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SHALLOTTE POLICE LT. RODNEY GAUSE (left) and Officer Joey Hoagland inventory money and other property seized from the car allegedly used by three

suspects to flee last Wednesday's armed robbery at Wilson's Supermarket in Shallotte.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

## Three Arrested After Armed Robbery At Local Supermarket

BY RAHN ADAMS

Rozell Hewett got more than he bargained for last week when he went to the grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread.

Arriving at Wilson's Supermarket last Wednesday about an hour before closing time, the 69-year-old Shallotte Point resident had the misfortune of walking in on an armed robbery.

"It was in progress when I walked in the door," Hewett recalled Thursday, "but I didn't know what was happening, so I went on in."

What happened was that three people were injured in the robbery, although not seriously. Hewett and about a dozen others were unharmed. The gun-wielding robber made off with more than \$21,000 in cash, but dropped part of it as he fled on foot and later left the rest in his wrecked getaway car for lawmen to recover.

Two suspects were arrested last Wednesday night, while a third man—the alleged robber—was apprehended Monday morning in Columbus County after a four-day manhunt.

At least one of the three men—all Lake Waccamaw residents—is a suspect in a rash of armed robberies in Columbus County, according to authorities there.

Shallotte Police Lt. Rodney Gause said Anthony Corbett, 20, and Gregory Dudley, 19, were arrested last Wednesday night outside a residence on N.C. 211. Both were charged with armed robbery and were placed in the Brunswick County Jail under \$100,000 secured bonds.

Dewayne E. Godwin, 25, was taken into custody early Monday morning in Lake Waccamaw by members of the Lake Waccamaw Police Department and the Columbus County Sheriff's Department.

Godwin was charged with armed robbery and assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury. He was jailed Monday in Brunswick County under a \$30,000 cash bond, Gause said. Local authorities plan to seek a higher bond.

According to Shallotte Police Of-

ficer Joey Hoagland, who was one of the first lawmen on the scene, the robbery occurred last Wednesday around 10 p.m. at the supermarket located in Coastal Plaza Shopping Center on U.S. 17.

Hoagland said the robbery was reported by store manager Chris Farmer, who had been forced at gunpoint to empty the store safe of more than \$21,000.

After entering the store, the robber went into a storage room at the rear of the building, where he encountered a stock clerk. After tying up the male clerk with box wire, Hoagland said, the masked robber left the storage area, then assaulted another store employee in the deli section of the store.

The officer said the assailant struck Elaine Tharpe of Ocean Isle Beach in the head with a .44 Magnum revolver. Ms. Tharpe later was treated and released at The Brunswick Hospital.

When Ms. Tharpe yelled and alerted Farmer, the robber pulled his gun on the manager and ordered him to gather the approximately 15 employees and customers in the store, Hoagland said. At that point, Hewett entered the store. "When I walked in the store, he (the robber) had the gun at the manager's head then," Hewett said last Thursday. "He told everybody to get in the back."

Hewett added that the suspect threatened him. "He said, 'I ought to put a bullet through that old man's head.'—I guess because I wasn't scared of him," Hewett recalled.

With the exception of Farmer, the employees and customers were made to stay in the rear storage area, then were shut inside a storage cooler for about 15 minutes, Hewett said.

Hoagland said two customers were injured during the robbery when the assailant shoved them to the floor. Linda G. McCall of Shallotte, who complained of chest pains, was treated and released at The Brunswick Hospital, while William L. Martin of Supply did not require hospital treatment.

According to Gause, the robber ran

from the store to the Shallotte Middle School parking lot, where the other two suspects were waiting in a 1980 Chevrolet Monte Carlo. While running, the suspect dropped about \$600 in cash, which was recovered by police.

Gause said the three sped from Shallotte to the Supply area on U.S. 17 and were involved in a hit-and-run at the intersection of U.S. 17 and N.C. 211, rear-ending another vehicle. They then turned onto N.C. 211 and drove about seven miles at a high rate of speed with no headlights, due to damage from the collision.

The suspects' car was stopped on N.C. 211 by N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper David Lewis in connection with the hit-and-run, Gause said.

According to Brunswick County Sheriff John C. Davis, a county deputy arrived on the scene as Lewis arrested and handcuffed Godwin. When the deputy informed Lewis that the three were suspects in the robbery, Corbett and Dudley fled. Godwin escaped into a wooded area when the officers attempted to apprehend the other two men, Davis said.

Davis and Detective Mike Speck took Corbett and Dudley into custody without incident outside the Charles Parsons residence on N.C. 211. Despite sheriff's department roadblocks, Godwin eluded authorities and returned to the Lake Waccamaw area.

According to Gause, lawmen recovered the remainder of the stolen money in the wrecked car. All but about \$30 of the money taken from the store was found.

They also found in the car a .44 Magnum revolver, which was loaded with "rat shot," and the black ski-mask believed worn in the robbery.

Gause said Monday that Lake Waccamaw Police received a tip concerning Godwin's whereabouts and located the suspect Monday around 12:30 a.m. inside a shed near a relative's residence.

Godwin was injured in a struggle with officers during the arrest. He was treated and released from a Columbus County hospital early Monday before being taken to the Brunswick

(See ARMED, Page 3-A)

## Robertson Supporters Take Control Of GOP Convention

BY SUSAN USHER

Supporters of presidential candidate/former TV evangelist Pat Robertson gained control of the Brunswick County Republican Convention Saturday. And, in a confusing, four-hour meeting they secured a clear majority of delegates and alternates to the party's district and state conventions.

Ike Williams, chairman of Robertson's campaign and orchestrator of the quiet take-over, later told The Brunswick Beacon the group's goal.

"We were trying to get a strong delegation of Republicans to the district and state conventions," he said, "to elect conservatives to the national convention to write a conservative platform."

That platform, he continued, would be "against abortion—which is murder, and the give away and throw away and waste of this land." At the same time, he added, the delegates represent county conservatives who want "to make the Republican Party the majority party."

Williams' election maneuvering started after the convention heard a keynote address by Deputy Secretary of Transportation Tommy Harrelson as well as brief comments from most GOP candidates for local office.

Before the afternoon was over, however, Williams told the convention, "The next time you're getting ready for a convention, you get out and work and get delegates to the precinct meetings and you'll have control of the convention."

Despite the controversy over the

elections, the meeting opened and closed on a call for party unity, with Williams saying, "A lot of these people have never been to a Republican convention before. We all need to chip in, especially after the primary, and let's elect them (Republicans)."

Chairman John Dozier noted, later, "It was just about what we expected." He added, "And we're tickled to death to have some new Republicans."

Saturday's experience may encourage more activism by mainline party members, he continued, echoing Williams' advice: "I would like to

see our old ones stop being complacent and get out to work. Maybe this will do it."

Strategy Worked

Williams' strategy involved several attempts to change the way delegates were elected. His first motion was to have delegates vote as a convention, rather than by roll call of the 18 precincts represented. The motion was approved on voice vote, but later was ruled out of order by Chairman John Dozier, who called instead for the group to follow the party's usual roll call procedure.

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ROBERTSON CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN Ike Williams (left) of Hoods Creek Precinct confers with GOP Chair-

man John Dozier Saturday, as officials tally the results of a vote.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

## Jogger Dies At Ocean Isle Beach

The cause of death of a young man who died last week while jogging at Ocean Isle Beach was still unknown Tuesday, said Brunswick County Coroner Greg White.

Zane Emerson Eargle Jr., 26, of Winston-Salem, collapsed Friday near 190 East First Street, said Ocean Isle Police Chief Bill Ozment.

Ozment said he was called around 4:30 p.m. and administered CPR with three other people for approximately 30 minutes until the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad arrived. Eargle was transported to The

Brunswick Hospital and later pronounced dead.

White said an autopsy was being conducted at Onslow Memorial Hospital in Jacksonville.

Eargle was the son of the superintendent of the Winston-Salem-Forsyth County school system.

Ozment said the man was apparently in town by himself for the weekend, staying at a home on Wilmington Street. He said Eargle was a third-year dental student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## More Clam Beds Open; Oysters Remain Toxic

BY DOUG RUTTER

All oyster beds affected by a "red tide" which infested state waters for up to four months remained closed this week, while a small area was reopened to hand clamming.

George Gilbert, assistant supervisor of the shellfish sanitation program of the N.C. Division of Health Services, said, "They've improved, but they're still showing some signs of toxicity. Until they are completely clear, there's nothing we can do."

The oysters contain toxins left by a bloom of *ptychodiscus brevis* which infested 210 miles of the state's coastal waters. The shellfish have slowly purged themselves of the toxins since the algae disappeared last month, but cold water temperatures have slowed the cleansing process.

Although N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Director

William Hogarth announced two weeks ago that oyster season would end statewide March 19, he said last week the state would consider extending the season one or two weeks in areas which have seen very little harvest this year.

He said those areas could include waters near Core Sound and Morehead City, which were closed to oyster harvesting just two weeks into the season.

Hogarth added that the state will probably not consider reopening oyster beds in Brunswick County, or other areas where fishermen were able to harvest most of the season, unless shellfish meats tested this week reveal no levels of toxicity.

State law requires oyster season to end no later than March 31. Although the regulation could be suspended, Hogarth said the state would probably not go beyond that deadline.

Meanwhile, the Division of Marine Fisheries reopened a small area between Harkers Island and Marshallberg to hand clamming Saturday.

The 45-mile stretch of coastline between Harkers Island and New River, which includes Bogue Sound, remains closed to all shellfishing.

In South Carolina last week, state environmental officials reopened oyster and clam beds in Murrells Inlet but continued a ban on shellfishing north to the state line.

Thom Berry, spokesman for the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, said shellfish in the areas still closed will not be tested for at least two more weeks.

"In those areas we were finding very low concentrations," he said. "We decided to wait to give the shellfish extra time to cleanse themselves."

Berry said it is difficult to predict whether those beds

will reopen soon because of the many factors involved. Variations in water temperature, sunlight and water flow will determine to a great extent how fast the shellfish are clear of all toxins.

Although shellfish beds in Murrells Inlet were closed for about six weeks, Berry said the area's commercial fishermen fared well compared to those in North Carolina who lost an estimated \$5 million.

Murrells Inlet was the state's only commercial shellfish area affected by the "red tide." South Carolina shellfish beds north of Murrells Inlet are harvested only by recreational fishermen.

"From what I understand," he said, "only a small number of commercial shellfishermen were affected." He said most were able to find temporary jobs during the shellfish ban.