

Time To Fall Back...

Sleep in. There's an extra hour for it. Eastern Standard time resumes at 2 a.m. this Sunday morning, **October 25.**

Shucking In The Big Time

Three local oyster pickers finish in the money at the National Oyster Shucking Contest in Maryland. Page **7-A.**

What A Racquet!

The West Brunswick girls' tennis team beats South to finish with a perfect 12-0 season. Page **12-B.**

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NATIONAL TV SHOW AIRS STORY

Accused Molester, Wife Arrested In Nevada; Children Found Safe

BY ERIC CARLSON

A nationwide television broadcast and a clipping from *The Brunswick Beacon* helped a dedicated detective bring about the arrest of accused child molester Robert Burroff Jr. and his wife Gail at a Reno, Nev., homeless shelter Tuesday night.

The four Burroff children were safely taken into custody by the Reno Department of Social Services after the arrest, according to Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Nancy Simpson. Brunswick County DSS workers will arrange to fly them home later this week, she said.

"The officers who made the arrests said they believed the children were kind of relieved, like they were tired of being dragged around from town to town," Simpson said.

Burroff is being held in the Reno jail on two felony charges, Simpson said. His wife has been jailed on a warrant charging her with being an accessory after the fact to a felony.

Fugitive warrants were issued for Burroff when he failed to turn himself in after being indicted Aug. 31 on one charge of first-degree rape and two counts of taking indecent liberties with children.

He was last seen Sept. 4 by a woman in Ocean Isle Beach, who told police she had taken him to meet his wife at the local fishing pier that day.

Neighbors living near Mrs. Burroff's mobile home on Stone Chimney Road told Simpson that they had not seen the mother or her children Sarah, 12, Melody, 11, Michael, 8, and Sammy, 2, since the fourth.

A search of the trailer indicated the family had left suddenly without even taking the children's shoes, clothing or diapers, Simpson said. Food

"I was so happy to know they were alive. I just knew one of those girls had left that article there as a message, to try to get some help."

—Detective Nancy Simpson

was left defrosting in the sink and clothes were still hanging on the line.

On Friday night, the Burroff case was a featured segment on the Fox Television Network program "America's Most Wanted," which asks viewers to phone in tips on crimes and missing persons.

The show told the Burroff's story and revealed that an article clipped from *The Brunswick Beacon* had been found on a gasoline pump at a San Antonio service station Oct. 6. The clipping was the second page of a Sept. 24 story about the family's disappearance, Simpson said.

The article urged anyone with information about the Burroffs to call the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. However, the phone number did not include the area code, Simpson said. So the man who found the clipping first called authorities in Brunswick, Ga., and Brunswick County, Va., before finally reaching Simpson. The discovery brought her mixed feelings.

"I was so happy to know they were alive. I just knew one of those girls had left that article there

as a message, to try to get some help," Simpson said. "But I was also afraid of what might happen to her when he found out what she'd done."

Feeling increasingly desperate, and with no local clues to the Burroffs' whereabouts, Simpson last week contacted the producers of "America's Most Wanted." She sent photos of the family and a copy of the *Beacon* article, which was shown during the broadcast.

The discovery of the article in San Antonio focused Simpson's attention on Texas. One of the dozens of calls she received came from Ronald Megs, director of the Star of Hope shelter in Houston.

Simpson called Megs Monday afternoon. He told her the Burroffs had been staying at the shelter under their own names since Sept. 6, two days after they were last seen in Brunswick County.

A counselor at the shelter told her the children appeared healthy. She said they had been attending a local school. Simpson also learned that the Burroffs had applied for food stamps and other public assistance programs, suggesting that they might have intended to stay in Houston.

Megs also told Simpson that the Burroffs had planned to stay at the Star of Hope until Oct. 22. Instead, they checked out on Oct. 8, two days after the *Beacon* article was discovered.

Simpson said she alerted Houston police and the Harris County Sheriff's Department to check other shelters in the area. A bulletin was issued to watch for Gail Burroff's 1986 Honda Accord.

Finding the clipping in San Antonio, about two hours drive from Houston, led Simpson to believe the Burroffs might be planning to cross the border, where it would be next to impossible to ex-

(See BURROFFS, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY LYNN CARLSON

A Jubilant Winner

A beaming Shirley Simmons of Supply greets her considerable cheering section after winning the Oyster Shucking Contest at the close of last weekend's N.C. Oyster Festival. Simmons took top prize after coming in second in the contest for each of the past three years. More festival photos and stories, inside.

Simmons Claims Shucking Title At 1992 Oyster Fest

BY SUSAN USHER

It was Shirley's day. After coming up second three consecutive years in a row, Shirley Simmons shucked her way to a win Saturday at the North Carolina Oyster Shucking Championship at Seaside.

Cheered on by a North Carolina Oyster Festival crowd that included many of her coworkers at a Shallotte Point oyster house, Simmons shucked 24 oysters in 2:31:68, seconds faster than any of her six competitors. That lead held in judging for neatness of presentation, with an adjusted time of 2:57:68.

For her efforts she received a check for \$100, a plaque and an all-expenses-paid trip to the National Oyster Shucking Championship in Leonardtown, Md., next October 16 and 17.

First runner-up Dorothy Hill of Shallotte received a check for \$75 for a tray shucked in an adjusted time of 3:02:13. Third-place and \$50 went to first-time entrant Chuck Watson of Myrtle Beach, S.C., whose adjusted time was 3:16:56.

Simmons, a Supply resident, has been shucking oysters for 15 years. She picks at Lloyd Milliken's Oyster House at Shallotte Point, as do three other entrants in Saturday's contest. On her best day, Simmons says she has opened 110 pints of oysters.

Last year, after hearing her name called as first runner-up for the third time in three years, Simmons

vowed, "I'm just going to keep coming back until I win."

Saturday, she said it "felt good" to win, though she had entered convinced she would not.

With her winnings, she added, "I might take my family out to eat."

Contest chairman Annette Odum said she was pleased with the crowd's enthusiasm.

"I loved having the audience out there going wild like that," she said. "It added a lot to the contest."

The shuckers' showdown was the highlight of the 12th annual N.C. Oyster Festival, sponsored by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce to boost "shoulder season" tourism and the economy in general of its service area.

Unseasonable temperatures in the mid-80s Friday dipped overnight, and when cloudy skies cleared mid-day Saturday, it was cool.

"Perfect oyster-eating weather," was how Glenn Humbert, chairman of the Brunswick County Shrine Club's food service, described it.

"It was a great day for us," he said. "Everybody's real tired right now, but we'll be back next year."

"Shriners served more than 800 buckets of oysters in two days, including 500-plus Saturday, as well as other seafoods. Steamed oysters were an addition to the Friday menu.

While the club has no plans to add fried oysters to its menu (too

(See FESTIVAL, Page 2-A)

PRESIDENTIAL RACE SPURS REGISTRATION

Voter Turnout Predicted At 70 Percent

BY SUSAN USHER

Local political and election officials are predicting Brunswick County's largest voter turnout ever on Nov. 3, spurred largely by interest in the race for the presidency.

"What's bringing it on is the presidential election. This time it's so open, and with the debates they're having, there's a lot of interest," said W.A. (Bill) Stanley Jr. of Brick Landing, chairman of the Brunswick County Democratic Party.

He's seen higher interest reflected in volunteer activity and in a last-week surge in registrations. Several precinct officials ran out of blank forms due to heavy activity the last day registration was open, Oct. 5.

When the books closed, Brunswick County had 32,769 registered voters, according to Lynda Britt, supervisor for the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

That is a gain of 2,848 over the May primary and an increase of 4,423 or 15.6 percent over the last general election in November 1988,

"I think it will be the highest (turnout) we've ever had. I wouldn't be surprised to see it around 70 percent."

—Lynda Britt
Elections Supervisor

when 28,346 people could vote. It reflects even higher registration activity than might first be apparent. Since 1988, Britt said the county has also "purged" voter records, removing between 4,000 and 5,000 persons from the registration lists.

Britt said she isn't certain how to account for the large increase.

"I don't know what the meaning is. I don't

know if it's retired people who take their voting seriously or if it is young people wanting to have a voice in their future, or both," she said.

In 1988, Britt's prediction of a 60 percent voter turnout was right on the money, with the actual turnout at 62.5 percent.

This year she's predicting even higher voter participation.

"I think it will be the highest we've ever had," she said two weeks prior to the election. "I wouldn't be surprised to see it around 70 percent."

Stanley agreed that interest in the general election is up considerably from four years ago, when he was also serving as party chairman.

"What interest there was then, was for Bush," he recalled. "This time it's just a complete 180-degree turn-around. We've had people who have been in the county three or four years and never registered that wanted to register this time."

"I think we're going to have one of the great-

(See REGISTRATION, Page 2-A)

Police Still 'Stymied' By Ash Man's Murder

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department is seeking information from anyone who might have seen Ronald Everett Evans, 20, of Ash in the hours before he was shot to death beside a dirt road off N.C. 130 north of Shallotte Monday night, Oct. 12.

A horseback rider discovered Evans body face down in the bushes beside the unpaved extension of Mulberry Street on the edge of the

Green Swamp Sunday afternoon. He had been missing since about 7:30 p.m. the previous Monday, when he left his stepfather's home in Ash to buy dinner at a Shallotte fast food restaurant.

Evans' champagne colored 1986 Honda Accord was found the next day by employees at the Brick Landing Plantation golf course. It had been nosed into a swampy area on a dirt road on the golf course property. Inside was the unopened bag of food from the Burger King in Shallotte.

"We need help from the public on this one," Detective Capt. Phil Perry said Monday. "We know he got to the Burger King at about 8 o'clock and that he was alone when he left. He must have stopped somewhere and met someone between there and where his body was found. "Somebody had to have seen him. We need that person to come forward and help us make this thing gel," Perry said.

From interviews with family and friends, police have determined that Evans had originally planned to cook for himself and his girlfriend, Jacqueline Smith, Monday night. Instead he decided to get dinner at Burger King at meet her back at home after she got off work at the Revco drug store in Shallotte.

He borrowed \$10 from his step-

father, Dewayne McCumbee, and left for Shallotte. He said he would call his mother Marion McCumbee if he was going to be late. The call never came.

"We know he was serviced at Burger King and we know he was alone. After that we draw a blank," Perry said. "We're just stymied."

Evans body was found with two gunshot wounds, one in his back and one in his leg. It appeared that he had been killed where the body was discovered and that there might have been some sort of altercation. The body was sent to Chapel Hill for an autopsy.

The rutted dirt road where the body was found runs from the end of the pavement on Mulberry Street north, then forks about a half mile away with one prong intersecting N.C. 130 and the other connecting with Big Neck Road.

Evans lived on Big Neck Road in Ash. Mulberry Street ends near Freeman's Place, a popular nightclub where two shootings have been reported in the past month.



EVANS

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