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Jail Birds

These black birds probably won't be spending any time in jail, but they were caught breaking the law recently at Holden Beach. While one bird searched for food, the other kept his eyes open for police.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Blanks Selected As Brunswick County Schools New Assistant Superintendent

Oscar Blanks, a long-time educator in Bladen and Columbus counties, will begin work Nov. 1 as Brunswick County Schools' new assistant superintendent of pupil personnel and support programs.

The Brunswick County Board of Education voted Monday night to hire Blanks for the newly-created post, a third assistant superintendent in the schools' central office created by consolidating several other jobs.

Blanks, 52, has more than 25 years of experience as a teacher and administrator. He was hired on the recommendation of Superintendent Ralph Johnston, selected from a field of 19 applicants, of which seven were interviewed, said Personnel Director Ralph Ward.

Named Administrator of the Year earlier this year by the North Carolina Association of Educators, Blanks has served as Chapter 1 supervisor for the Bladen County Schools since 1991.

In Brunswick County he will oversee pupil personnel and support programs, which include employees such as the system's guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists, as well as special programs such as DARE (Drug Awareness Resistance Education), JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) grants, the exceptional children's program headed by Lorene Williams and "possibly other areas," said Johnston.

Blanks was out on annual leave Tuesday and could not be reached for comment.

Johnston described the new assistant as "an innovative and research-oriented person who believes in

staying current on new ideas and trends in helping all children learn. His philosophy is simply 'child first.'

"His commitment to children will enhance our efforts, providing leadership to the areas of pupil personnel and support programs."

Blanks has described his situational leadership style as embracing four quadrants: talking, counseling, participating and delegating.

The Columbus County native holds a bachelor of arts degree from N.C. A & T University in mathematics, a master's degree from East Carolina and a 1990 doctorate of education in administration and supervision from South Carolina State University. He is a graduate of the Principal's Executive Program at Chapel Hill and received curriculum audit training through the American Association of School Administration in 1992. He authored a \$30,000 grant to implement a school development program in an elementary school.

He will receive a state-paid salary based on education and experience, plus a local supplement of \$6,335.

Before joining the school administrative staff in Bladen County, Blanks served as principal of Booker T. Washington Elementary School from 1977 to 1991, served as assistant principal of Hallsboro Junior High while serving as athletic director of Hallsboro High School, taught math two years at West Columbus High School in Cerro Gordo, served as a guidance counselor one year for the Acme-Delco junior and senior high schools, and taught math and worked as an assis-

tant coach at the old Artesia High School. His first education job was teaching math in an Asheville high school.

With Blanks' hiring, the school system also addressed a concern voiced by black community leaders

who picketed the school board office earlier this year demanding that blacks be hired in more visible positions of leadership.

At one time both the superintendent's job and one assistantship were held by black educators.



Balloon Heads

Ken Schenck and Jerry Price of Jacksonville show off their handiwork at one of the Oyster Festival booths.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Shalotte Board Backs Main Street Vendors In 4-1 Vote Tuesday

BY DOUG RUTTER

A long-standing proposal to rid Shalotte's Main Street of roadside peddlers finally came to a vote Tuesday night and was defeated by a convincing 4-1 margin.

Alderman Wilton Harrelson's motion to "leave the vendors alone" was supported by fellow board members David Gause, Roney Cheers and Paul Wayne Reeves.

Morris Hall got no support for his earlier motion to draft a town ordinance that would move the peddlers off Main Street and into an organized flea market area.

"I'd really like to know why this is bugging you and a few other people," Harrelson said to Hall at Tuesday's town meeting. "Personally, I am fed up with this being brought up."

Hall indicated that his biggest concern is with the seafood vendors, crafts salesmen and other peddlers who frequently set up shop on property at the intersection of Main Street and Smith Avenue.

Town Attorney Mark Lewis said the town board could amend its zoning ordinances to prohibit street peddlers from operating in certain sections of town.

However, most board members said they don't want to chase the salespeople off Main Street.

Harrelson said the vendors are operating in a commercial district and have the permission of the property owner.

Cheers said the town could do something about the vendors if they were creating a traffic hazard on the street. "We have no jurisdiction over private property, only to the point if it is unsightly," he said.

Reeves said if Hall wants to beautify Shalotte, he should propose a crackdown on sign ordinance violations.

"I can't carry the whole basket at one time," Hall replied.

Following the vote, Hall said he would not raise the issue again but would support a ban on street vendors if another town board member revived the debate in the future.

"I can assure you I won't bring it up again. Evidently, I've beaten a dead horse to death so I'll let it die," Hall said.

Harrelson, who along with Reeves goes off the town board in December, said, "It's been resolved

temporarily. I'm sure it will come up again."

Money Refused

Undaunted by the overwhelming vote against his vendors proposal, Hall managed to push through a second motion that will allow the town to keep Hall's stipend every time he misses a meeting.

Alderman are paid \$25 each per meeting, whether they attend or not. The town board normally meets twice a month. The mayor is paid a salary of \$125 per month.

Harrelson and Gause voted in favor of Hall's motion for the town to keep its \$25 if Hall is absent. Reeves and Cheers voted against the measure.

Hall said he feels guilty about getting paid for meetings he does not attend. "It's like hiring a plumber and he doesn't show up. I don't think the citizens of Shalotte are getting their money's worth when I'm not here."

Other Business

In other business Tuesday, aldermen:

■ Adopted a resolution that will allow all town employees to establish and contribute to their own 401K retirement funds. They also will be permitted to borrow money against those funds. In the past, the 401K plan has only been available to police officers.

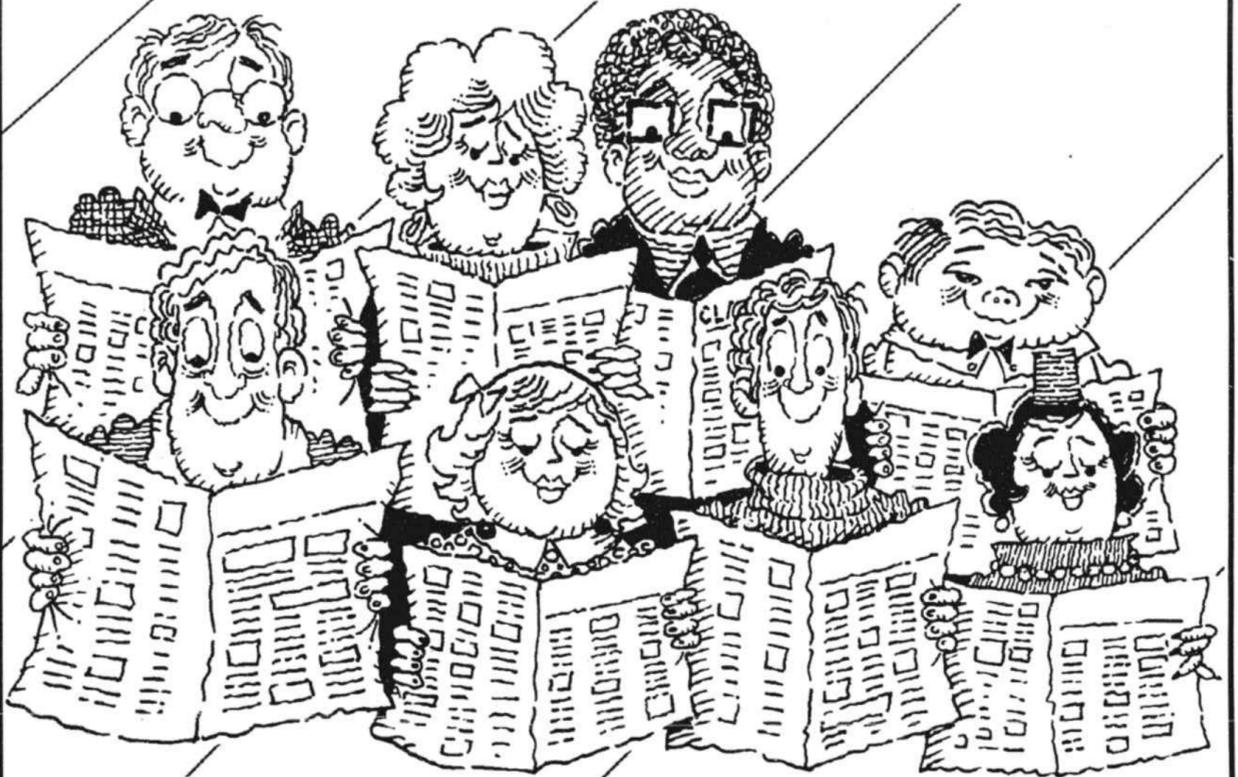
■ Accepted a planning board recommendation to deny a conditional use permit requested by David Jones, who wants to continue operating an upholstery business out of his home on Pender Road. Planning board members said Jones did not provide them with the information that is required by town code.

■ Postponed discussion of banking proposals received from United Carolina Bank and Southern National Bank. The board plans to meet with representatives of each bank on Nov. 2.

■ Instructed Police Chief Rodney Gause to pay closer attention to parking violations. Board members mentioned problems with people parking on sidewalks and in fire lanes and illegal parking in spaces reserved for the handicapped.

■ Voted to close off the entrance to the town park on N.C. 130 West. The only remaining entrance will be behind the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce building.

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