



STAFF PHOTO BY LYNN CARLSON

Hospice Gift

Betty Zegan (left), social ministries chairperson for St. Brendan the Navigator Catholic Church, presents a \$500 check to Susan Ritz, community relations/volunteer coordinator for Lower Cape Fear Hospice in Brunswick County. The funds will aid Brunswick County clients of Lower Cape Fear Hospice.

Have Suggestion For Welfare? Tell It To The Governor Jan. 3

A public hearing in Wilmington Jan. 3 is the third stop in Gov. Jim Hunt's project to hear from welfare recipients, social workers, business owners, educators and others about the best ways to change the welfare system.

The Wilmington hearing will take place at 7 p.m. in the McLeod Building auditorium at Cape Fear Community College.

The hearings are part of an effort by Hunt's Welfare Reform Task Force to develop a strategy to change North Carolina's welfare system and help families move from welfare and dependency to work and self-sufficiency, a news release from the governor's office states.

"We have to find ways to end the

cycle of poverty so that families on welfare can learn to stand on their own two feet," Hunt said. "Many of the families want to work—they want to buy homes and send their children to college, but the system discourages them from pursuing those dreams. It's time to change that."

A second priority for the 32-member task force is preventing teenage pregnancy.

Hunt created the bipartisan task force in September. It operates under the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and is expected to offer its recommendations to Hunt early next year. Hunt says he intends to propose welfare reform to the 1995 General Assembly.

Two Busted On Crack Charges In Street Sweep

BY ERIC CARLSON

Two men were arrested on felony drug charges and two others were accused of misdemeanor offenses in the most recent "street interdiction" checkpoint set up by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department narcotics squad Friday night.

One vehicle also was seized in the enforcement effort, which was conducted in the Shallotte area, according to lead drug investigator Lt. David Crocker.

Detective Billy Hughes arrested Bryan Lawson, 23, of West Long Acres, Shallotte, on charges of cocaine possession and possession of drug paraphernalia, Crocker said. A crack pipe containing residue of the drug was confiscated, along with Lawson's 1987 Dodge automobile. The suspect was jailed under a \$5,000 bond.

Two passengers in Lawson's vehicle also were charged with drug violations. John Campbell, 23, and Larry Moore Hill, 35, both of Route 3, Shallotte, were each charged with possession of drug paraphernalia.

Also Friday night, Detective Gary Shay arrested Calvin Otto Pigotte, 29, of McMilly Road, Shallotte on charges of cocaine possession and possession of drug paraphernalia. His bail was set at \$5,000.

The street interdiction checkpoint was set up in response to requests from local citizens about illegal drug

'Straw Vote' Says Calabash Should Buy CBU

BY ERIC CARLSON

A straw vote of registered voters in Calabash indicates overwhelming support for the town's proposed \$4.5 million purchase of Carolina Blythe Utility Co., which provides water and sewer service Carolina Shores and some other areas of the town.

Of the 954 post card ballots returned to the town, 749 votes were cast in favor of the purchase while 196 residents said they were opposed, Mayor George Anderson said Tuesday. Nine ballots were invalid.

As of late November, the Brunswick County

Board of Elections listed 1,465 registered voters in Calabash.

The Calabash Board of Commissioners last month agreed to conduct the non-binding referendum in an effort to gauge support for the proposed purchase of Carolina Blythe.

Mayor Anderson had no comment Tuesday about the results of the vote. He said he would prefer to wait until the commissioners meet again next month before discussing it.

An informational letter accompanying the straw poll ballot told voters that a purchase of CBU would result in an increase in combined wa-

ter and sewer rates from \$21 per month to "a range of \$34 to \$41."

The letter also claimed that "the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority is a likely purchaser of CBU if the town does buy it" and estimated that such a purchase would result in a combined water and sewer rate of \$35.68 a month.

In response to rumors that the authority intends to buy Carolina Blythe, the SBWSA board of directors at a Dec. 13 meeting voted unanimously to reaffirm a previous decision not to purchase CBU.

Shallotte Asking Brunswick To Inspect Buildings

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shallotte has a dilemma. Albert Hughes spends so much time working in the water and sewer and street departments, he doesn't have enough time to devote to his job as town building inspector.

On the other hand, the town doesn't have the enough building activity on a daily basis at this time to justify hiring another employee to serve as the inspector.

Town aldermen hope they've found a solution. They voted Tuesday night to enter into a contract and turn building inspection duties over to Brunswick County on a one-year trial basis.

"There's just not too many options out there for us right now," Alderman Carson Durham said. "I don't think it will hurt the town to be consistent with what the county's doing."

Town officials said it could be a couple months before the change goes into effect. They haven't seen the final contract, and the move hasn't been approved by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

If both boards sign the contract, the county would issue all permits and collect inspection fees. The county's fees are substantially higher than the fees currently charged by the town.

Town Attorney Mark Lewis said the preliminary contract reviewed by the board of aldermen would require the county to enforce the state building code.

However, he pointed out that it would not require the county to enforce specific town building regulations or make routine checks for unsafe or unsanitary conditions at building sites.

Although the change would likely make his job less demanding, Hughes said Tuesday that turning building inspections over to the

"There's just not too many options out there for us right now. I don't think it will hurt the town to be consistent with what the county's doing."

—Alderman Carson Durham

county would not be his preference.

"Economics pretty much dictates it has to stay as it is or go to something like this," he said. "I don't see the town being able to afford a full-time inspector besides me."

Mayor Sarah Tripp said the move may benefit builders because they could have inspections done on a more timely basis.

However, she said property owners have told her that they prefer dealing with the town more than the county.

"The discussions I've had said we need to do this," Durham said. "I personally feel we need to do this and get a strong inspections program in our town."

Unpaid Bills

Believe it or not, Shallotte has records of overdue water and sewer bills dating back to 1976.

Since the town can't force water and sewer customers to pay utility bills that are more than three years old, aldermen voted Tuesday to delete about \$7,770 in unpaid bills from the books.

"We just need to clean this thing up. This has been going on for years," Durham said.

Town board members also voted to try to collect the \$945 that has gone unpaid since 1992.

"We need to stay on top of it and go ahead and cut the water off if people are going to take advantage of us," Durham added.

Aldermen will talk in January about the possibility of increasing

the deposits for water and sewer meters. They say businesses such as restaurants and laundromats should pay higher deposits because they use more water.

Meanwhile, the town has made progress in collecting most of the taxes that went unpaid over the last 10 years.

Shallotte started the year with about \$27,000 in unpaid taxes and has received about \$19,000, Durham reported Tuesday.

Durham said there are seven individuals who now owe the town about \$11,640, including 1994 taxes. All of those people signed statements agreeing to make monthly payments, and some have not lived up to their promises.

"They're not making payments like they said," Durham said. "All I'm doing now is telling you it's out of control with these few people."

Mayor Tripp suggested the town mail a final notice to the people and threaten to dip into their bank account... or take them to court to collect the tax money.

Tripp said one person agreed to pay the town \$500 per month until his tax bill was paid off, but he has only paid \$70 all year.

"I think we've bent over backwards to work with them. If they don't work with us it's a one-sided affair," she said.

Other Business

In other business Tuesday, aldermen:

■ Agreed to pay a consultant up

to \$1,000 for a study and report on changes that are needed to avoid fines by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA).

■ Took no action relating to the town's cable television franchise. Alderman Morris Hall said he met recently with officials at Vision Cable, which is interested in serving Shallotte. Atlantic Telephone Membership Corporation's cable franchise with the town expires next May. Hall said he plans to meet soon with ATMC officials.

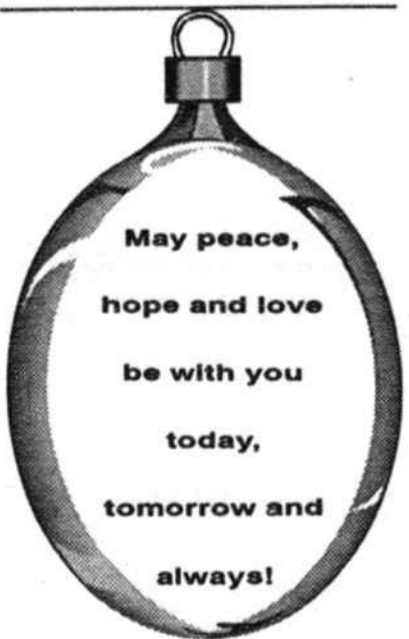
■ Received a report that the planning board has established a committee to review the current vendor ordinance. Committee members are Durham, Greg Bouldin, John Twomey and H.L. Holmes.

■ Heard from Alderman Roney Cheers that he will be meeting this week with a house mover concerning the relocation of Sunnyside School. Town officials plan to move the historic building a short distance, behind the chamber of commerce off Main Street. Cheers said the move could take place within a few weeks.

■ Discussed the prohibition on "junked, nuisance and abandoned" vehicles in the town limits and extraterritorial area. The regulations took effect Oct. 31 but have not been enforced. Board members plan to talk with Chief Rodney Gause about the police department taking over enforcement of the rules. Town staff has compiled a list of about 90 illegal cars in the town limits.

■ Shallotte's board of adjustment granted a variance from the town sign ordinance. The board agreed to allow the Shallotte Middle School PTA to erect an 80-square-foot sign in front of the school along N.C. 179. Town code does not allow signs larger than 50 square feet. Aldermen voted to waive the \$50 fee for the variance request.

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