

# Report Shows Drop In Local Crime; Sheriff Fears Rate Is On Rebound

BY RAHN ADAMS

Sheriff John Carr Davis isn't resting on a recent state Justice Department report that says Brunswick County's crime rate dropped last year. He's afraid next year's report won't hold such good news.

On the surface, the 1988 Uniform Crime Report—released last Wednesday by Attorney General Lacy Thornburg—indicates that reported crimes in Brunswick County decreased by nearly 23 percent, from 1,007 crimes in 1987 to 776 crimes in 1988, according to Leroy Clark, a statistician with the SBI's Division of Criminal Information.

"I was amazed," Davis told the Beacon last Thursday. "I felt like we've been just as busy as before." However, he added that the report might not

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—Sheriff John C. Davis

give a "true picture" of local criminal activity, because all local municipalities do not participate in the reporting program.

Brunswick was the only county in southeastern North Carolina to record a drop in crime. Bladen, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow and Pender

counties all recorded increases, from two percent in Onslow to 15.5 percent in Columbus.

The report—divided into violent crimes and property crimes—is a little less encouraging when the respective categories are analyzed. Violent crimes listed are murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault; property crimes are breaking and entering, larceny and motor vehicle theft.

Murders in Brunswick County rose from three in 1987 to 11 last year—a jump of 266 percent—while the murder rate across the state was down by just over one-half of a percent, Clark said. There were 514 murders in North Carolina two years ago and 511 last year.

The only multiple murders last year were the

shooting deaths last October of three family members at their home in the Winnabow area on N.C. 87 toward Maco. The case remains unsolved.

Overall, though, the county's rate of violent crime remained unchanged, while the statewide rate increased by 6.2 percent. Last year in Brunswick County, there were two rapes, seven robberies and 31 assaults reported, compared to one rape, seven robberies and 40 assaults reported in 1987.

According to Clark, property crimes here dropped by 24 percent overall last year, from 956 to 725. Across the state, property crimes rose by 6.6 percent.

Davis credited the decline to stepped-up patrols beginning in the fall of 1987. "The only thing I can

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# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY  
FO SPRINGPORT MI 49284  
12/31/99  
BOX 162

Twenty-seventh Year, Number 39

©1988 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shalotte, North Carolina, Thursday, August 3, 1989

25c Per Copy

32 Pages, 3 Sections



STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

## Helping Hands For Tiny Tots

Whiteville resident Terri Gore (left) plays in the surf with her daughter, Ashley, while friend Rachel Elkins (right) of Clarkton teaches her granddaughter, Elkin Nance, the finer points of jumping waves. The two families were vacationing Monday at Ocean Isle Beach.

## Municipal Candidates Declare As Filing Deadline Approaches

BY DOUG RUTTER

More than two dozen candidates for municipal office emerged during the past week as the filing period heads into the home stretch.

Brunswick County Board of Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt said the deadline for filing is Friday at noon. The fee is \$5. The last day for voter registration for the Nov. 7 elections is Monday, Oct. 9.

Thirty-two persons had filed for office through the first two-and-a-half weeks of the filing period, which opened July 7; another 27 have filed since last Tuesday.

Activity was especially heavy in Varnamtown, where five persons, including three incumbents, have filed for seats on the town board of aldermen since last week.

Current board members Ennis Swain, John David Dawson and Roger Robinson have filed for election along with residents Samuel Terry Varnam and Luellen Norris. Present board member Ada McDonald filed earlier in the period.

Through Tuesday, there were six candidates for the five available seats on the town board, but no candidates for mayor. Mayor Tracie Varnum announced in June that he did not intend to seek election this fall.

The Town of Holden Beach was also without a candidate for mayor as of Tuesday, but had eight people running for five commissioner seats, including four who have filed since last Tuesday.

Board of Elections member Mabel Dutton said the latest candidates are incumbent William Williamson, former mayor Kenner Amos, former commissioner Gloria Barrett and Judy Bryan.

Other candidates for Holden Beach Commissioner are Odis Aleck Alexiou, George Bradshaw, Carole Rogers and Don Pollard.

Ocean Isle Beach Town, Clerk Alberta Tatum said Tuesday no more candidates have filed for office since last week. Three incumbents—Mayor Betty Williamson and Commissioners Terry Barbee and Bill Benton—have filed for re-election to the posts they now hold.

"It's been kind of quiet over here," said Mrs. Tatum. "I haven't heard any rumors or anything."

No additional candidates have filed in Shalotte or Sunset Beach since last Tuesday afternoon. Shalotte's incumbent Mayor Jerry Jones and Alderman Sarah Tripp filed for re-election earlier in the filing period. The seat now occupied by Paul Wayne Reeves is also up for election this fall.

At Sunset Beach, Mayor Mason Barber previously filed for re-election. Those running for the three seats available on town council are incumbent Edward M. Gore Sr., D.G. "Bud" Scramont and Julia Thomas.

In addition to the mayor's post and the council seat held by Gore, town board seats presently held by Minnie Hunt and Kathy Hill Peed will be filled in November.

Besides Varnamtown and Holden Beach, filing has also been heavy over the past week in Southport, where six more residents have declared their candidacy since last Tuesday, according to Ms. Britt.

Four of those—incumbent James Brown and Gilbert Powell, Jay Walton Willis and Walter C. "Andy" Anderson—have filed for alderman from Ward I. William "Bill" Crowe filed earlier for alderman from Ward I, where three seats are up for election this fall.

As of Tuesday, Harry W. Gore Sr. was the only person who had filed for office from Ward II. Two alderman seats from that ward are up for election in November.

C.B. "Cash" Caroon was the only candidate for mayor of Southport as of Tuesday afternoon, said Ms. Britt.

In the newly-incorporated town of Sandy Creek, three more persons have filed for office since last Tuesday, bringing the total number of candidates to six for the five seats up for election this year on the town board.

Those filing since last Tuesday are incumbent Willie Millinor and Ray Flynn Jr. and Waymon Sutcliffe, said Ms. Britt. Ernest "Buddy" Grainger and Donald C. Minnis, who presently serve on the board, and Louis A. Blouir each declared their candidacy earlier in the filing period.

The first candidates for the towns of Bolivia and Navassa have also filed for office over the past week. Longtime mayors Ina Mae Mintz of Bolivia and Louis "Bobby" Brown of Navassa were the only candidates in those municipalities as of Tuesday, said Ms. Britt.

All four commission seats are up for election in Bolivia this fall, and two town board seats are up for election in Navassa.

In Belville, Samuel T. Herring and Eunice I. Long have filed for seats on the town board. There are two commissioner's seats up for election in November. Mayor Ken Messer had earlier filed for re-election to his post.

After two active weeks at Long Beach, filing slowed down last week with Joe Edwards the only person to file for commissioner. There are five other persons running for three town commission slots and two mayoral candidates at the Oak Island beach town.

Down the road at Yaupon Beach, incumbent commissioner Robert W. Brown and Loy D. Buff have filed for seats on the town board. Three of the six commission seats are up for election in November. The mayor is appointed by the board.

There are three candidates for two commissioner seats and two seeking election to the mayor's post in Boiling Spring Lakes. Commission candidates are incumbent Herbert C. Buntin, Lester K. (See CANDIDATES, Page 2-A)

## Youth Hit By Car At Holden

A young boy hit by a car Saturday evening at Holden Beach was listed in fair condition Tuesday morning in a Wilmington hospital.

Nine-year-old Christopher Robert Hale of Charlotte was struck by a vehicle at about 5:22 p.m. Saturday near the intersection of Ocean Boulevard West and Neptune Street while trying to cross Ocean Boulevard, according to Holden Beach Police Chief Raymond Simpson.

Simpson said the child was headed to the beach at the time of the accident and apparently ran in front of the car while attempting to cross the island's main thoroughfare about 100 feet east of a painted crosswalk at a beach accessway.

"He didn't have any broken bones. He was just bruised and shaken up," said Simpson. "He's a lucky little boy."

The chief said the driver of the

vehicle, Rebecca Mason Watson of Supply, was traveling east on Ocean Boulevard at the time of the accident. The vehicle was moving about 35 mph, he said. No charges were filed.

Following the accident, workers with Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad rushed the boy to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply, said Simpson.

Hospital spokesperson Frances Fowler said the child was alert and oriented when he arrived at the emergency room. She said he was treated for multiple trauma and immediately transported to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in stable condition.

Iris Baker, public relations officer at New Hanover, said the child was in fair condition Tuesday and would probably be going home sometime this week.

## TWO EXISTING POSITIONS CUT

### VIC Hiring Director, Cutting Budget

BY SUSAN USHER

While Brunswick County's Volunteer and Information Center board of directors is proceeding with plans to name an executive director for the service agency, Chairman Percy Woodard said the group also plans to continue appealing a reduction in funding by the Cape Fear United Way.

Telling the Brunswick agency it must make changes if it expects to receive funds in the future, United Way cut VIC's budget this year from the \$43,000 it received last year to either \$33,000 or \$23,000—depending on whether it hires an executive director. VIC had asked for additional funding to help cover the cost of the new position.

Woodard said VIC wasn't sure it would get the additional funds it sought, but never expected its funds to be reduced. United Way funds accounts for 69 percent of VIC's current operating budget.

Meanwhile, however, in order to meet a revised budget due in to United Way by July 31, VIC's board last week eliminated the two agency's existing full-time paid positions, a \$15,600 coordinator's job and \$11,400 information and referral director's job held by Ouida Hewett and Grace Bratt respectively.

Mrs. Hewett joined the agency in August 1978, while Mrs. Bratt has been with the agency since it opened in November 1977.

At its meeting later this month, said Woodard, the board of directors expects to announce the hiring of an executive director, who will be asked to begin work on Sept. 15. Twenty-five people have applied for the \$17,000 post, with the four finalists all local residents, he said. Three have college degrees, the other considerable experience in the volunteer and information referral arena.

Of that field, the board is checking references of the top two candidates before offering the job, Wo-

oodard said. The executive director will be expected to handle public relations as well as apply for grants and spearhead other fundraising efforts. And until funds are available to hire additional staff, the executive director will also handle day to day operations.

"The \$17,000 for the executive director and \$11,000 for senior aides and any other part-time help we can find are all the money we've got for salaries," said Woodard.

After appealing the initial funding decision by the United Way, Woodard called last week and learned that the allocations review committee—a panel of community volunteers from the United Way's service area—had denied an appeal hearing request.

While the move may result in no change in status, Woodard said he wants to appeal to the full Cape Fear United Way board of directors "just for the principle of the thing."

"I want to talk to those folks, because we have made progress," he said. He said in an earlier interview that many of the changes recommended or demanded by United Way have been met or soon will be, with the hiring of an executive director.

Christine McNamee, director of planning and allocations for the United Way, said the umbrella funding agency has been working with VIC to bring about some changes since 1985, a year after Paul Wayne Reeves resigned as ex-

ecutive director and was not replaced.

Hiring an executive director was one of the top concerns expressed in all but one agency review since 1985. The review in 1986 was nominal, pending completion of a major review of the agency's operations begun in 1985.

This year, United Way went one step farther, specifying in writing that the person hired must come from outside the existing staff.

"The reasoning for that is that we've been working with the current staff for several years now to make some significant changes," said McNamee. "Every year they have come back and said, 'Here are our changes.' They weren't very different from what was submitted before, but we would accept them."

First in 1988 and then this year, she said, the board decided to "get tough," even though it doesn't like reducing or eliminating funding allocations.

This year's United Way allocations committee recommended—and the board of directors approved—a \$14,000 cut in the Voluntary Action Center budget and smaller cuts in home missions and information and referral.

The recommendations came after the committee first reviewed the budget request and the agency's goals and objectives, visited the agency and held a panel review with the staff and volunteers, then because of its concerns, met also

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*"We felt the agency needed some fresh blood, some people with specific skills to make the changes that the existing staff was either unwilling or unable to do."*

—Christine McNamee, United Way Planning and Allocations Director