

VISITING HOLDEN BEACH

Couple Burned When Camper Explodes

BY DOUG RUTTER

A Shelby man was listed in good condition Monday after suffering serious burns when a camping trailer exploded last week at Holden Beach.

Todd Huss, 31, was recovering at the UNC Hospital Burn Center in Chapel Hill following the explosion last Wednesday morning at Campground By The Sea.

His wife, Laurie, 28, was discharged from The Brunswick Hospital in Supply Monday after five days of treatment.

The couple and their two children were staying in a 1972 Terry camper they had borrowed, said Brunswick County Fire Marshal Cecil Logan.

"The trailer exploded," Holden Beach Police Chief Robert Cook said. "It literally blew the sides out of it."

Authorities said the children, a boy and girl who appeared to be 4 or 5 years old, were outside when the explosion happened around 8:05 a.m. and were unharmed.

Cook said their father suffered burns over about 80 percent of his body. "He was in terrible shape, had very little skin left," Cook said. "He was burned everywhere except his hands and his face."

Cook said about half of Mrs. Huss' hair was burned as well as her eyelashes and eyebrows. She also suffered burns on her lower legs and feet.

Police got the man and woman out of the trailer and stabilized them until Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad arrived. The man was immediately transported from The Brunswick Hospital to Chapel Hill.

Logan said the family was apparently cooking on a hot plate, but one of the children wanted oatmeal so they decided to use the gas stove.

A gas line to the camper's heater was disconnected, and gas filled storage areas inside the camper when the tanks were turned on to use the stove.

Logan said the explosion occurred when a match was struck to light the stove.

"It was actually a very, very small fire. It was a lot of heat but a small fire," he said.

The fire was out before Tri-Beach Volunteer Fire Department arrived. An emergency medical technician from Charlotte who was staying at the campground turned off the gas to prevent the fire from spreading.

Cook said the fire didn't burn long. "It was more or less a flash, just an explosion and gone," he said.

The young boy told authorities that he saw flames underneath the trailer just before the explosion.

"He said he hollered for his daddy and before he could answer it just blew up," Cook said.

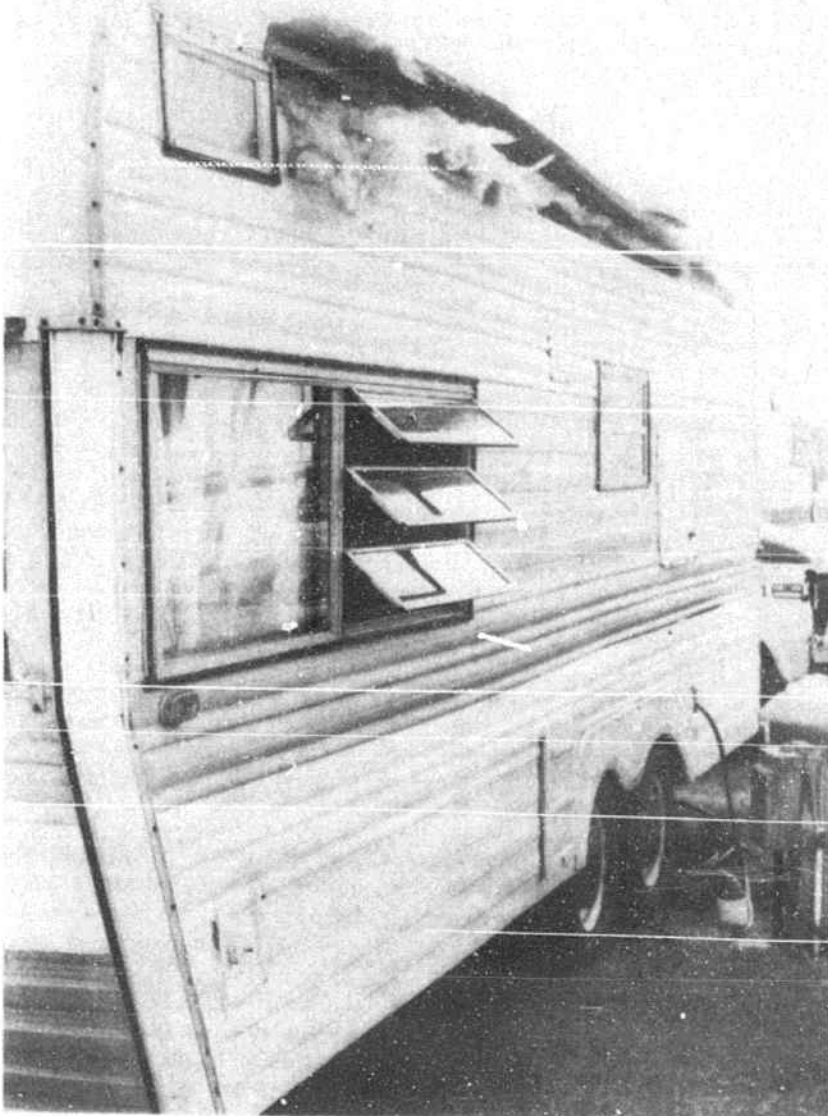
The two children stayed with someone in a nearby camper until their grandmother drove down from Shelby to take care of them.

"They seemed to be OK," Logan said. "They were shook up, of course, as any kid would be seeing mommy and daddy taken away in an ambulance."

Cook estimated the camper was about 19 or 20 feet long.

"They said they heard the explosion halfway down the island," he noted.

Despite the force of the explosion, Cook said no other campers nearby were damaged and nobody else was injured.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER
TWO PEOPLE WERE INJURED last week at Holden Beach when an explosion blew out one side of this camping trailer.

Drinking Party Dispute Ends With Man's Shooting

An afternoon of drinking ended in violence Sunday when a 61-year-old ex-convict shot his neighbor in the chest at a mobile home park near Southport, police said Monday.

The victim, Michael Lee Terry, 39, was listed in stable condition at New Hanover Regional Medical Center Monday, investigating Detective Nancy Simpson said.

Arrested in the shooting was Edward Earl Steppe, a native of Charlotte who "has been in and out of prison since 1954," according to Assistant District Attorney Lee Bollinger. He said Steppe has served time for armed robbery, breaking and entering and drug charges.

Steppe has been charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, inflicting serious injury.

The two men live two trailers away from each other in the Sea

Pines Community off Long Beach Road.

Witnesses to the shooting told Simpson that Steppe, Terry, another man and a woman had spent the afternoon sitting in chairs beside Terry's trailer. They had been drinking for about two hours, Simpson said.

Steppe and Terry got into an argument that ended when Steppe pulled out a .25-caliber automatic and shot Terry in the chest between his heart and his stomach, Simpson said. She did not know the nature of the disagreement.

Other neighbors reportedly told Simpson that Steppe had pulled out the gun earlier in the day, but had not threatened anyone.

An initial bond of \$10,000 was set for Steppe's release. That figure was raised to \$50,000 after a first appearance in court Monday.

Man Charged With Raping Friend's Pre-Teen Daughter

A North Myrtle Beach, S.C., man has been charged with nine sex offenses involving a girl under the age of 13 in a series of assaults that allegedly occurred in Brunswick County over a period of two years, police said Monday.

Ronald Lynn Kimball, 48, has been charged with one count of first degree sexual offense with a child under 13, statutory rape, two counts of crimes against nature, three counts of taking indecent liberties with a child and two counts of sexual activity by a substitute parent.

If convicted of all charges, Kimball could face a maximum sentence of two life terms plus 80 years.

Detective Nancy Simpson said Monday that the charges were brought after information was received from South Carolina indicating that the offenses had occurred here when the victim was age 12.

The victim, now 15, is the daughter of Kimball's female friend, Simpson said.

Kimball was arrested July 30 by North Myrtle Beach Police. He did not fight extradition to Brunswick County, where he is being held in lieu of \$100,000 bond.

At a first appearance in Brunswick County District Court Monday, attorney Michael Ramos was appointed to defend Kimball. A probable cause hearing was set for Aug. 19.



Buy any frozen yogurt product & **Get 1 FREE** with coupon

1 coupon per item, not valid with any other offer. Also good at Yaupon Beach & N. Myrtle Beach locations.

Hot Dogs 2 For \$1

Chicken 2 pc. Snack Pack \$1.99 (inc. 4 potato wedges)

Propane Gas Cylinder Exchanges \$11.99

New Tanks \$35.00

Express Stop

EXPRESS STOP

24 Hours A Day—7 Days
Shalotte-Jct. Hwy. 17 & Holden Bch Rd.
©1992 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Don't Miss This Summer

Clearance Sale

Ladies' Summer Dresses & Sportswear **20-50% Off**

Mens' Summer Dress Shirts & Sportswear **15-50% Off**

Ladies' Summer Shoes **25-50% Off**



Kirby's
DEPARTMENT STORE
and BEN FRANKLIN
Main St., Shallotte, 754-4846

timing is everything

NOW'S THE TIME

DOUBLE RIGHT ON

TIME TIME

TIME'S A WASTIN' THIS IS THE RIGHT TIME

no time like the present

JUST IN TIME IS

TIME! MONEY

the time of your life

PERFECT TIMING

Don't let the best time to get a loan in decades pass you by.

Home Equity Loans


8.79% APR

Stop By Today

We've lowered our rates at NationsBank. So it's a smart time to get a loan for a car, home improvement or even to refinance your existing debt. What a great way to save money in the long run. Stop by or call your neighborhood NationsBank and ask about our new low rates. But do it today, before time runs out.

NationsBank | U.S.A.

Official Sponsor 1992 U.S. Olympic Team



*APR quoted available to qualified NationsBank Deluxe Banking customers and applies only to five-year term home equity installment loans with 80% loan-to-value ratio. 60 monthly payments of \$20.44 per \$1,000 borrowed. Other rates and terms available. (Rates subject to change without notice.) ©1992 NationsBank Corporation. NationsBank of North Carolina, N.A. Equal Housing Lender. Member FDIC