

Trojans On Top!

A key win Friday over East Bladen claimed at least a piece of the conference title for West Brunswick. The Trojans travel to South Brunswick Friday before the start of the Waccamaw 2-A Conference tourney Monday. For complete game coverage, check out Page 9-B.



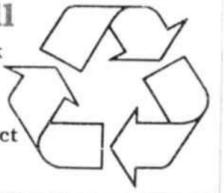
Spring Has Sprung

It looks like spring, with early blossoming of fruits, flowers and shrubs. But chances are there's more cold—and the possibility of cold damage—ahead before spring truly arrives. Local farmers say that's just one of the risks they face. Page 4-B.



Recycling On A Roll

Holden Beach is the latest Brunswick County community to eye a voluntary recycling program. The town is considering use of a trailer similar to the one in Shallotte to collect recyclables such as paper, aluminum and glass. The story's on Page 3-A.



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Auto Crash Claims Local Woman's Life

A local woman was killed and a Bladen County man was seriously injured Friday afternoon in a head-on collision near Supply, according to Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

Nila Canfield Gates, 22, of Ash, died at the scene of the crash. Her death was the first traffic fatality this year in Brunswick County. Ms. Oakley said three highway deaths had occurred here by this same time last year.

The collision happened Friday at 4:30 p.m., about two miles north of Supply on N.C. 211, when Mrs. Gates pulled out to pass another southbound vehicle. Her 1989 Suzuki automobile collided with a northbound 1986 Nissan pickup truck driven by Edward B. Singletary Jr., 35, of Bladenboro.

Singletary suffered incapacitating injuries and was taken by ambulance to The Brunswick Hospital, Supply. Both vehicles were total losses.

No charges were filed in connection with the fatal wreck, which was investigated by Trooper B.D. Barnhardt.



EMERGENCY PERSONNEL WORK to reach accident victim Nila Gates in the wreckage of her car Friday afternoon on N.C. 211. STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

TAKES JOHNSTON COUNTY JOB

RDC Director Resigns Post

Brunswick County Resources Development Director Michael de Sherbinin resigned Monday to accept a similar position as economic development director of Johnston County.

De Sherbinin, who has been employed here since November 1979, announced his resignation Monday night in Bolivia, at a special meeting of the county Resources Development Commission, said RDC Chairman Baxter Stirling. De Sherbinin requested the meeting last week after being notified that he had been selected for the Johnston County post. "It's a fantastic opportunity and one for the sake of my career that is essential," de Sherbinin said of the new job he begins April 16.

Both the Johnston County Board of Commissioners and Johnston County economic development board last week voted unanimously to hire him, de Sherbinin said. His new salary will be \$45,000 a year. His salary here is \$39,252.

"I'm excited," de Sherbinin added. "Johnston County is very similar to Brunswick in that it borders a major metropolitan area (Raleigh). They have similar problems and opportunities." Johnston County, located southeast of Wake County, has five industrial parks compared to two here in Brunswick.

Stirling noted that Johnston County chose de Sherbinin from a field of 130 applicants. As a result, the chairman said the RDC undoubtedly will have a "pretty wide field" from which to pick de Sherbinin's successor.

The vacancy will be advertised in various publications, with applications received by the county personnel office. Stirling added that a three-member RDC committee was formed Monday to review applications. Committee members are Dennis Crocker, Bob Radcliffe and V.A. Creech.

Stirling said the RDC has been pleased with de Sherbinin's performance and that the board was surprised by his resignation. "He didn't go looking for this job," Stirling said. "I think he (applied) just for the heck of it."

De Sherbinin said his application was solicited last November by Johnston County officials including County Manager Richard Seif, who formerly managed neighboring Columbus County and met de Sherbinin then.

"Naturally when you see an area develop over a 10-year period, you have an awful lot of ties," de Sherbinin said of leaving Brunswick County. "It's very rewarding to see the efforts of many people. That gives me a better feeling than leaving and knowing the program's going to stop, because it won't."



DE SHERBININ

Former Sunset Firefighter Sentenced On Arson Counts

A former Sunset Beach volunteer firefighter received a split prison sentence Monday after he admitted setting 25 woods and dumpster fires in southwestern Brunswick County.

John Devon Caison, 22, of Sea Trail, entered guilty pleas in Brunswick County Superior Court to 16 counts of burning woodlands and nine counts of burning personal property, according to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office.

Judge Giles R. Clark sentenced Caison to suspended prison terms totaling 13 years, a four-month active term and five years of probation. The defendant also was ordered to pay a \$500 fine, \$600 attorney fees and \$10,652.29 in restitution to the state, Brunswick County and the Sunset Beach and Calabash volunteer fire departments.

Caison, brother of county Forest Ranger Miller Caison, was arrested last October, following a year-long investigation by the Brunswick County Fire Marshal's office, the

N.C. Forest Service and the SBI. Fire Marshal Cecil Logan said Miller Caison was not involved in the incidents or the investigation.

John Caison was a member of Sunset Beach VFD when the arson fires occurred between Feb. 23, 1986, and Aug. 13, 1989, according to arrest warrants. Prior to his arrest, Caison was dropped from the fire department's membership for missing meetings and training, a department official said.

Warrants indicate that 14 of the woods fires were set on property off Old Georgetown Road, while the other two fires were set off the Sunset Beach Causeway and off Ash-Little River Road between U.S. 17 and Hickman's Crossroads.

Seven of the dumpster fires were set at the Sea Trail solid waste collection site on N.C. 179, according to the warrants. The other two fires were set at the Cawcaw Swamp dumpster site near Hickman's Crossroads.

Board Bows To Public Outcry; Rescinds Hiring

BY RAHN ADAMS

In a move that apparently was timed to relieve mounting public pressure, Brunswick County Commissioners Gene Pinkerton, Frankie Rabon and Grace Beasley had changes of heart Friday about their earlier decision to hire William Kopp as county manager.

At an "emergency" meeting early Friday evening in Bolivia, the county board voted 4-0 to rescind its controversial 11-day-old action to hire Kopp, a former Republican board of commissioners chairman here. Commissioner Benny Ludlum, on vacation in Florida, was absent.

Ludlum and Commissioner Kelly Holden had opposed from the start the manner in which Kopp was selected. The N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety controller purportedly was picked for the then unadvertised job on the basis of several private talks with Rabon and a brief executive session Feb. 5.

"I was pleasantly surprised," Holden said Friday of the rescission. "Gene called me today at 4 p.m. and said we were going to have a meeting to discuss personnel, and asked me if I could come. That's all I knew... I think Gene did the right thing."

Kopp, a Southport native, would have gone to work here March 1 at a salary of \$56,000 per year—approximately \$11,000 more than the salary of former County Manager John T. Smith, who was fired last December. Invitations to a March 5 reception to welcome the new manager were mailed last week.

Friday's session lasted less than five minutes and included no public discussion by board members. Visibly shaken, Chairman Pinkerton read the following statement, which served as his motion:

"On Feb. 5 this board voted to make William Kopp Brunswick County manager. This decision has resulted in a great outpouring of public sentiment from many citizens which has centered on the swiftness of this action, but not its substance.

"This public sentiment is based upon the belief of a cross-section of the community, as communicated to me, that a broad-based selection process for this office should be undertaken.

"Mr. Kopp has concurred with this sentiment during conversations with me and has agreed to release Brunswick County from the terms of any oral contract with which he may have been a party to with the county.

"Therefore, I move that the action of Feb. 5 employing Mr. Kopp as county manager be rescinded and that the board proceed to advertise

for the position of Brunswick County manager for a period of six weeks."

Contacted Monday in Raleigh, Kopp had little to say about the board's latest decision. "I agreed with the action that was taken," he said. "I agreed that my name should be withdrawn."

When asked if he intended to formally apply for the county manager post, he commented, "I don't have any plans to at the present time." Although department officials apparently were aware that Kopp had accepted the job here, he also said Monday that he had not resigned his state position.

According to county Personnel Officer Deborah Bowling, a vacancy notice on the county manager position will run beginning Sunday in Charlotte, Raleigh and Wilmington newspapers, and will also appear over the next six weeks in local newspapers and a statewide local government newsletter.

The advertisement states, in part, that "the successful applicant shall have demonstrated organizational and budgetary experience as well as experience in dealing with issues of (See BOARD BOWS, Page 2-A)

Poor Season Ends For Lockwood Folly

A portion of Lockwood Folly River was opened to shellfishermen last Thursday, but not in time to salvage one of the worst oyster seasons the river has ever seen.

Counting the three days last week that the lower section of the river was open to harvesting, fishermen were permitted to work in Lockwood Folly 19 of the 126 days in the 1989-90 oyster season. The river was harvestable about 15 percent of the season, which ended at sunset Saturday.

The rest of the time, Lockwood Folly was closed to shellfishing because of high levels of fecal coliform, an indicator of pollution.

The lower section of the river was opened to shellfishing last Thursday morning, but it was closed down Monday due to weekend rainfall and stormwater runoff. Runoff often carries pollutants into the river making shellfish unsafe for harvesting.

Lockwood Folly isn't the only local river where oystermen have struggled this season. Harvests are down across the county and along the North Carolina coast.

School Board's Mum Regarding Superintendent's Evaluation

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Board of Education members met behind closed doors for nearly four hours last Thursday evening as a large crowd of people waited outside to hear the outcome of the superintendent's evaluation.

When the board returned to open session at 10:30 p.m., Chairman Dorothy (Dot) Worth said she could not disclose the results of the evaluation under terms of a modified contract between the board and Superintendent John Kaufhold.

Following a recent confrontation over meeting procedures between Kaufhold and board member Robert Slockett, rumors had flown countywide that the superintendent's evaluation might be negative and his job possibly at risk. Kaufhold's contract ends June 30, 1992. Hired initially as an assistant superintendent in mid-1987, he was soon named interim superintendent following the resignation

of Superintendent Eugene Yarbrough. Kaufhold was hired as superintendent effective March 1988.

More than 70 people turned out for Thursday's meeting in the administrative offices at Southport, including school system employees, parents and others who described themselves as "concerned citizens." Most stayed throughout the four-hour wait, nibbling on food, and wandering back and forth between the board offices and the outside porch.

Before the board went behind closed doors, the Rev. Moses Herring of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, saying he represented a group of concerned citizens, praised Kaufhold's performance as superintendent. In a prepared statement he observed that the school board serves the public, rather than their own "personal view."

While in executive session, Mrs. Worth said the board handled several other personnel and/or attorney-client matters. No action was taken.

She referred questions about Kaufhold's evaluation to the board attorney, Glen Peterson.

The board provides the superintendent with opportunities to discuss "board-superintendent relationships"

periodically, and at least twice each year informs him in writing of any inadequacies in his performance. Before Jan. 31 of each year, he is supposed to receive a written performance evaluation. This year's evaluation ran slightly behind schedule.

In evaluating the superintendent last Thursday, board members individually filled out forms (the same used in their last evaluation) that critiqued Kaufhold's performance in various areas of responsibility. Then the comments were compiled for a "consensus" evaluation as required by the superintendent's contract. Each board member discussed items of concern to him or her with the superintendent and Kaufhold was allowed to respond to each.

"I can't really say whether the evaluation was negative, positive or neutral," said Peterson, but he added that members and the superintendent had a "frank and open" discussion. No action was taken, said Peterson, and the board did not discuss the possibility of Kaufhold's resignation.

Peterson said any release of information regarding the evaluation was up to Kaufhold.



KAUFHOLD