

### Picket Or Ticket?

It may be tempting to rip out your porch pickets and improve your view, but to do so violates state safety codes. Page 3-A.

### Judicial Review Sought

A teacher's petition claims her firing was discriminatory under the federal family leave and disabilities acts. Page 8-B.

### Angler's Lucky 13

An 8-foot lemon shark wins the 13th annual Poor Boy Shark Tournament for Fred Walker of Yaupon Beach. Page 4-D.

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## New Information Adding Focus To Frink Murder Investigation

BY ERIC CARLSON

One month after the brutalized body of Amy Caroline Frink was found on a remote dirt road in South Carolina, detectives say they have uncovered new information that could help them identify a suspect in the murder of the Shallotte teenager.

"We're excited about some new leads that suggest we may be starting to focus in the right direction," said Detective Tom Hunter, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department case officer for the multi-agency investigation.

Police say an arrest in the case is not imminent and remain tight-lipped regarding details of their recent findings. But after conducting more than 250 interviews on both sides of the state line, they say the investigation into Frink's brutal slaying has not slowed.

"If anything, it has intensified," Hunter said. "We aren't closing our eyes to anything. Several scenarios are being looked into. Nobody has been eliminated from suspicion. In this investigator's opinion, everyone we've identified as a possible suspect remains a suspect."

Although the final results of an autopsy on Frink's body have not been received, Hunter said preliminary findings indicate that there was "no trace of drugs" in her system.

Rumors that Frink's murder might have been drug-related began to circulate after her body was found on a hunting club road known as a hang-out for drug users.

(See MURDER, Page 2-A)



FRINK



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

## Change Of Command

**BMCS J.D. Arndt, former chief of the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Oak Island makes a final crew-inspection during change of command ceremonies Wednesday morning (July 20). After leading local USCG operations for more than four years, Arndt will become officer in charge of Coast Guard Station Cortez, near Bradenton, Fla. He turned over command to BMCS Bradley S. Steigleder (right), whose most recent tour of duty was as executive petty officer of the USCG Cutter Naushon in Ketchikan, Alaska.**

## Schools, Commissioners Begin Arguments To Jury In Battle Over Funding

BY ERIC CARLSON

This year's school spending plan is the first one ever developed by the teachers and principals who see the educational needs of students every day, Brunswick County Schools Superintendent Ralph Johnston told a jury Tuesday.

Cutting the budget would mean firing teachers, increasing class size and forcing young people who want to learn into classrooms with disruptive students who won't get the special attention they need, he said.

Not so, argued attorney Michael Ramos on behalf of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners. He insisted that the county's share of the school system's \$40 million budget "should be adequate" if the Board of Education was financially prudent.

"Every one of these people has a distinct personal interest, if not a monetary interest, in the outcome of this case," Ramos told the jury. "By the time they finish they'll have you believing that our students have no paper to write on and no pencils to write with. That's just not the case."

After five hours of jury selection, testimony began Tuesday afternoon in the school board's lawsuit seeking an increase in the amount of school spending approved by the county commissioners. Brunswick education officials say their \$9.4 million allocation is not enough to continue existing programs and falls far short of the amount needed to improve Brunswick's notoriously bad education rating.

First to take the stand Tuesday was Johnston, who began by citing a study showing that Brunswick County students were performing at a significantly lower level than the state averages in nearly all subject areas.

Johnston said when he was hired in October 1992, the school board directed him to come up with a systematic plan "to raise the expectations and standards" of education in the county. After meeting with principals, teachers, parent groups, civic clubs, business leaders and others, Johnston said he presented the board with a mission statement and a list of goals for the immediate future.

"When I arrived, I found that teachers and principals were not involved in the budget process," Johnston testified. "I told the board that improvement will not happen in the superintendent's office. It's got to happen in the

schools, with the guidance of teachers and principals."

With that in mind, Johnston said he asked officials at each county school to assess its needs for materials, supplies, staff development and other things directly related to teaching. Spending plans for each school were developed from these surveys.

"I told them this was not to be a want list, but a need list," said Johnston. He testified that the school board's budget request reflected those needs.

Not only is the amount of school funding approved by the commissioners insufficient to meet basic requirements, Johnston said. It's not even enough to maintain current programs and pay for state-mandated salary increases and health-care costs. Cutting a requested \$187,000 teacher supplement will mean that the schools "will not attract the best and brightest" teachers, while compromising efforts to increase minority recruitment.

The superintendent said the most recent preliminary test results show that "in some areas we have made some progress and in some areas we have gone backwards."

"I am confident that additional progress can be made," Johnston said. "It is critical that there be adequate funding to do so."

Johnston was scheduled to be cross-examined Wednesday morning. In his opening remarks to the jury, Ramos set the stage for the county's defense by telling the jury, "Their argument for increased funding is that they need the money for educational services. Our evidence will show that the money we give them doesn't go there."

Ramos told the jury of six women and six men that since 1986, enrollment in county schools has increased by only 5 percent—from 8,300 to 8,900—while the county's share of school funding has increased 100 percent, from \$4.5 million in 1986 to more than \$9 million this year. Of that amount, only \$3 million goes to instruction, while the rest is spent on "support services," Ramos said.

"This case is not about whether the board of commissioners wants children to have a good education or whether they believe education is necessary," Ramos

(See JURY TRIAL, Page 2-A)

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## ALDERMEN UPSET WITH DEPARTMENT

# Shallotte Fire Chief Carter Not Expecting Reappointment

BY DOUG RUTTER

Recent tension between Shallotte Aldermen and the town's volunteer fire department could come to a head next Tuesday when aldermen appoint a fire chief for the upcoming year.

Fire department members voted last week to recommend re-appointment of Chief Tim Carter, who has served in that capacity for nearly seven years.

However, some town board members have said in recent months that Carter is difficult to work with and they want someone else to head up the 15-member department.

Aldermen are expected to make the appointment at their Aug. 2 meeting. They will either select one of three names submitted by

*"They're going to vote somebody else in as chief. It doesn't matter. What am I going to lose? It's a lot of responsibility."*

—Shallotte Fire Chief Tim Carter

the fire department or choose someone else to serve as chief.

As required by town policy, the fire department will submit a list of three names for consideration. In addition to Carter, members will recommend David Moore and Tony Hewett as possible appointees.

In an interview last Friday, Carter, a 10-year

veteran of the department, said he doesn't expect to be re-appointed.

"They're going to vote somebody else in as chief," Carter said. "It doesn't matter. What am I going to lose? It's a lot of responsibility."

Alderman Bill Allen is among the town board members who have indicated they want to appoint a new fire chief.

"I'm hoping we'll get a new head of that department who we can work with," Allen said last week as the board discussed a \$1,370 drop ceiling that was installed in the fire department office without authorization.

"I think we need to stand up strong now with that department because I'm very unhappy with them. I disagree with everything they did with us," Allen said at last Tuesday's meeting.

Alderman Carson Durham also expressed concern over the project, which was started without town board approval. Town policy requires board authorization for any fire department expense greater than \$500.

(See SHALLOTTE, Page 2-A)

# Police Cite 'Domestic Problem' In Fatal Shooting Of Church Deacon

BY ERIC CARLSON

Police say a man enraged over the alleged extramarital activities of his wife confronted one of her friends and shot the man dead at his home in Shallotte shortly after midnight Wednesday (July 20).

Oliver William "Dub" Gore was found dead after the alleged killer called his minister and arranged to turn himself in to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department about an hour later, Detective Capt. Phil Perry said Monday.

Charged with Gore's murder is Michael Dwayne Miller, 33, of Cardinal Drive, Shallotte, who is well-known in the area as an employee of a local pest control company. He is being held without bond in the Brunswick County Jail, Perry said.

Miller had been "having ongoing problems" with his wife and believed that Gore, who was a deacon at her church, was "part of this domestic problem," Perry said. Police believe Miller had been driving around for much of the night when he went to Gore's house at the end of Northside Drive to confront him about the situation.

There was no indication of a struggle, Perry said. Gore was shot once in the head and once in the abdomen and died at the scene. After the shooting, Miller drove north on U.S. 17 toward Wilmington. He threw the five-shot .38-caliber revolver out of the car window in the Winnabow area, Perry said.

A short time later, Miller called his minister and asked him to arrange for Miller to surrender, Perry said. The minister called the Brunswick County Emergency

Services (911) center, which dispatched police and a rescue unit to Gore's home.

Sheriff's detectives processed the crime scene and are conducting the investigation because the house, located at the end of the paved portion of Northside Drive, off Smith Avenue, was initially thought to be outside the Shallotte city limits.

After giving a statement to detectives, Miller led investigators to the spot in Winnabow where they recovered the handgun believed to be the murder weapon, Perry said.

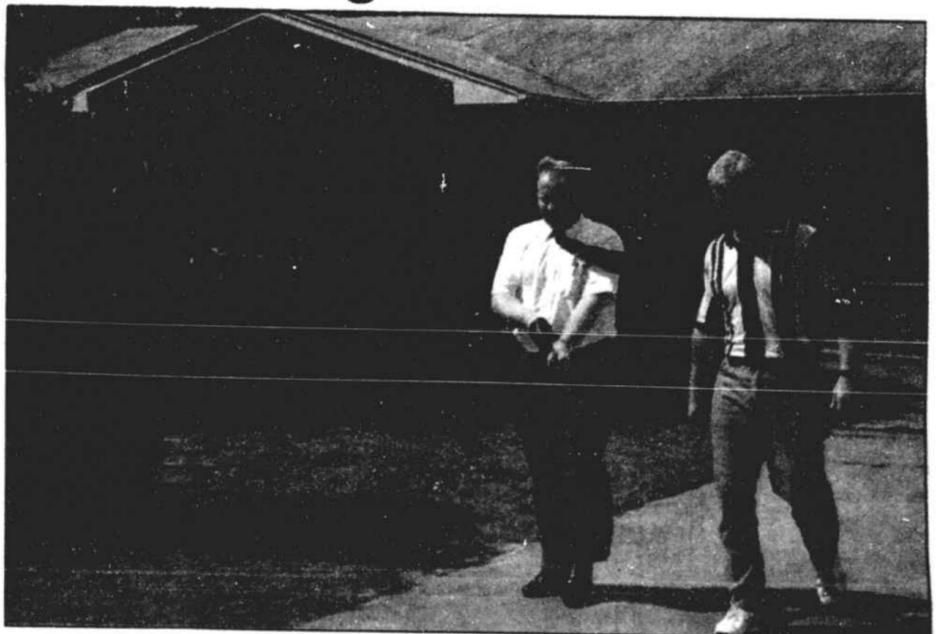
Standing just outside the yellow crime-scene tape around Gore's home Thursday morning, his brother-in-law Frank Hewett of Ash said he was puzzled to learn about the violent death of the 57-year-old man who retired just two months earlier from his 30-year career as a longshoreman at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point.

"He was just a hard-working man who never had one minute's trouble with the law," Hewett said. "He was just starting to enjoy himself, spending more time with his hobby—buying antiques and things at flea markets, fixing them up and selling them."

Gore was married to Hewett's sister Annie Belle for 36 years before she died at their home of heart problems in December 1991, he said. The two had no children together. "She stayed here and kept house while he worked at Sunny Point," Hewett said. "She kept it real nice."

A native of Shallotte, Gore was regarded as a peaceful man who served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher at the nearby Letties Grove Pentecostal Church, Hewett said. Although Gore kept books and handled finances for the church, police say there is no indication that robbery might have been a motive for his killing.

A probable cause hearing was scheduled for Aug. 4.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

**CHIEF RODNEY GAUSE (left) of the Shallotte Police Department removes gloves worn while investigating the murder of Oliver William Gore at his home on Northside Drive early Thursday morning. With Gause is Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective John Ingram, who headed the investigation.**