

Clerk Of Court Bellamy Indicted On Felonious Cocaine Possession

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Clerk of Superior Court Greg (Kenneth G.) Bellamy turned himself in at the Brunswick County Jail Monday night after his indictment earlier in the day on a charge of felonious possession of cocaine.



Bellamy

"Anything over one gram is felonious," said SBI Agent Fred McKinney, who was involved with the investigation. He said a charge of possession does not have to go into the detail of a charge of trafficking, which must specify a range. Revealing further in-

formation relating to details of the charge or investigation, he continued, "would not be proper to say at this time."

Bellamy, 38, of Holden Beach, has been a consistent top vote-getter in countywide elections. First elected in 1978, he is currently serving his third four-year term of office. He was not in office Monday or Tuesday and refused to comment to reporters Monday night.

He was released Monday night on \$5,000 unsecured bond, which means on his signature alone. The bond had been set earlier in the day by Superior Court Judge Henry H. Hight Jr. of Henderson, who is hearing court in Brunswick County this week for the first time.

At the jail, Bellamy remained in the holding cell out of contact with the media.

He has retained as legal counsel Roy Trest of Shallotte and Joseph B. Cheshire V of Raleigh. Trest met reporters in the hall leading to the jail with a brief

typewritten statement that indicated a formal statement was to be made Wednesday morning in Bolivia.

District Attorney Michael Easley said Bellamy was not indicted as a result of a special grand jury investigation of cocaine trafficking, the first of its kind in the state. Rather, as soon as he received information regarding the clerk, Easley said he referred the matter to the special prosecution division of the Attorney General's office. That referral led to investigation by the SBI.

As clerk of court, Bellamy is responsible for probate of wills, administration of estates, and has jurisdiction to hear and decide special proceedings such as adoptions and foreclosures in addition to performing record-keeping and administrative functions for district and superior courts of the county.

According to Judge Giles R. Clark of Elizabethtown, resident superior court judge for the 13th District, several things could occur regarding

Bellamy's position. He could continue in office pending outcome of the charge against him, he could be suspended, resign or a petition could be presented to Clark by county citizens seeking Bellamy's removal.

"I have appropriate concern for the situation," Clark said Tuesday morning, "but I need a whole lot more information. Right now I have no action directly in mind."

Clark said he was notified of the indictment late Monday and did not have any background on the basis for the charge.

"I do know," Clark added, "that for the past ten years he has been a mighty good clerk of court."

If Bellamy's position were to become vacant, it would be Clark's duty to name a successor. In the event of Bellamy's death or resignation, Clark also has the right to name an acting clerk for up to 30 days while a decision on a successor is made.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

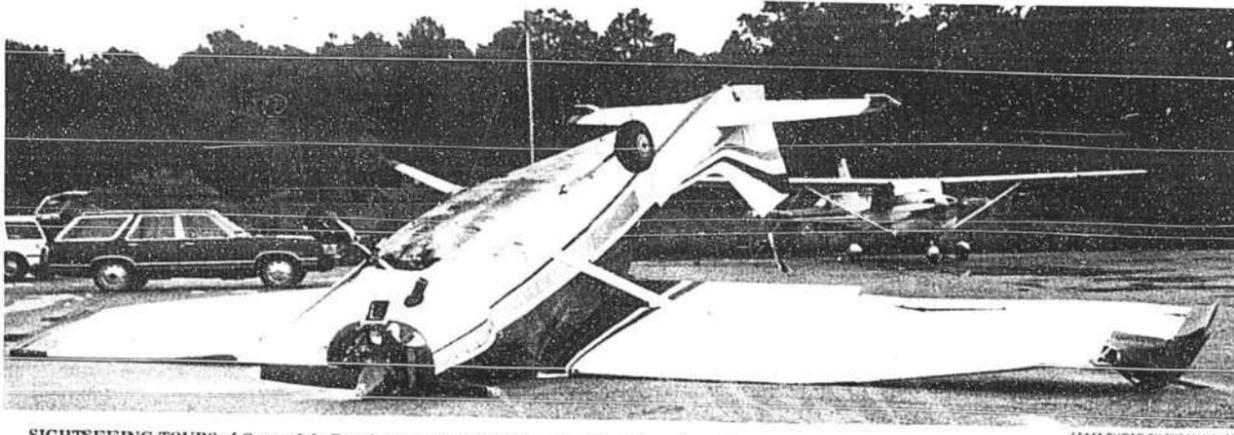
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SIGHTSEEING TOURS of Ocean Isle Beach were abruptly interrupted last Thursday afternoon when a small airplane piloted by Arthur Johnson was damaged in a thunderstorm, along with two other planes. STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Six Indicted On Charges Of Cocaine Trafficking

Additional true bills of indictment on cocaine trafficking charges were returned against six men Monday, the work of a special investigative grand jury.

That same grand jury returned true bills against 32 subjects last month following approximately four months of investigation. An investigative grand jury can compel testimony, a power not given to law enforcement officers.

Additional charges were levied Monday against two of the defendants, Lloyd Strickland and Johnny Dale Wood, both of Winnabow.

"They had the cases last month," said District Attorney Michael Easley, "but they delayed returning the indictments because they wanted some corroborative evidence."

The grand jury's special investigative powers were dissolved in June. However, in returning the bills of indictment this month and last, it

has acted in the capacity of a regular grand jury, he said.

Those indicted Monday and the trafficking charges against them are as follows:

- Ricky Dale Bellamy, Shallotte, possession of more than 28 grams cocaine.

- William Irvin Peal, 24, Whiteville, conspiracy to possess more than 400 grams, possession of more than 400 grams.

- Lloyd Neill Strickland, 36, Winnabow, conspiracy to possess more than 400 grams cocaine, possession of more than 400 grams.

- Joseph Sullivan, 26, Shallotte, conspiracy to possess more than 28 grams cocaine, possession of more than 28 grams cocaine.

- Johnny Dale Wood, 19, Winnabow, conspiracy to possess more than 400 grams cocaine.

- Richard Woods, 37, Calabash, conspiracy to possess more than 400 grams cocaine.

Storm Was 'Scary' For Charlotte Trio

BY SUSAN USHER

Susan Donnelly and her family were scared last Thursday afternoon.

The Charlotte woman, her husband Bill and daughter Erin were in the family car en route to Sheffield's Grocery when rain began to fall in sheets, high winds began to rock their car and soft drink crates and other debris flew by their windows. Simultaneously the town's fire siren went off.

"We didn't know if it was the town's way of warning of dangerous weather or not," said Mrs. Donnelly. The Donnellys pulled up beside the grocery, which shielded them from winds that were clocked by National Weather Service monitors at hurricane strength, up to 65 mph.

"Cars were going across the bridge—but slowly," she said. "The

sky was like black, very dark blue, but there was no funnel cloud.

"It was scary," she said. The Ocean Isle Beach area took the brunt of the severe thunderstorm system that swept across the area with torrential rainfall, lightning and heavy winds.

Lightning had struck the island's fire siren, shorting out a breaker and causing it to sound continuously. "It's fixed now," Fire Chief Terry Barbee said Tuesday.

Lightning also struck the radio antennae used by the police and fire departments, putting them temporarily out of service. As of Monday, Police Chief Bill Ozment said the departments are operating with radios loaned to them by Henry Carter of Shallotte.

At the Ocean Isle Beach Airport, located at the intersection of N.C.

179/904 and Ocean Isle Beach (Four Mile) Road, two airplanes were thrown against each other, with a third damaged as the two piled up, said Ocean Isle Beach Policeman Jimmy Todd. He was patrolling the area after the storm passed in mid-afternoon. The most severely damaged included one used for aerial tours of the beach area and one owned jointly by DeCarol Williamson and Ronnie Holden.

The drive-in window station at United Carolina Bank's branch office sustained damage and trees were uprooted or broken in at least one yard along the causeway and another adjoining the airport.

Offshore, Coast Guard helicopters and rescue boats searched the waters for a boat that observers said had capsized. They found several rafts, such as those used by swimmers,

that apparently had been blown offshore during the storm, but no evidence of a boating accident.

Chief Ozment said Monday that a small boat had been stranded offshore during the storm, but made it in safely after the cloud passed.

Most of the damage occurred near the causeway intersection on the mainland.

"Something came through in a path," said Ocean Isle Beach Pier Operator Curtis Williamson, who lives behind the bank. "You could see where it came through." The storm also brought large hail, he added, that beat against the windows of his home.

The Brunswick County Agricultural Extension Service reported no significant crop damage as a result of the storm.

Indicted Driver To Face Trial As Adult

A 15-year-old boy who drove a truck through a Leland apartment building in March, killing one person and injuring two others, was indicted on three misdemeanor driving violations by a Brunswick County Grand Jury Monday.

Christopher Bryan Ennis was indicted for unauthorized use of a con-

veyance, reckless driving and operating a motor vehicle without a license. The jury did not return indictments relating to the death.

"He will be tried as an adult," said District Attorney Michael Easley.

A trial date has tentatively been set for Aug. 10 in Brunswick County Superior Court. That date is con-

tingent on the hearing of several motions before the trial.

On March 24, William Guy Bondurant II, 21, of Wilmington, was killed when a truck Ennis was driving crashed into a Shasta Park Apartments duplex on Mt. Misery Road in Leland.

The driver was not injured in the

incident. He was placed in the Lower Cape Fear Juvenile Detention Center in Wilmington while awaiting a hearing in juvenile court.

Other indictments returned Monday that did not stem from the work of special investigative grand jury included the following:

(See INDICTMENTS, Page 2-A)

County Awards Cable TV Contract

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Commissioners voted unanimously Monday night to award a 15-year, nonexclusive cable television service franchise to Custom Private Cable Inc., which has opened an office in the Boone's Neck area.

Non-exclusive means the company can serve any area of the county and isn't required to serve specific areas.

The only member absent was Commissioner Jim Poole, who is to undergo leg surgery later this month.

Some equipment is already in place, spokesman Ralph Pittman told commissioners. He said the Colorado Springs, Colo., based company would begin offering service initially in areas in the Holden Beach/Boone's Neck area currently unserved by either Vision Cable or Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp.'s cable division.

It would expand from there, he said, "to where we can serve people and also serve our stockholders and make a profit—anywhere there's a demand."

The terms of the franchise differ from any granted previously by commissioners, but are similar to that awarded Vision Cable of Wilmington.

"We're eating from the same table, if not the same spoon," said Rex Gore, attorney for Custom Private Cable. He said the firm was satisfied with the concessions requested in rewriting the proposed franchise into a form that County Attorney David Clegg said he could recommend for adoption. "I suspect," he added, "in retrospect if you rewrite the other two you would make some changes."

The company can apply to renew its franchise, but must go through a specific procedure. If the franchise agreement ends, the company's underground cable would revert to county ownership.

Custom isn't the only company interested in the local cable TV market. Before the vote, Dennis Turner of Calabash asked commis-

sioners to set a policy that would apply to all applicants. He said his company, organizing as CTVS, will present a proposal soon.

"As the county grows, there will be more companies competing to serve developing areas. He added, "the franchise here has been lax in getting service to them."

Aid Sought

Commissioners also heard from Mary Strickland, chairman of the county domiciliary/nursing home advisory committee, which monitors patients'/residents' bill of rights. Its work includes visits to local facilities.

Mrs. Strickland requested reappointment of two current members, herself and Jean R. Caldwell, both of Southport, and appointment of a seventh member, preferably from the field of mental health. Also, she requested commissioners set aside up to \$90 per member to offset travel and other related expenses incurred by the committee, as is the practice in Bladen and Pender counties. The matter will be taken up at the board's 10 a.m. meeting on Aug. 3, when the committee is to have nominations for a seventh member.

Appointments Debated

In a continuation of their July 6 meeting, commissioners met for three hours on July 16 to discuss their board appointment system, with no action taken. However, at its Aug. 3 meeting, the board intends to discuss a motion made last Thursday by Commissioner Chris Chappell.

Chappell proposed that the board attempt to equalize, by electoral district, only its public sector appointments to various boards without consideration of appointments made by other parties.

Further, he proposed that the board vote in open session on all appointments following a motion from the floor. Before the vote, he suggested, commissioners would be advised of the district residence of any

See COMMISSIONERS, Page 2-A

Students Told: 'Pay Debts Or Miss Class'

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Some West Brunswick High School students may not start school as early as they expected this fall.

Parents of about 200 of the rising 10th-12th graders have just received letters from Principal David Corley telling them money their youngsters owe the school must be paid by the first day of school or they will not be admitted to class.

If payment has not been made when school resumes Aug. 31, Corley is prepared to send delinquent students to a separate room where they will be supervised by an administrator, an available teacher, or the in-school suspension teacher.

According to Corley, debts ranging from 50 cents to over \$100 are owed as library fines, course fees, or for fund-raising projects, in which products were taken and never returned or paid for.

Corley calls the letters, which were mailed July 16, a "legitimate request to pay this obli-

gation," and to let parents know of the debts before they are overwhelming.

"I think it's taking a positive step toward teaching them to take responsibility for their actions," he said. "It's the kind of values not usually taught at school."

He explained students had been advised at the end of the last school year of money they owed. "Students already know about this. It's only parents who don't," he said.

In the past no concerted effort was made to collect student debts until the debtor was about to graduate. Then payment was required before a student could receive a diploma.

"But sometimes kids drop out of school and we lose the money," Corley said.

Corley is encouraging parents to come to the school any weekday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to discuss the debt or make payment on it.

He said that if a mistake has been made, and the student has already paid what he owed, he/she can bring proof of payment to his office.

Preparing the letters required three weeks of

intensive work by his office staff, Corley said. He wanted parents to have them in plenty of time to make payment before the first day of school.

Corley said, "Teachers are so frustrated with this problem, and they need their administrator to give them support."

Brunswick County board of education members knew nothing of the policy, though Corley said he has discussed the general problem with Superintendent Gene Yarbrough.

Board Chairman James Forstner said the idea of preventing students from receiving an education was a "troubling thought," but he withheld judgment till he knew more about it.

Board Member Dorothy Worth said, "Surely some other punishment could be applied, such as losing their library privileges."

At the State Department of Public Instruction, attorney Harry Wilson said, "Every school is allowed to set its own policy on collecting fines." He said Corley's policy is not necessarily a violation of public school law.