



### The Buck Stops Here

Twenty-eight deer heads similar to this one competed for prizes and praise at the Brunswick County Big Buck Contest in Bolivia Saturday and Sunday. For the story behind the winning entry, turn to Page 12-B.



### For All Plant Lovers

The Brunswick Horticulture Show this weekend at the N.C. National Guard Armory in Shallotte features the latest in garden and landscape ideas, products and advice. Admission is free; show hours are 1 p.m.-8 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m.-6 p.m. Sunday.



### Black Artists Perform

Area black artists—including Wilmington actor Lloyd Wilson as "Uncle Remus"—performed before a near-capacity audience Saturday at the Black Arts Festival at Brunswick Community College. The story and more photos are on Page 4-B.

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY  
12/31/99  
PO BOX 162  
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Twenty-eighth Year, Number 20

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Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, March 29, 1990

25¢ Per Copy

36 Pages, 3 Sections

## Arson Blaze Guts County Purchasing Agent's Home

BY RAHN ADAMS

No arrests were reported as of Monday afternoon in connection with a weekend arson fire that gutted a Brunswick County department head's Ash area farmhouse. No one was home at the time of the blaze.

Waccamaw Volunteer Fire Department was called to the Billy Ingram residence on Route 2, Ash, Kingtown Road, Sunday at 6:53 a.m., said Brunswick County Fire Marshal Cecil Logan. Ingram is county purchasing agent and a former county building inspection department director.

The fire, which Logan estimated was set around 2 a.m., had almost burned itself out by the time it was reported by a passerby who noticed smoke coming from the single-story frame house at 6:45 a.m. Logan said the blaze died down by burning up all the oxygen inside the closed-up house—a situation that prevented the entire structure from being consumed.

The shell of the house remains standing, with little evidence of the fire apparent from the outside. Logan said a bathroom, where the blaze was set, and a hallway sustained the most fire damage. The rest of the home's interior sustained extensive heat and smoke damage; however, it appears repairable, Logan said. Damage was estimated at \$20,000.

Owner of the house is listed as Ingram's mother, Lois R. King, of Route 1, Ash, according to a report on file at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. Ingram moved into the house approximately two weeks before

Sunday morning's fire and was staying "at the beach with friends" Saturday night, the report states.

Civil court documents at the Brunswick County Courthouse indicate that Ingram moved into the house as a result of a March 15 divorce settlement with his former wife, Marjorie K. Ingram. As part of the agreement, Ms. Ingram was allowed to reside in the couple's house in Ocean View Landing subdivision near Ocean Isle Beach.

Sheriff's Det. Gary Shay said Monday that the arson case did not appear to be related directly to the divorce proceedings. "Not at this point in time it doesn't, no," the detective said. "It doesn't appear to be a revenge-type thing."

Both Shay and Logan said authorities have identified several suspects in connection with the fire, which remains under investigation by the sheriff's department, fire marshal's office, Waccamaw VFD and the SBI. Shay noted Monday that SBI polygraph tests were being set up for "several individuals" possibly linked to the case.

Ingram told the *Beacon* Monday that he did not know who set the fire. When interviewed early Monday afternoon at the fire scene, he also indicated that he had not been contacted yet by arson investigators.

Shay and Logan would not comment on the specific means used to start the blaze. However, Shay said a "device" was found in the bathroom where the fire started.



STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

SOOT MARKS AND BROKEN WINDOWS are the only outside indication of extensive interior damage caused by an arson fire early Sunday at Billy Ingram's Ash area home.

## County Native Charged In Two Bank Robberies

BY DOUG RUTTER

A Southport native charged with the robbery of banks at Ocean Isle Beach and Myrtle Beach, S.C., and other crimes was being held in Columbus County Jail Tuesday on \$100,000 bond.

Charles David Cain, 23, of Hampton, Va., was formally charged Monday with armed bank robbery in connection with last Friday's holdup of the United Carolina Bank at Ocean Isle Beach, said Paul Cox, a special agent in the FBI's Wilmington office.

Also Monday, Cain was charged with the March 22 robbery of the South Carolina National Bank in Myrtle Beach, said Larry Bruns of the FBI's Myrtle Beach office.

Last week's bank robbery at Ocean Isle—the first of 1990 in Brunswick County but the sixth to occur here in the last 10 months—led to a manhunt that ended in a shoot-out between the suspect and a state highway patrolman near Whiteville. Nobody was injured.

Ocean Isle Beach Police Chief Curt Pritchard said a white man brandishing a blue steel revolver entered the United Carolina Bank on the causeway at Ocean Isle last Friday around 9:45 a.m. and demanded money.

After receiving approximately \$4,600 in cash, the suspect exited the bank and was last seen walking behind a nearby restaurant headed for a wooded area. Cox said police later recovered all but \$58 of the stolen money.

There were no customers in the bank at the time of the robbery, and none of the employees were injured, said Cox.

Bank employees said the robber appeared to be between 25 and 30 years old, said Pritchard. The suspect was wearing a small straw hat, faded red or pink bandana over his face, amber-colored sunglasses, a faded blue T-shirt and dark-colored pants.

Immediately after the robbery, about 18 officers from the N.C.

Highway Patrol, Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and police departments at Ocean Isle Beach, Sunset Beach and Shallotte set up four roadblocks and scoured the area. A county officer looked for the suspect from a small airplane, and three FBI officers arrived on the scene about an hour after the robbery.

"What we attempted to do was flood the area with officers in hopes of keeping the suspect in a very small area," said Pritchard.

About 20 minutes after the robbery, Pritchard said he learned that a man fitting the robber's description had stopped at a business about one mile away from Ocean Isle Beach to ask directions to the town.

Employees at the business said the man was driving a white pickup truck, said Pritchard. A description of the vehicle was broadcasted on police radio to law enforcement officers throughout the county as well as to officers in Columbus, Bladen (See COUNTY NATIVE, Page 2-A)

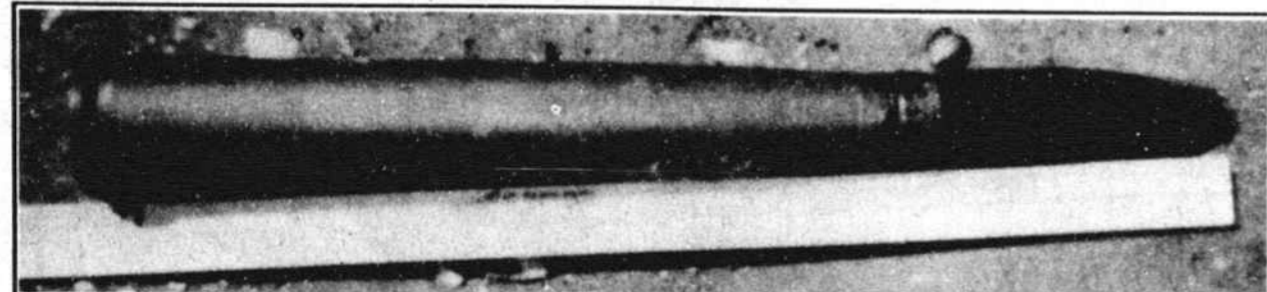


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

THIS 40-MILLIMETER MILITARY ROUND, measuring 18 inches by the yardstick shown, was found last Friday along the Intracoastal Waterway on Ocean Isle Beach.

## Military Ammunition Found At Ocean Isle

BY DOUG RUTTER

A Marine Corps bomb squad that picked a 40-millimeter military round from the waterway near Ocean Isle Beach last week came up empty after searching the area for more ammunition Monday afternoon.

Two members of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune at Jacksonville traveled to Ocean Isle last Friday afternoon to pick up the projectile, said base spokesman Lt. C. M. Royan. The unfired round would have been used with a grenade launcher.

A further search by the military bomb squad during Monday afternoon's low tide turned up nothing, said Ocean Isle Beach Police Chief Curt Pritchard.

An anonymous telephone caller alerted the Ocean Isle Police Department shortly before noon last Friday that there were "some bombs at the water's edge" at the north end of Shallotte Boulevard, said Pritchard.

He said two town police officers investigated the call and found a projectile near the bank of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. One of the officers re-

mained at the scene to keep the public away until the Marine Corps unit arrived at about 3:30 p.m.

Royan said that because of its age and having been exposed to the elements, the round posed no threat. The projectile was apparently manufactured in 1943—the date stamped on the side of the canister.

She warned, however, that it could have been "extremely dangerous" if it had been in better condition. A military round should never be picked up, she said, even if it's found rolling around in the surf.

Pritchard said the projectile was "shaped exactly like a giant bullet," with its canister approximately 13 inches long and its head, about five inches long.

Where the round came from and how it got to Ocean Isle Beach is not known, said Royan, adding, "It could have gotten there in a million ways."

Police were notified of the projectile in the waterway about two hours after the Ocean Isle Beach branch of United Carolina Bank was robbed Friday morning.

"It was one heck of a day," Pritchard said Monday. "This stuff just doesn't happen at Ocean Isle."

## Design Work Holds Up Construction Of New Sunset Beach High-Rise Span

BY RAHN ADAMS

Whether or not their efforts can succeed, opponents of a proposed high-rise span at Sunset Beach will have two more months than they might have expected this fall to keep their fight from becoming water under the island's new bridge.

Tom Shearin, project engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation, confirmed Monday that the date DOT will receive construction bids on the Sunset Beach Bridge project has been moved back to Sept. 18 due to a "delay" in preparation of the bridge's design.

Prior to a March 15 meeting at Sunset Beach Town Hall, DOT officials had told local officials that bids would be received July 1. The informal session—which was held for discussion of the bridge project—was attended by town, county and DOT representatives including Shearin.

"That was what we were shooting for," Shearin said of the unofficial July deadline. "The original contract was for September, and we tried to speed things up to July." He added, however, that the contractor, J.E. Greiner Consulting Engineers of Raleigh, is unable to complete the bridge design two months earlier than allowed by the contract.

DOT awarded the \$470,598 design contract last August. The state has received all necessary bridge construction permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard and N.C. Division of Coastal Management, said Shearin.

Opposition to the new bridge is

spearheaded by the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association, a property owner group that began a renewed campaign last fall to keep the island's nearly 30-year-old pontoon swing bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway from being replaced by the high-rise, fixed-span structure.

The organization's lobbying efforts have resulted in letters from U.S. Rep. Charles Rose and U.S. Sen. Terry Sanford asking DOT to re-examine the "feasibility and prudence" of the high-rise bridge, given its \$7.88 million estimated cost and divided community support. The bridge construction is to be funded with federal and state monies.

"I know I'm more optimistic than I was," SBTa official Bud Knapp said Tuesday of DOT's new target date. Knapp, who heads the association's "Save Our Bridge" committee, added, "The big question is: Why? Why is there a push for this bridge when the state is short on funds and when there are so many other projects—education, roads and maintenance of other bridges—that need attention?"

Knapp said the SBTa plans to continue its fight against construction of the new bridge. He remarked that the group's upcoming April 14 meeting at Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department "is going to be particularly important" in determining the association's direction in the bridge dispute.

At a special "Save Our Bridge" rally last September, SBTa mem-

bers supported a proposal which would allow the group's board of directors "to investigate other alternatives, to require a thoughtful and constructive consideration of the need for a high-rise bridge at Sunset Beach, with such action including the possibility of investigating and engaging legal counsel to take such legal actions as may be ultimately approved by the membership of this association..."

However, Knapp said Tuesday that the SBTa is "hoping we don't have to take legal action." He noted that association members continue to pursue "individual efforts" to convince state legislators and North Carolina's congressional delegation to reconsider the bridge project. Over the past year, members also have been involved in a letter-writing campaign to major newspapers and television stations across the state.

According to Shearin, the SBTa's opposition has not held up bridge construction. "We've received their letters and comments, and have answered them as best we can," the engineer commented, "but it has not forced us to delay the bridge project."

Shearin speculated that construction will begin in November and be completed within 2 1/2 years. He said DOT tried to move up bid openings to July in hopes of allowing the successful contractor to begin construction in September and do a considerable amount of work before weather conditions worsen for the winter.

## County ABC Board Recommends Merger With Existing System

BY RAHN ADAMS

In order to give all restaurants and clubs in Brunswick County a chance to begin selling mixed drinks this tourist season, county Alcoholic Beverage Control officials say their fledgling ABC system needs to join forces with an established system.

During the board's first official meeting since its formation in February, the three-member Brunswick County ABC Board voted unanimously Monday to recommend to county commissioners that the county system either merge with or purchase one of the county's nine existing municipal ABC boards. The proposal will be presented to commissioners at their April 2 meeting in Bolivia.

County ABC board members Joyce Vereen, John Ramsey and Clyde Babson indicated that their decision to suggest a merger or sys-

*Merger of the Brunswick County ABC Board with an existing local ABC system would financially benefit both.*

—John Ramsey, Member Brunswick ABC Board

tem purchase came as a result of information they received during an ABC training session March 19 in Raleigh. County Attorney and Interim County Manager David Clegg—who was appointed Monday as clerk to the ABC board—also participated in the training.

Due to passage of last November's countywide ABC referendum and previous votes in individual municipalities, liquor-by-the-drink permits already can be obtained by eligible businesses in towns with

ABC stores, including Belville, Boiling Spring Lakes, Calabash, Long Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Shallotte, Southport, Sunset Beach and Yaupon Beach. Mixed-drink sales also are legal at Bald Head Island.

However, until the county establishes its own ABC store, businesses in the remaining municipalities and the county's unincorporated area cannot receive mixed-drink permits. By state law, a business (See ABC BOARD, Page 2-A)