

Pistol, 21 Clips And 5,750 Bullets Stolen In Longwood Break-In

A customized, laser-sighted pistol and more than 5,700 rounds of ammunition were stolen from a storage shed in Longwood sometime in the past six weeks, according to a crime report on file at the Brunswick County Sheriff's office Monday.

Deputy Keithan Horne was told by the victim that he was in the process of moving to Florida and had stored some of his belongings in the shed on Robin Circle in late October. The man said he went to the shed Wednesday evening and discovered more than \$7,800 worth of property missing.

Among the stolen items was a Taurus 9mm semi-automatic handgun equipped with a laser sighting system and tritium night sights, the report said. The thief or thieves also took 5,750 rounds of 9mm, .357-magnum, .45-caliber and .38 special ammunition along with eight ammunition boxes and 21 clips for 9mm and .45-caliber pistols.

Horne reportedly found no sign of forced entry. The victim told him the windows on the shed could not be locked.

In other recent crime reports:

■Eight vehicles were vandalized at three Shallotte car dealerships Sunday night, resulting in an estimated \$6,675 damage. Investigating officer Malcolm Long found nothing stolen and believes the crimes were all committed by the same person sometime between 9 p.m. Sunday and 6 a.m. Monday. Damaged were a 1994 Chevrolet Camaro, a 1993 S-10 Blazer, a 1992 Geo Storm, a 1994 Ford Ranger Splash pickup truck, a 1993 Ranger service truck, a used 1992 Ford 150 pickup, a 1988 Ranger and a 1984 Oldsmobile Cutlass. Most of the damage consisted of scratched paint, smashed out windows and numerous broken mirrors, sparking Long to comment, "They sure got some bad luck coming." Detective Lt. Donnell Marlowe is investigating the case.

■A houseboat docked at Marsh Harbour Marina in

CRIME REPORT

Calabash was broken into Friday night. The Whiteville teacher who owns the boat told Deputy Joey Adams that a combination television/videocassette recorder and a video camcorder were taken. The thief apparently got in by prying a lock off the door, causing an estimated \$3.50 damage. The stolen property was valued at \$2,450.

■Two videocassette recorders, a color television and a microwave oven were among the more than \$1,400 worth of property stolen in a mobile home break-in on Flamingo Drive in Shell Point recently. The owner, a Gastonia woman, told Deputy Cathy Hamilton that she returned to her summer residence Friday evening and found that someone had broken out a window in her front door, causing an estimated \$100 damage. Also missing in the theft was an undetermined number of videotapes.

■Someone stole a 24-horsepower Johnson outboard motor from a boat parked outside a house on Peoples Way in the Brickland area Wednesday night. Horne estimated the engine's value at \$800. He reported that a gate was discovered open at another home about a 1,000 yards away, but nothing was found missing there.

■A money bag containing about \$400 cash was stolen from the Ocean Harbor Golf Course clubhouse in Calabash Friday night. Horne found a glass door broken in the snack bar area, where "blood drops led a path to a padlocked cabinet." The lock had been pried off. Although there was a quantity of change and several bottles of liquor in the cabinet, nothing else was taken, the report said.

■Horne also investigated a report of ongoing embezzlement from the Lions Paw Golf Links clubhouse snack bar. The business manager said he had noticed the cash drawer coming up short beginning early this

month. He said he reported the occurrence to a magistrate, who told him to "bait the register" to confirm that the thefts were occurring. The manager said he did so twice by putting first \$23, then \$12 extra in the cash drawer. Both times, the money was discovered missing at the end of a certain shift. A suspect has been identified.

■The owner of a home on Friendly Lane in Leland told Deputy William Hewitt that he believes a man who had been living at the house recently stole a \$20,000 IRA account book, a \$1,000 certificate of deposit book, a sterling silver belt buckle and a cocker spaniel. There was no sign of forced entry, the report said.

■A record player and a color television valued at \$175 were stolen from a vacation residence on Beachview Drive in Sunset Harbor sometime in the past month. Deputy Jimmy Davis found that the thief or thieves apparently used a candle to light their way through the home, indicated by wax drippings found on the carpet. There was an estimated \$550 damage.

■In the latest in a series of break-ins in Pine Burr Acres subdivision, a microwave oven and a color television were stolen from a home on Wren Street sometime in the past two weeks. Deputy Phil Bryant said it appeared that the thief climbed on top of an air conditioner and forced his way inside through a window. The deputy estimated the value of stolen property at \$450.

■Also on Wren Street, a 19-inch black-and-white television was stolen in a break-in that occurred sometime between Oct. 15 and Dec. 10. Horne found that a window on the back door had been pried open to get inside. He said he "also found a Natural Lite beer can in the bedroom and it appeared as if someone had slept on the couch (because) the cushions were messed up."

■Someone fired a bullet through the front window of the Salvation and Deliverance Church on Northwest Road recently. A member of the church discovered the

bullet hole Friday evening and called the sheriff's department. Deputy Brian Sanders discovered a fragment of the bullet, which apparently broke the window and hit an inside door frame, causing an estimated \$250 damage.

■A color television valued at \$200 was stolen from a home on Brigadier Street, off Seaside Drive, last week. The Charlotte retiree who owns the home said she returned Saturday night to find a window broken and the TV gone. Deputy Adams estimated the damage at \$75.

■The victim of an auto theft on Neighbors Way asked the sheriff's department to call off its investigation into the incident after the car was recovered about a mile from where it was stolen. According to Deputy William Hewitt's report, the 1989 Nissan Pulsar, valued at \$9,000, was stolen from a Hamlet woman on Dec. 5 and found the next day. The woman said she did not want to pursue the matter because she did not want to come back to the area to appear in court.

■A 30-pound propane tank and regulator were stolen from a home on Ocean Haven Road in Seaside last week. Horne estimated their value at \$275.

■Someone pried open the rear door of a double-wide mobile home on N.C. 87 near Goodman Road and tore a meter box off the wall sometime between Thursday and Sunday. Deputy Brian Sanders estimated the damage at about \$1,500.

■A Leland man was bilked out of \$20 recently, according to a report by Detective Ken Messer. The victim told the detective that another man told him he had a load of rock to sell, but his truck was out of gas. So the victim gave \$20 to the man, who left and never returned with the rock.

■A thief reportedly broke into a trailer at Tripps Mobile Home Park at Shallotte Point and stole a six-pack of Shaeffer Lite beer valued at \$2.25. Adams estimated the damage at about \$50.

Sunset Beach Architects Get Contract For New Town Hall

BY LYNN CARLSON

Johnson and Renaud Architects on Monday was awarded a contract to build a new \$250,000 town hall at Sunset Beach.

The Sunset Beach architectural firm will receive a fee of \$25,000 to design and oversee construction of an approximately 4,500-square-foot structure to house the town administration, police and building inspection departments.

Current plans are to build the new town hall just east of the existing facility, which would be sold or demolished and the property used as a 50-space parking lot. However, Mayor Mason Barber said Monday that until ground is broken on the new facility, the town board wouldn't rule out selling or swapping the current town hall property "if somebody offered us a great deal."

Town Administrator Linda Flue-

gel and Councilmembers Julia Thomas and Cherri Cheek were designated to be available to architect Joe Johnson for consultation during the design and construction phases. Since June, Cheek and Thomas have served as a committee to interview architects; they made the recommendation to hire Johnson and Renaud.

Cheek said she doesn't expect construction to get under way for about six months.

Fluegel acknowledged that having a new town hall under construction will be demanding, but added, "For a new town hall, I'll find the time."

The space constraints of the existing town hall, dedicated in 1971, have escalated with the rapid growth of the town. Many municipal records are stored in a room over the town's maintenance shop because the town administration has outgrown its three rooms, one of which

also serves as council chambers. Monthly town council meetings frequently pack the small chambers and exceed the small parking lot's capacity. When public hearings are conducted on issues of townwide interest, they must be moved to bigger rooms, usually at Sea Trail Plantation.

Although blueprints have not been drawn, preliminary plans include a 50-seat council chambers inside a one-story town hall to which an upstairs could eventually be added if needed, Barber said. Recent regulations governing access by disabled people would not permit upstairs public areas without an elevator; however, second-floor storage is permissible, the architect said.

Council spent an hour questioning and negotiating with Johnson on the fine points of the contract, with most questions coming from Councilman

Herb Klinker, who was sworn in Dec. 6 to his first term in office.

"I'm new to the process, and I just got copies of the contract. I need to satisfy myself and my constituents," he said.

The parties agreed that all Johnson's reimbursable expenses—costs not covered under the contract—would require authorization by the town council.

Johnson said the contract includes no provision for a model or artists' rendering of the new building. He estimated a color rendering would cost \$1,500, an expense some council members indicate they wouldn't be willing to take on.

There will be no mortgage on the facility, Barber said. Council has budgeted \$182,000 toward the project, and will set aside the remaining funds needed in the next fiscal year's budget.



New Aldermen Take Office
Two new members of the Shallotte Board of Aldermen took office last week at the town's annual Christmas party. Bill Allen (left) takes the oath of office from Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewitt. Looking on is the town's other new board member, Carson Durham. Starting in January, the board will meet the first and third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in town hall.

Bird Island's Proposed Access Is Altered

BY LYNN CARLSON

Bird Island's owner will not need an Army Corps of Engineers permit to build a bridge and causeway to the island, since her agents have redesigned the plans so as to avoid filling about a quarter-acre of tidal wetlands.

Consulting engineer John Ryder of Century Von Oeson confirmed Tuesday that he submitted new plans to the corps to extend the proposed bridge and shorten the causeway, taking the plans out of the corps' hands. Ryder said the change will increase the cost of the accessway by some \$200,000.

Janie Pace Price, owner of the undeveloped barrier island off Sunset Beach, last December applied to the corps for a permit to construct an access road with bridging and place fill material in the waters adjacent to mad inlet and the Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway.

At that time, her proposal sought

permission for a 6,100-foot-long access road consisting of 2,330 linear feet of pile-supported bridging and 3,770 linear feet of sand causeway.

Ryder said his change eliminates 470 linear feet of causeway at the eastern end of the access road and replaces it with additional bridging.

Corps officials had for more than a year declined to act on the permit request, saying they were waiting for more information from Price about her development plans.

For most of that time, Price was unable to provide such information because Bird Island had never been zoned by the town.

In October, the Sunset Beach Town Council agreed to a planning board recommendation to zone Bird Island as a conservation reserve district, in which development would be limited to one single-family residence per acre of "buildable uplands." That definition would limit the island to 30 units or less, including a community center.

Price will still require a U.S. Coast Guard permit for the bridge because it will go over the navigable, though shallow, waters of Mad Inlet. "Historically, Coast Guard permits are pretty straightforward," Ryder said. "Their main concern is boat safety."

Efforts continue to set Bird Island aside as a nature preserve. Rep. David Redwine, speaking at the first annual Bird Island Preservation Society meeting in September, said he will ask the N.C. General Assembly for \$1 million toward a purchase of the property.

At that time, Redwine called Price "a good environmental steward" who has for years tolerated

trespassers using her private property, as well as the publicly-owned beach, as if it were already a park.

"I believe in my heart of hearts that they really don't want to build condos on that island," he said. "I think they are simply trying to establish a measure of its value. The Prices, at some point, are going to entertain an offer. I'm just trying to get a figure in my mind, to begin putting something on the table for us to talk about."

Setting a price for the island has been a problem for both sides. Price's agents have said she pursued the bridge and development proposals because she has no other means of determining the island's market value.

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