



Sneak Preview Offered

The Ocean Isle Museum Foundation unveiled its new facility Saturday, giving visitors a glimpse of several displays including this fox. For the story, see Page 11-A.



How Do You Spell...?

Sandra Dron of Southern Bell ponders the spelling of another word in the Brunswick County Literacy Council's Spelling Bee. The story's on Page 5-B.



Trojans Are Home Again

The West Brunswick Trojans are looking for their first league win against Fairmont Friday night on the Trojans home field. See the story on Page 9-B.

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Civietown Man Dies In Early Morning Home Fire

BY TERRY POPE
Staff Writer

A Civietown man died from smoke inhalation in an early-morning fire Sunday that damaged a mobile home on Gray Bridge Road.

George Ford, 20, was pronounced dead at the scene by Coroner Greg White. Firefighters responded to the call around 7:20 a.m. Sunday and discovered Ford's body lying in a doorway inside the mobile home at the intersection of Gray Bridge Road and Shell Point Road.

According to Detective Nancy Simpson of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, Ford apparently left a burner on in the kitchen and fell asleep. He had been staying at the home rented by Patrice Shaw, who left Saturday for Tennessee. Ms. Shaw's brother identified the body, according to Sheriff's Deputy R.L. McDonald's report.

A passer-by noticed smoke coming from the home and called the Civietown Fire Department. Chief Al Nord said when his men arrived the fire was still burning inside the home but had not broken through to the outside. It was extinguished within minutes.

Fire damage was contained to the kitchen area and an adjacent bathroom, Nord said. The windows were closed, making it hot inside the home.

"It was a hot one," Nord said. "It melted the blinds off the walls. The venetian blinds, it dripped them on to the floor."

Nord said the body was discovered when fireman Kenny Smith went into one of the end bedrooms to open a window to ventilate the mobile home.

The body wasn't burned, Det. Simpson said.

"Evidently, he had cooked something and forgot to turn the burner off on the stove," Simpson said. Detectives believe the victim awoke in the back bedroom and tried to escape.

"He got as far as the door," Simpson said. Smoke on the victim's nostrils indicated he died from smoke inhalation.

The body was taken to the Brunswick Hospital in Supply by the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad. Shallotte and Tri-Beach volunteer firemen also responded to the call.

Detectives believe the fire broke out between 6:30 a.m. and 7:23 a.m.



STATE FISHERIES DIRECTOR WILLIAM HOGARTH, right, talks with local fishermen following a public meeting last Thursday in Shallotte. Pictured, from left, are Terrence Galloway, Alex Kuigre and Sherman Varnum.

OYSTER SEASON OPENS OCT. 15

Shell Fishermen To Face Strict Harvest Limits

BY DOUG RUTTER

Local commercial fishermen will be limited to seven bushels of oysters per day and 14 bushels per boat when the 1990-91 oyster season opens next month in North Carolina.

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries slashed the daily harvest limits from 50 bushels per boat to the new amounts after holding a series of public meetings along the coast last week, including one in Brunswick County.

State Fisheries Director William Hogarth said the new limits will apply Monday through Friday. Commercial oyster harvesting will not be allowed on the weekends.

Oyster season opens Oct. 15 in the southern part of the state and Nov. 12 in areas where mechanical harvesting is permitted. Hogarth said mechanical harvesters will be limited to 20 bushels per boat this season.

The state oyster season usually runs through the middle of March, but Hogarth said officials will determine when to close the 1990-91 season after the season starts. He said it won't be closed before January.

In the past, the state has limited daily oyster harvests to 50 bushels per boat. But Hogarth said poor harvests the last few years prompted officials to lower the daily limit.

North Carolina commercial fishermen have averaged 120,000 bushels of oysters per year over the last 10 years, but they gathered only 52,000 bushels last season.

"The sampling we've done this year looks even worse than that," Hogarth said. The small oyster harvests have been blamed on over harvesting, pollution and parasites that have killed oysters in past years and are still present this year in small to moderate amounts.

To protect the resource, the state closed oyster season about a month early last season and lowered daily harvest limits near the end of the season to five bushels per person and 15 bushels per boat.

At a meeting last Thursday in Shallotte, Hogarth said the division wanted to put realistic limits on oysters at the start of this season so they don't have to be changed later.

Hogarth said at the time the state was considering imposing a five-bushel limit from the start of this oyster season to protect the oyster fishery.

"The whole reason for these limits is trying to keep the oysters going as long as we can," said Rich Carpenter, district manager with the Division of Marine Fisheries.

Most local fishermen said last week they would support a seven-bushel daily limit, but five bushels per day would not be enough to meet expenses such

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County Finds Some Errors On Census Housing Counts

BY TERRY POPE

Thirty homes had been ignored along Turnpike Road near Supply and an entire nursing home near Leland had gone uncounted in the 1990 U.S. Census Bureau's population and housing counts, county officials have discovered.

Those were the only housing count errors the Brunswick County Planning Department protested in a letter mailed to the Regional Census Center in Charlotte last week. The letter was signed by Gene Pinkerton, chairman of the Board of Commissioners.

County officials believe the Census Bureau's preliminary population count for Brunswick County is short by about 4,000 residents. However, counties and municipalities have only been given the right to protest housing counts and not population figures.

The county's letter does present its concerns that the population count also appears to be in error. The county and some towns stand to hurt in tax revenue distribution if the preliminary population figures released in August are not changed.

"We are convinced there is an under count of persons by more than 10 percent of the total permanent resident population," the county's response states.

According to the Census Bureau's preliminary figures, about 50,681 persons live in Brunswick County, but Planning Director John Harvey believes the actual count should be closer to 55,000 residents. In 1980, about 35,777 people lived in the county.

The town of Shallotte also plans to protest the population count. According to the census, Shallotte increased in population from 680 persons in 1980 to 828 residents this year. However, town officials believe the actual population stands closer to 1,400.

The county's letter gives two examples of how the Planning Department was made aware of residents' concerns that they were either left out of the population count or not allowed to continue their job of counting residents.

It states that Edward G. Dobson, who lives in Bricklanding Plantation, contacted the Planning Department to complain that no one in his condominium unit had an opportunity to respond to the census counts.

Dobson told the Planning Department that "none of the occupants of the 40 condos received a form or has had a call or visit from an enumerator," the letter states. "These housing units show in counts, but may not have received other scrutiny, for whatever reason."

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Manager List Narrows

Brunswick County Commissioners will interview three applicants for the county manager's position, apparently at their Oct. 1 meeting.

Board members had stated that they would set a date at Friday's workshop to begin interviewing candidates. An executive session for personnel was on the board's agenda Friday, but no commissioner took responsibility for asking for the secret session and no date was set.

The board spent 90 minutes in executive session at a meeting Sept. 17 where they chose five applicants from a list of 47 to see if they were still interested in the job. Of those five, three stated that they were still interested when contacted by Board Clerk Regina Alexander last week.

The applications were accepted five months ago.

Ms. Alexander said she assumed the commissioners would need an executive session so she added it to the agenda. Interim County Manager David Clegg said he doesn't know what the board intends to do regarding the interviews.

In other personnel action Friday, the board voted 3-2 to eliminate in-house hiring practices for county employment positions.

Clegg had asked the board to amend the personnel policy to make all positions open to the public at large and to advertise all positions before accepting applications. Commissioners Grace Beasley and Frankie Rabon voted against the request which goes into effect Nov. 1.

"The only thing a working man has to look forward to is seniority," Rabon said. "You're cutting all of the incentive to people who are trying to move up the ladder."

Ms. Beasley said the county needs "a whole new personnel policy."

Clegg said probationary employees are applying for in-house positions. If they move to another county job, their six-month probationary periods must start over.

Rabon also made a motion Friday to prohibit non-vested employees from applying for permanent county personnel positions. The motion failed, 4-1.

Big Sweep Volunteers Find Area Beaches Serving As Ash Trays

BY DOUG RUTTER

Volunteers who cleaned up the South Brunswick Islands beaches during The Big Sweep Saturday found out that the local strands have been doing much more than providing a spot for people to spread their beach towels. They've also been serving as ash trays.

Cigarette butts and filters topped the list of the types of trash seen by people participating in the annual litter cleanup at Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Holden Beach.

More than 230 people helped pick up litter on the local beaches Saturday morning, participating in The Big Sweep '90, a statewide cleanup of beaches, lakes and rivers across the state.

Volunteers filled trash bags and recorded what they picked up on data cards. The information on the cards will be compiled by the state and put into a national data base that will identify the most common types of litter and what types of groups are littering.

Sunset Beach

Sunset Beach coordinator Fran Pelletier said about 60 volunteers turned out to help clean up the beach and causeway, filling 60 trash bags.

"It was an excellent turnout considering the day," she said. "It was kind of a drizzly day and that probably kept some people away."

Mrs. Pelletier said the people who did participate were enthusiastic. Some of the more unusual finds included a natural gas container, children's shoes, underwear and a boat engine.

Cigarette butts and filters were the most common form of litter on the beach. "As one person wrote on their data card, Sunset Beach is one big ash tray," Mrs.

Pelletier said.

The side of the road leading to the island seemed to be dirtier than the strand was, she said. "That unfortunately seems to be a collecting spot."

Following the cleanup, volunteers enjoyed hot dogs and drinks provided by the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association and local merchants.

Ocean Isle Beach

Approximately 110 people helped clean up the strand and causeway at Ocean Isle Beach Saturday, including a group of 12 children and six adults from Bay Street Methodist Church in Fayetteville.

The volunteers picked up between 125 and 140 bags of trash. "We used every bag the state provided us plus a few others," said coordinator Chuck Armstrong, president of the Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners Association.

People picked up lots of plastic bottles, cans and candy wrappers. "There was a tremendous amount of cigarette filters all over the island," Armstrong added. "That's unfortunate because they're not biodegradable."

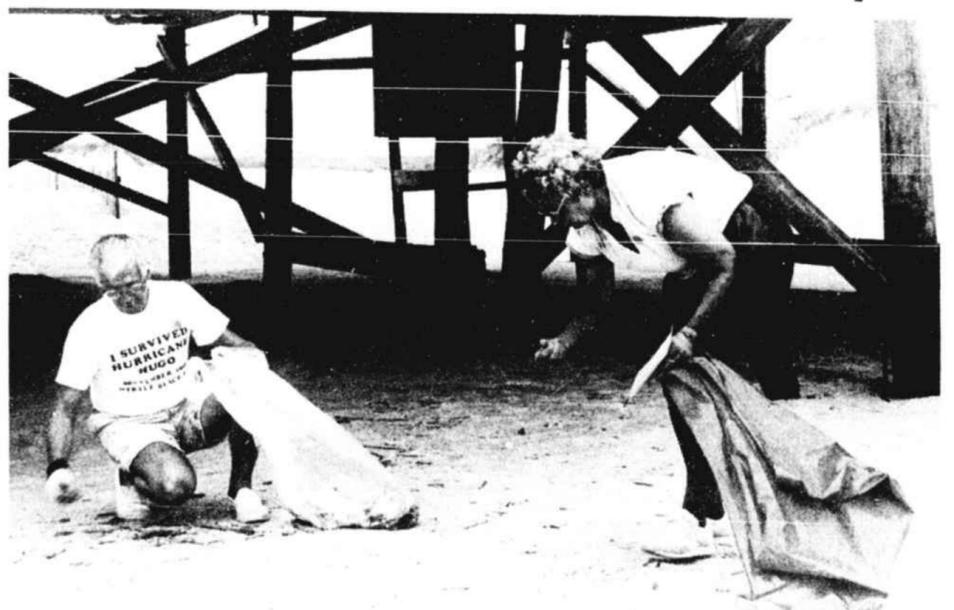
Holden Beach

At Holden Beach, 62 volunteers picked up 56 bags of trash, but local organizer Margaret Vasco said the cleanup could have been much better.

She said the high tide Saturday morning prevented some areas of the beach from being cleaned, particularly near the east end of the beach. "Our tide and rough seas certainly spoiled our day."

Mrs. Vasco also said some newspapers gave the wrong time and place for volunteers to meet at Holden Beach. Helpers were supposed to meet at 8 a.m. under

(See BIG SWEEP, Page 2-A)



WALTER AND ANN HOLT of Carolina Shores, Calabash, clean up the strand near the Sunset Beach Fishing Pier. They found lots of cigarette butts.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER