

Car Break-Ins At School 'Baffle' Local Officials

BY RAHN ADAMS

Officials at West Brunswick High School and lawmen said last week they are baffled by a series of vehicle break-ins occurring over the past six weeks in the school's student parking lot, all in daylight during school hours.

But authorities last week were taking steps to solve the break-ins and hopefully put an end to the problem.

Principal David Corley said Friday that the break-ins, which began last month, started as "petty thievery" but had become more serious over the previous two weeks.

"We provide a place for students to park, but we're having a difficult time maintaining it," Corley said,

"and it's taking a lot of time away from why we're here (to educate students)."

According to Assistant Principal Roy Deal, the vehicle break-ins occurred in the middle to back sections of the student parking lot, which is composed of eight rows of 30 parking spaces.

The West Brunswick campus is located on N.C. 130 near Shallotte, with the student parking lot situated near the highway.

Deal said the first incident occurred about six weeks ago, when a window glass was knocked out of a pickup truck in the student lot.

On Nov. 9, thieves entered five students' cars and removed mainly

expensive stereo equipment, taking about \$1,000 in goods from one vehicle alone, Deal said.

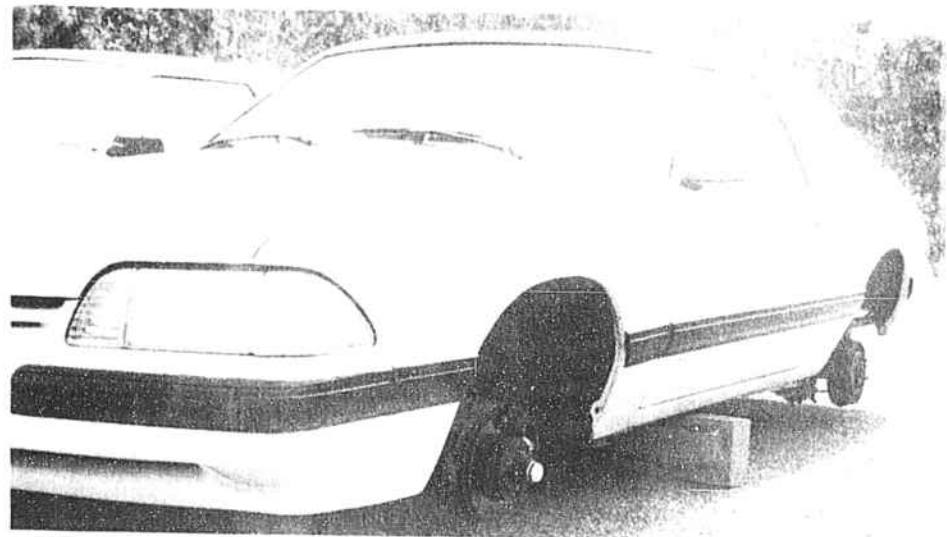
Two attempted vehicle break-ins occurred Nov. 17, he said.

Then last Thursday, custom "mag" wheels were removed from two cars, both of which were jacked up and left on cinderblocks in the parking lot, he said.

According to Brunswick County Sheriff's Det. Larry Joyner, the vehicle break-ins occurred during the morning hours—probably between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

"I find it kind of strange that they (thieves) can come in and do something like that and not be

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VANDALISM AND THEFT have plagued West Brunswick High School's student parking lot recently. Above, Donna Athan of Calabash was one of two

students who had all four tires stolen from her car last Thursday morning. Just two weeks earlier, Miss Athan's car stereo was stolen.

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SHALLOTTE MAYOR JERRY JONES (right) checks in the equipment of former firefighters Joey Hill (left) and Herman Berry Jr., two of 13 volunteers who

resigned after grievances between the town and fire department could not be settled last Wednesday night.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Shalotte Fire Department Begins Rebuilding Process

BY DOUG RUTTER

Acting Shalotte Volunteer Fire Department Chief Tim Carter said Monday the department is well on its way to recovery.

"It's going to take a combined effort between the people and the town," said Carter, "and I think we have the qualified people to help us get back on our feet."

Following a meeting of the town board last Wednesday, 13 of 18 members of the fire department walked off the job.

At that meeting, town aldermen rejected concerns expressed in a letter, a list of grievances and list of possible solutions which had been prepared by the firefighters.

Town Clerk Cynthia Long said that since the walkout, several area fire departments including those at Supply, Civietown, Shallotte Point and Ocaen Isle Beach have said they would help out if needed.

"Everyone has been very good about helping us out," she said. "We really do appreciate it."

Carter added that in addition to the five members who stayed in the department at the time of the meeting, 10 more have since joined and a few more have shown interest.

"I believe we're starting off real good considering how many left," he said.

Carter, who is now in his third year with the fire department, expects it to take about two years for the department to fully recover.

He said that in the meantime, other departments will be called in as backup in the event of a major fire.

Carter said that the department has the necessary equipment to fight fires and that the neighboring fire departments are "more than willing to afford the manpower."

Grievances put forth by the fire department membership at last week's town board meeting included the fact that agreements and actions taken by the grievance committee set up between the department and the town board had been overlooked by the town board and that very little has been done to correct inadequate water flow to the areas of Brierwood Golf Club and West Brunswick High School.

Another grievance stated that past and present town boards "have constantly created problems each year when it has come time to select a chief. This action has constantly put

the members in a bad light and has continually hurt membership recruitment."

The solution suggested by the fire department requested the establishment of a fire commission consisting of the fire chief, two firemen and two aldermen.

According to the proposal, any town board action concerning the fire department, except in the case of an emergency, would have to first be approved by the fire commission.

At the time, Mayor Jerry Jones said, "I think if there was as much work put into the fire department as there was this letter, the department would be a lot better off."

Michael Arnold, the former fire chief, said the members felt "betrayed by the board."

A lengthy and sometimes heated debate began following the town board's request for three recommen-

dations for fire chief.

Arnold, speaking on behalf of the department's new association, presented only one name, Herman Berry Sr.

When asked why the fire department did not have three recommendations, Arnold replied that the board had never technically instructed the members to provide three names.

Mayor Pro Tem Paul Wayne Reeves pointed out that fire department member Ricky Danford was at the meeting when the revisions were made and that the majority of the members had to have found out about it through him or the newspaper. "I don't think the fact that you were not aware of it is the real issue."

Arnold said, "We are more qualified to decide who should be chief than you all." He added that the

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Four More Sentenced In Drug Cases

BY RAHN ADAMS

Four more defendants indicted in June on drug charges were sentenced last week in Brunswick County Superior Court.

Three of the four received active prison sentences, while the fourth is already serving time on a separate conviction.

Judge Henry W. Hight Jr. handed down the sentences last week in Bolivia, according to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office.

The defendants included Perry Alfred Brown, Eddie Roderic Jones, Grady Ford Long and Arnold Douglas Smith—four of 32 persons indicted on cocaine trafficking charges in June by a special investigative grand jury in Brunswick County.

Brown, 25, of Supply, last Thursday was sentenced to two years in prison, with immediate work release recommended by Hight.

Brown pleaded guilty Aug. 13 to felonious possession of more than one gram of cocaine.

He faced a possible maximum sentence of five years in prison. The mandatory minimum was two years.

On Nov. 17, Jones, 23, of Shallotte, was given 10 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine on charges of conspiracy to possess and trafficking by possession, involving more than 400 grams

of cocaine.

He also received a 35-year suspended sentence and five years of supervised probation on one additional count of each charge.

Jones entered guilty pleas Aug. 31 to the charges, as indicted.

He faced a mandatory minimum sentence of 35 years in prison on each charge and a possible maximum sentence of 40 years on each count.

Long, 29, of Shallotte, pleaded guilty Sept. 8 and Sept. 10 to indictments including two counts each of conspiracy to possess and trafficking by possession, involving quantities of both more than 28 grams and more than 400 grams of cocaine.

Last Thursday, Long was sentenced to a 4½-year prison term on the 28-gram charges. He received a 12-year suspended sentence with five years of supervised probation on the 400-gram counts.

The mandatory minimum sentence on each of the 28-gram counts was seven years.

Smith, 30, of Supply, last Thursday entered guilty pleas to three counts each of conspiracy to possess and possession of more than 28 grams of cocaine.

He was given two-year sentences on each count for a total of 12 years, which Hight ordered to run concur-

rently with the remainder of a 15-year sentence that Smith presently is serving for first-degree burglary, armed robbery and drug offenses at Eastern Correctional Center in Maury.

One other defendant from the June drug indictments pleaded guilty last week, according to the clerk of court's office.

Last Thursday, Ronald Lewis Lee, 38, of Dunn, entered guilty pleas to three counts of conspiracy to traffic in cocaine, involving amounts ranging from more than 28 grams to more than 400 grams.

Also, Lee pleaded guilty to two counts of possession of cocaine, with one charge involving more than 28 grams and the other involving more than 200 grams.

Lee will be sentenced during an upcoming term of Superior Court.

Some 18 defendants have entered guilty pleas and are awaiting sentencing. Sentencings for a majority of that number were continued until the Jan. 11 and Feb. 8 terms of Brunswick County Superior Court.

According to the clerk of court's office, the sentencings of Alvin Bryan Willis III and William I. Peal IV were continued until Dec. 7 in Columbus County Superior Court.

Holden Beach Annexation Committee Looking At Larger Causeway Area

A committee named by Holden Beach to study possible annexation of the causeway area on the mainland, agreed last Wednesday night to study a broader area than previously identified.

Earlier the town had eyed possible annexation of the business strip along the Holden Beach Causeway.

A map presented Wednesday night by Carvin Robinson, a causeway merchant and secretary of the committee, outlines a larger area that also includes residential

neighborhoods bordering the causeway.

Robinson explained, "One of the complaints we heard before was that the town was just interested in an area that wouldn't cost it anything. We didn't want that kind of criticism."

But the boundaries under consideration are subject to additional changes, depending upon what the committee learns as it proceeds.

"This may look entirely different by the time we get through," said

Commissioner Gay Atkins.

Committee members agreed to spend the two weeks before their next meeting informally sounding out residents of the area regarding annexation.

"Let's do this casually," said Chairman Thomas Gray.

Residents of the study area who want to express their views or look at the map should contact any committee member, suggested Commissioner William Williamson.

On the east side of the causeway, the study area runs along the line bet-

ween the J.E. Fulford development and an undeveloped tract owned by Goodman Fulford, cutting around Tuscarora Village near N.C. 130. This tract is wide, said Robinson, because there appeared to be no "reasonable" cut-off point other than the Fulford line.

On the west side, the tentative boundary follows an unpaved road that runs behind the Beach Mart through the Newman Fulford development and out to Old Ferry Road.

"No problem with it," Williamson said of the newly-mapped area. "I'm for it."

But he and others questioned the town's ability to run water service to the area within the year allowed after any annexation.

Along with the sentiment of the area's residents, the feasibility of providing services will be among the questions the committee takes up as it study continues.

Commissioner Atkins said she thought it important for residents of the study area to know that the town

does not pay for the entire cost of street paving.

Currently, property owners must petition the town, with 51 percent of the road footage and property owners represented, to be assessed for paving. The owners pay 60 percent of the cost and the town pays 40 percent. Four streets on the island are currently in line to be paved.

Also present at the meeting were members Jarrett Elliott and David Rountree. Absent were Lyn Holden, Alan Holden and J.W. Robinson.