

Seafood Festival docks in Carteret

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

MOREHEAD CITY — In its 19th year, the state's second-largest festival is a fish out of water.

Structural damage to the North Carolina Seafood Festival office from Hurricane Ophelia forced event staff to relocate as the festival's Friday afternoon kickoff approaches.

"It's totally displaced our office, but we're actually relocated with a shell office next door," said Stephanie McIntyre, N.C. Seafood Festival executive director. "The festival will go on even though our office has been displaced."

Nearly 200,000 people are expected to attend the free-admission Seafood Festival, which features live music, fishing and tennis tournaments, a boat show, children's activities and about 200 vendors, many serving seafood staples and dockside delicacies.

The entertainment begins Friday, with musicians performing at three stages along the Morehead City waterfront. Contemporary recording artists Hope Partlow and Erika Jo, both scheduled to perform Saturday, are headlining the free performances.

McIntyre said the festival can accommodate about 6,000 vehicles at the N.C. State Port, with a free shuttle to and from the festival grounds. Overflow parking will be available if necessary.

Although the Seafood Festival

North Carolina Seafood Festival

Location: Morehead City waterfront
Dates: Sept. 30 through Oct. 2
Opens: Noon Friday, Sept. 30 (no vendors); 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday
Cost: Free
Information: (252) 726-NCSF

offers much more than seafood, McIntyre explained that the festival raises community awareness about the state fishing industry.

"We're hoping that a lot of people will make sure they patronize restaurants that serve North Carolina seafood," she said. "A lot of the vendors will be selling seafood caught right on the Crystal Coast. We hope to just bump up appreciation for seafood."

The festival officially begins at noon Friday with a luncheon, but the music won't begin until 7 p.m., and vendors won't be seen until Saturday morning. Vendor booths are open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

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County approves new subdivision

Westmil Pond Estates to have 38 lots

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Developers have the green light to begin constructing a 38-lot subdivision in Craven County's Township No. 7, after county commissioners approved the plans Sept. 19.

The Craven County Board of Commissioners rubber-stamped a Planning Board recommendation to approve plans for Westmil Pond Estates, which will be located off Old Airport Road in Township No. 7.

Commissioners also reviewed the county's response to Hurricane Ophelia with Craven County Emergency Services Director Stanley Kite.

"All of them had some comments about the hurricane," said county manager Harold Blizzard.

Kite recapped his damage assessment for commissioners, which totals some 41 single-family residences and 36 mobile homes damaged. Craven County obtained a Category B public assistance designation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, meaning that FEMA may reimburse the county for some of its protective measures.

The emergency management director thanked citizens who evacuated promptly and otherwise

cooperated by securing loose objects in and around their homes

"The citizens who took action — this helps the whole system, because we're all in this together," Kite said Friday. "If everybody does a little something, that makes everything a little better."

Craven County has a pool of about 550 fire rescue personnel and emergency first responders and an additional 200 law enforcement officers to participate in disaster relief efforts, Kite said.

"We have to prioritize — first and foremost, the infrastructure of electric, water and sewer," he said. "Basic services, we have to get back up and running."

In other business, commissioners approved the sale of 8 acres of county-owned property to bidder Mary Martha Parrott for \$33,150 and approved a request by Township No. 6's volunteer fire department to borrow about \$185,000 for a new fire truck.

The next Craven County Board of Commissioners meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 3 in the Craven County Administration Building. All meetings are open to the public.

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER / WILLIAM R. TOLER

Stormwater from Hurricane Ophelia drains from Union Point Park Sept. 13. Emergency management officials reported a 6 to 7-foot storm surge along the Neuse River.

Craven's close call

County sustains \$1 million in hurricane damage

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Hurricane Ophelia will be remembered in Craven County not for its intensity, but for its duration.

The sluggish Category 1 storm that inched its way through the region Sept. 12 and 13 caused an estimated \$1 million in damage — which Stanley Kite, director of Craven County Emergency Services, attributes in part to the hurricane's lackadaisical north-eastern movement.

"I think people underestimate hurricanes based on the Saffir-Simpson scale," Kite said. "They say a Category 1 isn't too bad. I don't look at it that way. Slow-moving storms can cause catastrophic damage."

Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point reported maximum sustained winds of 65 mph —

about 9 mph shy of hurricane force — with gusts reaching 92 mph, Kite said. He said a slight eastward flinch in the storm's projected path spared Craven County from the brunt of Ophelia's fury.

Fire rescue and law enforcement personnel responded to nine calls for assistance during the storm, helping about 20 people evacuate. Wind damage from Ophelia was minimal, Kite said.

"There was damage scattered throughout from fallen trees," he said. "Most everything was east of New Bern. Most of the damage was pretty much (isolated) because of the way that storm made that little jog to the east."

Craven County is applying for \$1 million in public assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and has been declared eligible for Category B assistance, Kite said.

Ophelia destroyed one single-family residence in the county and left four with major damage and 36 with minor damage, Craven County Emergency Services data shows. One mobile home was destroyed, while two sustained major damage and 33 were found with minor damage. One business in the county sustained minor damage.

Kite said Friday that discovery of more storm damage is possible as residents file reports with county, state and federal disaster aid groups.

"There is also some damage that we still don't know about," he said. "There's always damage not discovered in initial surveys."

The hurricane caused storm surge of about 6 feet on the Neuse River in downtown New Bern and

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Riverkeeper: Neuse fared well in storm

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Moderate storm surge was Hurricane Ophelia's only discernible effect on the Neuse River, according to Lower Neuse Riverkeeper Larry Baldwin.

The Riverkeeper, who oversees conservation education efforts for the private, nonprofit Neuse River Foundation, said overflowing hog waste lagoons poses the main threat to the river, and Ophelia didn't generate enough rainfall to flood the lagoons.

"I have not seen a whole lot of negative impact to the river because of Ophelia," Baldwin said. "We didn't get the precipi-

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER / WILLIAM R. TOLER

The riverside walkway at Council Bluffs Park in downtown New Bern is flooded as Hurricane Ophelia slogged through the Outer Banks on Sept. 12.

Film industry, New Bern may be a natural fit

Screen Gems president Capra is optimistic about city's future in film, TV projects

BY CHARLOTTE BIRD
FOR THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

New Bern's historic charm could attract the film and television industry to North Carolina's colonial capital, EUE/Screen Gems Studios president Frank Capra Jr. said Thursday.

The studio president and accomplished movie producer delivered a well-received lecture on filmmaking at Craven Community College's Orringer Auditorium in the latest installment of Public Radio

East's Explorations lecture series.

"It takes something very unique [to attract filmmakers] and Tryon Palace is unique," Capra said, responding to audience questions. "Tryon Palace is ideal for filmmaking. Some things filmmakers don't realize about the southeast is that it's full of talented actors, not just southern actors, actors from all over."

Capra said students interested in filmmaking careers can apply for

internships and other work experience at Wilmington-based Screen Gems Studios. He said students from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington have been involved with "One Tree Hill," a Warner Bros. series currently in its third year.

"There's a lot of chances for students," he said. "We get a lot of UNC-W students working with smaller parts on 'One Tree Hill.'"

Screen Gems Studios is home

"Tryon Palace is ideal for filmmaking. Some things filmmakers don't realize about the Southeast is that it's full of talented actors, not just southern actors, actors from all over."

Frank Capra Jr.



to nine stages ranging in size from 7,000 to 35,000 square feet — the largest studio complex east of Hollywood, Calif.

Could New Bern siphon away

some of Wilmington's many film and TV projects and establish itself as a Southern performing arts power-

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Local & State

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Cove City firefighters get generous boost

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

COVE CITY — Residents here raised about \$20,000 for their volunteer fire department Saturday, continuing an annual tradition of strong community support for emergency workers.

The Cove City Volunteer Fire Department sold about 1,700 plates of barbecued pork and chicken, according to Fire Chief Brian Davis, who estimated that between 800

and 1,000 people attended the 30th annual Cove City Firemen's Day fund-raiser.

"This community supports us really well," he said. "If it wasn't for the community, we wouldn't have half of what we have now. Cove City is behind the fire department with extremely strong support, and it makes a big difference."

Davis said the money will prob-

ably be spent to purchase updated equipment for volunteer firefighters in the western Craven County town.

A parade through Cove City's main thoroughfares kicked off the festivities, followed by the barbecue lunch at the fire station. Davis said about 60 community volunteers assisted the fire department as it served up barbecue by the plateful.

"We had just as many volunteers from the community who

weren't from the fire department help us out," he said.

The community festival also included the Craven County Junior Livestock Show, with youths showing about 160 lambs and 80 heifers.

An afternoon lull subsided at 7 p.m., when Batson & Chase serenaded Cove City with a variety of beach music and classic rock 'n' roll. The Myrtle Beach, S.C.-based band was scheduled to perform until mid-

night.

Davis said Firemen's Day exemplifies Cove City's small-town identity.

"The biggest thing to me as far as Cove City goes is it's just a small town," he said. "Everybody knows everybody. It's not like living in a big city."

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or at corey@indiregister.com.

Community pride abounds in Duffyfield

Fourth annual Duffest draws 8,000 to Duffyfield community

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Chris Stanley calls it a special thing. He isn't alone.

About 8,000 people converged on Stanley White Recreation Center Saturday for the Duffyfield Unity Family Festival, or Duffest 2005, a day-long celebration for residents of New Bern's Duffyfield community.

Stanley, 16, attends the community festival every year. Despite quantum leaps in attendance — last year's Duffest drew a crowd of about 6,000 — it still retains the feel of a family reunion.

"It's a special thing in the community, and it's good for everybody," he said. "I enjoy everybody coming out and being together."

Organized by the Greater Duffyfield Residents Council and the Duffest 2005 Committee, the event featured about 65 vendors, a basketball tournament, children's games, a raffle tournament and live entertainment, including the Nia African Dancers.

The fourth annual Duffest began at 9 a.m., with an opening ceremony comprised of remarks by Craven County Commissioner Johnnie Sampson Jr. and Tom Bayliss, New Bern mayor, at 11 a.m. The celebration concluded at 5 p.m., as a sunny September sky yielded to storm clouds.

"Mainly, this is a family gathering for the residents to come back to historic Duffyfield," said Marshall Williams, Greater Duffyfield Residents Council president.

Williams said the residents council has worked with city and county leaders to provide "resources for individuals to better them-

selves and better their lives." The council has resident-led committees for elder goals, youth goals, homeownership goals, health goals and community cleanliness goals.

Planners and architects of national prominence visited Duffyfield on Aug. 13 for a community design charrette, which Williams said energized revitalization and beautification efforts.

"We had a charrette and we had a lot of people in the community support it," he said. "They liked the ideas and the designs from the planners."

Red fire engines and pumper trucks from the New Bern Fire Department were on display, as were city police vehicles and Craven County Emergency Services' mobile command center.

The Duffest tab ran to about \$4,000, Williams said, which the residents council paid after holding numerous fund-raisers and seeking additional money from the city. Williams said the one-day festival takes nearly a year to plan — initial preparations for Duffest 2006 will begin next week.

But festival-goers say the organizers' hard work results in a consistently impressive event that instills community pride.

"It's great," said Maysville resident Marie Hill. "We need more like this in every area so people can get together and work together."

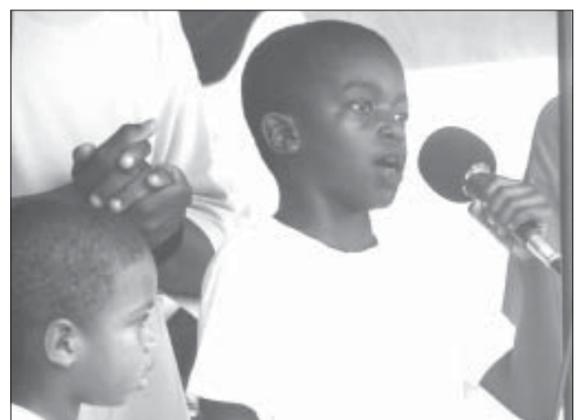
Hill said she enjoyed the music of gospel hip-hop artist Che Che da Supastar, explaining that it helps young people "see that they can celebrate in the Lord and still have fun."

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or corey@indiregister.com.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Children enjoyed jumping on the deflated 'moonwalk' during Duffest Saturday at Stanley White Recreation Center.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Left: Robin Stanley of Old Gold Music was one of the vendors on hand for Duffest.

Above: Seven-year-old Kweisi Johnson sings with Boys in Jeans on stage Saturday afternoon.

Havelock band squelches competition

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

VANCEBORO — Anthony Hingley first picked up the tuba in sixth grade. On Saturday evening, he picked up a first-place trophy.

Hingley, the low brass section leader for the Havelock High School Marching Rams, helped lead his bandmates to a first place overall finish in the 3A class of the West Craven Band Classic at West Craven High School.

The 12th annual competition featured bands from 10 North Carolina high schools in four size classes. Marching bands from Havelock and New Bern high schools represented Craven County, while West Craven — ineligible for competition as the host school — put on an exhibition performance.

"We try not to set our sights on one competition," said Hingley, now a high school senior. "We try to work during the whole season. I think we're doing good. We still have some improvements we can make, but overall, we're doing pretty good."

Hingley said playing in the band has given him a constructive hobby.

"I think marching band itself is good for a lot of people because it gives you



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

The Apex High School band finished up its performance of James Bond themes by forming the infamous spy's number at the West Craven Band Classic Saturday.

something to do so that you don't get in trouble."

The Marching Rams earned their first place overall finish by taking top honors in drum major, visual ensemble, music performance, marching execution and general effect and tying for first place in percussion with John T. Hoggard High School.

Assistant band director Amanda Landis stressed her students' dedication to the marching band, explaining that afternoon practices, competitions and fund-rais-

ers occupy all but two evenings each week.

"The kids are doing really good, they've worked hard," she said. "We've been working since the end of June."

About 120 musicians and color guard members lend their talents to the Marching Rams, whose routine centered on the rise and fall

of Rome. "I think our band is doing really well," said drum major Allison Priesing, a Havelock High senior. "We've

come a long way in this season so far."

Priesing, the fourth of five girls born to her parents, said each of her older sisters has performed in the Havelock band and each has earned a leadership role. She said her experience with the marching band has taught her valuable life lessons.

"Band has taught me that once you make a commitment, you need to stick to it," she said. "It's taught me to work with people."

New Bern High School's Marching Bears finished second overall in the 2A class, earning first place in drum major and second place in music performance, marching execution and general effect.

Only one 4A marching band — representing Apex High School — participated in the Band Classic.

**West Craven
Band Classic
Overall Winners**
1A: Roanoke Rapids
2A: J.H. Rose
3A: Havelock
4A: Apex

Wake County Schools education experiment draws national interest

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Efforts to integrate public school students by income level in Wake County could be responsible for improved standardized test scores.

School assignments in the county, which envelops Raleigh, the state capital, have been shuffled to ensure that low-income students comprise no more than 40 percent of the total student population, according to a report in Sunday's *New York Times*.

The result? Public schools in Wake County are more economically diverse, and some data points to as much as 40 percent gains in minority students' test scores since Wake County Schools began economic integration in 2000.

Though the policy has its detractors — parents who resent school reassignments that may mean longer bus rides — the strong correlation between economically diverse schools and higher standardized test scores is dif-

ficult to dispute, writes *Times* reporter Alan Finder.

"Some parents chafe at the length of their children's bus rides or at what they see as social engineering," Finder writes. "But the test results are hard to dispute, proponents of economic integration say, as is the broad appeal of the school district, which has been growing by 5,000 students a year."

Wake County has 139 elementary, middle and high schools, the article states. All but 22 of these schools are within the 40 percent threshold.

The *Times* calls Wake County's plan "the most ambitious in the country to create economically diverse public schools," and notes that school districts in Wisconsin, Florida, California and Massachusetts have adopted similar economic integration plans.

The article was headlined "As Test Scores Jump, Raleigh Credits Integration by Income." It appeared in the Education section of Sunday's *New York Times*.

Opinion

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Editorials

Birth of a star?

New Bern could be next filmmaking hotspot

From Union Point Park's sweeping vistas of the Neuse River to the throwback charm of the historic downtown district and the hulking grandeur of Tryon Palace, New Bern was tailor-made for Hollywood.

It's no surprise, then, that Frank Capra Jr., who captains EUE/Screen Gems Studios in Wilmington, sees potential in North Carolina's colonial capital. Capra, an accomplished movie producer, spoke about filmmaking at Craven Community College Friday in the latest installment of Public Radio East's Explorations lecture series.

Responding to public questions after his speech, Capra agreed that New Bern could be an attractive market for North Carolina's burgeoning film and television industry. He mentioned Tryon Palace by name.

But it remains to be seen whether this photogenic town is camera-ready.

Starry-eyed Wilmington rolled out the red carpet for moviemakers, offering strong support from City Hall and financial incentives for California-based studios to film in the Port City. Wilmington's courtship of the film industry has paid off; Screen Gems, its

crown jewel, is the largest active film studio east of Hollywood, Calif.

We asked Kevin Roberts, president of the New Bern Chamber of Commerce, whether he envisioned his town as a movie star in the making. He said the old girl hasn't auditioned, but there's no denying she'd be a natural on the silver screen.

"It has been a conversation we have had, but not to any real depth," he said. "I am frequently told how people who visit this market are amazed by the scenery. Do I think eventually we'll see some of it? Yes, I do."

Roberts said he regularly receives correspondence from magazine photographers interested in featuring New Bern in their publications. He predicted that opportunities for media exposure will only increase as the city's 300th anniversary approaches.

New Bern could benefit greatly from national exposure as an East Coast movie heavyweight.

City and county leaders should invite studios to share the town's rich history, vibrant downtown and bucolic backyards with audiences across the world.

Let voters decide

Libertarians should remain on state's ballots

When the State Board of Elections splits hairs, North Carolina voters are left with fewer choices.

By the board's stringent standards, the Libertarian Party no longer qualifies for official party status because its candidates failed to win the required 10 percent of votes in last year's gubernatorial and presidential elections.

Libertarian candidates can no longer appear on state ballots, and the Tar Heel State's 13,000 registered Libertarian voters may see their status changed to unaffiliated.

The beleaguered party is suing the State Board of Elections in Wake County Superior Court, the Associated Press reported last week, claiming that the state's rigid election laws violate citizens' rights — and the spirit of the Constitution.

It's difficult to believe that this nation's founders and the framers of our Constitution would deny an active citizen the right to run for election. George Washington was a known opponent of bloated, omnipotent political parties and feared the effects of a closed two-party system.

Other minor political parties, including the Green Party, may consider simi-

lar legal action in order to earn a spot on state ballots. This struggle to give North Carolina voters a choice is a noble battle — and we hope the plaintiffs in this lawsuit prevail.

The divisive and polarizing two-party system that steers American politics often forces voters to select candidates with extreme views.

This is the system we've democratically chosen, but it certainly shouldn't be entitled to government protectionism that prevents competition from smaller political factions.

We feel that when it comes to electing public officials, more choices are always preferable to fewer.

Third party candidates have a Constitutional right to throw their hats in the electoral ring.

State election officials should not seek to impose arbitrary regulations on candidacy that, as far as we can tell, are intended to reward influence and discourage grassroots involvement in politics.

In imposing standards for recognition that minor parties cannot realistically meet, the State Board of Elections has narrowed the range of ideas and beliefs that will be represented in public governing bodies.

Vox Populi

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We do not accept open letters, letters to a third party or unsigned letters. We reserve the right to edit or reject all submissions.

From the Editor

This alternative newspaper makes integrity its mission

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Survey after dismal survey indicates that newspapers are losing readers.

Media think tanks attribute this attrition to the emergence of free online content, or to an erosion of credibility among the mainstream media.

Blame it on the Internet — or on Jayson Blair.

While drooping circulation figures continue their steady decline and jittery publishers slash newsroom budgets to appease shareholders, the future for newspapers at times seems bleak.

Yet, you hold in your hands the premiere issue of the *Independent Register*, an alternative weekly newspaper covering New Bern and Craven County.

This newspaper is the result of a partnership between myself and co-pub-

lishers Eric Voliva and William R. Toler. We believe there is still a need for thorough, comprehensive community newspapers to record local history as it happens.

National circulation slumps, we believe, are largely the result of readers tiring of metro-centric newspapers that ignore and neglect small-town America. Through its weekly content, the *Independent Register* reflects our desire to cover Craven County objectively and compassionately.

We believe in the integrity of community newspapers, and we hope readers and advertisers will support us as we strive to publish an accurate, relevant and interesting edition each week.

This editorial page should tirelessly promote the fundamental American freedoms of speech, expression, religion, the press, petition and

assembly. It should always advocate for accountability in government and uninhibited access to open meetings and public records.

Reader feedback is always appreciated. We welcome letters to the editor and editorial submissions, as well as news tips and suggestions. If there's a story you'd like to see in the *Independent Register*, please let myself or either of my co-publishers know.

Much of the appeal in beginning this newspaper was the dream of self-employment. But we don't just work for ourselves. We work for you — our readers — and we will do everything reasonably possible to earn your trust and your continued support of the *Independent Register*.

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or at corey@indieregister.com.

Soapbox

Anti-marijuana lobbies perpetuate pot myths

BY AMANDA DASILVA
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

For millions of people, especially college students, there is no greater recreational activity than sitting back with friends and smoking a joint. While the American government has tried to demonize this little plant — marijuana — for almost a century, millions of people still continue to smoke it regularly.

This is not because they are addicted; it is not physiologically possible to become addicted to the drug. Nor do their actions necessarily lead to more serious crimes or abuse of more serious drugs (there are millions of people who have no interest in trying more dangerous substances). With this in mind, it is ludicrous to continue the assault on marijuana in the 35-year-old so-called "War on Drugs."

Marijuana, when it is not mixed with harder drugs (such as cocaine) or is not abused psychologically (where the smoker uses it in order to avoid responsibility for him- or herself), is a relatively harmless drug.

The government has bemoaned the health affects of the drug as part of its campaign against pot. Yes, like anything else that isn't pure oxygen, breathing in marijuana smoke can negatively affect the lungs, but pick up any issue of *High Times* magazine, and you'll see ad after ad for filtering devices that allow the user to breathe in only THC, the psychotropic ingredient in mari-

juana, and not the accompanying hazards inherent in smoke.

Other than this, there is no conclusive evidence by independent researchers that show any other adverse effects to smoking marijuana. Low sperm count, brain damage, schizophrenia and any other supposed effect of marijuana use has not been substantiated and all are based on purposefully faulty research.

Like any other recreational substance, marijuana is okay for some; it's every responsible adult's choice whether or not they want to use the drug.

With this known, the repercussions of the anti-marijuana movement within Washington become more and more absurd.

Billions are spent every year to spy on and lock up marijuana smokers who would otherwise never see a jail cell. Not only are the monetary costs extravagant, but the loss of useful and needed police officers harms communities and allows more devastating substances (such as the uprising crystal methamphetamine epidemic) to continue to thrive.

People sell their houses, abuse their children and destroy their bodies because of cocaine, heroin and alcohol, yet law enforcement officials are spending their time trying to lock up a few teenagers who wanted to smoke a few grams of marijuana.

As the old saying goes, which would be better: a stoner who stops at a stop sign and stares at it for 10

minutes, or a drunk driver that plows through it going 90 mph?

Luckily, these facts are becoming clearer to Americans, and the marijuana laws are now being questioned.

Though major pro-marijuana groups such as the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, or NORML, are in favor of an eventual overturn of all marijuana laws and making it fully legalized, decriminalization may be a better long-term engagement the government should begin.

With the stigma of the anti-marijuana movement inevitably lingering, taxes on marijuana production will be unfairly heightened. Corporate marijuana companies would produce less potent plants in order to increase profits.

If marijuana was decriminalized, the plant would stay in the hands of the consumers and not become a tool for the corporate state. Independent growers will continue to produce high-quality plants at a reasonable price, allowing these growers to create small businesses and help local economies.

Anti-marijuana laws do nothing but hinder the rights and invade the privacy of responsible adults.

Hopefully, America will stand up to the government's propaganda and allow this popular plant to lose its stigma and become a normal, everyday product once again.

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The *Independent Register* reserves the right to reject submissions and will edit all submissions for spelling, grammar, clarity, accuracy and Associated Press style.

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Capra lectures on filmmaking

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house? Kevin Roberts, president of the New Bern Chamber of Commerce, said there have been conversations about attracting the film industry, but the chamber hasn't yet made any overtures to movie directors.

"The 300th anniversary celebration and the preparation we're doing for it are going to be a catalyst for a lot of things like that, I think," he said.

Screen Gems has production credits for more than 300 films and TV se-

ries in its 20-year history, including "Sleeping with the Enemy," "28 Days," "Black Knight," "Dawson's Creek" and "One Tree Hill."

"Our sets are generally built for films and torn down afterwards," said Capra, who referred to "Black Knight," starring Martin Lawrence, as an example. "The castle in 'Black Knight' was used as a tourist attraction for a short while before it was torn down."

Capra first explored a movie set during the filming of "It's a Wonderful Life," perhaps his father's most

renowned project.

"My mom was never one for letting us on the movie sets, but one day I went onto my first set, then I knew my dad was making magic," he said.

After many following years and a growing interest in the business, Capra began working on his own first creation in 1961, "A Pocket Full of Miracles."

"I liked hearing some of his reasoning behind theater sales compared to DVD sales," said Caleb Boulware, a Craven Community College freshman.

County assesses damage from Hurricane Ophelia

Continued from Page A1

about 7 1/2 feet on Adams Creek and Clubfoot Creek, Kite said. Early rain bands from Ophelia sent water spilling into Union Point Park, flooding walkways and portions of East Front and Broad streets.

The county's emergency management chief reiterated that a hurricane's category on the Saffir-Simpson scale isn't the sole indicator of a storm's potential impact.

"Personally, I don't like the Saffir-Simpson scale being the deciding factor of whether you evacuate or whether you stay," he said. "People say, 'It's only a Category 1,' that bothers me, because even a Category 1 can have a significant impact on our community, and I don't think they understand that."

Kite said overall, county residents seemed better prepared for Ophelia than past hurricanes. He credits Hurricane Katrina's devastating impact on the Gulf Coast with opening people's eyes to the serious and destructive nature of tropical storms and hurricanes.

"I think what Katrina did was a wake-up call for people who didn't under-

Neuse River suffers no lasting consequences

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tation in that part of the watershed that would cause that type of a problem."

Baldwin said the 6 to 7-foot storm surge along the Neuse River caused temporary street flooding, but shouldn't be detrimental to the river's long-term health. He said Ophelia's effect on fish populations was difficult to gauge, but any negative effects were probably minimal.

Homes and businesses built on the riverfront with little or no buffer vegetation are particularly susceptible to erosion during tropical weather systems, Baldwin explained.

"The more of this de-

velopment we do right down to the water's edge, the more impact a storm like Ophelia will have," he said.

Runoff from manmade structures could contribute to river pollution, he said.

Baldwin said effects on the river would be amplified if Ophelia had been a powerhouse storm like Hurricane Katrina, which caused widespread oceanside and river flooding in the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana and Mississippi this year.

"I think we'd be in pretty bad shape if we got something like Katrina up here," he said. "I don't think we are completely prepared for anything like that, any more than anywhere else would be."

Seafood Festival features live music, entertainment in Morehead City

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Teen singer Aaron Carter is scheduled to greet fans 2 p.m. Sunday at the WITN-TV Ch.7 booth, according to the Seafood Festival Web site, www.ncseafoodfestival.org.

Other recording artists set to perform are Sammy O'Banion and Mardi Gras, Bogue Sounds, the Unknown Tongues, Streetpreacher and

Let it Be, a Beatles tribute band.

McIntyre said it's difficult to choose a highlight because of the festival's consistently strong and diverse musical lineup.

"I think a lot of it might be depending on what kind of music you enjoy," she said. "All three days are great."

At SasSea's Kids Zone, named for the Seafood

Festival's iconic mascot, children 8 and under can participate in hands-on activities offered from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Gazebo at SasSea's Island features children's entertainment, including a juggling show and several story times.

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or at corey@indieregister.com.

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stand the seriousness of these storms," he said.

The Atlantic hurricane season continues until Nov. 30. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted a 95 to 100 per-

cent chance of an above-normal hurricane season, according to a NOAA press release.

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or at corey@indieregister.com.