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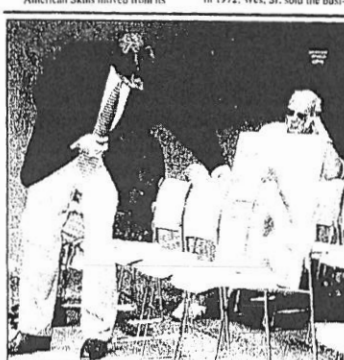
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SMELLS LIKE BACON - Les Edwards, co-owner of American Skins, supervises as Kendric Grady shows freshly fried pork skins into large fifty-pound boxes which will be shipped to distributors. Pork skins are processed into snack foods at the new Burgaw plant and give off the odor of frying bacon.

Pork skin processing plant opens in Burgaw

By LAURIE SANDBERG
Last week a pork skin processing plant opened within Burgaw's town limits, making it the "new kid on the block," the business black, that is. American Skins moved from its



MEETING WITH SUCCESS - Hadden Allen succeeds in his second attempt to win a special use permit from the Pender County Board of Commissioners. Here he shows a drawing of his proposed plan to develop a community of 64 townhomes near Old Casten Road in Hampstead.

Board okays two permits

By LAURIE SANDBERG
BURGAW - In a public hearing on Monday night, the Pender County Board of Commissioners voted to approve two special use permits.
A third special use permit by Sanderson Manning to expand mining activities was tabled until the next board meeting.
The first permit was requested by Hadden Allen to construct a 64 unit multifamily housing devel-

opment off Highway 210 in Hampstead adjacent to Old Casten Road.
The project will be known as "Village Square" and will provide housing for over 190 people including 64 school age children.
Allen had previously been denied a special use permit to construct a mobile home site at the same location.

PLEASE SEE "SITES" P.3

ment to Mr. Krauss. In 1981, Mr. Krauss sold back the business to Wes, Sr., his brother, and his son Wes Blake, Jr. who began the business of processing pork skins into a snack food.
"The business was not very profitable," said Wes Blake III who, along with his sister's husband, Les Edwards, bought the business with a group of investors in 1991. "We did most of the work ourselves. I worked day shift and Les worked nights."

The brothers-in-law did everything necessary to keep the company alive including cutting and cooking the skins, bookkeeping and payroll, even driving the trucks for delivery.
In 1998, the two men bought out the investors.
"We have been blessed," said Wes. "We have made some decisions which have proven to be successful."

Between 1993-94, Blake and Edwards created a niche market. They went to packagers and distributors to expand their market.
That led to a larger southeastern market, where they service primarily, but also prompted sales to distributors in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Texas.

Southern states include North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Florida.
The new facility is on the site which formerly housed Lundy Packing who vacated in the mid 1990's. Fire damage remained from the former owner and caused a major cleanup and renovation effort on the part of American Skins.

The new facility includes two offices, a reception area, a conference room, a large walk-in refrigerator with three exits, a cutting room, cooking room and shipping room.

Stone Montgomery Construction constructed the building and included enough space to accommodate expanded work space for Phase II of a plan by Blake and Edwards to move

St. Helena Council meeting is in uproar

By JOHN WHITE
Controversial appointment proceedings and angry complaints from residents disrupted the Village of St. Helena Council meeting last Thursday evening.
The appointment to fill the vacated seat of Council Member Janice Alexander, who resigned effective immediately, sparked contention when a petition supporting a popular resident was denied consideration by the village Board.
Ms. Alexander, who had held her seat since February, cited her reason for submitting a letter of resignation as "I can better serve the community in other ways."
Ms. Alexander's term of office had been shrouded in controversy from the time of election.
The proceeding to fill her seat led to controversy as a petition to

Mobile clinic earns County high praise

By JOHN WHITE
Pender health clinics earned high praise for accessible health care to residents at the recent Pender County Board of Health meeting.
In particular, the Board singled out the Mobile Medical Clinic as having the most improved county-wide health coverage, while catering to the needs of low income families.
Overall, the health clinics have increased patient care doubling from 9,000 in 1996 to 18,000 last year.
Population growth and conven-

Burgaw Postmaster appointed

By LAURIE SANDBERG
When Barry Klingel began his career with the United States Postal Service (USPS) in 1978, the postmaster interviewing him asked him what kind of job he wanted.
"I want your job," said then young, brash Klingel.
The postmaster laughed and hired him as a window clerk.
But over the years, Klingel proved himself due to his words and worked his way up the ladder, from clerk to supervisor, then officer-in-charge, and ultimately to the position of Postmaster.



SERVICE WITH A SMILE - New Burgaw Postmaster, Barry Klingel, happily awaits postal patrons as part of his duties at the window. Klingel has steered the residents of Burgaw as Officer-In-Charge for the past four months as well as ten years ago.

The Cape Fear Area United Way is recruiting volunteers to contact local companies and assist with presentations. Training provided and required. Call Siobhan Jackman at 251-5041.

Martin Beach, Clerk to the Board

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Clerk to the Board

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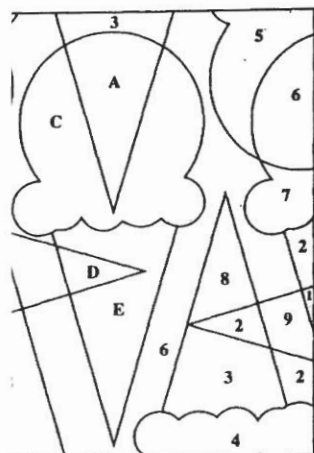
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HIDDEN CTURE



ch space that contains a letter.

THE TWINS

TWO ARE EXACTLY ALIKE?



NUMBER ONE AND TWO

AMERICAN SKIN, LLC



READY TO START COOKING are Wes Blake (L) and Les Edwards, co-owners of American Skin, LLC. Scheduled to open July 18, the Burgaw plant, located on Industrial Drive, will cook and supply pork rind pellets to companies nationwide. The pellets, which have a shelf life of approximately three years, are processed into pork rinds. Edwards and Blake closed their Wilmington plant which was no longer large enough to meet their needs. Opening the Burgaw facility, which consists of 20 employees, completes phase I of the project. Phase II plans, which include closing their Georgia plant and finishing Burgaw construction, are scheduled for completion by year's end. At that time the plant will total approximately 38,000 square feet in size and employ 40-50 people. (Staff photo by Karin Parker)

Topsail Beach Town Meeting

Dawson's Creek Gets Okay to Film in Topsail Beach

by Muriel St. John
Staff Writer

Granville Productions of Wilmington, producers of the TV serial "Dawson's Creek," was granted permission last Wednesday by the Topsail Beach Board of Commissioners to film portions of upcoming scenes in Topsail Beach.

Pending permission of individual property owners, the film-

ing procedures after a hurricane. Bergman also introduced Sam Altman, the Town's new Building Inspector.

Commissioner Jack Barnes noted that \$5,500 worth of trash cans was lost after Hurricane Floyd because they had not been secured. He emphasized that homeowners are responsible for securing their trash can(s).



A Wild Saturday Night

DWI Driver Leads 100 m.p.h. Surf City Chase, Crash

A Dunn man has been arrested on 12 different felony and misdemeanor charges and jailed under \$50,000 bond after leading Surf City police on a high speed chase and causing damage to two town police cars in a weekend incident.

James Grant Norris, 19, of 711 Alderman Mill Road, Dunn, was charged with felony hit and run, assault on a government official with a deadly weapon, careless and reckless driving, driving while impaired, damage to town property, and speeding 100 m.p.h. in a 25 m.p.h. zone following the Saturday night incident. Norris was also charged with possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, underage possession of alcohol, driving with a provisional license, felony speeding to elude police, and failure to stop for a blue light and siren.

The incident began at 10:45 p.m. Saturday night when Surf City police officer Jimmy Southerly stopped the 1996 Chevrolet pickup being driven by Norris on Roland Avenue in Surf City on suspicion of driving while impaired.

After Officer Southerly got out of his vehicle and approached the pickup, Norris put his vehicle in gear, made a U-turn on Roland, and fled on Hwy. NC 50 across the Surf City bridge at a very high rate of speed. Officer Southerly

got in his patrol car to pursue, and called in the pursuit to Pender County dispatch. Surf City officer Hilda Flores, who was traveling in the opposite direction on NC 50, joined the pursuit some distance behind the suspect and Officer Southerly.

The suspect vehicle's speed, according to the pursuing officer, reached 100 m.p.h. When Norris' vehicle reached Holly Ridge, Holly Ridge police officer Michael Meacham also joined the pursuit.

West of Holly Ridge, the fleeing suspect made a U-turn and turned back toward Holly Ridge. Officer Southerly also U-turned and resumed the pursuit. As Norris approached Officer Flores, he crossed the center line into her lane. Uncertain of the lane he was going to use, Officer Flores finally stopped her vehicle just over the center line to reduce the potential impact speed of a collision.

Norris' vehicle hit Officer Flores' vehicle head-on, causing a head injury to the officer, activating her vehicle air bags, and causing heavy damage to the vehicle. He then placed his vehicle in reverse, but was boxed in by the patrol car driven by Officer Southerly, which made impact with the rear of the pickup.

The suspect then fled on foot toward a wooded area, ignoring Officer Southerly's orders to "freeze" and "stop." As Norris ap-

proached the wooded area, he turned back abruptly toward the pursuing officers (Southerly and Meacham). Suspecting the presence of a weapon, Officer Southerly fired two rounds from his service weapon.

The suspect then ran into the woods, where he was tackled and arrested by Officers Southerly and Meacham. The suspect was treated at New Hanover Regional Medical Center for a bloody nose and sore ribs, sustained in the automobile collision, in which he was not wearing a seat belt. After treatment, he was released again to Surf City police. Officer Flores was also treated at New Hanover Regional's emergency room for a concussion and released.

The suspect was taken before a magistrate and ordered held under \$50,000 secured bond on the pending charges. He was transported to the Pender County jail.

An investigator with the State Bureau of Investigation was requested to assist in review of the incident because of the officer's discharge of his weapon. The vehicle accident - in which the investigation was handled by the state Highway Patrol - and the weapon discharge are both being reviewed internally in the Police Department in accordance with normal procedures.

Safe Haven Enables Women and Children to Escape from Violence

by Karin Parker
Staff Writer

"I was so afraid of my husband, that I wouldn't even scratch my

Another survivor interjected, "I was so unsure of myself, if you asked me if I wanted chocolate or vanilla ice cream, I couldn't tell

where I could live until I could get on my feet."

"I thought they'd bring you in that night and throw you out that