

Mayor Suspends Police Chief Pending Hearing

BY SUSAN USHER

Mayor Beamon Hewett confirmed Tuesday afternoon that he has suspended Charlotte Police Chief Wayne Campbell from duty, with pay, pending a hearing before the town board of aldermen at its next regular meeting on April 3.

"This is a dispute between the chief and myself," he said of the unexpected action, which apparently stems from a specific incident that occurred March 14. No details were available from Hewett or other town officials.

While there have been "some problems between the chief and other members of the department," he said, these were only "indirectly" related to the suspension.

Also related only indirectly are several recent meetings of the town board with Campbell behind closed doors to discuss personnel matters. Hewett confirmed that "everyone of them" involved undercover officer Michael Speck, but added that the chief's suspension had nothing to do with the other officer.

"I have done nothing illegal, immoral or dishonest," was Chief Campbell's only statement Tuesday. He preferred to withhold further comment until after the matter is heard by the town board.

Until the chief's status is resolved, Mayor Hewett said he had "taken control" of the department. Sgt. Rodney Gause, the second highest ranking person in the department, will actually be "the man who is really going to be in charge" under Hewett's supervision.

Hewett suspended Campbell Monday afternoon, he said, after first discussing his decision with all five aldermen and with town attorney Mason Anderson.

"I called the chief in and told him what I had. We talked about an hour over it," he said, with no resolution reached. Hewett met afterward with other members of the police department and informed them of his action.

Hewett said the suspension came as a result of a "specific incident" that occurred March 14, the date of

an earlier meeting with the chief. "But," he added, "I didn't know it had occurred until a week later." In the meantime he also had met with other police department employees on Monday and then with Campbell and the town board Wednesday night. Campbell, in his late 40s, succeeded Hoyal "Red" Varnam as chief on Aug. 1, 1983. A law enforcement veteran with 15 years of experience, he presently earns an annual salary of \$17,280.

"Other than this specific incident," the mayor told reporters, "I have had no complaints about the chief. I have praised him on numerous occasions."

Asked if the chief had had his support until now, Hewett replied emphatically, "He sure did."

Hewett assured the press that the incident prompting the suspension was "nothing like" the situation that led to the suspension and ultimately the dismissal of Campbell's predecessor, Hoyal "Red" Varnam, who was convicted on drug smuggling conspiracy charges.

Hewett, like Chief Campbell and Aldermen Paul Wayne Reeves, Jerry Jones and Wilton Harrelson, would not discuss the actual basis for the suspension out of consideration for Campbell.

Aldermen David Gause and Bobby Ray Russ could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Hewett said he had promised Campbell not to discuss the matter publicly. The chief's hearing will be conducted behind closed doors next week.

"He has a right to be heard by the board. If he can prove that what I did was wrong," continued the mayor, "the board may decide to reinstate him."

Hewett said he has not yet decided what action, if any, he will recommend to the board.

Following Campbell's suspension on Monday, Sgt. Gause was called on duty from vacation, but Mayor Hewett said Tuesday Gause would probably go back on vacation Wednesday since relief officer Jerry Wilson had agreed to work as needed

this week. Gause is using his vacation time to move into his new home off Village Point Road.

In the only action following an executive session with Campbell to discuss personnel at their Wednesday, March 20 meeting, the board directed the town to advertise a vacant position in the police department.

In an arrangement worked out among the police and sheriff's departments and the State Bureau of Investigation, Speck had begun work in July as an undercover officer in Operation Brass. That is the name given to a drug investigation that culminated this week with indictments by the Brunswick County Grand Jury of 22 suspects on more than 60 charges.

According to Sheriff John C. Davis, Speck was paid and certified by the Charlotte Police Department, and deputized by the sheriff's department. His salary was paid by the Charlotte department, but the sheriff's department provided him money for drug "buys" and a vehicle



Wayne Campbell

while working undercover assignments.

Another undercover officer who worked with the Southport Police Department will go on patrol duty now.

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That Was A Close Shave!

STAFF PHOTOS BY SUSAN USHER

While state Department of Transportation employees gave Highway 17 a close shave (above), some rerouted Shallotte motorists almost got sheared in occasional head-on traffic (below). The grinder began gobbling up

layers of pavement last Thursday and finished up early this week; retopping comes next, said DOT employee Minor Hewett. The crumbled old pavement will top a dirt road off N.C. 179.



Undercover Drug Operation Results In 22 Indictments

BY TERRY POPE

An undercover drug operation involving several county law enforcement departments resulted in the indictment of 22 people and ten arrests Tuesday.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Department detectives along with State Bureau of Investigation agents and several town police personnel began making the arrests Tuesday morning after the indictments were announced. The Brunswick County Grand Jury met Monday and late Monday night before handing down the indictments which were sealed until announced Tuesday morning by District Attorney Michael Easley.

Of the ten arrests made Tuesday, at least two men are from the Shallotte area. Randy Franklin Latimore, 19, of Route 2, Box 170, Shallotte, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana with intent to sale and deliver and the sale and delivering of marijuana.

Also arrested was Dale Arthur Hewett, 33, of Route 6, Box 919, Shallotte (Shallotte Point), who was charged with possession of cocaine with intent to sale and deliver and the sale and delivering of cocaine.

Called "Operation Brass," the undercover operation was aimed at helping to clear drugs off the streets by targeting those involved in the sale of drugs, said Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis.

"There is no great, big drug dealer involved," Davis said. "We're not getting any of the smugglers right now, so we're concentrating on the street drugs. Not that we're ignoring the smugglers all together."

From the 26 months of investiga-

tion involving several local police departments, including Shallotte, Southport and Long Beach departments, 20 men and two juveniles were indicted on 66 charges. Two juvenile petitions will be served on the two minors for selling drugs, said Detective Lt. Dick Burgess.

All of the indictments stem from the sale of either marijuana or cocaine to undercover officers in Brunswick County. Officers continued their search for the defendants Tuesday night, but by late Tuesday evening ten men had been arrested and charged at the Brunswick County Jail.

According to the indictments, Latimore is accused of selling marijuana to an undercover officer on June 22, 1984. Hewett is accused of selling cocaine to an undercover officer the following day, on June 23, 1984.

Other arrests made Tuesday involve men from the Long Beach and Southport areas and one man from Wilmington. Robert Leonard Birch, 29, of 229 Edgewood Ave., Boiling Spring Lakes, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana with intent to sale and deliver and the sale of marijuana to an undercover officer on Oct. 26, 1984.

Also charged with possessing and selling marijuana to undercover officers were Scott Barham, 20, of 203 SE 79th Street, Long Beach; Anthony Wayne Overman, 19, of 310 NE 55th Street, Long Beach; and Jeff Conca, 24, of 311 River Drive, Southport.

Barham was indicted by the Grand Jury for selling drugs to an undercover officer on Dec. 12, 1984. Overman is accused of selling marijuana

to an undercover officer on Jan. 3, 1985 while Conca was indicted for selling drugs on Jan. 11, 1985.

Charged with two counts each of possessing and selling of marijuana to officers were Malcolm Monroe McHose, 24, of NE 54th Street, Long Beach and Ray Duncan, also of Long Beach. Both were indicted for selling drugs to undercover officers in December and January.

Phillip Taylor of Southport was charged Tuesday with three counts of possessing and selling marijuana to undercover officers in December and January of this year.

One Wilmington man, Oliver Hansley, 31, of 3314 Winston Blvd., was arrested and charged with possessing and selling marijuana on Nov. 26, 1984.

Also indicted by the Grand Jury Tuesday for possession and selling of drugs were Al Arthur Doshier Jr., of Southport; Tim Lanier of Chadwick Trailer Park, Leland; David Ward of Connies Trailer Park, Leland; Lloyd Fields of Fawnbrook Trailer Park, Bolivia; Rodger Dale King of Long Beach; Gary Miller; Steve Babson; Danny Martin; Gene Martin; and Jay Ward.

Undercover officers from the Shallotte and Southport Police departments were used in "Operation Brass," said Sheriff Davis. About \$6,000 to \$8,000 in funds was used to purchase the drugs while departments supplied the vehicles and manpower.

Throughout the operation, detectives also confiscated a four-wheel-drive pickup used in one of the drug operations, Davis said.

Brunswick County Leads State In Annual Population Growth

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County is the fastest growing county in the state in terms of population and housing growth, figures released last week by the Brunswick County Planning Department and N.C. Department of Commerce reveal.

In the five-year period from April 1980 to April 1985, there has been a 35.6 percent increase in permanent resident population and a 42.4 percent increase in total number of housing units in the county, reported Vonnenna Singleton, planner II with the Brunswick County Planning Department.

Last year alone, Brunswick County's permanent population increased by 3,415 people, or from 45,119 residents in April 1984 to 48,535 residents projected for April 1985. Approximately 2,470 housing units were also added in the county last year, the report states.

Of those new homes, 1,195 are listed as permanent residential units,

rather than seasonal homes or summer cottages. Municipal building permits issued prior to Dec. 31, 1984 and electrical inspections issued by the county last year are used to compile the department's annual population and housing count.

In 1984, a total of 894 single- and multi-family units were built in the county compared to 267 built in 1981, according to N.C. Department of Commerce figures. Those figures reveal the number of new home constructions, rather than added mobile homes or other renovations. During the three-year period since 1981, their figures reveal new residential construction has increased by 235 percent in the county.

In 1981, the county's average annual population increase stood at 4.6 percent while in 1984 the figure had jumped to 7.8 percent, Ms. Singleton reported last Wednesday to the planning board.

"Most of the development is taking place in the same pattern as during

1983—south of U.S. 17," Ms. Singleton said.

A map the planning department staff prepared to show the increase in housing units shows a red dot for every new construction added last year. The coastal areas, especially the South Brunswick Islands, are lined with red dots while other concentrated areas lie in Leland and Southport.

"I was staggered by Von's figures," said county planning Director John Harvey. The figures are still just a conservative estimate of the county's growth, he added.

The Shallotte township led the county's permanent resident population growth with a 58 percent increase over last year. Other townships were as follows: Lockwood Folly, 42 percent increase; Town Creek, 30 percent increase; Smithville and Northwest, 26 percent increase, and Waccamaw, 21 percent increase.

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Supply Man Sentenced To 19 Years For Sexual Offenses

BY TERRY POPE

Facing a possible 120 years to life in prison, a Supply man pleaded guilty to lesser sexual offenses in Brunswick County Superior Court Tuesday morning and was sentenced to 19 years in prison.

Farron Dan Holden, 30, of Route 2, Supply, (Holden Beach area) had been charged with first-degree rape and two counts of first-degree sexual offense stemming from two separate incidents. In a plea bargain agreement with District Attorney Michael Easley in court Tuesday, Holden pleaded guilty to second-degree rape and one count of second-degree sexual offense thus avoiding a trial.

Holden was charged on July 14, 1984 by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department with the first-degree rape and first-degree sexual

offense of a Holden Beach vacationer. He was also charged on Jan. 8, 1985 for first-degree sexual offense with a seven-year-old girl who was staying in the defendant's home while he was out on bond.

Although each first-degree charge carries a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison, the charges were consolidated for the purpose of sentencing. Judge B. Craig Ellis dismissed the jurors from the courtroom Tuesday while accepting Holden's guilty plea from his attorneys, State Sen. R.C. Soles Jr. of Tabor City and Michael Isenberg of Southport.

Judge Ellis sentenced Holden to 19 years in the N.C. Department of Corrections and ordered that he undergo psychiatric evaluation and receive treatment from the department.

During Holden's sentencing hearing Tuesday morning, Easley told Judge Ellis that he agreed to the plea bargains because of the difficulty that arose in trying each case before a jury. In the incident from July 14, 1984, the victim "has honestly admitted to us that she had had something to drink and had smoked some marijuana" the night she was allegedly raped on the beach strand, Easley said. That would have made it difficult for a jury to "believe everything she says," Easley added.

The Gastonia resident was walking alone on the beach strand around 12:30 a.m. when Holden approached her, Easley said. After walking along the beach for several hours, it began to rain so the couple took shelter under a deck, where Holden allegedly

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