

Pistol Owners Offered Extra Service When Seeking Permit

BY TERRY POPE

Of the more than 250 Brunswick County residents who received pistol permits last year, a few came back to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department for help when their handguns were either lost or stolen.

In addition to issuing pistol permits, the sheriff's department also keeps a file on handguns purchased by county residents for future reference, said department receptionist Jeanette Roach. Information on pistol purchasers is required by law, but information on guns is recorded on a voluntary basis.

Even with permit and pistol in hand, there are still residents who feel safer with the model or serial number of their handgun tucked away in a sheriff's department

file.

"It is not a law, but we advise them that it's a good idea to register their gun with us," Ms. Roach said. "It has helped several times when we've had guns stolen. Sometimes people will not remember what their model and serial number is, but we can check it with our files."

North Carolina law prohibits the sale, transfer, purchase or receipt of a pistol without a permit issued by the proper official in the purchaser or receiver's county. As in 86 other counties in the state, in Brunswick County the issuing official is the sheriff's department.

Permit applicants are required to pass a test for "good moral character" and pay a \$5 fee before receiving approval to purchase a pistol. Applicants must be 21 years or older, have lived in Brunswick County for the past six months and have a good reason for wanting a pistol. As outlined in the state statute, good reasons for owning a pistol include protecting the home or business, target shooting, collecting and hunting.

"Most people who apply are either collectors or home protectors," Ms. Roach said. "They're usually someone who lives alone and a gun gives them a sense of being able to take care of themselves. There are also some who have to carry around a large amount of money."

Hunters or fishermen also seek permits for handguns to shoot snakes, she added.

Four questions on the Brunswick County pistol permit application may declare a resident ineligible to receive a permit. By law, a permit may not be issued to anyone who 1) has been declared incompetent because of a mental illness or committed to a mental institution; 2) is under indictment for or has been convicted of a felony; 3) is an unlawful user of marijuana or other narcotic drugs; and 4) is a fugitive from justice.

Of the more than 250 applications received by the department last year, two or three were disapproved due to convictions for felonies.

"Not very many will apply if they know they have a criminal record," Ms. Roach said. "Usually it will be a breaking and entering conviction, but you don't want to give a permit to someone who's been convicted of breaking and entering."

The state law does not require officials to check personal references or an applicant's Police Information Network criminal history file before issuing permits.

However, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department checks both before approving applications within 30 days.

"We have records of everything that goes through the court system," Ms. Roach said. A filing cabinet behind her desk hold cards listing all felony convictions from Brunswick County court. The department also has access to the PIN machine in the dispatcher's office that lists criminal records nationwide.

"We ask the officers within the department if they know the applicant," Ms. Roach said. "Usually the officer working the area where the person lives will know them. Sometimes we go a lot on what the officers have to say."

Form letters are also sent to the three character references listed on the application. The department requires local references from the applicant's community rather than family members.

"We've never had one that was unfavorable," Ms. Roach said. "We have some that just don't bother to send them back in."

A large number of women also apply for pistol permits at the department, Ms. Roach said.

"Usually they say they live alone or their husband works late at night and would feel better if they had some type of protection around," Ms. Roach said.

Permits are needed for each pistol that is purchased. Therefore, obtaining permits can be a routine gun collector often go through, but others are often unsure of what procedure to follow.

"We get quite a few calls every day," Ms. Roach said.



Honor Students Inducted

Several Waccamaw Elementary School students were recently inducted into the National Junior Honor Society. Pictured are, from left, seated, Robin Long, Wendy

Foss, Sherry Fields, Sandra Gore, Tonya Smith, LaShonda Stanley; standing, Gerin Hughes, Matthew Chappell, Adam Evans, Becky King and Monica Gore.

Planning Board Member Resigns 'Second Time'

Brunswick County Planning Board member Carolyn Galloway of Leland has resigned for the second time in as many months, saying her first letter of resignation in December must have gotten lost in the mail.

At their Jan. 16 meeting, board members instructed county planning director John Harvey to write Ms. Galloway a letter, "pointing out her attendance record and the question of her current residency," according to minutes of the meeting.

Board member Shelton Stanley suggested the board discuss Ms. Galloway's membership status, pointing out that "she was absent one out of three meetings in calendar 1984." Unaware of any previous letter of resignation, the board agreed to ask for her resignation by return mail

"so that the Board of County Commissioners can name a replacement for the remainder of her unexpired term."

In a letter dated Jan. 28, Ms. Galloway informed Harvey that she had already sent a letter of resignation to the county administration office dated Dec. 28.

"I regret that the board did not receive my letter of resignation," Ms. Galloway wrote. "I previously requested that my resignation become effective January 1. I am asking you now to honor that request immediately."

Ms. Galloway, a math teacher at North Brunswick High School, also thanked the board for their "graciousness and concern."

"May the board continue to do a

fantastic job for the improvement of Brunswick County," she wrote. "I hope you will remain a board with dignity, pride, and high standards which I enjoyed thoroughly being a part of."

According to Harvey, the letter was forwarded to county commissioners last week. Commissioner Frankie Rabon is expected to recommend a replacement for Ms. Galloway at the board's Feb. 18 meeting.



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