



**Barn Explosion**

"It was all gone when we got there," said Sprunt Hall of the Faison Fire Department. A charred foundation, pieces of tin, and ashes are all that remain of the

McGowan tobacco barn. An explosion and fire destroyed the frame building Friday about 10:45 in the morning. Two men were burned, and one died as a result. (see story)

## Faison Man Dies, Another Hurt In Tobacco Barn Blast

One man has died and another was seriously burned when leaking gas exploded in a tobacco barn near Faison.

James Gerald McGowan, 63, of Route 2, Faison, died at about 10 a.m. Saturday at the Jaycee Burn Center at N.C. Memorial Hospital in Chapel Hill, a hospital spokesman said.

McGowan and a Bowdens man, Otto Hill, apparently tried to light a gas burner used to heat tobacco in McGowan's barn Friday morning when an explosion ripped through the building, destroying it.

Duplin County emergency services coordinator Hiram Brinson, who

investigated the accident Saturday, said Hill apparently had been standing near the door and was blown out of the barn.

He said Hill entered the burning rubble twice in an effort to save McGowan, who was pinned beneath a wooden beam. On the second trip Hill pulled McGowan out, put him in a truck and drove to a nearby house for help.

Both men were taken by private vehicle to Sampson Memorial Hospital before fire and rescue units arrived at about 11 a.m., said Faison Fire Chief Glen Jernigan. He said the two men were later flown by helicopter to the Chapel Hill burn

center, where Hill is in serious condition.

Fire and emergency services investigators picked through the debris Saturday to determine the cause of the blast. Jernigan said an LP gas tank outside the barn had not ruptured and that the explosion was probably caused by gas that had leaked inside the structure. He said the lighter-than-air gas had probably risen to the top of the barn.

Fire officials did not realize the fire had been caused by an explosion until they arrived, Jernigan said.

"You couldn't tell it had been a tobacco barn," Brinson said of the wreckage that remained.

## Defendant Sentenced To Death In Warsaw Murder

Russell Holden Jr., 31, of Warsaw was sentenced to death last week on Thursday by the Duplin County Superior Court jury that found him guilty of first degree murder.

The jury had a choice between sentencing Holden to death or to life imprisonment. It deliberated an hour and 10 minutes after receiving instructions from Judge Henry L. Stevens, District Attorney William Andrews said.

An appeal of the sentence to the N.C. Supreme Court is automatic.

Holden was taken to Central Prison in Raleigh Thursday afternoon.

Holden was convicted Friday of attempted rape and murdering

Vanessa Jones, 17, of Warsaw. Her body was found March 16 in a cornfield outside Warsaw.

The sentencing hearing opened Tuesday afternoon. The defense lawyers, Reginald Kenan of Warsaw and Graham Phillips of Wallace, contended that mitigating circumstances should moderate the sentence. They said Holden had no significant history of criminal activity.

The prosecution presented evidence that Holden had been convicted of attempted rape in 1982 and that he once said the next woman he raped would be killed so she wouldn't be able to identify him.

Two women testified that Holden had raped them but that they did not

report it. Three other prosecution witnesses testified Holden had attempted to assault them.

Among key elements in the state's presentation during the murder trial were a pair of torn suspenders, a portion of which was found under the victim's feet and the other in Holden's possession, and a spent cartridge found at the death site. The cartridge was identified as having been fired in a gun found in Holden's possession.

Andrews said Duplin County Chief Deputy Glen Jernigan, State Bureau of Investigation Agent John Payne and Assistant District Attorney Dewey Hudson interviewed 75 witnesses during the murder investigation.

## Faison Board Adopts Town Personnel Policy

Faison is just one of many municipalities which have recently adopted a personnel policy setting work hours, rates of pay, and overtime procedures for its employees.

The policy adopted by the Faison Board last week was written to comply with federal fair labor standards. Faison Commissioner Bill Igoe was assisted by John Blane, compliance officer of the federal Wage and Hour division in Goldsboro in drafting the policy.

According to the policy, town public works employees will punch a time-clock and be paid per hour of work at a rate not less than the current federal minimum wage. The town clerk will fill out a daily time sheet and be paid per hour of work at a rate not less than the current federal minimum wage. Overtime will begin after an employee has worked 40 hours during a week. The policy stated no compensatory time would be granted instead of overtime payment. Exempt from the overtime policy is the town public works director and the police officers. The personnel policy was adopted with the effective date April 11, 1985.

Continuing efforts to connect town residences along available sewer lines, the board authorized Town Clerk Hazel Kelly to bill all customers along the system whether

connected or not. After a letter campaign requesting connection to the system, only five homes along the line remain unconnected to the sewer lines. The board moved to begin billing the unconnected homes for the minimum charge.

On the request of Faison Commissioner Melvin Rogers, the board unanimously agreed to honor a retiring town businessman by proclaiming "Roscoe Cooper Day."

A date was not set, but the events of the day will be organized by Commissioner Rogers and Faison Commissioner Jane Hollingsworth. Cooper is a former cafe operator from which he sold a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits. He is said to have operated the business about 60 years at its current location in downtown Faison. Cooper officially closed his cafe last Wednesday.

### Duplin Candidates File

Seven candidates have filed for Duplin County town offices through last Wednesday, the county elections office reported. The filing period for municipal elections Nov. 5 began the week before and will continue to noon Sept. 20.

Jimmy D. Newkirk, a Kenansville town commissioner, has filed as a candidate for mayor.

Those filing for re-election are:

- Wallace Mayor Earl Whitaker and town Commissioner Luther Powell.
- Rose Hill Mayor Ben Harrell and Commissioner Felton Rackley
- Faison Mayor N.F. McColeman.
- Warsaw Commissioner W.E. Foster.

## Duplin To Experiment With After-School Child Care

"Latchkey children" in Duplin County soon will have an alternative to spending school day afternoons in an empty home.

A two-year pilot program to provide after-school care to children of working parents will begin in North Duplin Elementary School Sept. 16.

The Duplin County Board of Education agreed Tuesday of last week to provide these children with 2½ hours of supervision after each regular school day.

The county will provide \$9,707 worth of services as its share of the program's annual cost of \$41,384. The remainder of the money will come from state and federal sources.

One teacher will be provided for every 25 children. The plan requires four teachers at \$10 an hour and four teacher aides at \$4.53 an hour for 2.5 hours a day for 180 days.

"Latchkey children" are those

who return from school to empty homes because their parents work.

A survey of 492 elementary school children in Duplin County found that 100 went home to unsupervised homes, said Austin Carter, a school supervisor.

Working on the premise that children left unsupervised are more likely to be abused or neglected, he said, this program will help working families who have no choice but to let their children come to empty homes.

Carter said working families have a problem finding affordable child care near home with hours that match their working hours.

He said 13,204 children under 18 live in Duplin County. Only 1,807 of them live in urban areas with easy access to child-care facilities. Many families can't afford child care, he said. Twenty-six percent of children in the county live in poverty, about

10 percent above the national average, Carter said.

His report showed that 5,925 Duplin County mothers are employed and 3,763 of them have children aged 6 to 17. He said the county has 1,107 single-parent families including 621 working mothers with children aged 6 to 17.

There are only 18 licensed daycare centers in Duplin County.

If fewer than 100 children participate in the program in North Duplin, the program will be divided between it and another school.

The program will be free but parents will have to arrange for their children to be picked up at the school.

Carter said families need the income provided by the parents. "No single indicator correlates so highly with children's health and education as family income," he said.

## Duplin Board Of Elections Meets

The Duplin County Board of Elections met Aug. 20. They made the following appointments who are available to register new registrants or unregistered persons. They are appointed for two years.

Persons desiring to register or make any changes in their registration with one of these officials, should call or contact that person for an appointment, since this is a voluntary service.

Those appointed are: Warsaw: Registrar - Doris Britt, Judges - Barbara Collins and Lee Brown; Faison: Registrar - Roba Pate, Judges - Eveyln Malpass and Catherine Kennedy; Calypso: Registrar - Sara Southerland, Judges - Ella Radcliff and Virginia Hines; Wolfscrape: Registrar - Jean Sullivan, Judges - Murray Roberts and Elbert Davis; Glisson: Registrar - Lynn Harper, Judges - Leon Arthur and J.N. Waters; Albertson: Registrar - Annie Deaver, Judges - Donald Heath and Thomas L. Stroud; Smith: Registrar - Kenneth Maxwell, Judges - Charles Linwood Tyndall

and Grover Rhodes; Cabin: Registrar - Ressie Kennedy, Judges - Kenneth Heath and Haywood Tyndall; Hallsville: Registrar - Michael Kent Miller, Judges - Robert Miller Jr. and Grace Albertson; Beulaville: Registrar - Johnnie Boyette, Judges - Raddie Faye Johnson and William D. Thigpen; Cedar Fork: Registrar - Harold Raynor, Judges - Charles W. Edwards and J.D. Sloan; Cypress Creek: Registrar - J.D. Manning, Judges - Randy Maready and Keith R. Sholar; Chiquapin: Registrar - Milo N. Pickett, Judges - Wanda Southerland and Nell Bryan; Locklin: Registrar - Jone James Cavenaugh, Judges - Peggy G. Hanchey and Eva Marie Carter; Charity: Registrar - J.T. Brinkley, Judges - Virginia Brinkley and Joseph W. Bland; Wallace: Registrar - Nina Cavenaugh, Judges - Mary Jo Robinson and Verda Wells; Rockfish: Registrar - Joan Conway, Judges - Eunice Knowles and Annie Ruth Wells; Rose Hill: Registrar - H.M. Price, Judges - Sallie W. Blanchard and Luther J. Sutton; Magnolia: Registrar - J.H. Rouse, Judges - Ruth

Quinn and Helen Allen; Kenansville: Registrar - Florence Brown, Judges - Mary Brown and Carolyn C. Hall.

The municipal election officials appointed to serve for two years are so appointed: Beulaville: Registrar - W.D. Thigpen, Judges - Wyoma Thomas and Blanche Spell; Calypso: Registrar - Sarah Southerland, Judge - Virginia Hines; Greenevers: Registrar - Linda C. Farrior, Judges - Vernett Carr and Hazel Witherpoon; Kenansville: Registrar - Florence Brown, Judges - Carolyn C. Hall and Troy D. Mullis; Magnolia: Registrar - James A. Powell, Judges - Lillie Sanders and Wray Sasser; Rose Hill: Registrar - H.M. Price, Judges - Sallie W. Blanchard and Norman Z. Teachey; Teachey: Registrar - Alice F. Wadsworth, Judge - Pearl Usher, Wallace: Registrar - Nina Cavenaugh, Judges - Verda R. Wells and Z.R. Atkinson; Warsaw: Registrar - Timothy Williams, Judges - Barbara Collins and Lee Brown.

The registration deadline for registering to vote in the Nov. 5 municipal election is Oct. 7.

## Conviction Is Reversed In Wallace Murder Case

A three-judge panel of the N.C. Court of Appeals has reversed the second-degree murder conviction of a Duplin County woman sentenced in the 1984 death of a 2-year-old child.

The panel unanimously declared last week that a motion to dismiss murder charges against Pearl Alfreda West for lack of evidence should have been granted in the April 1984 Superior Court trial in Duplin County.

Mrs. West, a Wallace native, was found guilty of the Feb. 9, 1984, suffocation of Jason Lamar Fillyow. She was sentenced to 25 years in prison by Superior Court Judge Mary M. Pope.

Jason Fillyow was found dead in the house of Carlton and Pearl West after a fight involving West, his wife and Ingenuie Fillyow, the child's mother.

District Attorney William Andrews said in Kenansville that he was shocked at the reversal. He said he would not comment until he read the ruling. He said he would have to look at the decision before he could determine whether a trial on lesser charges could be ordered.

"As to whether the defendant committed the crime charged, the state's evidence is entirely circumstantial," the appellate panel said in its decision. The decision noted that there were three versions of the circumstances surrounding the child's death.

These three versions were the testimonies of Ms. Fillyow, Mrs. West and police detective Jimmy Smith, who testified as to statements made by West during the preliminary hearing. West declined to testify against his wife during the murder trial. In the preliminary hearing West had testified that he had an affair with Ms. Fillyow.

The appeals court said testimony in the Superior Court trial "supports a finding that the defendant had malice towards the child," but this testimony could not determine whether Mrs. West killed Jason.

The child's body was discovered on a bed under a closet door in the Wests' bedroom. Mrs. West testified in the murder trial that she telephoned West from Warsaw on Feb. 9 and told him she was in Washington. She testified that he told her he was hungry and had no money, so she drove back to Wallace, stopping in a nearby yard and walking to the house.

She entered the house, walked down a hall toward the bedrooms and saw her husband. She said he asked her, "What are you doing here?"

She testified that he grabbed her arm to keep her from passing. She kicked open the door to a room and saw the child watching television.

She said she and her husband struggled but she got past her husband and opened their bedroom

door. She said she saw a woman's coat on the bed. The child ran past her and West into the bedroom, she told the court.

Mrs. West said she thought a woman might be hiding in the closet so she started to open the door. She testified that Ms. Fillyow dashed out of the closet, knocking the door off its hinges.

Mrs. West said the door knocked her down as it fell on or against the bed. Ms. Fillyow and West fled into nearby woods. Mrs. West said she found the child on the bed under the closet door.

When West refused to testify in the trial, the judge directed a deputy to read West's testimony in the preliminary hearing. In that testimony he said Mrs. West returned home unexpectedly and in a violent rage because Ms. Fillyow was in the house.

He said he and Ms. Fillyow fled. He said he thought the child had escaped but when he and Ms. Fillyow returned, they found Mrs. West had left and the child was dead.

The appellate panel said Jason could have accidentally suffocated during the disturbance between the three adults: "Given this gap in the record, we cannot in conscience say that there is substantial evidence to support the finding that the defendant suffocated the child."

## Pupils To Be Tested

The Duplin County school system has been and will be checking kindergarten students for various capabilities.

Hearing, speech, motor skills, reasoning, language and vision will be checked of the kindergarten children at each elementary school.

Those already tested are from B.F. Grady, Chiquapin, Beulaville, Wallace and North Duplin. Sept. 12 they will be tested at Rose Hill-Magnolia, Sept. 13 at Kenansville and Sept. 16 at Warsaw.

## Ailing Tobacco Has Farmers Worried

The furor over leaves falling from a popular tobacco variety continued with farmers complaining about their monetary loss and tobacco specialists attempting to determine the cause.

Dick Powell, N.C. State University tobacco specialist, toured several fields in northern Duplin County Thursday with farmers and J. Michael Moore, Duplin County tobacco agent.

Several farmers have complained for the past three weeks that unripe leaves are falling off Speights G-80 tobacco. Morris Kornegay estimated his potential loss in a field near Friendship Church in the Outlaw's Store area at \$1,000 an acre.

One of the hardest hit is Wayne Davis, who has severe leaf loss in 16 acres of the variety. He said he believes the loss is so extensive he will lose money on his crop.

Powell said the problem, a type of hollow rot, is caused by a specific set of conditions not likely to be repeated every year.

"We have received more attention on this G-80 variety than any other," he said.

"It looks like the remaining leaves might be coming out of it and will be harvested," he said.

Powell split several stalks of affected plants, which showed rot and hollow tops.