



Shallotte Voters May Address Wine Sales In Fall Referendum

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shallotte voters will likely have more than presidential, state and county politics on their minds when they head to the polls this fall. During their meeting last Wednesday, Shallotte Aldermen agreed to petition the Brunswick County Board of Elections to hold a referendum this fall and let voters decide the future of unfortified wine sales in town. The board hopes to hold the referendum the same time as the general election, Nov. 8. County Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt said Monday afternoon that she had received the petition earlier that day, one day before deadline for

placing items on the November ballot. A meeting of the elections board, she added, will be held either Friday or Monday to determine whether the town can hold a referendum, but she indicated that there is little chance it will be turned down. "I don't think there will be any problems. It will probably be just a formality." Currently, the Shallotte ABC store is the only place in town where unfortified wines can legally be sold. In order to be sold, however, those wines must be produced in North Carolina. The town board's decision to request a referendum came after it was

presented with requests from four Shallotte grocery stores to allow the off-premises sale of unfortified wines in addition to fortified wines. Fortified wines, such as Mad Dog 20/20 and Thunderbird, have an alcohol content between 14 and 20 percent. Unfortified wines, also called dinner wines, have less than 14 percent alcohol. Managers of Hills, Wilsons, Food Lion and Piggly Wiggly submitted identical letters to the town board last week requesting a change in town ordinance prohibiting the sale of dinner wines in stores. Alderman David Gause pointed out, however, that the town has no

such ordinance. That matter, he added, was decided through a referendum and would have to be changed through a referendum. Mayor Jerry Jones said the store managers have been contacting him about the matter for the past several months but just presented him with a formal request last week. Referring to the \$350 the town set aside in this year's budget for an election, he said he thought a referendum might have to be held this fiscal year. The town will not have another regular election until November 1989. In the letter to the board, the store managers said Shallotte needs to

make "progressive changes to improve the quality of life" if it is to remain the commercial hub of the South Brunswick Islands. "In an effort to better serve the public (local and tourist), we need to offer for sale the same unfortified wines as the neighboring towns, such as Calabash, Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach," the letter states. Town board members present last week said they feel the voters will oppose the sale of dinner wines at licensed retail stores, just as they did during the last referendum held three years ago.

"I personally think it will go down the drain again," said Gause. In May 1985, 66 percent of the people who voted opposed the sale of unfortified wines in retail stores. Of the 324 registered voters in town at that time, however, only 127 or 36 percent cast ballots. To a lesser degree, those voters also opposed two other wine sale issues on the ballot at that time. They voted against the sale of beer and other malt beverages for consumption on-premises at Class A restaurants, hotels and motels and against the sale of unfortified wines for on-premises consumption in eating places.



CHIEF LINA ANGSTADT of the Calabash Volunteer Rescue Squad runs to retrieve additional medical supplies from her ambulance at the scene of a two-vehicle collision Sunday afternoon on N.C. 179 in Calabash.

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STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

VOTE WAS 3-2

School Board Seeks Return To Non-Partisan Elections

Rep. E. David Redwine will soon be getting a request from the Brunswick County Board of Education to undo local legislation introduced by his predecessor. Monday night the school board voted 3-2 to ask Redwine to introduce a bill next year that would make county board of education elections non-partisan again. Board members James Clemmons and Dorothy Worth opposed the motion, which was introduced by Chairman James Forstner and supported by Marvin McKeithan and Doug Baxley.

"I disagree with that," Mrs. Worth said, not elaborating when invited to do so. Clemmons said before he voted for the motion he wanted to know why the law was changed. "Somebody had a reason for it," he said, making a motion to table the matter. The motion failed by an identical 3-2 split vote.

"We're not making him do anything," Chairman Forstner interjected. "We're asking him." According to Forstner, 92 percent of school board elections are non-partisan.

The local election was changed to partisan in 1981 by Rep. Tom B. Rabon Jr. It was introduced over the objections of the entire six-member school board. At that time the board, elected on a non-partisan basis, consisted of three Democrats and three Republicans. The current board consists of five Democrats, two of whom (James Forstner and Marvin McKeithan) were defeated earlier this year in partisan primaries.

Rabon's legislation also established five electoral districts of near-equal voting population and made other changes for the Brunswick County Board of Education and the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

On two occasions, in November 1980 and March 1981, Rabon sought the school board's input on whether the elections should be partisan or non-partisan. In both instances a majority of the board favored non-partisan elections.

"I can't recognize anything good about it," Chairman Shirley Babson said at the time. "I think people will be more interested in whether the party has power than in the good of the schools."

"It was a sad day for education when we made school board seats political." Later she added, "Children need to be represented because they are children, not because their mothers or fathers are Republicans or Democrats." Rep. Redwine, who could not be reached for comment Tuesday, was chairman of the Brunswick County Democratic Party at the time of the 1981 vote. At that time, he had no objections to the partisan school board election. "People are laboring under a misconception if they think there's no politics on the school board," he told the Beacon. "You have to be involved in politics to get elected. I can't see why anyone would be ashamed to

declare themselves a party member." Also Monday, the board tabled until September a vote on a second proposal from Forstner. He sought a resolution asking the county's legislative delegation to introduce a bill seeking combination of the presidential primary with local and state primaries. Separating the two reduces public interest and participation in the electoral process, he said. Forstner and McKeithan voted against tabling. Clemmons said he wanted to know if any other school boards have adopted similar resolutions before acting. "I certainly wouldn't want us to be the first one," he said.

Teen Charged In Accidental Shooting

BY RAHN ADAMS

A 16-year-old Shallotte area boy has been charged with involuntary manslaughter in connection with the accidental shooting death of his friend last month in the Varnamtown community.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Lindsay Walton said Monday that William S. Faircloth of Stanley Mobile Home Park, Shallotte Point, was arrested Saturday.

In general terms, the charge indicates that a victim is killed "without malice... in a needless and careless manner," Walton explained.

Faircloth's arrest stemmed from the July 13 death of Terry Williamson, 13, of Southport. The fatal shooting occurred at the Roy Hewett residence on Sabbath Home Church Road.

Williamson, Faircloth and a juvenile who authorities would not identify were inside the dwelling at the time of the shooting. The victim, who had suffered a single wound to the head from a .357 Magnum handgun, was found dead in a bathroom.

Investigators initially said it appeared that the victim accidentally shot himself. An autopsy at the

regional medical examiner's office in Jacksonville was inconclusive as to whether or not the shooting was self-inflicted, Walton said. However, "evidence obtained from the scene showed that it was not a self-inflicted gunshot wound," Walton said. He added that Faircloth also admitted to the accidental shooting.

"Evidence shows both gentlemen were playing with the gun, basically thinking the gun wasn't loaded," the detective said, "and it was loaded."

Although only one cartridge was found in the weapon, there was no indication that the boys were playing Russian roulette, Walton said, adding that they apparently were "just playing with the gun."

Faircloth's arrest warrant was drawn by the sheriff's department last Friday. The teen-ager was picked up Saturday and released from the Brunswick County Jail on a \$2,000 secured bond a couple of hours after his arrest, Walton said.

According to court documents, Faircloth is scheduled to appear in Brunswick County District Criminal Court Aug. 15 on the involuntary manslaughter charge.

Driver, Pedestrian Killed In Separate Traffic Mishaps

A Supply woman and a New Hanover County man were killed in separate traffic accidents last week in Brunswick County, raising the county's highway death toll this year to 10.

Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley said Tonja Leigh Caison, 26, of Supply, died from injuries sustained in a two-car collision Saturday afternoon on N.C. 130 east of Shallotte.

The other victim, William Ellis Bruce, 24, of Carolina Beach, died after he was struck by a hit-and-run auto last Thursday night on Old Fayetteville Road near Leland, Ms. Oakley said.

She said both victims died at New Hanover Memorial Hospital following their accidents. The deaths raise Brunswick County's 1988 highway death toll to 10—two more than by this same time last year.

According to Ms. Oakley, the Caison accident occurred Saturday at 4:05 p.m., 4.1 miles east of Shallotte at the intersection of N.C. 130 and Mt. Pisgah Road.

The collision occurred when a 1987 Oldsmobile driven by Madie Leonard Roach, 61, of Supply, turned into the path of Ms. Caison's 1988 Nissan. Trooper T.W. Caulder charged Mrs. Roach with misdemeanor death by vehicle.

Mrs. Roach and her husband,

73-year-old Charles Roach, were hurt. The woman suffered incapacitating injuries and was listed in fair condition Tuesday at New Hanover Memorial Hospital. Her husband suffered non-incapacitating injuries.

Each vehicle sustained an estimated \$6,000 worth of damage.

According to Ms. Oakley, the other fatal accident happened last Thursday at 8:50 p.m., 3.8 miles south of Belville on Old Fayetteville Road.

Bruce was walking on the shoulder of the northbound lane facing traffic when he was struck from behind by a 1979 Chevrolet driven by Joseph Goodman, 67, of Leland. Goodman's car was passing another vehicle when the mishap occurred.

Ms. Oakley said Goodman stopped briefly, then left the accident scene. Witnesses at Lanier Trailer Park, Leland, reported the incident to authorities, before Goodman was located and charged with hit and run involving personal injury by Trooper B.C. Jones.

Damage to Goodman's car was estimated at \$500.

Three motorists suffered minor injuries in a two-vehicle collision Sunday at 1 p.m. on N.C. 179 in Calabash.

Ms. Oakley said a 1987 Ford pickup truck driven by Jimmy Dale Davis, 42, of Shallotte, crossed the center line and crashed head-on into a 1981

Pontiac driven by Marie Clemmons Nunalee, 53, of Cary. The Nunalee car pulled onto the right shoulder of the road immediately before the crash.

Both drivers and a passenger in the Nunalee car—William Nunalee, 69, also of Cary—complained of injuries and were taken by rescue squad ambulances to The Brunswick Hospital near Supply.

Trooper R.V. West charged Davis with driving left of center. Damages were estimated at \$7,000 to the Nunalee car and \$4,000 to Davis' truck.

In another weekend wreck, John Archie Blue, 18, of Carthage, was charged with exceeding a safe speed after his 1985 Honda motorcycle wrecked Sunday at 1:45 a.m. on N.C. 179, three-tenths of a mile west of Shallotte, according to Ms. Oakley.

She said Blue was traveling at approximately 75 mph when the motorcycle ran off the right side of the road. Blue's leg struck a driveway post, causing the motorcycle to overturn and crash into a small tree.

Blue suffered incapacitating injuries and was taken by rescue squad ambulance to The Brunswick Hospital.

Trooper C.E. Ward estimated damages at \$900 to the motorcycle and \$150 to the yard and tree owned by C.R. Jones of Shallotte.

'WINDFALL' EXPECTED

County Tax Bills In The Mail

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Tax Administrator Boyd Williamson had some good news and some, well, not so good news last week.

The "bad" news—for some local property owners, anyway—was that 1988 tax statements were ready two months earlier than last year's tax bills. The good news is that Williamson expects Brunswick County's property tax levy to exceed earlier estimates—a possible windfall that could help relieve the county's tight financial position. "We're looking at billing more than we anticipated," Williamson said



Williamson

last Wednesday, as tax office workers finished getting the notices ready to be mailed.

Estimated tax revenue in the county's 1988-89 budget amounts to \$19.9 million, based on a \$3.8 billion tax base and a 95.2 percent collection rate. This year's tax base should exceed \$3.9 billion, Williamson said.

About 50,000 envelopes containing almost 90,000 property tax statements were mailed Friday from the county complex in Bolivia. Williamson estimated that postage alone cost the tax department \$12,000 to \$13,000 this year.

Last year, the tax office mailed about 85,000 bills for 1987 taxes in October.

"It's actually taken us a couple of years to get over revaluation," Williamson said, referring to why the bills were sent out earlier this year.

He explained that the county's eight-year revaluation, which was done in 1986, "threw a curve" into the day-to-day operation of the tax department by increasing the amount of work his staff handled and the volume of taxpayers who visited the tax office for information or assistance.

"By billing earlier this year, that obviously gives us a two-month head start on next year," Williamson said, indicating that next year's bills may be mailed in July, shortly after county commissioners set a property tax rate.

And, in fact, the local tax rate is the only other change affecting property owners this year, Williamson said. In late June, commissioners raised the tax rate from 50½ cents per \$100 of property valuation to 54½ cents. (See TAX BILLS, Page 2-A)



TAX DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES Lue Smith (left) and Dana Sloan prepare 1988 Brunswick County property tax statements for mailing last week.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS