

### On The Shelves

Jeff Conaway of Holden Beach is among 57 Brunswick County business owners stocking shelves with a new product following the state's issuance Friday of temporary ABC permits for beer and wine sales. The story's on Page 12-A.



### On The Team

Seven Brunswick County high school football players, including four West Brunswick High School Trojans, earn slots on the All-Waccamaw Conference team. Get the details on Page 9-B.



### New Reef Goes Down

Months of planning ended with a just few minutes' work last Friday as fishing boats gathered off Shallotte Inlet to watch the sinking of the county's newest artificial fishing reef. For the story and other fishing news, see Page 9-C.

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A PACKED BOARD ROOM greeted Brunswick County Commissioners Monday night, as county employees protested recent personnel reclassifications. Social Services employee Shirley Weston (right) was one of several speakers.

## Commission Fires Manager; Names Pinkerton Chairman

BY RAHN ADAMS

Monday's meeting of the Brunswick County Commissioners was marked by change from start to finish, as the board opened the regular session by picking a new chairman and ended the night by forcing the county manager to step down.

On a motion by Chairman Gene Pinkerton, commissioners voted unanimously to ask for County Manager John T. Smith's resignation, effective that day. Smith will get six months' severance pay, or more than \$22,000.

County Attorney David Clegg was named interim county manager until Smith's permanent replacement is found. Clegg was interim manager for 5 1/2 months in 1987, after long-time County Manager Billy Carter resigned for health reasons. Smith was hired in September 1987.

Pinkerton said no decisions about the search for a new county manager will be made until the board's Dec. 18 regular meeting.

The commissioners' action Monday followed a one-hour, 45-minute executive session which Smith requested to discuss a "personnel problem" apparently unrelated to his own employment. Immediately after the secret meeting, Pinkerton announced that action had been taken behind closed doors, but that it would not be announced due to "personnel confidentiality."

Smith left the executive session through a back door to the commissioners' conference room and was not present when the board called for his resignation in open session. There was no discussion of Pinkerton's motion in public session. Clegg said Smith submitted his resignation verbally during the closed-door session.

### 'Political Pressure'

In separate interviews after the meeting, four of the five commissioners—Pinkerton, new Vice Chairman Frankie Rabon, Grace Beasley and Kelly Holden—all commented that their action was taken "in the best interests of Brunswick County." Pinkerton, Rabon and Beasley had little else to say on the matter.

However, Holden and Commissioner Benny Ludlum, who was contacted Tuesday morning, indicated that the board's internal unrest over the past year was a factor in the decision to replace Smith. "It's something that perhaps has been in the back of our minds," Holden said. "I think we knew it was com-



PINKERTON

SMITH

though, that he did not know the action definitely would be taken until it was brought up in Monday's executive session.

Tuesday morning Smith told the *Beacon*, "I think the commissioners have been under a lot of pressure—I call it political pressure—from the people who support them." He added that working with a divided board "is an odd situation to get caught up in."

The former county manager said he had "some conversation" about his job status prior to Monday's meeting with two commissioners whom he did not name. But, like Holden and Ludlum, he said he didn't necessarily expect the move to be made Monday.

Ironically, Rabon, Beasley and Ludlum were the three commissioners who supported Smith's hiring two years ago. Former Commissioners Chris Chappell and Jim (See COMMISSION, Page 2-A)

## 26 Drug Suspects Charged In County Undercover Operation

BY RAHN ADAMS

Twenty-six suspected street-level drug dealers were charged Friday, culminating a nine-month undercover operation by local and state authorities.

Brunswick County Narcotics Squad Lt. David Crocker indicated that the drug charges stemmed from marijuana, cocaine and crack buys that were made in the Shallotte, Southport and Leland areas by undercover agents. The Ocean Isle Beach Police Department and SBI assisted in the investigation.

"The main purpose is to tell street dealers that we haven't forgotten about them," Crocker said, referring to local law enforcement's emphasis over the past couple of years on major drug traffickers.

He noted that local drug dealers have begun handling smaller quantities of controlled substances, in order to avoid investigative grand jury probes, which by law can investigate only trafficking-level offenses.

Crocker said 20 officers were involved in a roundup that began Friday around 5 a.m. Eleven of the 26 suspects were arrested at their homes. Four others already were in custody from a June drug bust near Leland. The remaining 11 suspects were at large late Friday.

Three vehicles were seized Friday by the sheriff's department, including a 1977 Mercedes Benz, 1979 El Camino and 1987 Dodge truck. Crocker explained that drugs

were sold out of the vehicles during the investigation.

The lieutenant said lawmen made the arrests Friday in order to apprehend the suspects before their cases went to a Brunswick County grand jury Monday in Bolivia. Authorities feared some of the defendants might flee when the indictments were publicized.

Information on the indictments was unavailable Monday from the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office, due to the number of drug cases presented to the grand jury. The 26 drug defendants face at least 124 charges, according to sheriff's department data.

According to the sheriff's department, suspects arrested Friday were:

—Randy Lane Babson, Route 1, Ash, manufacturing marijuana, released on \$2,000 bond.

—Marshall Ballard, Phoenix, sale of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver, jailed under \$2,000 bond.

—Wanda Ballard, Phoenix, sale of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver, jailed under \$10,000 bond.

—Toby Bass, sale of marijuana, possession with intent to sell and deliver, jailed under \$10,000 bond.

—Dayton Hayes, Stanbury Road, Holden Beach, two counts of sale of marijuana, two counts of possession with intent to sell, two counts of maintaining a residence to sell marijuana, released on \$5,000 bond.

—Gregory Duard Hewett, Shallotte, sale of marijuana, possession with intent to sell and deliver, maintained a vehicle to sell marijuana, jailed under \$5,000 bond.

—Glen James, Leland, two counts of conspiracy to traffic in cocaine, six counts of trafficking in cocaine, jailed under \$100,000 bond.

—William Patrick Jolly, Southport, sale of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver, jailed under \$5,000 bond.

—Lois Faye Smith, Stanley Mobile Home Park, Brick Landing area, sale and delivery of marijuana, possession with intent to sell and deliver, conspiracy to sell and deliver, maintaining a vehicle to sell marijuana, released on \$5,000 bond.

—Curt "Fruity" Williams, Mulberry Street, Shallotte, sale of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver, released on \$5,000 bond.

—Gary Dwayne White, Route 1, Ash, two counts of sale and delivery of marijuana, two counts of possession with intent to sell and deliver, released on \$5,000 bond.

Other defendants named in the undercover operation were:

—Timothy Andrews, Route 1, Leland, sale of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver, maintaining a residence to sell cocaine, at large.

—Tim "Tony" Ballard, Phoenix, sale of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver, at large.

(See SUSPECTS, Page 2-A)

## State Proposes Protection For Local Creeks

BY DOUG RUTTER

Portions of nearly three dozen creeks and waterways in Brunswick County would receive more protection from pollution under a state plan to impose stricter controls on wastewater discharges along high quality waters.

New and expanded wastewater discharge systems along those designated waterways would also be required to meet stricter standards.

Federal anti-degradation regulations require the state to maintain waters deemed important to fisheries and those with exceptional water quality through the development and implementation of protective measures.

In North Carolina, that protection is ensured in part through the classification of certain creeks and streams as High Quality Waters, according to Greg Thorpe of the state Division of Environmental Management.

Thorpe said rules governing development along High Quality Waters were revised this summer and took effect Oct. 1. The N.C. Environmental Management Commission could vote on reclassifying more than 1,100 acres of freshwater streams and 16,000 acres of coastal waters as high quality as soon as March 8.

The High Quality Waters label is reserved for native and special native trout waters, primary nursery areas and streams with excellent water quality as determined by the state Division of Environmental Management.

Since they are already protected from pollution, some waters designated as water supplies and all shellfishing waters and Outstanding Resource Waters cannot be classified as High Quality Waters.

Based on their importance to various fisheries, the state has proposed naming sections of 34 creeks, branches and swamps in Brunswick County as High Quality Waters. They are located in the Cape Fear River and Lumber River basins.

Local waterways proposed for reclassification as High Quality Waters in the Cape Fear River Basin include portions of the following: Beaver Dam Creek, Brunswick River, Calf Gully Creek, Cape Fear River, Dutchman Creek, Fishing Creek, Governors Creek, Gum Log Branch, Nancy's Creek, Nigis Creek, Polly Gully Creek, Smokehouse Creek, Walden Creek and White Spring Creek.

In the Lumber River Basin, county waters nominated for the designation include sections of the following: Bell Branch, Doe Creek,

Jinnys Branch, Little Doe Creek, Little Saucepan Creek, Lockwood Folly River, Middle Dam Creek, Mill Creek, Old Mill Creek, Oxpen Creek, Pamlico Creek, Sams Branch, Sandy Branch, Shallotte River, Shallotte Creek, Sharron Creek, Stanbury Creek, The Mill Pond, Williams Branch and Woodward Branch.

All of the local creeks and streams are being considered for the High Quality Waters class because they have been designated as primary nursery areas by the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission.

If they are reclassified, Thorpe said new and expanded wastewater discharges along those waters would have to meet stricter treatment requirements than they do now.

Thorpe, who supervises the state's water quality standards and assessment unit, said the proposal gathered mostly favorable responses at three public hearings last month.

However, he said some people voiced concerns over the fact that stricter controls on stormwater runoff along High Quality Waters will not apply in the state's 20 coastal counties.

During periods of heavy rainfall, stormwater runoff carries pollutants such as pesticides, sediment and an-

imal waste into nearby streams. To reduce the amount of runoff pollution, the state restricts development near bodies of water.

Within one mile of coastal waters, the state limits the amount of acreage that can be covered by rooftops, driveways and other impervious surfaces to 25 percent unless the developer uses storage ponds to trap excessive amounts of rain.

Away from the coast, however, the state plans to limit the built-upon area to 12 percent. Under that plan, the stormwater runoff rules used in the mountain and Piedmont areas would be twice as restrictive as the regulations used on the coast.

While persons concerned about coastal ecology disagree with that part of the plan, state officials believe the stormwater regulations in effect on the coast are adequate. Due to the steeper slopes and types of soils found in the mountain and Piedmont regions, Thorpe said the state thinks those areas need stricter controls on runoff.

Public comments on the proposed reclassifications will be accepted through Dec. 29. They can be mailed to Greg Thorpe, Division of Environmental Management, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, N.C., 27611.

## CRC Takes No Position On Local Dredging Plan

BY DOUG RUTTER

Despite a recommendation from its advisory council and generous local support, the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) last week took no formal position on a proposal to dredge Eastern Channel near the mouth of Lockwood Folly River.

For most of the year, area fishermen have been rallying behind a plan to dredge the sand-clogged Eastern Channel behind Long Beach, which served as the inlet between the river and ocean before the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway was dredged years ago.

Many area residents believe reopening the channel would improve water flow and help flush bacteria from the polluted Lockwood Folly

River, which has been closed to shellfish harvesting for most of the year.

The N.C. Coastal Resources Advisory Council (CRAC), which is designed to act as a liaison between the public and the CRC, voted last Wednesday to recommend that the commission call for a study of the dredging plan to find out what effect it would have on the area.

Long-time CRAC member Rosetta Short of Long Beach raised the issue and suggested the commission adopt a resolution supporting the dredging of Eastern Channel. Mrs. Short is a member of an unofficial group of area residents and state officials that has been working throughout the year on solving pollution. (See CRC, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

### Sharing His Wish List

Wade White of Ash was one of several youngsters who had a heart-to-heart talk with Santa Claus following the Shallotte Christmas Parade Saturday. Each child received a bag of candy and a warm hug. Parade pictures are on Page 6-A of this section.