

Tax Collections 'Average' As Deadline Passes

As the deadline for paying property taxes passed Tuesday (Jan. 5), Tax Collector Nancy Moore estimated that about 85 percent of Brunswick County property owners will have paid on time and avoided a penalty.

"We haven't compiled the figures yet, but collections seem to be running about average," Moore said. "We expect that at least 85 percent will pay by the deadline and another 10 percent will come in between now and June."

As usual, business was brisk at the tax office last week. The period between Christmas and the deadline is when the largest numbers of taxpayers

choose to pay their bills.

Those who missed the deadline will be charged a 2 percent penalty during the month of January. Tax returns filed after Feb. 1 will face an additional 4 percent each month until taxes are paid.

The names of delinquent taxpayers are published in local newspapers in April.

Under a policy adopted in 1991, the county has the right to garnish the wages of a delinquent taxpayer or attach their bank account to recover the money. No warning of such action is required.

While the numbers have changed slightly, the names and the order of the ten largest taxpayers'

list remained the same for 1992, with large corporations and businesses dominating the roster. Once again, Ocean Isle Beach developer Odell Williamson was the only individual taxpayer to make the list.

The value of the ten top taxpayers' properties, at \$1.3 billion, constitutes slightly more than 30 percent of the county's \$4.35 billion total tax base.

Carolina Power and Light Co., with its Brunswick nuclear plant in Southport, heads the list of taxpayers released by the tax office (See TAX, Page 2-A)

Top Ten Taxpayers, 1992

	Value	Total Tax
1. Carolina Power & Light.....	\$659,345,088	\$4,745,710
2. duPont.....	256,305,629	1,742,878
3. N.C. Eastern Municipal Power..	171,641,240	1,235,816
4. Archer Daniels Midland.....	80,273,386	577,968
5. Cogentrix of N.C. Inc.....	31,190,630	224,572
6. Odell Williamson.....	27,779,790	188,902
7. Federal Paper.....	24,626,640	170,296
8. Brunswick Electric.....	23,050,962	158,470
9. Bald Head Island Ltd.....	21,612,785	155,612
10. International Paper.....	20,816,150	141,549

SOURCE: BRUNSWICK COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR

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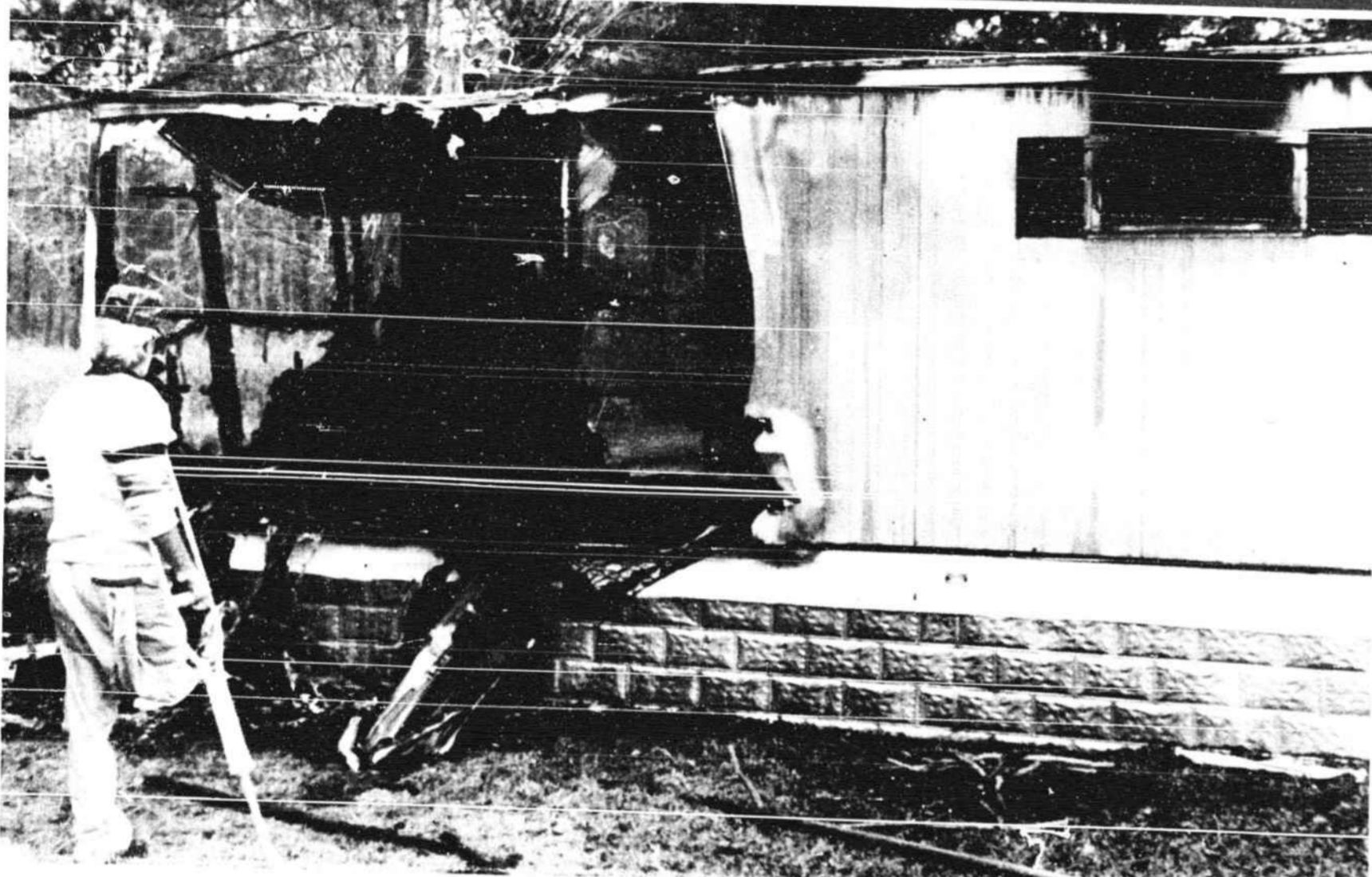
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STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

MARVIN EVANS of Ash, who lost a leg and three fingers in a 1991 shooting incident, inspects the remains of his mobile home after an electrical fire destroyed it Monday morning.

Shooting Victim Loses Mobile Home In Fire

BY ERIC CARLSON

As if losing a leg and part of his hand wasn't enough for one man to endure in less than two years, Marvin Evans of Ash had to stand by helplessly Monday morning and watch his mobile home go up in smoke.

"If it weren't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck," he said to no one in particular.

Evans was beginning to feel a bit better about things and had reason to believe that 1993 not be as bad as the past two. But after Monday, he's not so sure.

Eighteen months ago Evans and two friends were standing around talking outside a home on Little Prong Road when a pickup truck pulled up and stopped. A man got out and approached the three, carrying a 12-gauge shotgun.

"Y'all are going to die tonight," the man said as he fired three blasts.

One of the shots tore three fingers from Evans' right hand as he held it up to shield himself. Hundreds of pellets riddled his lower abdomen. The shots were fired from such a close range that the wadding from one of the shells was driven into his body.

One of the other men, Danny Hogan, was hit in

"If it weren't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck."

—Marvin Evans

the chest and in both arms and legs.

In an investigation that established no clear motive for the shooting other than mistaken identity, 42-year-old Dexter Woodring Hughes of Longwood was arrested and charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury.

After more than a year of judicial delays, Hughes was sentenced to 10 years in prison and five years on probation.

Evans was sentenced to a life without a leg, without half his hand and without another day at his former job as a carpenter.

He still carries 300 pellets in his body. Recurring infections and gangrene have forced him to have two amputations of his right leg. In all, he has undergone surgery 15 times.

But recently, things were looking a bit better. He had left his trailer on Project Road and moved

in with his friend Jane Riley. She had helped him raise the money to buy an artificial leg, which he hopes to have fitted within a few months.

Last weekend, Jane's daughters came down from Pennsylvania for a visit. Evans put them up at his trailer, where they stayed until Sunday.

Luckily, they had already left when something went wrong in an electric wall heater and set the trailer on fire Monday morning.

Alan King, first captain of the Waccamaw Volunteer Fire Department, was driving by when he spotted the smoke. He turned in the alarm and, with the help of Second Capt. Kevin Smith and Assistant Chief Glenda Warren, the blaze was knocked down in a matter of minutes.

But not before the fire opened up one end of the trailer and gutted the rest. Emergency Management Director Cecil Logan, who drove a back-up tanker to the fire, said the trailer was a total loss.

Leaning on his crutches, Evans stared blankly at the gaping black hole in his former home. Someone patted him gently on the back and wished him good luck.

"I'll need it," he said. "It can't get much worse."

MORE ARRESTS EXPECTED

Police Nab 'Major Cocaine Dealers,' Recover Property

BY ERIC CARLSON

An eight-month undercover investigation and assistance from several "good citizens" led to the arrest last week of two major cocaine dealers and the recovery of more than \$12,000 in stolen property police say users had exchanged for drugs.

"These were not just street dealers. These were major cocaine traffickers," said Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Lt. David Crocker.

Carl Gene (also known as "Blind") Ballard, 30, and Silva Teresa Smith, 31, were arrested outside their home on Lincoln Road, Leland, last week after undercover detectives made a deal to purchase 2 kilograms (about 4.4 pounds) of cocaine from them for \$93,000, Crocker said.

Ballard and Smith have each been charged with four counts of trafficking in more than 400 grams of cocaine, two counts of conspiracy to traffic in cocaine, two counts of cocaine possession and one charge of possessing drug paraphernalia. Police estimated the street value of seized drugs to be \$50,000.

At the time of their arrest, the two had been on probation for less than two weeks after pleading guilty to cocaine possession, Crocker said.

A .38-caliber revolver was found

in Ballard's pocket at the time of his arrest. Hypodermic syringes, razor blades, a homemade pipe, several wrappers coated with cocaine residue, a small bag of marijuana

and materials used in the processing of cocaine were seized in a search of their home.

Investigators believe Ballard and Smith were operating an on-going business in which they

accepted stolen property in exchange for powdered cocaine or crack, its smokable derivative.

Inside the Lincoln Street house, detectives found televisions, stereo systems, videocassette recorders, power tools, appliances and other items. By tracing serial numbers, detectives have linked several of the seized items to Brunswick County break-ins as far away as Holden Beach, Crocker said.

The investigation began about nine months ago, when Det. R.D. Todd learned through an informant that Ballard and Smith were "selling large quantities of cocaine from their residence," according to a search warrant on file at the Brunswick County Clerk of Court office.

In late May, Todd and agents of the Wilmington Police Department narcotics unit searched a mobile home on Chapel Loop Road, (See DRUG, Page 2-A)



BALLARD



SMITH

Representing Brunswick Interests May Be Tougher In Newly Drawn District

BY SUSAN USHER

When the N.C. House of Representatives convenes Jan. 27, Rep. E. David Redwine (D-Brunswick) will have already begun redefining his role in a state legislature and 14th District altered significantly by redistricting.

Of all House members, 32 are senior to Redwine in terms of longevity in office, according to the House Principal's Clerk Office. Including 1993, Redwine will have served 5.5 terms, while the most senior member will have served 16 terms.

There are 78 Democrats and 48 Republicans serving in the post-redistricting chamber. Of the Democrats, only 51 have legislative experience, said Redwine. That's not enough to fill the 68 leadership posts that would be available if the structure remains unchanged.

Redwine is part of a study group charged by the House speaker with examining the organizational structure of the chamber and making recommendations for change. Reorganization is just one of the issues committees on which Redwine serves will be making recommendations when the legislature reconvenes. (See related story in this issue.)

Traditionally, committee and subcommittee chairmanships go to members of the ranking party, in this case, to the Democrats.

The alternatives being weighed are whether to reorganize by consolidating several committees into "supercommittees," in the process concentrating leadership power among fewer individuals; to break with tradition and give freshman legislators committee leadership roles; or some combination of the two.

A third alternative does exist, but is least likely to occur—sharing leadership powers with Republican members.

"Given their willingness to work, those Democrats with experience will be asked to do more this year," suggested Redwine.

As of late December, he didn't know what responsibilities he would be assigned during the 1993 session.

"The other thing I think is going to be interesting for this term is our district," said Redwine, who for the first time is part of a two-seat district.

"Before I felt I knew how my constituents felt about an issue generally; it was just a matter of my going ahead and doing what I think is right," said Redwine.

That gentleman's agreement between Sen. R.C. Soles (D-Columbus) and himself, in which each guided legislative matters related to his own home county, is a thing of the past.

(See REDISTRICTING, Page 2-A)



REDWINE

Environmentalists' Backing Sought For Sewer System

BY LYNN CARLSON

Engineers representing Sunset Beach and Calabash want the N.C. Coastal Federation to endorse plans for a regional sewer system, which they say could serve as a model water quality improvement project.

Consultant Joe Tombro of the Powell Associates engineering firm told the Sunset Beach Town Council on Monday he thinks the towns' plan to pursue a regional sewer system, including a stormwater runoff management component, is compatible with the environmental group's recently released environmental action agenda for North Carolina.

The engineers say their data show that septic tanks are the primary source of ground and surface water pollution in the area and that a sewer system is needed to restore water quality in southern Brunswick County.

The Swansboro-based federation presented its agenda to Governor-elect Jim Hunt two weeks ago. The document suggested a timetable of goals and objectives aimed at "the restoration of contaminated waters, the management of coastal growth, and better opportunities for public involvement in coastal planning and protection."

Tombro and fellow consultant Jim Billups will meet today (Thursday) with leaders of the Sunset

Beach Taxpayers Association seeking a "meeting of the minds" about the need for centralized sewage disposal in southern Brunswick County. The 800-member taxpayers' group is the only local organization listed among endorsers of the Coastal Federation's action agenda. However, the group's leaders were vocally opposed to the recent formation of the South Brunswick Islands Water and Sewer Authority representing Sunset Beach and Calabash.

SBTA President Cleve Waldmiller said Tuesday that he welcomes the meeting, because the group has been given "no detailed data" indication. (See SEWER, Page 2-A)

Board Sinks 'Punitive Surcharge' Plan

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach homeowners can continue using as much water as they want without worrying about seeing a "punitive surcharge" on their quarterly water bill.

Town commissioners voted 3-2 Monday night against a plan to inflate the water rate for owners of rental homes who advertise illegally and use more water than their septic systems are designed to handle.

Commissioners Gil Bass, Gay Atkins and David Sandifer voted against the proposed surcharge that would have increased the water rate more than six times for some homeowners.

Sid Swarts and Jim Fournier voted in favor of the plan to boost the water rate from \$1.50 to \$10 per 1,000 gallons for people who use too much water and contribute to pollution.

Under the proposal, the higher fee would have kicked

in when the owner of a rental home used more water than the septic system was built to accommodate. The fee wouldn't increase unless the owner also advertised that his house had more bedrooms or sleeping capacity than permitted.

Opponents of the plan said it wouldn't solve the problem of overcrowding and wouldn't discourage people from abusing their septic systems. Proponents saw the proposal as a means of identifying permit violators.

Monday's debate became heated at times. At one point, Sandifer accused Swarts of having "a crusade against realtors on this island." Swarts said his crusade was "against people who violate septic system permits."

Sandifer said the proposal didn't deal with the overcrowding problem. If a homeowner advertised that his four-bedroom home slept eight people but rented it to 20 (See WATER, Page 2-A)

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