

License, Low Pay Have Chore Workers Worried About 1991

BY TERRY POPE

For the past 11 years, Rose Ledet has taken care of an invalid woman but in January she may be forced to quit. Rose, 72, feeds, bathes and provides in-home health care 24 hours a day, with eight of those hours funded through the Brunswick County Department of Social Services' CAP services, or Community Alternatives Program. CAP provides a chore worker to help care for patients who are just one step away from being placed into a nursing home. Chore workers have operated through the Department of Social Services for 15 years. Under new regulations which go into effect Jan. 1, chore providers like Rose will lose their jobs and must stop providing home health care for patients unless they become licensed as a nurse's aide. The State Nursing Board has mandated that anyone providing in-home patient care must be licensed and must also take continuing education courses each year for renewal. Chore workers must also become certified in CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation lifesaving techniques. "No one else can go into that home and take care of her," said Jeannette Roach, whose mother is Rose's patient. "I don't

know how or what can be done, but we're willing to do anything we can do to keep her." Rose has known the Roach family for 46 years. The family is upset that the state could impose such regulations without allowing exceptions for people like Rose. Although aimed more at the private companies that now provide home health care in the state, the new regulations also affect programs sponsored by county social services departments. "Unfortunately, those regulations are developed to help people," said Brunswick County Social Services Director Jamie Orrock. "But sometimes they end up hurting people more than they help." The State Division of Social Services has gone on record opposing the new requirements and so have Brunswick County's chore workers. However, 25 DSS chore providers completed the 75-hour Nurse Assistant I course offered by Brunswick Community College in October, said nursing instructor Connie Milligan. "It's not a course I have on the schedule at this time," Ms. Milligan said. "There was some miscommunication at one time where they didn't think they would have to take it." Another course will be offered if DSS

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requests one and if course instructor Bernice Lewis can arrange the schedule, she said. "If they were to provide us with x number of people, I'm sure they would work something out," said Ms. Milligan. Chore providers operate through three programs to provide care for patients who qualify for Medicaid. Nineteen county residents are currently being served through the department's CAP program, 53 receive assistance through the Title 20 program and 24 through the Personal Care Services program. More chronically ill patients are served through CAP.

Currently, there are 69 county residents on the department's CAP waiting list. That list has been as high as 100, Orrock said. "You're going to see it increase even more with a growing elderly population in Brunswick County," he predicted. The county decided to operate its own in-home health care service rather than contract that program out to a private business. Programs such as CAP are more cost effective for families of chronic ill patients than nursing home care, said Orrock. "It's also more mentally rewarding to be able to stay at home. Placing a person in a nursing home is a demoralizing experience. You can almost see the cloud come over their face." For the chore workers, the new regulations make no exceptions. There is no grandfather clause that exempts workers, such as Rose, from having to go through the rigorous training to become licensed. "It's just not a negotiable issue," Orrock said. "We can go to the state for exceptions, but I wouldn't be very optimistic." Ms. Roach said Rose is the only person that her mother can communicate with. Her mother is on oxygen and cannot feed herself. The Roach family subsidizes Rose for the hours not covered as a chore worker. Ms. Roach is afraid that switching to a new

chore provider will upset her mother and further threaten her health. If chore workers must receive extra training and take continuing education courses in the future to keep their licenses, then they want better pay. Chore worker Roy Holden addressed the Brunswick County Board of Social Services Monday to ask if the department could find a way to increase chore providers' pay. Chore providers are paid \$4.16 per hour, or about \$8,450 annually, Holden said. County custodians earn \$11,600 per year, he said. "It's really pathetic when someone can push a broom and make more money than someone who must provide care for another person," Holden said. "I'm not knocking the custodians. I accepted the job at that pay, but I didn't know that later on I'd have to become a certified nurse's aide or certified in CPR." Orrock said the county has three methods for giving pay raises: across the board pay increases; merit pay, which hasn't become a county policy; and reclassification of state positions as requested by the county. In light of the new license requirements, the state needs to reclassify chore positions, Orrock said, but that could take a couple of years.

Shooting Leaves One Injured

BY TERRY POPE

A Leland man remained hospitalized Tuesday after being shot outside a Navassa nightclub late Friday. Timothy Terry Ballard, 30, of Route 5, Leland, was hit in the right abdomen by pellets from a shotgun blast outside of Valentino's, reported Deputy M.S. Mason with the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. According to the report, Marshall McKoy Jr. of Route 4, Leland, was in the parking lot at the nightclub when the suspect approached and fired at him, hitting McKoy's vehicle with at least 15 pellets. Ballard, who was a bystander, tried to run, but was also hit by the shotgun blast. Detective Gary Shay is investigating the shooting. The nightclub is on Cedar Hill Loop Road. Ballard was taken by private vehicle to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington where he was admitted, Det. Shay reported. In other reports on file at the Sheriff's Department: ■ Detectives have ruled that a Supply man found dead in his home died from natural causes. Lynwood Thomas Chandler of Route 5, Lumberton, was found dead around 11:30 a.m. Saturday at his vacation home in West Tanglewood. A neighbor reported he had not seen the victim for a number of days. Deputy Ken Messer obtained permission to enter the home, where he found Chandler lying partly on a bed in a rear bedroom. ■ Burglars vandalized and then took an estimated \$15,559 in boat motors and tools from Mike's Marine on N.C. 130 west, Shallotte, sometime late Friday, reported Deputy Douglas Todd. Thieves cut a hole in a fence and a garage door and cut the line to an alarm box to gain entry. A fire extinguisher was sprayed inside the building and paint was poured on the floor, windows and merchandise. ■ More than \$3,700 in saplings and shrubs were removed from the entrance to River Gate Estates on N.C. 904, reported Franklin Gore on Sunday. The shrubbery had recently been planted, Deputy R.J. Hoagland's report stated.

■ Someone took a drive on the 18th hole at Carolina Shores Golf Course late Sunday, but with a sports car instead of an iron. Fred Edwards reported someone drove a vehicle onto the 18th green, spinning and sliding the vehicle across the turf and taking a flag pole worth \$35. The incident occurred around 10:50 p.m. ■ Brunswick County School Bus No. 130 was put out of commission last week when someone broke 12 of its windows while the bus was parked at Shoreline Estates, reported John Keith Hewett. Det. Shay is investigating. ■ Someone also broke the windows to a 1989 Nissan owned by Robert J. Robinson of Route 3, Supply, reported Det. Shay. Only one window was spared in the larceny, which was reported Thursday. A video camera and tripod was taken from the car. ■ A Navassa woman awoke Thursday to find her car missing. Daisy Young Jennings of Main Street reported someone took the keys and a video cassette recorder from her home and drove off with a 1987 Pontiac Bonneville valued at \$12,300. ■ Someone hauled away a utility trailer from Holden Brothers Produce on U.S. 17 south, Shallotte, reported Kelly Holden Friday morning. The 12-foot trailer is valued at \$600, Deputy G.A. Caison reported. ■ A boat and motor valued at \$1,200 was reported stolen from a Bricklanding location, reported the owner, Jerry Ransom of Route 4, Bladenboro. Deputy Don Stovall reported the 15-foot 1978 Carolina flat-bottom boat had a 40-horsepower motor. ■ Burglars entered a home in Hurricane Haven between Oct. 26 and Nov. 24, reported property owner Richard Hearn of Sanford. A rear door was pried open and thieves took \$759 in appliances, Deputy W.F. Moore reported. ■ Another home was entered in Seagull Mobile Home Park, reported Donald Lynn Pennington of Route 6, Shallotte, on Friday. A lock on a utility shed was cut and

removed along with \$948 in tools from inside, Deputy Stovall's report stated. ■ Pamela Todd Strickland of Route 9, Shallotte, reported someone pried open a glass door and damaged a window in gaining entry to her home and taking an estimated \$834 in jewelry and causing \$700 in damages, reported Deputy George Stanley. ■ An estimated \$449 in fishing gear and boating equipment was taken from a home on N.C. 179 south of Shallotte, reported property owner Everette Fritts of Lexington on Wednesday. Deputy Hoagland reported someone pried open a back door to gain entry. ■ The Fisherman Cove Grill on Kirby Road was broken into Wednesday night, but nothing was reported missing, reported William Eades. Deputy Charlie Wilson reported a hole had been knocked into a side door to the business causing \$100 in damage. ■ Norman Ray Allen of Charlotte reported Thursday that someone broke the windshield to his vehicle parked at a residence on Boonesneck Road around 12:30 a.m. Deputy Wilson listed the damage at \$250.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Ideal For Take-Off

O'Neal "Knot" Varnam of Varnamtown takes advantage of the pleasant weather Sunday to fly his radio-controlled airplane at Holden Beach. The strand made a nice runway at low tide, though the gulls may not have known what to make of the plane.



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