

Young Cancer Patient Finds 'Guardian Angel'

BY SUSAN USHER

Sunday afternoon, Jeremy Clemmons was running across the living room of his family's doublewide mobile home at Seaside, batting two balloons toward his brother, Shane, 5.

He appeared healthy, but Jeremy is a very sick little boy.

Larry and Lynn Clemmons learned Aug. 4 that their son has acute lymphoblastic leukemia, one of two kinds of childhood leukemia. Doctors gave Jeremy a 70 percent chance of beating the cancer, his mother said, but there's no guarantee.

His fraternal twin sister, Brittany Lynn, has also been tested. She's fine.

Jeremy, meanwhile, has begun a rigorous, three-year schedule of chemotherapy.

"The first eight weeks are the most difficult," said his mother. So far, Jeremy is taking it all in stride. "I don't really think he understands," she said. "But at the hospital he was good about letting them hook him up to the IV and giving him the shots in his legs."

Since his diagnosis, Jeremy has undergone multiple blood transfusions, spinal taps and bone marrow tests. He's received shots in the muscles of his legs and he has a right atrial catheter, a tube leading into his heart that makes it easier to take blood samples and administer medicines.

It helped that Jeremy found a special friend shortly after his arrival at UNC Hospitals.

Chapel Hill Public Safety Officer Cindy Felts was there when the Clemmons arrived around 1 a.m. Aug. 5. Although she wasn't really supposed to do so, she had accompanied an assault victim to the hospital emergency room.

"To me, she's a guardian angel," Mrs. Clemmons said. "I don't care what people may believe. I believe with all my heart that when we got there the Lord had her waiting there for us."

That Friday had been a difficult, long day. Mrs. Clemmons said she had taken Jeremy to several doctors earlier in the week who had diagnosed his high fever and earache as most likely a viral type of flu. When the fever continued, she took him to Dr. Lee Langston's office.

"Something told me to check his bottom eyelid, and I did," she said. "It was as white as that sheet of paper." She pointed it out. After struggling to get an adequate blood sample, the staff ran a hemoglobin

check, but it didn't register. Then Langston took a larger sample for a complete blood work-up at the hospital and said he'd call Monday.

Thirty minutes later, Mrs. Clemmons was still at the drugstore getting a prescription filled when a family member tracked her down. The doctor had called. Jeremy needed a bone marrow test. A bed and doctor were waiting for him at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill. It was the next day before they found out what was wrong with Jeremy.

"We got there around 1 a.m. Saturday morning," recalled Mrs. Clemmons. The pediatric oncology unit was on the seventh floor. Cindy Felts was in the lobby, near the elevator.

Jeremy's mother is afraid of elevators, having gotten stuck on them twice. Felts offered to walk with her up the seven flights of stairs. It turns out she also is a twin, as well as the mother of a 4-year-old girl.

Saturday afternoon, Officer Felts returned, bringing a dozen balloons. Sunday she brought clothes for the children and cash, since the Clemmons had come unprepared for a long stay.

When Mrs. Felts learned of the family's financial situation, she did even more. Working with WRTP, a religious AM station and Carolina Christian Communications, a Durham non-profit organization, she began a fund. The money will help pay expenses related to Jeremy's treatment, including transportation to and from Chapel Hill.

Mrs. Felts plans to keep track of Jeremy and came to Shallotte to see him Monday.

Jeremy came home last Wednesday after 12 days in the hospital.

So far his medical bills amount to more than \$11,000. The family has applied for Medicaid and expects to get it, but Mrs. Clemmons isn't sure how much of the bill must be paid from the family's own limited resources.

Larry Clemmons is a commercial fisherman, working irregularly. Mrs. Clemmons has been given a leave of absence from her job at a local grocery store so she can care for Jeremy and make sure he receives his treatments.

Each Monday and Friday Jeremy receives two different types of chemotherapy treatments at a local doctor's office. On Wednesdays he takes more extensive treatments at the hospital in Chapel Hill. He is presently on five types of chemotherapy. But the end of the three years, he will taking nine types. The medicines have side ef-



THREE-YEAR-OLD JEREMY CLEMMONS, shown with his mother, Lynn, and brother, Shane, was befriended by a generous-spirited Chapel Hill policeman the same day doctors diagnosed his illness as a form of childhood leukemia.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

fects that include nausea, bloating and hair loss.

But by the end of the month, Jeremy's oncology treatment team hopes to see signs of remission. At home he leads a fairly normal life, but must watch out for cuts and bruises.

Jeremy has an immune system, but it isn't working. Both his red and white blood cell counts are low and the chemotherapy treatments destroy some good cells as well as the cancer cells.

A simple illness or any exposure to someone with chicken pox or who has been exposed to chicken

pox could put him back in the hospital for at least 10 days at a time. He must avoid mingling where there are large groups of people, or wear a facial mask.

"I hope everything will be all right," she said. "I try not to look at the bad side. But it's hard, especially at the hospital when he feels well at one moment and down the next."

Contributions toward Jeremy's care can be mailed to Carolina Christian Communications, P.O. Box 15400, Durham, N.C. 27704. Checks should be made payable to C.C.C. with a notation as to what the money is for.

Two People Injured When Cycle Hits Dog

Two Brunswick County residents were injured Saturday when the motorcycle they were riding struck a dog on the side of the road near Grissetown.

The accident happened Saturday at 9:45 p.m. about 9 1/2 miles south of Shallotte on N.C. 904, said N.C. Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

Donald Ray Somerset, 38, of Shallotte was traveling east on N.C. 904 when the 1981 Suzuki motorcycle he was driving struck a dog and ran off the left side of the road.

Somerset suffered non-incapacitating injuries in the accident. A passenger, 45-year-old Sylvia Somerset, had serious injuries. Both people were taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply, Ms. Oakley said.

Trooper B.L. Wilkes estimated

damage to the motorcycle at \$50. No charges were filed, Ms. Oakley said.

Elsewhere in Brunswick County, a Supply man was charged with driving left of center following a one-vehicle accident last Friday.

The wreck occurred last Friday at 4:30 a.m. on N.C. 130 East, 3.8 miles north of Holden Beach. Ms. Oakley said a 1988 Nissan pickup traveling south ran off the road at a curve, struck a ditch bank and overturned.

Trooper R.L. Murray charged Christopher Allen Ward, 24, of Supply with driving left of center. Ms. Oakley said the driver said he fell asleep at the wheel.

Ward was taken to The Brunswick Hospital with minor injuries. Damage to the Nissan was estimated at \$5,500.

Testimony Is Under Way In Taylor Triple-Murder Case

Testimony began Friday in the first-degree murder trial of Michael Anthony Taylor, who is accused of the October 1988 murders of a Maco family.

Taylor is being tried for the deaths of Marion "Cowboy" Meetze, 48, his wife Ginger Meetze, 32, and Mrs. Meetze's daughter by a previous marriage, 10-year-old Michelle Arnold. Taylor also is charged with armed robbery in the theft of a gun that allegedly was taken from the Meetze home.

Friday, the state called to the stand Edward Barnett and Albert Skipper, two men who worked with Meetze at B.F. Goodrich in Wilmington and who found the bodies. They explained how they went to the home when Meetze didn't report for work and found the bodies in the partially burned home on N.C. 87 south of Maco.

Barnett, a plant supervisor, said he visited the Meetzes in their home five days before the murders and testified that Meetze said he was ex-

pecting Taylor to visit him to pay him some money he owed Meetze.

Monday, Gary Shay, a detective for the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, testified as to what he found when he went to the Meetze home to investigate and State Bureau of Investigation ballistics expert Eugene Bishop testified that some of the shell casings found at the crime scene were fired from one of the guns given to him to test.

However, Bishop said none of the .22-caliber shell casings found at the scene matched any of the guns he was given to test. All three victims are believed to have been shot with different weapons, according to documents on file.

Michael McCann and Roger Benton, two South Carolina residents who knew Taylor and the Meetzes also testified Monday.

The trial is expected to last at least two weeks and the state can seek either the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Hughes Has Been Named New Shallotte Magistrate

In a few weeks, Shallotte's magistrate's office will be open for the first time since Lela Osborne resigned the position in March.

Cheryl Hughes has been appointed by Superior Court Judge Giles Clark as the magistrate in Shallotte, according to Diana Morgan, clerk of Superior Court. Ms. Morgan said she received Ms. Hughes' commission last Monday, Aug. 13.

Ms. Hughes is presently working out a notice with her employer, the Powell and Gore law firm, where she is a legal secretary, Ms. Morgan said.

She will then work a few weeks with magistrates at the county Government Center in Bolivia before opening the Shallotte office, Ms. Morgan said.

"So it will be the latter part of

September at the earliest before the Shallotte office will be open," Ms. Morgan said.

Shortly after Ms. Osborne resigned, the state placed a hiring slowdown, or temporary freeze on filling vacancies, because of a shortfall in state revenues. The slowdown was extended at least twice.

Ms. Morgan said that Judge Clark, District Court Judge William C. Gore Jr. and herself had requested that the freeze be lifted for this position.

Police chiefs in the Shallotte area said the absence of a magistrate in Shallotte has hampered their departments' efforts, because officers have been forced to drive to Bolivia to secure the services of a magistrate.

Permit Issued For Marina

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and erosion at the marina. Based on plans for the marina, there will be no automatic closure of shellfish waters if and when it is built, said George Gilbert, assistant director of the N.C. Shellfish Sanitation program.

With 26 boats slips, a maximum boat length of 21 feet and no marine heads, Gilbert said the state would have to sample waters and find high levels of bacteria before the area would be closed to shellfishing.

Gilbert said in a recent interview that there's no way to predict whether construction and operation of the marina would create pollution and force the state to close nearby oyster and clam beds.

There needs to be limits on all types of activity along the shoreline, he said, if are residents want to preserve and restore the river.

Channel Side's permit application was put on "administrative hold" in September 1988, because the state needed more information on sewage treatment plans. The permit application remained in limbo until April, when developers submitted the scaled-down version of their plans to the state, with 26 boat slips and no dry storage.

There are no plans for wastewater treatment facilities or fuel pumps at the Genoa Point Boat Basin. Plans call for the marina channel to be built so any negative effects on water quality are minimized.

To create the upland basin, developers would have to dig out about 2,500 cubic yards of material, none of which is wetlands. Vegetative buffers and silt fencing would be used to control stormwater runoff

Hankins, Harrison Among Superintendent Finalists

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Baxley, Donna Baxter, Robert Stockett and James Clemmons will each investigate one of the finalists. They anticipate visiting each candidate's current school district, interviewing people in the communities and the school system.

"The board did not sit down and list criteria, but they will ask the usual kinds of questions," said Peterson, such as the type of person and type of administrator they are, and other background information the board feels it should know about before making a hiring decision.

Members will share with each other the information collected.

The starting date for the new superintendent will depend on the candidate and his or her current work situation. Salary will be negotiated. "If we can't get together, we will go to the No. 2 person on the list," Peterson said.

Following is a look at the four finalists:

—Interim Superintendent P.R. Hankins is well known in Brunswick County, both as an educator and civic leader. Hankins, 60, has been employed by the Brunswick County Schools for 33 years, including the past 31 consecutive years. He is the only one of the finalists that does not have a doctor-

ate in educational administration, but that is not one of the minimum requirements for the post.

He was named associate superintendent in 1978, having served as assistant superintendent for federal programs since 1973. He was promoted to assistant superintendent from the post of audiovisual services director, a position he had held since 1966.

Hankins taught science and math in the Brunswick County Schools from 1952 to 1954, leaving to take a post in Japan as a Military Education Center instructor for one year. He then taught science and coached in Anson County for three years before returning to Brunswick County in 1959. From then to 1966, he served as a teacher and elementary school principal.

Hankins holds a master's degree from North Carolina A&T University and a bachelor's degree from Johnson C. Smith University.

Assistant Superintendent William C. Harrison is the youngest of the finalists at age 37. He joined the central office staff in July 1988, and is responsible for curriculum. He came from Fayetteville, where he had served as principal of Terry Sanford Senior High School since 1983. He had previously served as an assistant principal, as principal

of an elementary school and as director of a summer program for the academically gifted.

Harrison taught in the public schools for five years. He also served as an adjunct professor at Methodist College and in the graduate program at Fayetteville State University, teaching school law, high school administration and techniques of teaching in the secondary school.

He has a bachelor's degree in intermediate education from Methodist College, a master's degree and educational specialist certificate in education administration from East Carolina University and a doctorate in education administration from Vanderbilt University.

Betty C. Wallace is on leave from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and is writing a book on educational reform, *The Bell Curve Syndrome*, which is scheduled for publication early next year. With the state department she had served six years as deputy assistant state superintendent for administration. Previously she served two years as director of the department's Western Regional Center in Canton and two years each as assistant superintendent and associate superintendent of the Macon County Schools. Other experience includes three years with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

as an administrative assistant for curriculum and teacher, an instructor at Central Piedmont Community College and as a teacher in Georgia.

Mrs. Wallace, 46, holds a bachelor's degree in English from California State University, a master's degree from UNC-Charlotte, an education specialist certificate in administration from East Carolina University and a doctorate in education administration from the University of Georgia.

Barbara D. Rogers of Raleigh has been principal of East Wake High School since 1983. She served the two previous years as an assistant superintendent for the Wake County Schools, in the funding and development department. She also served as math and science curriculum coordinator and as director of the ESEA program.

Her experience includes a stint in 1975-76 as a visiting lecturer at N.C. State University. Ms. Rogers, 51, was a classroom teacher from 1969 to 1975. She has also written math workbooks and served as an educational consultant.

She holds a bachelor's degree in math and science education from Clemson University, a master's degree in education from Winthrop College, and doctorates in school administration and political science from Duke University.

forcement coverage from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and a new magistrate's office in the southern end of the county.

Schaack also asked that the center turning lane on N.C. 179 be extended all the way through Calabash, and directed his request to Jim Cook, district engineer with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Redwine, who said he gets kidded in the General Assembly for creating more towns than any other legislator, played a key role in last year's merger of the old town of Calabash and Carolina Shores.

He said last week he wishes more communities, particularly those in the northern section of Brunswick County, would follow the example of cooperation among neighbors being set in Calabash.

Carolina Blythe Utilities, a private company that serves Carolina Shores, does not have the capacity to serve the rest of town. Mattutut said it cannot expand its capacity, either, because of limits on the amount of treated waste it dumps into the Waccamaw River.

If treated wastewater could be used to irrigate the two golf courses near Calabash — Carolina Shores and Marsh Harbour — the entire town could hook onto the Carolina Blythe sewer system, Mattutut said.

However, state regulations allow treated wastewater to be used for irrigation on new golf courses only where separate pipes and retention ponds are part of the overall design.

Ed Schaack, building inspector and code enforcement officer for Calabash, requested more law en-

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Town officials also asked for help getting the Calabash River dredged. Planning and Zoning Board member Tom Brendford said there never would have been a Calabash without the river, and it's still the heart of the town.

The river hasn't been dredged for about 10 years, primarily because of a timing problem. The Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for waterway dredging, hasn't been able to get a dredge boat from South Carolina to the river at a time of the year when dredging is allowed in North Carolina.

To show the need for dredging, town officials used three pontoon boats to take guests on a tour of the

Calabash Leaders Request Help