

## Lewis Gets Trial Date

The former interim head of the Brunswick County Building Inspection Department will face trial for embezzlement in Brunswick County Superior Court Jan. 14.

Julius Drake "Buddy" Lewis of Leland waived his right to an appointed attorney at a first appearance in court Monday, telling Judge Giles R. Clark that he wished to hire his own.

Lewis was indicted by a Brunswick County Grand Jury Oct. 15 on one count of embezzling money from the county.

He was charged with allegedly converting to his own use a check belonging to the county drawn on the account of Faith Original Free

will Baptist Church of Leland. The \$125 check was left blank and intended for a county building permit which was never officially issued.

Judge Clark agreed to give Lewis 30 days to hire an attorney and ordered that he appear in court Jan. 14. He was released on a \$3,000 bond following his arrest Nov. 10 on the indictment charge.

Lewis resigned as interim head of the Building Inspection Department in August. He told Judge Clark Monday that since then he has gotten another job and can afford his own attorney.

If found guilty, Lewis could face a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.



THIS ONE-LANE PONTOON BRIDGE, which has served the island at Sunset Beach since around 1961, will remain in place for now as state and federal transportation consider their next step. The bridge has become a symbol in debate over the community's future development.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

## Sex Offenses Net Sentence

A Leland man was given a 12-year active prison sentence Monday in Brunswick County Superior Court for two counts of second degree sexual offense against children.

John Graham Jarvis Jr. had earlier pleaded guilty to the two charges in Superior Court. Judge Giles R. Clark sentenced Jarvis to 12 years in prison. He had faced a possible 20 years in prison on each count.

At a sentencing hearing Monday, Detective Nancy Simpson of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department testified how the defendant allegedly committed the sexual offenses against two girls under the age of 9.

Assistant District Attorney

Thomas Hicks asked that Ms. Simpson read in court directly from her investigative reports statements provided by the two girls. The report described in detail how the defendant allegedly showed adult video tapes to the girls and committed sexual offenses against them on numerous occasions. He did not perform sexual intercourse with the victims, she stated.

As she read from the report, Ms. Simpson's voice grew weak on several occasions and she had to pause to gain composure. Hicks asked that she continue.

Ms. Simpson told the court that the defendant admitted in an interview to having been sexually abused as a child.

## Judge Gives 12-Year Sentence

(Continued From Page 2-A)

was to rent a condominium unit at Topsail Island and a home in Lenoir County for storage of the marijuana. He also helped unload the boats and drove a pickup truck filled with marijuana to Lenoir County. McKinney described Cooper as a "supervisor" of the operations, being on a higher level in the drug ring than offloaders.

From this case, investigators learned that Cooper was also involved in a January 1983 operation in which 8,000 pounds of marijuana were imported to Cherry Grove, S.C., and to Brunswick County. Cooper unloaded the boats and drove a truck filled with marijuana to Omaha, Neb., McKinney said.

In July 1982, a shipment involving 4,000 pounds of marijuana was also imported to Brunswick County involving the same drug ring. Cooper was one of nine defendants indicted in the operation. He was arrested in South Carolina on June 28,

1984, and spent 17 months in the Brunswick County Jail while awaiting trial.

Cooper will be given credit for time already served. He was released from jail under \$50,000 bond. He faced a possible maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and was originally scheduled for sentencing in July 1987.

At the sentencing hearing Monday, Twigg told Judge Clark that since his arrest Cooper has earned his degree in English from Winthrop College in South Carolina with a 3.1 grade point average and is staying with his parents in Charlotte.

"I'm sorry for the damage I've done," Cooper told Judge Clark. "I've hurt a lot of people. I've been trying to get my life together for the last five years. I'd like to be a constructive citizen and get on with my life."

Cooper has also been called to testify before a federal grand jury in Boston, McKinney said.

## Teen Faces Additional Charges

(Continued From Page 1-A)

belt. Those charges were voluntarily dismissed on April 23.

According to court records, Arnette was traveling on Sabbath Home Road toward Holden Beach when he failed to stop at a stop sign about 1.3 miles north of Holden Beach around 8:10 p.m. His 1980 Chevrolet struck Olive's 1985 Pontiac which was traveling on Old Ferry Road. Olive died four days later from injuries sustained in the accident.

Arnette is scheduled to appear in Brunswick County District Court Dec. 11 on the most recent charges filed against him.

On Nov. 3, Trooper B.D. Barnhardt charged Arnette with driving while impaired, failure to heed a blue light and siren, reckless driving, resisting arrest and obstructing a public officer, driving while his license was revoked and driving after drinking while a provisional licensee.

Court documents indicate officers

determined probable cause did not exist for the DWI charge following a breathalyzer test. Arnette's blood-alcohol content registered .04, while .10 is considered too drunk to drive in North Carolina, the report stated.

According to Trooper Barnhardt's report, Arnette was stopped around 12:35 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, on Live Oak Drive in Seaside for spinning his vehicle around at a high rate of speed, attempting to elude arrest, weaving and driving left of center. Arnette then jumped and ran from the officer and hid in a mobile home, the report states. He was operating a 1990 Buick, Barnhardt stated, at speeds up to 100 mph.

Following his arrest, Arnette was released from Brunswick County Jail under \$1,500 bond.

Court records also show an Oct. 31, 1989, arrest by Ocean Isle Police Department for alleged larceny of four black cherry wine coolers from an Ocean Isle Beach store. The case was voluntarily dismissed the following day by the district attorney's office.

## NO WORD YET ON APPEAL

# SBTA Members Cheer Ruling; Hear Concerns About Pontoon

BY SUSAN USHER

Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association members Saturday cheered the news of a "first round" victory in the group's effort to prevent construction of a high-rise bridge to the island, then turned their attention to concerns regarding operation of the existing bridge.

The 500-plus members of the group are primarily non-resident property owners of Sunset Beach. SBTA formed approximately 11 years ago to promote orderly growth of the community and to preserve its unique character, with opposition of a new bridge a major focus of its efforts.

"We won Round 1," President Cletus Waldmiller, wearing a T-shirt depicting the existing pontoon bridge and the words "Sunset Beach ...coming home," told the approximately 70 members gathered at the fire station Saturday. "I don't know if it is a three-rounder, a 10-rounder or a 15-rounder event."

"The next step is up to the (state) Department of Transportation, I think," he continued. "We shouldn't get overcomplacent. We have just won Round 1."

In an opinion handed down Nov. 19, U.S. District Court Judge W. Earl Britt ruled that the state should have performed an in-depth environmental impact study before building the bridge. His order voided all existing project permits and ordered work on the proposed high-rise bridge stopped until such a study is completed and new permits obtained. He ruled that the original study fell "woefully short" of minimum standards of state and federal environmental laws and that it "completely ignored" the indirect effects of a new bridge.

Whether the state should decide to appeal or go back and complete a more thorough environmental assessment, Waldmiller said, reading a letter from prosecuting attorney Jim Maxwell, the plaintiffs are in a "much better position" to continue their opposition as a result of data and expert testimony compiled in

preparation for the suit. Also, he read, "we have reason to believe several agencies are willing to rethink their decision to issue permits."

"Continued vigilance to preserve the way of life on this quaint island is mandated."

Defendants—including the N.C. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and state and federal transportation officials, have 60 days from Nov. 19th in which to file an appeal with the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va.

Bill Jones, a spokesman for the state DOT, said Monday no decision has been reached on whether to appeal.

Plaintiffs in the suit have 20 days in which to submit a brief to Britt with arguments supporting their claim to have legal fees and court costs paid by the defendants under the Equal Access to Justice Act. After that defendants have 20 days in which to respond with a brief of their own. Then the plaintiffs have 10 days in which to reply to defendants' brief.

The plaintiffs have outstanding legal fees of \$18,158 in addition to those fees paid earlier.

Sunset Beach Fire Chief Greg Cain and a VFD director, Jack Thomas, shared concerns with SBTA members regarding provision of fire protection and other emergency services to the island with the pontoon bridge as their only access.

"We don't seem to have a solution for it," said Chief Cain, asking for SBTA members' suggestions.

The one-lane swing-span pontoon bridge was completed around 1961. The cables used to operate the bridge rust quickly and must be replaced approximately every four months, said Thomas, and the work interrupts access to the island.

At extreme high tides, such as during recent lunar tides, the height of the center span makes it difficult for the department's heavy vehicles (20,000 pounds and more) to cross.

One SBTA member suggested mounting duplex cables on the

bridge so they can be alternately replaced without disrupting service.

As Thomas and Cain said that keeping the department's oldest tanker, with more than 20 years of service, on the island during hurricane watches and other emergency situations is a losing proposition since exposure to salt air causes the vehicle to deteriorate faster.

SBTA officials, however, did not acknowledge firefighter Jim Allison's suggestion to adopt a resolution encouraging town and county officials to erect a substation on the island to house emergency vehicles.

In general discussion of ways to improve vehicular access to and from the island, other suggestions included having the timing of traffic signals adjusted, educating motorists on how the sensors trigger the signal and working with DOT on an off-season schedule for opening the bridge to waterway traffic. Presently the bridge opens on the hour during the tourist season and on demand the remainder of the year.

Waldmiller said DOT had rejected an earlier request from the town council to switch to a flashing yellow light for vehicular traffic during winter months.

Treasurer Fran Pelletier encouraged members to "spread positivism" regarding waits at the bridge, promoting them as a "pleasant change of pace".

SBTA members gave a standing ovation as they adopted a resolution introduced by Albert Wells honoring Minnie and Bill Hunt for their "strong support of the goals" of the organization, friendship to others, dedication to environmental concerns and "quiet but effective advocacy".

The group also agreed to Mrs. Hunt's suggestions to present a special memento of the case to the plaintiff's attorneys, Jim Maxwell and Ruth McKinney of Durham and to continue annual contributions of \$500 each to Calabash Volunteer Emergency Medical Services and Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department.

## Man Burned Seriously In Heater Explosion Tuesday

A Shallotte area man was rescued by a neighbor Tuesday evening after he was seriously burned when a kerosene heater fueled with gasoline exploded.

Fire victim Otis Horne "was burned bad," said Shallotte Point Volunteer Fire Department Chief Mike Potts. "He had burns over much of the upper part of his body."

"His next door neighbor is probably owed the credit if (Horne) survives. The neighbor got him out."

As Potts reconstructed the incident, Horne, in his mid-50s to late 60s, was apparently alone in the house on Squirrel Nest Road in the Sasspan community when the accident happened at about 6 p.m. When he poured gasoline in the kerosene heater and lit it, the fire blazed up. Horne ran outside, shouting to next door neighbor Mike Brendelen that the house was on fire.

"He went back in and the heater blew up and he was caught in it," said Potts. "It just flashed up. He was able to crawl to the door and Mike (Brendelen) pulled him out."

Taken to The Brunswick Hospital by Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad, Horne was then transported by helicopter to the Burn Center at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill at approximately 9:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Shallotte Point and Shallotte fire departments responded to the fire along with the rescue squad. "Everyone responded fast. We all got there about the same time and we knocked it out real quick," Potts said, estimating water usage at 800 gallons.

Potts said firefighters salvaged the structure of the wood frame residence, but that "probably 75 percent" of the interior sustained smoke or fire damage because of the way the fire flashed.

Brunswick County Emergency Coordinator Cecil Logan said that heater owners need to take precautions against the accidental use of gasoline in the heaters. Fire investigators found a five-gallon bucket from which Horne had apparently poured the gasoline.

"Gasoline and kerosene heaters do not mix," he said. "When these people go to the stations to get kerosene, they need to be sure they're getting kerosene and not gasoline."

He added, "We usually get two or three of these type calls a year and we're not even into cold weather yet."

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## Shallotte Woman Faces Embezzlement Charges

BY TERRY POPE

A Shallotte woman has been indicted on 34 counts of embezzlement for allegedly taking money while employed by a local convenience food store chain.

Brenda Gale Todd Crocker, 28, of Route 6, Shallotte, was indicted Monday by a Brunswick County Grand Jury on charges that she embezzled amounts ranging from \$10 to \$30 on 34 separate occasions from the Minute Man Food Mart, which has stores in Calabash, Shallotte and Seaside.

According to the indictments, the alleged incidents occurred between March 25 and April 29 of this year. Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Lindsey Walton documented 17 incidents where \$30 was allegedly taken, 16 incidents where \$10 was taken and one time when \$20 was taken.

A warrant for her arrest was issued Sept. 27, according to documents filed at the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office. She was arrested Oct. 2 and released on \$5,000 bond.

Judge Jerry A. Jolly issued an order for her arrest Oct. 24 after she failed to appear in Brunswick County District Court for a first appearance. Her attorney, Stephen Yount, filed a letter with the clerk's office stating that Ms. Crocker was never notified to appear in court and that she had a medical appointment on the court date.

The 34 counts involving Ms. Crocker were among 41 bills of indictment considered Monday by the grand jury, which returned 37 true bills. Four of the cases have been continued until the grand jury meets next month.

James Henry Pierce of Route 1, Leland, was also indicted Monday on one count of first degree sex offense with a child and one count of taking indecent liberties with a child. The offenses allegedly occurred between July 1 and Sept. 1 of this year, the indictments state.

Also indicted was James Ray Worrell of Gatland Estates, Leland, on one count of taking indecent liberties with a child. The alleged incident occurred May 22.

## More Warm, Dry Days Expected

Mild, dry weather should continue in the Shallotte area for the next few days, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

"It's a good new/bad news kind of forecast," he said of the projected above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall.

He expects temperatures to average from the mid-40s at night into the mid-60s during the daytime, with less than one-half inch of rainfall.

"If that happens we will probably close out the month with less than an inch of rainfall," said Canady. While this is the dry season of the year, Canady said rainfall levels are

still "below where we should be," with no indicators that the pattern is likely to change even into next week.

The area saw no rainfall during the period Nov. 20-26.

During that period, Canady recorded a maximum high temperature of 76 degrees, which occurred on the 26th. A minimum nightly low of 37 degrees was recorded on the 21st.

A daily average high of 71 degrees combined with a nightly average low of 44 degrees for a daily average temperature of 57 degrees, which Canady said is about five degrees above average.

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