

# New Campaign Finance Reports Give Candidates Trouble

(Continued From Page 1-A)

All three candidates promptly paid their fines, Britt said.

Of those who competed in the party primaries, sheriff's candidate Jerry Dove seems to have had the most trouble complying with the campaign reporting guidelines. As required by law, Britt mailed three notices to Dove's campaign treasurer Cathy Harvell, informing her of the problems.

Dove's report listed contributions of \$200 each from Carmichael Construction Co. and Bland Coastal Development. Harvell was reminded in Britt's letter that state election laws prohibit contributions by "business entities, corporations, professional associations or labor unions," although individuals within such organizations can make contributions of personal funds.

In another letter, Britt notified Harvell that Dove's report included an entry for "four cash contributions, none over \$100," totalling \$450. There were a number of problems with that entry, besides the obvious error in math.

"First, no cash contribution in excess of \$100 may be accepted," the letter said. "Because this is in excess of \$100, it must be by check, money order or bank draft and must be reported by name and complete mailing address."

The letter also notes that anonymous contributions are prohibited by law and that if a campaign treasurer receives such a donation "it shall be paid over to the state board of elections," where it will be deposited in the state's general fund budget.

In the third letter, Dove's campaign treasurer was notified that his campaign report listed a \$5,000 loan from Thomas Bowmer of Southport. It notes that "a loan may not exceed \$400 per candidate unless the individual making the loan is the candidate or the candidate's spouse, parent, brother or sister."

Britt pointed out that a later entry in Dove's report indicates that \$1,000 of the loan was repaid on April 15.

"It appears the error was realized and the \$1,000 loan repayment was an attempt to correct the error," Britt wrote, asking for clarification.

Considering that more than \$61,000 was spent on the four-way Democratic Party primary for sheriff, Britt said that "for the amount of contributions and expenditures they handled, I think they did a wonderful job."

Sisk also ran into problems with a cash contribution that arrived in the mail with no return address and no indication of who sent it, Britt said. The donation was listed as such on his financing report.

As required by law, she notified Sisk that any contribution over \$100 must be made by check or money order, with the name and address of the donor included. She also noted that anonymous gifts in excess of \$100 are prohibited and must be returned to the state board of elections.

"I feel so bad about Bill Sisk's situation," Britt said. "He received the contribution in the mail and reported it. Had he not been that honest, no one would have known."

While Britt said she "does not go through these reports with a fine-toothed comb," she is required to check

all calculations on each report. She must also look for corporate and business donations and watch for individual contributions that exceed the \$4,000 limit.

A review of the financing reports shows some other questionable entries that did not result in reprimands, but may lead to problems for candidates in the future.

County commissioner candidate Randy Stanley, for example, listed \$275 in campaign contributions and \$71.79 in expenses. The latter included \$42.11 for "checks" and \$29.68 for "sign stakes." However there was no listing for the money spent to print Stanley's campaign posters, which were displayed at several locations in the county.

Commissioner Tom Rabon's report listed \$660 in contributions. It stated that the money came in "13 contributions, none over \$100" on April 14, the day before his campaign financing report was filed.

"It appears that may have happened at some sort of event, but there needs to be some clarification. He should have named the event," Britt said. "It's not illegal to accept cash contributions of less than \$100 without naming the individuals. But this is too simplistic."

Another reporting rule that was widely overlooked during the primary campaign was the requirement that candidates record all "in-kind contributions." According to the law, these include, "without limitation, such contributions as labor or personal services, postage, publication of campaign literature or materials, in-kind transfers, loans or use of any supplies, office machinery, vehicles, aircraft, office space or similar related services,

goods or persons, or real property."

In other words, candidates who hold fundraising events such as barbecues or fish fries must report the amount of money spent on food and materials, Britt said. They must also list as donations the hours worked by volunteers at the event.

Although several candidates reported collecting donations at campaign fundraisers, none of them reported in-kind contributions of materials and labor used to organize the events.

"It seems that in-kind contributions are one area where the candidates are not on a firm footing," Britt said. "I don't think it was a willful attempt to circumvent the law. It was just that they did not know what to do. So—since there was no cash money involved—they chose not to do anything."

Britt suggested that candidates who hold fundraising events keep track of the hours worked by volunteers. After arriving at a fair-market value for their efforts, the candidate should list that amount as a donation on the contribution side of their report and as an outlay on the expenditure side.

"It's like trying to make your checkbook balance," Britt said. "I know some of the candidates feel they can't be bothered, but it bothers me more than it does them. It's the law and I have to keep track of it."

All candidates who were defeated in the primaries are required to file a post-primary financing report no later than 5 p.m. Thursday, June 2. All candidates in the Nov. 1 general election will have to submit a pre-election report by Oct. 28.

## OWNER SAYS IT'S 'A LIE'

# Woman Claims Skating Club Discriminates

BY DOUG RUTTER

"They've been like this for years and years. I say it's time for them to stop," Marilyn Mejorado said last week as she stood outside Shallotte Skating Club.

The Holden Beach woman picketed in front of the Main Street business last Wednesday because she says the private roller-skating club discriminates against minorities.

Mejorado said her Hispanic daughter, Shiona, and two black children in a first-grade class at Supply Elementary School were not invited to a classmate's birthday party at the club because of their race.

Asked about the allegations of discrimination, club owner Steve Becky refused to comment.

"That's a lie and I have no comment to make about it," Becky said in a telephone conversation Thursday. "When she told you we discriminate against Hispanics she told you a lie."

Mejorado said a girl in her daughter's first-grade class announced last Tuesday that she would be having a birthday party the next day after school at the skating club.

Shiona said she and two classmates were told they wouldn't be allowed to attend the party because of their race. The two other children singled out were black. The 16 other kids in the class received invitations.

"It made me feel bad that they were taking people from this because of the color of their skin," seven-year-old Shiona said. "I came home crying that day."

"I was angry," Mrs. Mejorado said. "My child was crying, and I was furious. She came to me and said, 'I'm not good enough to go to the party.' I asked why and she said, 'Because I'm Hispanic.'"

Mejorado said she spoke briefly with the club's owner, Becky, on the telephone before he hung up on her.

"He said it's his club. He'll run it the way he wants to run it," Mejorado said. "I'm shocked. He just took us back 30 years. I've never seen anything like this. It's shocking."



SHIONA MEJORADO (left) pickets in front of Shallotte Skating Club last week with her little sister, Briana Santos Mejorado.

Shallotte Skating Club is a members-only club. When a non-member goes to the club, a group of members present are called together to vote on whether to issue a new membership.

The party for Shiona's classmate, Alex Floyd, was held last Wednesday at Brunswick County Bowling Center, instead of the skating club.

Alex's father, Robert Floyd, said the change was made because the Floys were afraid some of her daughter's friends would not be accepted as members at the skating club.

"We changed it over to where everybody would be welcome," Floyd said Thursday.

Floyd stressed that neither he nor his wife were told that their daughter could not invite Hispanic or black children to the party.

"Those words were never used. Anybody whose lived here for many years will tell you that's the way it's been at this skating club. It's an unwritten thing. You know it's going to be a problem," Floyd said.

"It's a private club, and you have to be voted into membership. It's not open to the general public. It just so happens that certain people aren't voted in," he said.

Floyd, an attorney, said the law allows private clubs to set their own rules and vote on members.

"I don't agree with it, but it's their business. If they want to have their rules and restrictions, they can as a private club. The law would support them on that," Floyd said.

He noted that the skating club is just like a private country club or college fraternity.

"If the members choose to vote against certain people because they don't fit their ideal...who's to say they can't do it? There's nothing that can be done because they have a right to do it," Floyd said.

"It's not something I can do anything about. Nobody can. It's the last bastion of something. It's like a dinosaur," Floyd added.

Mejorado said she planned to contact the American Civil Liberties Union and file suit against the club owner. She said she has received support from NAACP chapters in Cedar Grove, Southport and New Hanover County.

"Every black person I've talked to told me, 'Well it's always been like that. You can't change it.' I think we should try. Only when everybody stands up are we going to make a difference."

# Commissioners Okay Loan For High School Renovations

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Brunswick County Commissioners have agreed to "float a loan" of \$211,706 to the board of education so building contracts can be signed for \$1.6 million worth of improvements at West Brunswick and North Brunswick high schools.

The board of commissioners held a brief special meeting to consider the school board's funding request Tuesday night.

No county funds will actually change hands in what Commissioners Chairman Don Warren called a "paper transaction." According to county Finance Officer Luthia Hahn, the money transfer will be authorized to underwrite the school board's construction plans while it waits for guaranteed state funding that will repay the loan "by January."

The school board discovered that it needed more money after construction bids for the two high school renovation projects came in about \$200,000 over budget, Hahn told the commissioners. With its building funds already earmarked, the school board needed the county's funding guarantee so it could move ahead with construction.

Brunswick County Schools are expected to receive about \$300,000 in state "ADM" funds, which are allocated according to a school system's average daily membership of students. That money will be used to repay the county "loan" before the building funds are actually spent, Hahn said.

While he supported the motion agreeing to the fund transfer, Commissioner Donald Shaw took the opportunity Tuesday to question the way the construction money was allocated. Shaw represents District 5, where North Brunswick High School is located.

"I'm kind of concerned about twice as much being spent at West than at North," Shaw said. "People don't think I'm representing them very well when they come up with half as much every time."

"Maybe they want to ease you out in the next election," quipped Commissioner Wayland Vereen.

"I won't vote against it, but I'm still concerned," Shaw said. Shaw's question went unanswered, as no board of education members or school administration officials attended the meeting.

Hahn said current construction plans call for \$1.13 million to be spent on improvements at West Brunswick, while \$524,087 has been allocated for North Brunswick.

# Five Schools' Jobs Eliminated, 5 Created

(Continued From Page 1-A)

viewing should begin soon to fill the new administrative and instructional staff positions.

Directors of elementary education (grades prekindergarten-through-five) and secondary education (grades 6-12) will be hired to help implement site-based management, develop and implement curriculum and instructional services, assist in evaluating teachers as requested and serve as substitute principals when needed.

Three "teachers on special assignment" will be selected to serve as school improvement specialists, one at each grade level, and will work closely with principals and teachers.

"I'm hoping at the school board's next meeting that Dr. Johnston (Superintendent Ralph Johnston) will make his recommendations regarding personnel and where we're going," said Baxter.

"He has been here two years and we haven't seen any recommendations based on his observations and experience."

Also Friday, high school principals Bob Harris (North Brunswick) and Sue Seilers (South Brunswick) received tenure, or continuing contracts. As of June they will have successfully completed three probationary years as school administrators.

Contracts were renewed for first- or second-year probationary principals Patricia Carney, Sandra Robinson, Richard Lawson, Diana

Mintz, Latty Stanley and Carolyn Williams.

The board also renewed contracts for the coming year for 146 other

probationary professional employees, granting career status (continuing contracts) to 40 of them.

Contracts were not renewed for

the 1994-95 school year for two school-based employees, one at Shallotte Middle and the other at South Brunswick Middle.

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