



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

SHERIFF-ELECT RONALD HEWETT (at rear of room) was on hand recently to present "wheelchair licenses" at Supply Elementary School, the culmination of an exercise designed to increase students' understanding of the disabled. Hewett has been praised for his work with young people as Brunswick County's Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) officer.

Eubanks To Head Brunswick County DARE Effort

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Hewett said the sheriff's department will apply for funding through the Governors Highway Safety Commission to create a Sheriff's Alcohol Field Enforcement (SAFE) team. Such units, like the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department SAFE team, are made up of designated deputies who focus their enforcement efforts on impaired drivers.

In addition, Hewett said the sheriff's department will seek state funds for a victim's advocate to assist the victims of crime through the often

lengthy criminal court system.

There will be increased emphasis on continued officer training, Hewett said. He plans to institute policies that will encourage deputies to obtain intermediate and advanced law enforcement certification.

"I will bend over backwards to see that any officer who wants to further his education has the opportunity to do so," Hewett said. "That's something Sheriff (John Carr) Davis did for me and I appreciate it."

Hewett said he will "recognize professionalism as part of an incentive plan" in which those officers

who make an effort to improve their training "are more likely to advance in my department."

Citing another of his campaign promises, Hewett said he will encourage deputies to "be in touch with the community they serve. I want them getting out of their cars and going into businesses and encouraging citizens to take an active roll in letting us know what we can do to accomplish their needs."

Although he has designated his official replacement, Hewett said he will continue actively supporting the DARE program. He hopes to hire another trained DARE officer and to

expand the drug awareness program into junior high schools.

Hewett said he plans to maintain his own DARE certification and promises to teach at least one class each year.

Summing up his plans for improving the sheriff's department, Hewett said the emphasis will be on professionalism and service.

"It's important for them to remember that each and every member of the sheriff's department directly reflects on Ronald Hewett," he said. "The citizens will come first and my officers will be public servants."

Davis Reflects On Two Decades In Department

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fits. During that five-day interim period, Chief Deputy Marlow will be chief administrator for the department, Davis said.

Since there is no provision under state law for swearing in a new sheriff before Dec. 5, the official position of county sheriff will be held by county Coroner Greg White. Davis said Brunswick is one of 25 counties in the state that operate under the coroner system.

If that transition sounds odd, it's nothing like the one Davis faced when he became sheriff in 1983. He was chief deputy when former Sheriff Herman Strong was hit with federal drug indictments in an investigation that resulted in the arrest of numerous prominent residents, local officials and law enforcement officers in southeastern North Carolina and northeastern South Carolina.

Again the county coroner became the official sheriff until the Brunswick County Commissioners named Davis as Strong's successor. It was not an easy role to step into.

"It was a rough time," Davis said. "It was tough on the department. People lost confidence in law enforcement. But we still had good people here. I went to the federal agencies and asked them to tell me if anyone else was under suspicion."

"They worked with us," he said. "We kept most of our deputies. We had a good relationship with other departments and it didn't take long to re-establish trust."

Over the next few years, Davis gained the support of enough voters to get himself elected sheriff in 1983. Four years later, he stood for re-election and won again. He doesn't seem to regret his decision to call it quits in 1994, but there are a few "loose ends" he would have liked to tie up.

Davis said he was glad to see the

three-year-old mystery of Rhonda Diane Keeler's murder solved before he left office. Her body was finally recovered last month after her husband, Timothy Keeler, agreed to reveal its location near the couple's former home in Ash before pleading guilty to voluntary manslaughter.

But there are other cases Davis wishes he could have seen solved before leaving office, like the murder of Shallotte teenager Amy Caroline Frink, whose brutalized body was found on a logging road just across the state line last June. Or the mysterious killing of Yaupon Beach native Bryan Smith, found dead floating in Town Creek on May 8.

"It would be nice to leave with all of them solved, but I know that could never happen," Davis said.

For now, he's looking forward to "doing a little traveling" and enjoying the life of a retired sheriff with his wife Dorothy. The two are planning a trip to New Hampshire next month. And after that?

"I'm going to do whatever she tells me to do," Davis said with a wink.

Totals Shifted Just A Little In Canvass

No offices changed hands, but vote totals for two candidates shifted slightly following the official canvass last Thursday of the Nov. 8 election.

Clara Carter, who won election to the Brunswick County Board of Education, picked up one vote, reported the Brunswick County Board of Elections. U.S. Congressman Charlie Rose, who won re-election to his district office, dropped seven votes.

School Board Questions Revised Teacher Pay Plan

(Continued From Page 1-A)

All schools in the county and the central office staff had an opportunity to revise differentiated pay plans that had been approved in the spring after the state legislature voted this summer to include non-certified employees for the first time. This group includes workers in positions that don't require teacher certification, such as teacher assistants, custodians, library aides, cafeteria employees and bus drivers.

Complicating matters was the legislature's decision to cut the sum of money available for bonus pay for certified staff to a pool equal to 1 percent of their salaries instead of 2 percent, and to create a pool equal to 2 percent of salaries for non-certified bonus pay.

This is the fifth year for differentiated pay, a program funded by the state legislature that gives public school employees an opportunity to earn bonus pay or to share in staff development funds according to plans devised by the staff of each site but subject to review by a countywide panel and final approval by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

Waccamaw Elementary School's plan was unchanged, since it provided for non-certified employees from the start. The board approved revised plans submitted by Bolivia, Union and Southport elementary, North Brunswick, West Brunswick

and South Brunswick high schools, South Brunswick and Leland middle schools and the new Learning Center at Southport.

The school board also approved a revised plan for the central office staff that awards

For the small amount of money involved, one unidentified school employee said during the meeting Monday night, "It has been a real pain for us to come up with a plan that is fair and equitable."

Several school board members, including Chairman Donna Baxter, also voiced reservations about the value. "We've had differentiated pay five years, two years with site-based management. We get a little bit of money for it and we take a lot of heat," she said. "What are we doing that's improving?"

Preliminary research by Testing Coordinator Bill Detrie suggests, however, a trend toward improved performance in areas where schools identified goals and linked bonus pay to achieving those goals.

Assistant Superintendent Jan Calhoun said he's been pleased with student achievement over the past two years. "It's not improving by leaps and bounds," he said, "but it's showing steady improvement."

"We're just getting to the point where I see connections between the results and what the schools are doing. I think differentiated pay has been the catalyst for that change."

BCC To Consider Settlement With Ex-Instructor

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick Community College trustees were to consider approval of a proposed mediated settlement with a former Brunswick Community College business instructor at their meeting Wednesday night, Nov. 16.

A settlement between the college and Jane H. Page of Southport was tentatively reached during a Nov. 1 mediation conference, subject to approval of the BCC Board of Trustees.

Page filed suit against BCC last September after her nine-month employment contract was not renewed for the 1993-94 school year, claiming she had been wrongfully dismissed and denied due process. She sought reinstatement and damages in excess of \$10,000 for alleged breach of contract.

While neither Page nor BCC President Michael Reaves would comment Tuesday on specifics, the report filed by mediator William E. Wood, an attorney from Whiteville, indicates agreement has been reached on all issues in question. It also notes the proposed settlement includes voluntary dismissal of the suit "with

prejudice," which would bar Page from filing a future action against the college on the same claim or cause under the N.C. Rules of Civil Procedure.

Reaves said BCC's attorney, Jim Prevatte of Southport, and its insurer's attorney, Debra Nickels of Raleigh, had asked to meet with trustees Wednesday night and present their recommendation.

Page said her attorney, Gary Shipman, would make an announcement once the settlement agreement is approved.

In Brunswick County Superior Court, mediation is the first effort made to resolve all civil cases before they come to trial. Parties to this suit faced a Nov. 5 deadline for reaching a mediated settlement. Otherwise the case could have been calendared for trial.

Page had taught business courses at the college since September 1987. Her most recent salary was \$2,474 a month under a contract for September 1992-May 1993.

In her complaint Page charged she was wrongfully dismissed because she had been told

her contract would be renewed and her name was listed in college publications as the instructor for three fall quarter courses.

She was notified in an Aug. 23 letter from BCC President Michael Reaves that her contract had not been renewed.

In its response to her complaint, BCC defended its decision not to renew Page's contract, saying that course audits found she had illegally altered student attendance records, placing the college in jeopardy and resulting in possible repayment of federal funds and sanctions.

Also, BCC claimed the college's personnel policy was applicable to Page only while she was in the college's employ, and that non-renewal of her contract did not constitute a dismissal, termination or suspension. Her contract for the 1992-93 school year had ended in May in conjunction with the end of spring quarter.

Page alleged her dismissal was influenced by her outspoken criticism of the school's administration and advocacy of student and faculty rights, in violation of her Constitutional right to free speech.

Warm, Wet Days Ahead

Local weather should be a little warmer and wetter than usual as the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday.

He expects temperatures to range over the next few days from the mid-50s at night into the mid-70s during the day, without about three-quarters of an inch rainfall.

For the period Nov. 8-14, Canady recorded a high of 82 degrees on Nov. 10 and a low of 40 degrees on Nov. 12.

A daily average high of 73 degrees and a nightly average low of 50 degrees combined for an average daily temperature of 61 degrees, which he said is about 6 degrees above the long-term average for this time of year.

Funding Dispute Draws Statewide Attention

(Continued From Page 1-A) didn't get it. The commissioners appealed after the judge refused to reduce the award or retry the case.

While the appeal is before the N.C. Court of Appeals, the county is being required to provide the school system the same funding it received from all local sources last year, upping the budget allocation to just over \$10 million for the 1994-95 school term.

It typically requires 12 to 15 months for a case to be heard by the court of appeals. On Oct. 19 the court agreed to expedite hearing of this appeal on petition by attorneys representing both boards. Case files and briefs have been submitted, and the attorneys have waived oral

arguments in an effort to speed a decision.

On Monday, John Connell, clerk to the appellate court, said the court's calendar is full through the end of the year. He said the earliest the case can be considered is probably February or March.

"That is disappointing. We would like to have had a decision sooner," school board attorney Glen Peterson said Monday. "But, as I've been trying to explain to the school board, three or four months to those people is warp speed."

In 1993 the school board also appealed the county's budget allocation, but the boards reached a mediated settlement rather than go to trial.

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