

Trial Continues

A former Calabash businessman charged with drug trafficking was sentenced Tuesday to two 35-year terms and fined \$500,000. Details are on Page 9A.



Taking Second Look

Holden Beach Officials are taking a second look at a controversial outside light rule that bans lights such as this fixture suspended from the top of a utility pole. The story's on Page 6A.



Trojans Claim Win

West Brunswick High School Trojans won three boys' games in a busy week of prep basketball, while the Lady Trojans didn't fare as well. Check out full sports coverage on Pages 12A-14A.



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Southport Man Killed In Saturday Accident

A Southport man was killed Saturday evening when the truck he was driving ran off the road near Holden Beach and struck a tree.

Herbert Parker Jr., 65, was traveling north on Stone Chimney Road about five miles north of Holden Beach when his pickup ran off the road, sideswiped one tree and hit another tree head-on.

State Trooper B.L. Wilkes reported the driver was exceeding a safe speed at the time of the accident, estimated at 65 mph.

The 1986 Chevrolet truck came to a rest about 10 feet to the left of the tree. There were no passengers in the truck.

The accident occurred around 7:15 p.m. Damage was estimated at \$3,500.

It was the first death reported on Brunswick County's highway for 1991, said Ruby Oakley, Highway Patrol spokesperson.

In another accident last Thursday, a Shallotte woman was seriously injured when her car ran off the road about a mile west of Shallotte and struck a drainage culvert.

Eunice Strickland Kersey, 70, was traveling west on N.C. 130 when she crossed the center line and ran off the roadway, reported State Trooper B.D. Barnhardt. The driver stated that approaching headlights blinded her from seeing the highway, according to the officer's report.

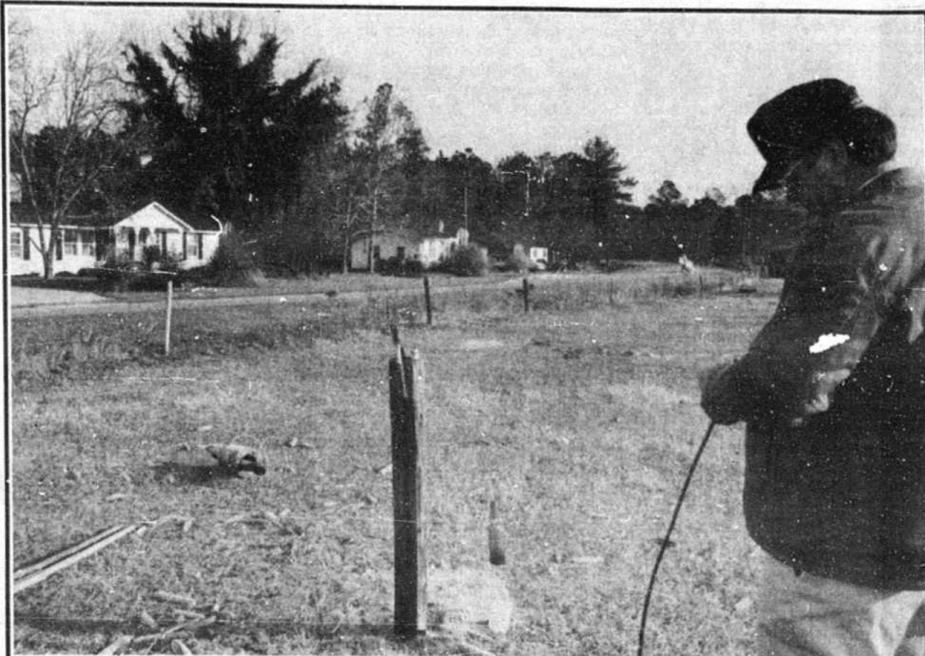
Ms. Kersey was charged with driving left of center following the 6:40 a.m. accident. Damage was estimated at \$800 to her 1972 Chevrolet.

She was taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply.

An early-morning accident Sunday sent two drivers to the hospital.

Two drivers were taken to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington with serious injuries Sunday following an early-morning accident.

(See MAN, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

TURNPIKE ROAD resident Junior White says he can't figure out why the U.S. Census Bureau failed to notice his house, one of about 30 homes in his neighborhood near Supply.

U.S. CENSUS SAYS OTHERWISE

Homes Exist On Turnpike Road

BY TERRY POPE

Residents along Turnpike Road near Supply say their community is one of the oldest in Brunswick County, yet the U.S. Census Bureau claims there are no houses on the road.

Junior White was busy Monday morning wiring in some goats and a turkey in front of his home on Turnpike Road. His home has been there for more than 30 years, he said.

White pointed south to a two-story wooden structure just a few hundred yards away. Although nobody lives there now, generations once grew up there.

"That's the old Mrs. Bertie Lancaster place," White said. "It's at least 100 years old."

Turnpike Road runs between Mt. Pisgah Church Road and Stone Chimney Road near Supply. Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church sits at the corner of Turnpike Road, which was once called Bellamy Road.

White's son, Brunswick County Coroner Greg White, also owns a home on Turnpike Road and so do about 30 other people, according to the Brunswick County Planning Department.

How then could the U.S. Census Bureau reach a conclusion that there are no homes along Turnpike Road?

The planning department requested that the bureau recheck its figures after a preliminary housing count released last September by the federal agency showed no homes existing in a census block which includes Turnpike Road. Spot checks to compare the census report with county land use maps showed a discrepancy, said Don Eggert, a county planner.

"We went out and counted the number of units and sent that information to the Census Bureau," Eggert said.

A letter received this month from William Hill, director of the U.S. Census Bureau regional center in Charlotte, said there were no houses in the census block where Turnpike Road is located. The number of housing units was confirmed by a "field review," the letter states.

County planners were stunned.

White said he was not aware that his neighbor-

(See HOMES, Page 2-A)

Clegg Hired As County Manager; Ledgett Assistant

BY SUSAN USHER

In a move Monday night that evoked little surprise, Brunswick County Commissioners gave David Clegg the job he has held in function, if not in title, for approximately 14 months.

The board's second move did come as a surprise as it named Douglas Ledgett as assistant to the manager, leaving open the possibility of a future reclassification to assistant county manager. Ledgett, an attorney from Southport, was hired in late 1990 as the county's first emergency medical services coordinator.

Clegg, 35, who will continue as county attorney, said he is "probably" the only county manager in the state to hold both positions, though some county managers are lawyers. Clegg said he sees no conflict of interest in holding the dual roles.

He was among four candidates for the post interviewed in open session by commissioners a week earlier. A vote on hiring a new county manager had been delayed pending routine background investigations by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

"He has done an outstanding job," said Holden, describing Clegg as a "proven leader" in his performance over the past 14 months as the two boards he served under during the past year moved forward with construction projects and water extension projects and began pushing for revised subdivision ordinances and zoning regulations.

Since joining county government in 1985 Clegg has served in the dual roles of staff attorney and either assistant, acting or interim county

manager, depending upon the circumstances.

The 4-0 unanimous decision to hire Clegg was made on a motion by Gene Pinkerton early in Monday's meeting. Commissioner Frankie Rabon was absent. He had called before the meeting, saying he had to deal with an emergency at work.

However, when the subject was broached by Chairman Kelly Holden, Pinkerton said he wasn't prepared to vote on Clegg's salary.

Clegg's salary was increased a year ago to \$54,000 to reflect his added duties as acting county manager. He said Monday he hasn't discussed the question of salary with the board.

Commissioners indicated they would take up the question of salaries for Clegg and Ledgett at their next meeting.

Clegg Gets Back-Up

In the newly created position of assistant to the manager, Ledgett will continue as emergency medical services coordinator and will assume other responsibilities under Clegg's direction and supervision, said Holden. He will also serve as acting manager in the manager's absence.

Holden said the idea of Ledgett taking on the role of assistant was his.

"David is not going to be here everyday. It's asking too much to ask him to assume both jobs with no backup. He could get burned out," said Holden. Ledgett was chosen, said Holden, because he is also a lawyer, has a good knowledge of the county and administrative skills, and works well with Clegg.

Wearing Two Hats At Once Familiar Role For Clegg

BY SUSAN USHER

David Clegg has worn the hat of Brunswick County manager as well as attorney off and on again since his employment in 1984.

Because of that, he said Monday, county residents shouldn't expect any overnight changes in county government, though changes may be forthcoming in future months.

He may be the only county manager in North Carolina who also serves as a county staff attorney. It's a mix with which he is comfortable

and also challenged.

One of four candidates for the position, Clegg had told commissioners in an open interview earlier this month that he thinks the manager's role includes serving as a conduit between the public and the commissioners. Employee morale is tied directly to "a sense of accomplishment, an achievement of the goals of the county," he said, and county employees should not work "simply to bring home a paycheck."

Clegg has an undergraduate degree in government and foreign affairs from Hampden-Sydney College and a master's degree in theater arts and law degree from the University of South Carolina. In his spare time he is involved in the

(See TWO HATS, Page 2-A)

Poor Bookkeeping Could Cost Brunswick Schools

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Board of Education members digested bad news of its own last Wednesday while the world outside the board room received word that war had begun in the Persian Gulf.

The school system must repay the state approximately \$75,667 and faces possible legal action by its insurance underwriter to recoup any benefits improperly paid to or on behalf of an unknown number of former employees.

The county owes the state \$75,000, said auditor Charles Flowers, because the finance staff was not

"...The records aren't there."

—Charles Flowers Auditor

reconciling its State Public School Fund with the state treasurer's office on a timely basis. Because the school system didn't know how much state money it had spent, "expenditures were charged to the state fund that were not qualified and had to be refunded." Finance Officer Rudi Fal-

lon has since implemented steps to ensure timely reconciliations of all accounts.

Discovery that health insurance premiums for several former employees were still being paid through the school system has left the system potentially liable for benefits received by those individuals.

"We don't know what that claim will be or for how much," said Flowers. "Management doesn't know how many claims may have been paid. The records aren't there."

North Carolina Blue Cross/Blue Shield administers the state's self-insurance program in which the school system participates. Former employees are allowed to continue their group policy coverage for a transition period of up to 18 months if they pay both their share and the school district's share of the premiums, plus 2 percent. They are billed individually, not through the schools.

However, that was not the case in one or more instances. Randy Worth, the husband of former school board chairman Dorothy Worth, left the system's employment in 1985, but continued paying premiums through the school system until June 1990 for his family hospital insurance.

(See BOOKKEEPING, Page 2-A)

AREA REALTORS OPTIMISTIC

Figures Show County Survived A Sluggish Year For Building

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County wasn't hit quite as hard as other areas of the country by a slump in new home construction in 1990, area figures show.

Area realtors remain optimistic that Brunswick County's market can remain strong enough to survive a possible recession of the national economy this year.

"We're definitely in better shape than other parts of the country," said Terry Barbee, president of the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors. "A lot of folks remain ready to do something if they could move their property elsewhere."

Retirees from other areas comprise a large block of local home buyers. Because homes are not selling in other parts of the country that are affected more by the sluggish economy, new home sales locally are expected to be off slightly for the first quarter of 1991, he predicted.

"Then I'm looking for it to pick back up," Barbee said.

Brunswick County remains the second-fastest growing county in the state behind Dare County. According to building permits issued in 1990, the number of new homes built in unincorporated areas of the county last year increased after two straight years of declines in new home construction.

While the county saw a trend in fewer homes being built inland in recent years, the beach communities have continued to experience steady growth. New home construction on the South Brunswick Islands remained steady or increased again last year, building reports indicate.

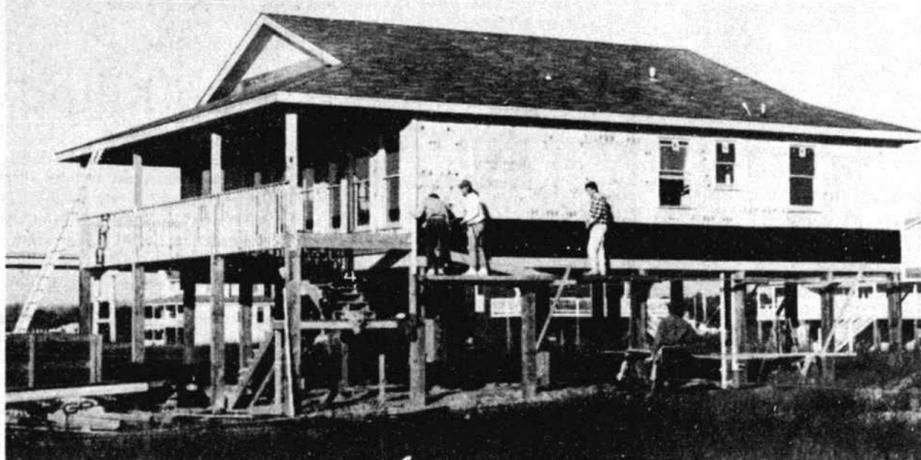
At Ocean Isle Beach, permits for 35 single-family homes and two duplexes were issued last year for an estimated \$3.6 million in valuation. In 1989, only 27 permits were issued for \$2.37 million in valuation.

"I felt like it was a little bit slow," said Barbee, an Ocean Isle Realtor, "but the building inspector kept telling me that we were doing better than last year. It's all in the frame of mind of how you look at things."

The Brunswick County Building Inspections Department issues building permits for new home construction in areas outside of town zoning districts and for six towns that do not have their own programs. Those towns are Belville, Bolivia, Leland, Navassa, Sandy Creek and Varnamtown.

According to the county's annual building inspections report, permits for 181 new homes were issued outside of municipal zoning districts last year for a valuation of \$13.7 million compared to 184 permits in 1989 at a valuation of \$12.1 million. The county also is-

(See AREA REALTORS, PAGE 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

AT HOLDEN BEACH, new home construction actually increased last year on the island despite a sluggish year nationally. This home is under construction in the Wild Dunes subdivision.