



AWARD—Clarence William Page, formerly of Raeford, an employee with the Prudential Insurance Co., has been awarded Prudential's Community Service Award for 1976. Page, a division manager with the Gibraltar Agency, is shown receiving the award from Kenneth C. Nichols, senior vice-president. As part of the overall award, \$100 checks from Prudential to the United Negro College Fund and North Carolina A&T State University were presented to Page.



ENERGETIC—A new addition to the Hoke County Recreation Department's summer program is slimnastics, an exercise class for all energetic folks. A vital part of the program is jogging, and these ladies here are moving toward the end of another lap.

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Wildlife Afield

By Jim Dean

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

When the handsome little spike buck walked out into the creek in front of me, my first reaction was, "Oh no, not again."

Ordinarily, I'd be thrilled to get a good, close look at a deer. The average person would be scrambling for a camera or making noises like, "Aw, ain't that sweet."

Not me. No siree bob. Not anymore. I feel about deer the same way a sick man feels about angels.

For some reason, whitetail deer have a grudge against me. I don't understand why unless it's because I like the taste of venison. But even that seems insufficient grounds for the nefarious, underhanded, evil and totally mind-bending methods they use to gain their sweet revenge.

It's going to sound corny, but for at least seven years, I have been the victim of a cruel practical joke. I never see a deer when I am hunting deer, but I almost invariably see deer when I am fishing.

All I have to do is to think about going deer hunting and a quarter of million whitetails in Eastern North Carolina move to tidewater Virginia. Deer hunting friends bite their tongues when the mere thought of inviting me on a hunt crosses their minds. They pray that they be cleansed of such abstract fancy.

On the other hand, I cannot remember the last time I went fishing without seeing a deer. I believe I could wet a line in the bathtub and a four-pointer would come charging through the loose tile like a Schlitz bull.

Just like spring, I was stalking a sizeable brown trout that was feeding in the pool ahead of me. I had just gotten into position to make the critical cast when a Point buck did a belly flop off the bank right smack on top of where the trout had just taken a mayfly. Ironically, the fly I was about to use is called an Irresistible. It is tied primarily with deer hair.

On another recent occasion, I was casting topwater plugs for bass along the shoreline of a big Piedmont lake. I had just made a cast to a very likely looking spot when three deer walked out on the bank not 30 feet from me. They stood around casually waiting to see what I was going to do. At that exact moment, a largemouth bass as thick as a fireplug struck my forgotten plug. It sounded like a wing-shot MIG ditching in the Tonkin Gulf. I missed him clean -- never even felt him.

A few weeks ago, I was heading for Harkers Island to try to catch a king mackerel at Cape Lookout. There are, so far as I know, no deer on Cape Lookout. However, as I passed through the Cherry Point Marine Air Station, a large doe leaped out from behind a tree and passed through my headlight

beams only a few feet in front of the car. She looked like a moose. I swerved and came within a hair of mowing down 42 mailboxes. Maybe now you see why I was not

unduly overjoyed to see that spike buck prance out into the stream in front of me. And yet, even though I should have known better, I stood motionless so as not to frighten my curious companion. He came closer, sniffing and looking. Brer Dean, he lay low.

The deer was now only a rod length away. He began to circle me, still showing no fear. I carefully began to twist around so that I could watch him. Suddenly, the rock I was standing on rolled over. I scrambled wildly to keep my balance. It was no use.

A moment later I was sitting neck deep in 50-degree water watching the deer saunter off down the creek. He stopped only once, to watch my hat go over a low falls, then he stepped briskly into the woods. Mission accomplished.



DANIEL H. DeVANE



FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER

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