

Heat Wave Is Melting Away Society's 'Civilized Veneer'

By The Associated Press

The relentless heat wave that has seared North Carolina for ten days is melting away the "civilized veneer" that normally insulates society, leading to increased violence, a Mecklenburg County psychiatrist said Tuesday.

"We're getting down to a nature versus us type of thing," said Dr. Walter Feldman, a psychiatrist with the county health department. "You reach the point where you have a situation that technology, civilization and the intellect can't control, and you begin to regress to a more fundamental type of defense mechanism. When you do that, your reactions are more primitive, more infantile."

"The point is people are saving, 'When is God going to let up on us? How long is he going to try us?'"

Last month, one of the hottest Junes on record, Charlotte police responded to 360 calls in which men and women had attacked each other with fists, knives and broken bottles. That was 31 percent more than during June 1985, police said.

While at least some of the violence could be blamed on increased drinking and more people on the streets during the hot spell, Feldman said psychiatrists also were seeing many more people with depression, which often explodes into violence when the person finds a target.

"They've lost the middle civilized veneer that normally mediates," he said. "The problem is not the heat. It's the fact that it's continuous, unending, merciless with no end in sight."

Heat has already played a part in at least three deaths, officials say. Charlotte firefighters said a man who died after mowing a lawn Monday may have been a heat victim. Ernest Haynes collapsed in 93-degree heat and was pronounced dead 45 minutes later at Charlotte Memorial Hospital.

Wake County Medical Examiner Laurin J. Kaasa said high temperatures contributed to the death Saturday of Josephine Jones, 68, who also had a history of heart problems and diabetes. Guy Fisher, 29, died July 7 of heart failure blamed on the intense heat inside his metal-roofed house in Kinston.

Little relief was expected from the heat and drought through Saturday, as the National Weather Service forecast high temperatures in the low to mid-90s and only a slight chance of rain across the state. The weather service's 30-day outlook for North Carolina for mid-July through mid-August predicted above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall.

Temperatures eased slightly Tuesday, but the humidity levels increased, wiping out any gains in comfort. Greensboro was the coolest spot in the state at 2 p.m. with 80 degrees, but 69 percent humidity. Charlotte was at 95 degrees with 36 percent humidity and Wilmington reported 94 degrees with 47 percent humidity.

The heat, combined with the worst drought in 100 years, has forced several communities to impose mandatory water conservation measures.

Orange County has imposed water rationing, which forbids residents of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and other areas from filling swimming pools or ornamental fountains, or washing cars. The ordinance allows lawns and gardens to be sprinkled only between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. on Saturday or Sunday, depending on the neighborhood. Restaurant customers can only get a glass of water by request.

Water wasters could be fined up to \$50 or

could be jailed up to 30 days.

The rationing ordinance also contains a list of recommended conservation measures, including foregoing baths for showers, and limiting showers to four minutes.

Residents are asked to take showers instead of tub baths to conserve water and "about a four minute shower is comfortable to most people," said Everett Billingsly, director of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority.

Mandatory conservation measures, which carry a penalty, "are primarily outside measures that can be monitored by the police as they drive by," Billingsly said, and include washing cars, filling pools, watering lawns.

"The heart of our conservation ordinance is one of voluntary cooperation... In looking at our water consumption the past few days it appears we are getting that cooperation," he said.

Capt. Ralph Pendergraph of the Chapel Hill Police Department said a five-minute shower is "nothing anybody could be charged with."

Pendergraph said he'd devised one conservation measure on his own. "I've started capturing the water from the air conditioner and using it to water plants," he said.

Residents are also under orders to conserve water usage in Durham, Cherryville and Bessemer City.

Officials have imposed mandatory restrictions from noon Fridays to noon Mondays at Atlantic Beach to cope with water shortages that have hit the resort community on weekends.

Policemen in Fayetteville, Hope Mills and Spring Lake also have been asked to watch for residents sprinkling their lawns or gardens. When they spot sprinklers, they will ask residents to turn them off to conserve water.

Fayetteville's Public Works Commission was forced to shut down one of two water plants over the weekend when a reservoir showed high readings of iron and manganese.

Ken Fanfoni, head of water and sewer operations in Fayetteville, said Tuesday PWC officials "didn't get the response we had expected" in calling for voluntary water conservation. He said a 12-million-gallon reserve tank at the one operating water plant was only 75 percent full.

Fanfoni said if customers don't cut their water use voluntarily, mandatory conservation may be needed. PWC officials are drafting an ordinance for mandatory controls that would need city council approval.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Vic Bailey Lincoln Mercury's
Body Shop Is Now

SPECIALIZING

in the repair of

MERCEDES PORSCHE

And other types of sport cars
ALSO AUTHORIZED TO REPAIR
ISUZU - HONDA - PEUGEOT

We have 85 years combined paint and body repair experience and feature the latest

FRAME REPAIR EQUIPMENT
Come By For A Free Estimate

VIC BAILEY

703 WEST MAIN ST., SPARTANBURG, S. C. — 582-1200

MERCURY

LINCOLN

MERKUR