



Warren County Sheriff Theodore Williams (left) and County Manager Charles Worth (right) look in amazement at the height and girth of the marijuana plants confiscated in last Friday's bust that took place about 500 feet off SR 1001 in Warren County.

The estimated "street value" of the weed is in excess of \$1,000,000, Chief Deputy Bobby D. Bolton said. Some of the stalks were 20 feet in height and had stems that approached four inches.

(Photo by Brenda Clarke)

More Plants Seized Yesterday

Warren, Vance Lawmen Harvest Marijuana Valued At \$1 Million

By THURLETTA M. BROWN
News Editor

Phase II of Warren County's Marijuana Eradication Program has netted a haul of the weed with an estimated street value that exceeds \$1 million, Chief Deputy Bobby D. Bolton said Tuesday.

Phase I of the program began in July, when airborne surveillance was conducted here by the State Bureau of Investigation. The Phase II operation netted fruit about 9:30 a.m. last Saturday, when the SBI pilot, C. D. Holbrook, spotted a stand of plants off SR 1001.

Before surveillance by both land and air had been completed, 350 plants—some as tall as 20 feet, with stem diameters approaching four inches—had been found.

"What made the plants so valuable was their size," Chief Deputy Bolton said. "An SBI agent said he had never seen plants so tall," Bolton added, noting that the plants were especially "well cultivated and cared for."

Another factor contributing to the value of the haul was the inclusion of the sensimilla variety of the cannabis or marijuana

plant. "That's the 'preferred brand,'" Chief Deputy Bolton said.

According to Bolton, sensimilla is a more expensive type of "grass" because of its increased THC content. THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, is the active intoxicant in the weed that produces the "high" that is so valued by its users.

According to SBI Agent Bruce Black, the typical marijuana plant will yield "grass" valued at \$1,600, but the sensimilla variety will net \$2,400 per each average-sized plant.

"By the end of the confiscation operation, one flat-bed trailer and three pick-up truckloads had been removed from the sites," Bolton said.

Although 35-40 of the plants were found on the Warren/Vance county line near SR 1503, the bulk were found growing in Warren County in fields about 500 yards from SR 1001. Some of the plants were found about one-tenth mile west of Brown's Baptist Church.

At 7:30 p.m. Friday, the haul was burned at the Warren Coun-

ty landfill and, by 9 p.m., the remaining dregs had been buried. Present for the "bonfire" were Sheriff Theodore Williams, Chief Deputy Bolton, Sgt. Lawrence Harrison, Deputy Johnny Williams, SBI Agent Bruce Black and Ms. Phyllis Tolluck, a criminal justice student from East Carolina University, who had accompanied the SBI. Also assisting in the day's Phase II operation, in addition to SBI Pilot Holbrook, were Vance County Sheriff Tommy McGhee, Vance ABC Officer Bill Aiken and others on his staff, and SBI Agent Rick Sims.

On Tuesday afternoon, Deputy Harold Seaman and Deputy R. A. Coleman of the Warren County Sheriff's Department seized another 10 plants that were approximately 10-12 feet in height on a private lot in the Macon area.

The plants were discovered after sheriff's department officials received a tip on their location. The State Bureau of Investigation estimated the street value of the marijuana at \$16,000.

Democrats Plan Gathering

The Democratic Party will gather in the Warren County Courthouse on Thursday, Sept. 22 at 6:30 p.m. for a short, but important, meeting, Chairman T. T. Clayton announced Tuesday. All registered Democrats are urged to attend.

Warren Is Found

On Front Page

Warren County has received prominent "front page coverage" in the August/September issue of "Rural Routes," a newsletter published by the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, Inc. in Raleigh.

The cover story explains Warren County's strategic planning effort that has been funded by the center. According to the article, the project will include an analysis of economic and social data, the development of a mission statement, an examination of social and economic influences; and the implementation of an action plan.

Two photographs also appear in "Rural Routes": a scene along Main Street and the site of Peck Manufacturing.

Seven Are Injured

Seven persons were reported injured shortly after 8 a.m. today in a wreck on the Warren Plains Road a short distance south of the U. S. 158 Bypass, a spokesman for the Warren County Sheriff's Department said. Details of the accident were not available at presstime.

This 1971 Mercury overturned on NC 58 Saturday morning after the driver, Vernon Alston, lost control of the vehicle when a deer crossed the road-

way. Alston and his passenger received injuries that required treatment at Maria Parham Hospital. See story on Page 12. (Photo by Brenda Clarke)

Proceedings Televised

Speakers Want Fire Unit To Remain In Operation

By THURLETTA M. BROWN
News Editor

From a throng that might have burst the seams of the Warren County Courthouse, only 13 voices—four from speakers hailing from outside the county's environs—were heard in the public hearing held Monday night to receive citizens' comments on the issue of fire protection.

"The primary purpose for being here tonight is to get some understanding of what was really intended in the Churchill-Five Forks referendum," David Proctor, Warren County Fire Commission spokesperson, said, noting that the issues addressed would be county-wide as well. The night's events were conducted under the watchful eye of the WRAL-TV camera and the account was seen by area residents who watched the Monday night and Tuesday morning news.

Bill Terry—a Virginia Beach, Va. resident who owns retirement property in Six Pound, but was unable to vote in the recent referendum—expressed disbelief at the lack of understanding of fire department support through taxation. "I'm overwhelmed that a misinformed community could possibly vote 'nay' against a simple requirement: the protection of lives and property," he began. "You're sending a signal," Terry warned. "You want increased development in Warren County, but you're not going to get it by knowingly denying simple protection to the citizenry." Terry asked that the county budget additional funds to its fire departments or call for another referendum.

The second speaker, Randy Wall—a Wake County resident with property in the Six Pound area—said he paid the same tax rate as permanent residents without receiving the benefits. Wall said that most other "freeholders" in his predicament also supported the concept of a taxed fire district.

Only 10 percent of the property owners in the Churchill-Five Forks district were eligible to vote in the referendum and those who were on the voting rolls soundly defeated the taxed district with a 90-to-58 vote. "Had the referendum occurred here (in my district), I would have been unable to vote as well," Walter Gardner, Fire Association president, said. Gardner resides in Warrenton, but is a member of the Warrenton Rural Fire Department.

Wall said many of the large property owners in the Churchill-Five Forks community did not support its fire department. "We're small and we need it."

Charles F. Blackburn, a Henderson attorney present at the request of "some members" of the Churchill fire district, said, "It's

not that they don't appreciate the department, because they do." Blackburn explained that the charter of the Churchill department made all residents there members. "Nobody can close the department," he said, adding that only by a vote of the mem-

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Norlina Youth Facing Many Break-In Charges

If the "legwork" and "paper trail" required for processing are completed in time, a Norlina man will appear today (Wednesday) in Warren County District Court for a 96-hour hearing that local law officers hope will bring to an end a string of crimes that have plagued area residents, Sheriff Theodore Williams said Tuesday.

Shawn Bullock, 19, of Rt. 1, Norlina had been housed in the Vance County Jail to await trial in Henderson, after being picked up in Virginia with a stolen vehicle in his possession. On Monday, he was brought into Warren County, where he was interviewed by Chief Deputy Bobby D. Bolton and Norlina Police Chief Charles Galantis as a suspect in a rash of break-ins here.

At press time, 10 warrants, most for felony crimes, had been drawn on the Norlina youth.

Bullock is a suspect in the following crimes for which warrants have been drawn by Chief Deputy Bobby D. Bolton:

—a July 11 break-in at North Warren Elementary School: Deputy W. S. Bissette responded to the initial report that entry had been gained by breaking a window on the back side of the building. Reported missing were a five-inch color television and a money box valued at \$300. Damage was also reported to a drink machine there. A warrant has been drawn for breaking and entering and larceny;

—a July 12 break-in at W. F. Rooker & Sons Store in Norlina: Chief Deputy Bobby D. Bolton responded to a report that a window in the front door had been smashed, the store ransacked, and a .22-calibre pistol valued at \$130 and \$55 in cash had been stolen. A warrant has been drawn for breaking and entering and larceny;

—a July 17 break-in at Warren County High School: Responding Deputy Harold Seaman found that entry had been gained through a window at the back of the building. Although nothing was reported missing, the principal's office and cabinet-making shop had been ransacked. A warrant has been drawn for breaking and entering;

—a July 18 break-in at Northside Elementary School: Responding Deputy W. S. Bissette found that entry had been gained by breaking a classroom window at the back of the building. Holes had been punched in doors and \$5 had been removed from a drink machine. A warrant has been drawn for breaking and entering and larceny;

—a July 22 break-in at Campbell's Store in Wise: Responding Deputy W. S. Winston found that entry had been gained by severing a lock with a bolt-cutter and that \$80 in silver had been taken. A warrant has been drawn for breaking and entering and larceny;

—a July 25 break-in at the Vaughan Elementary School: Responding Deputy W. S. Bissette found that the school had been ransacked, a vending machine had been entered and \$50 in

currency had been removed. A warrant has been drawn for breaking and entering and larceny; and

—an Aug. 12 alleged theft of a purse, while her vehicle was parked at Tucker's Grocery in Ridgeway, reported by Ms. Linda H. Medlin of Warrenton. A warrant has been drawn for misdemeanor larceny of the purse. Because one of the checks taken in the incident was presented at Byrd's Food Center in Warrenton, a warrant for forging and uttering has also been drawn.

Investigations by Norlina Police Chief Charles Galantis have resulted in two additional warrants for breaking and entering and larceny:

—a July 21 break-in at Norlina Middle School in which entry was gained by breaking a window at the back of the building. Reported missing were a \$200 AM/FM radio/cassette player, a pair of bolt-cutters and \$5 in cash; and

—a July 23 break-in at Tillie's Beauty Salon in Norlina, in which entry was gained through a window in the back of the building and \$101 in currency was removed.

Bullock has confessed to all Warren County crimes, both officers said Tuesday.

Investigations into other unsolved crimes are continuing, Chief Deputy Bolton said, and a second suspect is believed to have been involved in six of the incidents.

Five Are Hurt In I-85 Crash

A two-car mishap on I-85 Sunday morning has resulted in minor injuries for the five persons involved.

According to the report filed by N.C. Highway Trooper R. A. Ennis, Hieu Van Le, 18, of Biloxi, Miss., and Ms. Jacqueline Teresa Alston, 27, of Rt. 3, Pittsboro, had both been traveling north on I-85 in their vehicles.

Le attempted to pass Ms. Alston in the 1988 Toyota he was driving and struck the left rear side of her 1980 Mazda, causing both cars to skid into the median. After skidding into the southbound lane, the Le vehicle struck Ms. Alston's Mazda in the left front, before hitting a ditchbank and skidding off the right shoulder. Le's Toyota came to rest facing east.

Ms. Alston, Le, along with his three passengers—Ho P. Huynh, 22, of Boston, Mass., Thuy Nguyn, 18, of Biloxi, Miss. and Thanh Le, 18, of Jamaican Plains, Miss.—were transported to Maria Parham where they were treated and released.

Damage to the Le vehicle has been estimated at \$4,000. Damage to the Alston vehicle has been estimated at \$900.

Hieu Van Le has been charged with careless and reckless driving, a Highway Patrol spokesperson said.