

County Courts Say Goodbye To Two Long-Time Friends

BY ERIC CARLSON

"All rise!"
It would be impossible to calculate how many times Brunswick County Sheriff's deputies Lt. Billy Gurganus and Sgt. Troy Dunkin have uttered those words in their 32 combined years as bailiffs for district and superior court.

But it wasn't difficult to see how much the two men meant to the judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, court clerks and defense attorneys who gathered to commemorate their services at a retirement ceremony in Bolivia Monday morning.

"We're gonna miss you fellows," said Judge William Gore Jr. before beginning a week-long session of Superior Court. He was joined on the bench by Superior Court Judge Jack Hooks Jr., who made a special trip to Bolivia to honor the two men.

"I've some of the best bailiffs around, but you two set a standard that would be hard to match," Gore said. "There will be a little something missing in Brunswick County when I come back."

Gurganus, who formally retired Friday after 23 years with the sheriff's department and 22 as a bailiff, put on his uniform one more time to call the courtroom into session Monday. Dunkin will end his 18-year career March 31 after having been assigned to the courts for the past 10 years.

They were joined by their wives Lena Gurganus and Nellie Dunkin for the formal ceremony and a retirement luncheon. The two deputies were presented with engraved plaques from the local district and superior court judges and citations of honor, which were read by the judges during the ceremony.

Dunkin and Gurganus were praised for being "prompt in (their) duties, attentive to the judges, protective of the public and courteous to all." Both were thanked for going "above and beyond the call of duty to provide transportation and meals to judges at (their) own expense."

On a more personal note, the judges expressed their appreciation to Gurganus and Dunkin for being sources of "advice, political wisdom, local lore, oysters, shrimp,

fish and fishing information."

Neither Gurganus nor Dunkin voiced any formal plans for their retirement except to spend more time at

their respective homes in Boiling Springs and Shallotte Point.

"I'm just going to take it as it comes," Gurganus said.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

BAILIFFS Troy Dunkin and Billy Gurganus (right) listen as two superior court judges praise their lengthy service to Brunswick County at retirement ceremonies in Bolivia Monday. Joining them are their wives, Nellie Dunkin (left) and Lena Gurganus.

Ocean Isle Board Contemplating Quarterly Nighttime Workshops

BY SUSAN USHER

Starting sometime in the near future, Ocean Isle Beach residents should have the option of attending an occasional night meeting of the town board of commissioners.

Commissioner Ken Proctor was charged Tuesday morning with working out the details with town attorney Elva Jess for conducting quarterly evening workshop meetings.

Proctor broached the idea of commissioners holding an evening "open forum" to hear from the public at least once each quarter. The idea followed up on a suggestion made by a resident at a commissioners' meeting last month that morning meetings keep some interested people from attending board meetings.

Jess said other towns she works with have held nighttime meetings for similar reasons. Sometimes board members take turns conducting informal gatherings and then sharing citizens' concerns at the board's next meeting. If a quorum of commissioners doesn't attend such a gathering, the legal requirements for meeting notice don't have to be followed.

But Proctor wants a meeting at which the full board can participate, along with the public. An official workshop meeting would allow that. In work sessions, governing boards can discuss public business but cannot take official action.

"I think it's a wonderful concept but it needs some planning," Mayor Betty Williamson said as she asked Proctor and Jess to work out the details.

Approximately 15 town residents attended the commissioners' meeting Tuesday morning, in contrast to the usual one to three persons.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners:

■ Heard a request from Director Pete Barnette for support of the Brunswick Volunteer & Information Center, which provides a variety of human services countywide.

■ Heard from Proctor that photographs of Eastern Channel are being sent to Congressman Charlie Rose's office as the next step in an effort to get the channel dredged.

■ Renewed a lease for \$1 with

Odell Williamson for public parking on lots between The Breakers and the Ocean Isle Beach Pier and the Ocean Isle Beach Motel. Williamson said that because of his willingness to lease the property, Ocean Isle Beach has a reputation for its ability to accommodate more people from the mainland than any other beach he knows along the North Carolina coast. While receiving offers to use the property for other purposes, "I haven't done it and don't intend to as long as I'm around," he said.

■ Assured property owner Betty Causey a drainage problem adjacent to her property will be addressed by the town;

■ Authorized pre-application to the N.C. Office of Coastal Management for a grant to help cover the cost of codifying town ordinances;

■ Met behind closed doors in executive session to discuss several "personnel requests."

■ Heard from Building Inspector

Druid Roberson that the valuation of residential construction in the town had increased in \$2 million increments since 1991, when construction was valued at about \$4 million. It is expected to near \$10 million during 1994. "If you're wondering why I've been a little snappy, I've been busy," he quipped.

■ Approved a letter to be sent to the Region O Council of Governments requesting COG hire someone to oversee OSHA compliance for all towns in the service area, with the towns to share the expense.

■ Specified, at the request of Utility Supervisor Odell Williamson, that no public tax money be spent on a new 10-lot private subdivision near Tubbs Inlet. The utilities will not be dedicated to the town and any repairs or maintenance will be made at the developers' expense.

■ Approved sewer department employee William Rivenbark as a permanent employee after one year's probation.

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