begun to leak from rusted and corroded drums long before the community's school and homes graced the landscape.

When New York state authorities evacuated 239 families from Love Canal on Aug. 2, 1978, hazardous waste dumping and landfilling became for many, the environmental issue of the coming decade.

And hazardous waste dumping has become a serious environmental issue in North Carolina.

For example, in northern Durham, 14 families on Ryan and Monk streets were advised not to use their well water this summer because of contamination from a septic tank filled with the drycleaning fluid tetrachloroethylene since 1972. The chemical is a carcinogen.

"Many of the hazardous waste problems we are encountering now have to do with environmental damage from earlier legal operations," according to Bryant Haskins, spokesman for the N.C. Department of Human Resources.

"Industry is very closely scrutinized today, but a few years ago people didn't know what we know today about the chemical hazards," he said. "In the 1930s, industry's ability to use chemicals outstripped its ability to dispose of waste by-products."

"In fact, all kinds of things went into

sanitary landfills including hazardous waste.

"People basically threw their hazardous waste in the field until regulations came along in 1976, 1978 and 1980."

Haskins said the Love Canal tragedy produced at least one conclusion: Dumping is the worst way to deal with the problem. In addition to the problems a dump may present to a community located directly over it, buried chemicals often leach into the surface water and ground water destroying the surrounding ecosystem.

At the request of the state's Governor's Waste Management Board, a coordinating board for the state's waste management policies, the Tracor-Jitco company performed an analysis of the state's industrial waste, in which landfilling was addressed:

"Secure landfills cannot substitute for other waste treatment technologies such as waste volume reduction, recovery, treatment or destruction. The many environmental problems and unknowns associated with landfilling make it a disposal option that should be minimized in the face of alternative technologies."

Problems with past chemical dumping forced Congress to pass the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, commonly called the Superfund. The act authorized the Environmental Protection Agency to spend up to \$1.6 billion to clean up toxic dumps claimed by no one — often called 'orphan dumps'.

Superfund money is used to clean up a site for which an owner can not immediately be found. The cost of cleanup is, hopefully, recovered from the owner.

More than 22,000 Superfund sites may ultimately be discovered nationwide, according to the EPA. Of the 350 cleanups begun, only six have been completed.

One site, located in North Carolina, was the cleanup of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) illegally dumped along 210 miles of state roads in 14 counties. The soil was scooped up and buried in a Warren County landfill at a cost of \$2.5 million to the state and the EPA. The landfill, located near a small, predominantly black community called Afton, sparked a bitter series of

protests in the fall 1982 when it became the first official hazardous waste dump created since Love Canal.

Because of the slow cleanups, environmentalists in the state maintain that present action by the EPA and the state is not enough.

"The North Carolina hazardous waste program falls far short of what is needed," said Bill Holman, lobbyist for the N.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club. "We need to clean up the state's dumps."

He said one bill, proposed during the General Assembly's short session this summer, would have allowed the DHR to have a state Superfund. It was killed by industry.

In addition, the resignation of Anne Burford, the former EPA director accused of mismanaging the Superfund, and EPA Assistant Administrator Lee Thomas' statement that Superfund cleanup collection sites were leaking waste into groundwater, prompted environmentalists to say that the EPA is asleep on the job in North Carolina.

But, Frank Moore, an environmental engineer with the N.C. Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Branch, said the nationwide EPA situation doesn't apply to the state. "In fact, there are no real 'orphan dumps,'" Moore said. "We know who owns every supposed 'orphan' dump site in North Carolina. In reality, these sites are uncontrolled hazardous waste disposal sites."

Today, North Carolina has three sites on the EPA National Priority List, he said: the PCB spill, one in the Blue Ridge Mountains and one in Charlotte. The PCB spill is cleaned up, and the other two sites come under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 which applies to active hazardous waste treatment facilities instead of waste dumps, he explained.

Haskins said the number of hazardous waste dumps falling in the orphan dump category was smaller than first believed. "When a survey was done a few years ago, this state, it was thought, had 600 orphan dumps," he said, "but as we went back to review the data, we found that we had duplicated some of the sites and the listing was inadequate. Now we think the list is much more accurate at 130."

Moore added, "Of the first 100 we reviewed, 70 to 80 percent weren't hazardous waste dump sites."

Several sites had also been cleaned up, including ones at the Lenoir Refining Company and the Plymouth Wood Treating Company. The Plymouth cleanup cost \$250,000, all of which was paid by the EPA.

H. Lee Mittelstadt, spokeswoman for the Hazardous Waste Branch, said the EPA had been quite responsive to the state's hazardous waste program.

"When we call EPA," she said, "they're here the next day determining just how much of a threat the problem poses to the public health, and we haven't been turned down yet."

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