

### Making History At SMS

A Shallotte Middle School team will compete in the state History Bowl after winning the local round. Page 9-A.

### One Great Grappler

William Stanley heads the all-county team and is named West's first county Wrestler of the Year. Page 10-B.

### Three Little Princesses

Tiny, Junior and Teen Miss Brunswick County are crowned in a night of pageantry at Supply Elementary. Page 5-B.

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

12/31/99  
HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY  
PO BOX 162  
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, March 3, 1994

50¢ Per Copy

40 Pages, 3 Sections, Plus Inserts

Thirty-Second Year, Number

## Oh, Deer! Whose Bones Were Under That Purse?

BY ERIC CARLSON

It was a grisly discovery, with all the makings for a True Detective magazine story.

A woman's purse was found Tuesday afternoon in a wooded area off Georgetown Road between the Pearl and Sandpiper Bay golf courses. Identification cards and papers were scattered about the scene.

But there was something else. Something unsettling.

Beneath the purse was a pile of bones and decomposed flesh. The person who called 911 couldn't tell if they were human, but they were big enough to be.

Deputies and detectives converged on the spot. The first officer on the scene secured the area to prevent anyone from disturbing evidence. The State Bureau of Investigation crime scene investigator was summoned.

Other authorities tried to make contact with someone at the address listed on the identification cards.

Arriving a short time later, Sheriff John Carr Davis and Detective Tom Hunter parked along Georgetown Road. Approaching carefully to preserve the crime scene, Hunter examined the remains. He came back with his report.

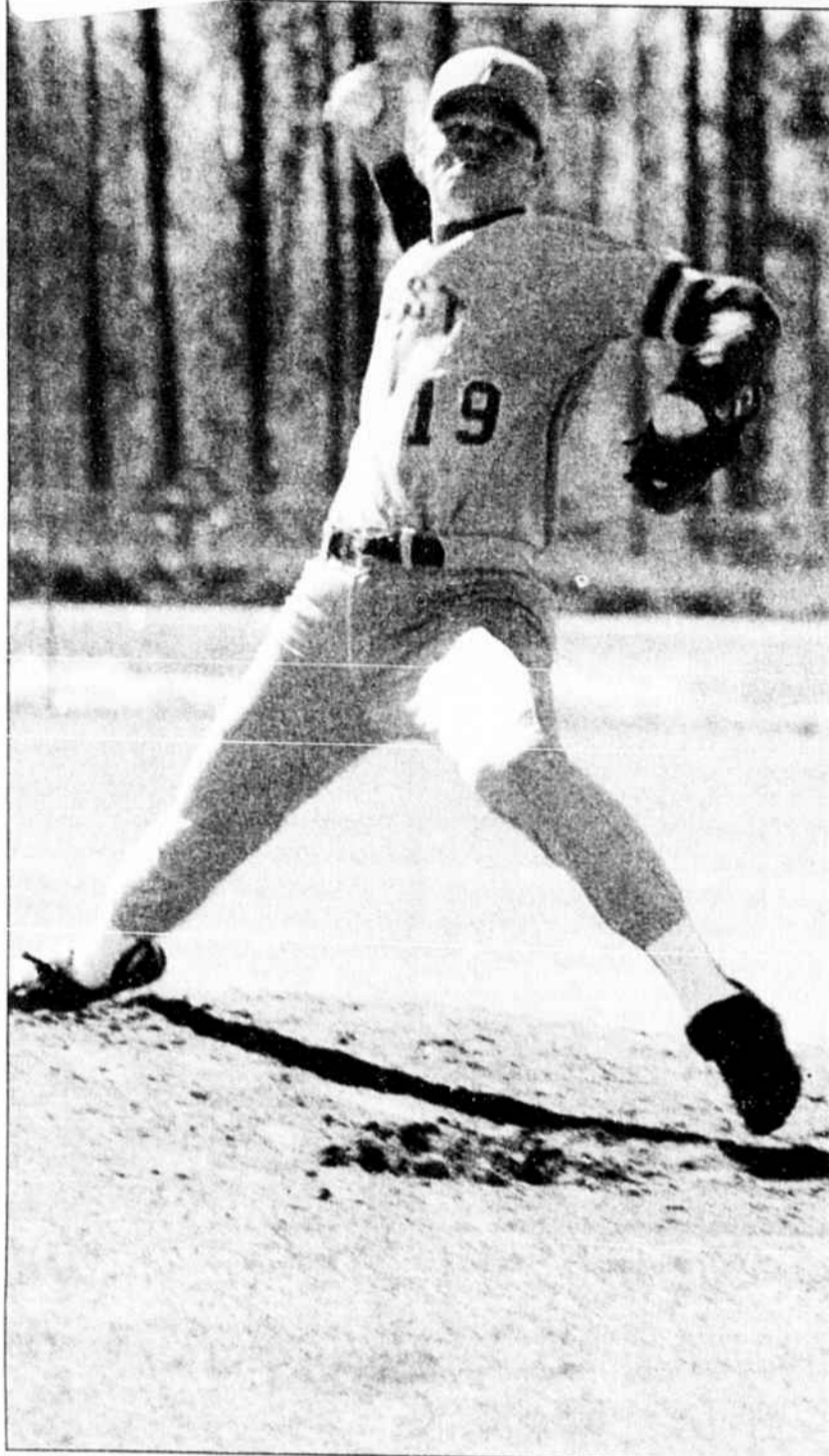
"Deer bones," he said.

It was about that time that the Hendersonville woman named on the identification cards called to report that her bones were quite all right, thank you. However, she said her purse had been stolen recently.

It appeared that the purse had been tossed from a vehicle and was later hit by a roadside mower, which threw the contents onto the deer carcass, Hunter said. Ironically, it was probably the same deer that a sheriff's deputy hit while on patrol a few years ago, Hunter said.

"All units back in service," the sheriff radioed.

Case closed.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

### Spring Training

West Brunswick High School's Josh Baker delivers a pitch during the Trojans' scrimmage game Saturday against the visiting New Hanover Wildcats. The high school spring sports season is less than two weeks away. West's baseball team opens the season March 15 at Wilmington Hoggard.

## County GOP Eyeing Way To Name Ballot Replacement For Fairley

BY SUSAN USHER

A Brunswick County Board of Education member's decision to end his bid for re-election has the local GOP organization looking at options for getting someone else's name on the ballot in November.

After fellow school board members rescinded a policy Republican Bill Fairley considered a key to improvement of the county schools, the first-term member said last week he will no longer seek re-election.

He has not formally withdrawn as a candidate, giving Brunswick County Republican Party officials time to consider its alternatives.

The Southport attorney had been one of two Republican candidates for the District 3 seat. Eric Pfeiffer of Long Beach had already submitted his formal withdrawal from the race to the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

If Fairley were to also formally withdraw before the May 3 primary, that would leave the GOP without a candidate, and possibly no chance of naming another.

Party Chairman Shirley Babson said Tuesday that Fairley is willing to wait until after the primary to formally withdraw if need be to allow a replacement to be named.

Whether that's necessary depends on one's interpretation of state election law.

Lynda Britt, supervisor of the Brunswick County Board of Elections, said that election law provides a procedure for a political party to replace a "nominee."

The party primary is the vehicle for choosing its nominee. Write-in candidates are allowed.

"After May 5 he will be the nominee. Fairley would automatically become the nominee after the primary if he is unopposed," said Britt.

If he resigns at that point, the GOP Executive Committee can vote on a replacement for the Nov. 8 ballot, she said.

That nominee would face Democrat Billy Carter, who lost the Democratic primary for the seat in 1992, but is unopposed this time out.

Babson said she is waiting to hear from the State Board of Elections and the state GOP organization's attorney on when a replacement can be named.

If the party can act before the primary, Babson said she would ask the GOP Executive Committee to vote at its March 10 meeting on a replacement for Fairley.

"I was sorry to see him (Fairley) resign and I did try to talk him out of it," said Babson. "But the important thing is we will have a good candidate on the ballot."

She has received three recommendations on how to fill the slot. One of those options would be to give it to (See FAIRLEY'S, Page 2-A)

## Mirror Maker Plans Pelican Plant Purchase

BY ERIC CARLSON

Thanks to the efforts of a Shell Point retiree, a Michigan manufacturing firm plans to buy the former Pelican Manufacturing Co. building in Shallotte and may re-hire many of the workers who were laid off when the sewing plant closed last December.

The Mirrorlite company of Rockwood, Mich., makers of bus and truck mirrors, plans to open a new branch of its operations in Brunswick County and is currently negotiating the purchase of the Smith Avenue building, according to Jere Comeford, a long-time friend of company owner Bill Schmidt.

"He's been down to visit us 10 or 12 times since we moved here seven years ago," Comeford said. "When he started talking about moving into North Carolina, I told him about the Pelican building."

Schmidt plans to open an entirely new company that will be called Mirrorlite of North Carolina, Comeford

said. Within 12 to 18 months after opening, the operation would likely employ 100-150 people, nearly all to be hired locally. Schmidt also plans to seek former Pelican employees to work at the plant. Comeford said.

The company considered constructing a new building at the 11-acre South Brunswick Islands Committee of 100 industrial park site on N.C. 130 west of Shallotte. But the Pelican building was chosen instead.

Schmidt is currently negotiating a purchase of the building with its Marion, S.C., owners. Those papers should be signed "within the next two weeks," Comeford said.

"He was hoping to get moved in before Christmas," Comeford said. "He's ready to go."

Efforts to contact Schmidt for comment were unsuccessful. He did not respond to two requests for return calls left at his Michigan office Tuesday.

### HEALTH INFO STUDENTS TO DELAY GRADUATION

## Snafu Leaves Would-Be BCC Grads 'Inconvenienced'

BY SUSAN USHER

Second-year Health Information Technology (HIT) students at Brunswick Community College say they are being "very inconvenienced both career-wise and personally" because the regional program will not receive national accreditation in time for them to graduate on schedule.

Students will complete graduation requirements one quarter later, and must wait another year, until October 1995, before seeking individual professional accreditation.

"I hate it for the students," said Johnnie Simpson, vice president for instruction at

BCC. "We're doing everything we can to accommodate them all and try to make sure they can graduate from an accredited program."

"The education director of the accrediting agency has told us that students do better on the exam if they are out in the field working when they take it. Hopefully our students will elect to get jobs in the fall."

The two-year program prepares students to process, maintain, compile and report health information, including preparing reports for agencies responsible for third-party reimbursements for private insurance, Medicaid and Medicare and maintaining confidentiality of

patient information.

**Accreditation Not Required**

Program accreditation isn't required, Simpson said, but is to the students' advantage.

Only graduates of accredited programs are eligible to take the national Accredited Record Technician (ART) exam offered each October. Those who pass the exam are awarded the designation ART, which increases their eligibility for top pay and advancement.

According to the publication "North Carolina Health Careers '92, an ART can expect an average starting salary of \$22,000 as a

medical record technician in this state.

"I guess that was the biggest disappointment to most students—the delay and the difference in earning potential it could mean," said Lucy Keefer of Calabash. "We basically went to medical clerk's school unless we get to challenge that exam."

Keefer was one of six students who signed a statement released to *The Brunswick Beacon*. She said two other students were absent the day the statement was circulated and a third chose not to sign it since she intends to withdraw. The students said they felt "extreme" (See ACCREDITATION, Page 7-A)

### SEASON ENDS MARCH 12

## It's Last Call For Local Oysters

BY DOUG RUTTER

Oyster sales have been slow since Christmas, but Marlene Varnam expects orders to increase over the next two weeks as area residents rush for their last shellfish of the season.

"It'll pick up probably this weekend and next weekend. People will want that last bushel before the season closes," the Varnamtown oyster dealer said Tuesday.

North Carolina's oyster season ends next Saturday, March 12. Harvest statistics for the 1993-94 season won't be available for some time, but early indications are that it didn't stack up to the previous two.

Brunswick County commercial fishermen harvested 90,131 pounds of oysters during the 1992-93 season and 116,515 pounds in 1991-92. In the four previous seasons, shellfishermen averaged 62,185 pounds.

Those figures had state fisheries officials concerned when oyster season opened last October. They expected the good harvest last season

*"This season was probably below average. It wasn't horrible, but it wasn't great either."*

—Rich Carpenter  
Division of Marine Fisheries

to take a toll on this year's crop.

"I feel like this season was probably below average," Rich Carpenter, southern district manager with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, said Tuesday. "It wasn't horrible, but it wasn't great either."

Carpenter warned last fall that the harvest could be down this season, in part because many of the local oysters did not meet the minimum size limit of three inches.

"When we went into the season we just had a lot of little oysters. We were hoping to get them up to a harvestable size during the season but it didn't happen," Carpenter said.

The division reduced the daily limit on commercial fishermen from seven bushels to five bushels last fall, hoping the change would help the oyster supply last longer.

However, Carpenter said the lower limit didn't help much this season. "We didn't have a real good supply this year."

Varnam said oyster sales have been down all along the North Carolina coast. Even in Brunswick County, she said the demand for oysters has not kept up with the limited supply.

"Sales have been off since after Christmas, especially in the last month," she said. "Usually after Christmas you sell as many as you can get a hold of. People aren't eating oysters like they were."

Carpenter said the Division of (See SEASON, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY CECILIA GORE

### Fire Guts Residence

Flames had engulfed one corner of this Shallotte area residence well before firefighters were called to the scene Friday night. The home, located on N.C. 130 about two miles west of Shallotte, is owned by Charles Price. The blaze was reported shortly after 6 p.m. Friday. Firefighters remained on the scene for more than three hours, according to a Shallotte Volunteer Fire Department report.