

New Sunset Beach Nudity Law Bans Thongs, Bared Breasts

After two close votes it is now a misdemeanor to bare certain parts of the anatomy on the public beach, streets or parks of the town of Sunset Beach.

With Mayor Mason Barber breaking the tie, Sunset Beach Town Council voted 3-2 Monday night to adopt the ordinance first proposed by Town Administrator Linda Fluegel several months ago.

"It was close," said Ms. Fluegel Tuesday. She had campaigned for the rule after town employees received numerous complaints about the wearing of skimpy swimsuits on the beach.

The council had voted 3-2 in favor of the ordinance at its December meeting, but a 4-1 vote is required for passage of an ordinance on first reading.

Monday night the vote followed the same pattern as before, with little discussion. Councilman Al Odom and Ed Gore voted against the ordinance; Julia Thomas and Bud Scramton voted for it.

But Councilman Mary Katherine Griffith, who had voted for the ordinance in December, was absent due to a conflicting event.

Mayor Barber broke the tie in favor of the ordinance.

In public parks or on public beaches or streets, it is now unlawful for any "fully developed female" to willfully expose her breasts. Exposure is defined as "the revealing of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering on any portion thereof lower than the top of any part of the areola."

Also, it is unlawful for anyone to appear in a such a state of dress or undress so as "to expose to the view of others the human male or female pubic area, pubic hair, anus, vulva or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering."

The ordinance may be precedent-setting. The N.C. League of Municipalities knows of no other community in North Carolina that has adopted a ban that in effect bars thong suits and other similar men's or women's swimwear.

Proceeding With Project

Sunset Beach Town Council members decided to proceed with plans to develop former Lot 1-A, the oceanfront extension of Sunset Boulevard, as a public

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Van Line Pays Heirs \$750,000

In a settlement reached last week, a moving company has agreed to pay to Pauline H. Inman of Shallotte Point and members of her family \$750,000 in compensation for a 1986 wreck in which her husband was killed along with a co-worker.

A consent order approving the settlement was filed with the Brunswick County Clerk of Court Jan. 2 following approval by Judge Giles Clark.

The wrongful death suit had been scheduled for trial by jury in Brunswick County Superior Civil Court Monday.

Inman's heirs—Mrs. Inman, sons Steven L. Inman and Dean A. Inman, and granddaughters Roxann Michele Inman and Tracy Darlene Inman, whose father is deceased, will divide the \$444,863 remaining of the settlement following payment of legal fees and other costs totaling \$290,137.

Keith D. Inman, 52, and Garland Houston Hale, mechanics at Jones Ford Chrysler Plymouth and Dodge in Shallotte, took a car they were repairing for a test drive on U.S. 17 the evening of Oct. 20, 1986. Hale was driving; Inman was in the front passenger seat.

William C. Leisure of Massachusetts was driving a North American Van Lines moving van when he crossed the center line on U.S. 17 just north of Shallotte and struck the car operated by Hale head-on, killing the two men instantly.

Hale's case was settled earlier for \$490,000.

Inman's estate was represented by James C. Fuller of Raleigh and Roy D. Trest of Shallotte. The two said the \$750,000 settlement could be the largest such award in Brunswick County history. Fuller said if the case had gone to jury trial he would have expected an award in the \$500,000 to \$100,000 range. However, a recent \$3.1 million jury award in New Hanover Superior Court to the children of two wreck victims was described as "helpful" in the settlement negotiations.

The attorneys had learned, said Fuller, that Leisure had not had a valid driver's license for three years and had violated numerous company driving rules. Leisure had also been driving for 15 consecutive hours at the time of the accident.

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STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Year's First Babies Arrive

Travis and Rita Elliott of Holden Beach are the parents of twin daughters (from left) Melina Danielle and Dana Alexandra, the first babies born in 1991 at The Brunswick Hospital in Supply. Arriving at 3:49 p.m. and 3:50 p.m. on New Year's Day, they weighed seven pounds and six pounds, three and one-half ounces respectively. Gifts for the county's first babies of the year included \$100 savings bonds, one-year free car seat rentals from the hospital volunteer auxiliary, and several dinners for their parents from local restaurants. The babies' maternal grandparents are Pete and Augusta Singletary of Holden Beach. Paternal grandparents are Joyce and Eugene Elliott of Southport.

Holden Board Was To Meet Wednesday Regarding Manager

Holden Beach Commissioners were to meet Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. in called session, apparently to discuss the fate of the town's manager of only six months, Blake Proctor.

Proctor had no direct comment when asked about rumors circulating Tuesday regarding his status with the town. "It would be ludicrous to say anything at this point," he responded.

Town commissioners met Monday night, then recessed until Tuesday morning, when they discussed "personnel" matters behind closed doors for nearly three hours.

In open session, the board's only

action before adjournment was a vote to release Public Works Director Henry Thompson's retirement fund at his request, said Deputy Town Clerk Diane Clark. Thompson has been on disability for several months and will not be returning to his post with the town.

Later Tuesday Mayor John Tandy advised The Brunswick Beacon of efforts first to call another meeting that night, then Wednesday morning.

"I'm trying to do what's right," he said. "It's a continuation of a meeting we should have recessed and that we adjourned by mistake."

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Commissioners To Interview Manager Applicants In Open

BY TERRY POPE

Interviews for the new Brunswick County manager will be held next Monday morning in open session before the public.

"We want to do it right," said Commissioner Donald Shaw, who made the motion Monday to interview applicants "in the public eye."

Shaw's motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Frankie Rabon the only board member voting to keep the interviews private. The board agreed to meet at 9 a.m., Jan. 14, to interview up to five applicants who applied for the position.

Commission Chairman Kelly Holden said that of the stack of close to 20 applications received by 5 p.m. Monday, only five met minimum qualifications for the job.

"The personnel director went through and screened the applications," Holden said. Starie Grissett is the county's personnel director.

Clerk to the Board Regina Alexander will notify the five applicants that they will be interviewed before the public. The applicants will be given the chance to withdraw from consideration if they so chose.

County Attorney David Clegg has served as interim county manager

since December 1989, when John Smith was fired. Clegg has applied for the position and will be one of the persons interviewed next week.

The board of commissioners in February 1990 attempted to hire Bolivia native William Kopp on a 3-2 vote without first advertising the position or holding interviews. After rescinding on that action, commissioners voted to advertise the position and about 47 applications were accepted, but the board never took action on filling the seat.

Shaw and Vice Chairman Jerry Jones were elected in November and joined the board last month. The board voted then to readvertise the position.

Holden defended the board's decision to interview applicants in open session. He said part of the county manager's job is to work with the public. Qualified applicants shouldn't feel threatened about open interview sessions, he added.

Holden said the names of the other four applicants will not be released by the board prior to next Monday's interview session to protect the applicants' current job status.

Board Overturns Firing

The motion to hold open inter-

views for manager came just minutes before the board entered into executive session for about 15 minutes to discuss an unspecified personnel matter.

No action was taken on that personnel matter, but the board did vote Monday to reinstate two water system employees to their jobs following an open grievance hearing. The two men asked the board for the open sessions.

Wade Robinson of Supply and Phillip Russ of Longwood were fired from their jobs in November after failing to report to work on a Saturday to repair a broken sewer line that serves Leland Industrial Park.

Robinson is a maintenance mechanic I worker who earns \$14,032 a year and Russ is a maintenance mechanic III worker who makes \$17,906 a year.

Assistant Utility Director Leo Fulford told commissioners that five men on the "tapping crew" were ordered on a Friday to report to work the next day, Nov. 16, for an emergency repair of the sewer pipe. Only two men showed up to work from the crew. Another man called in sick, he said. Other main-

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Board Puts Off Debate Over Second-Hand Hiring Complaint

BY SUSAN USHER

Vice Chairman Doug Baxley, followed soon after by Chairman Donna Baxter, walked out of an hour-long closed-door session of the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night during a discussion on superintendent selection procedures.

"I'm not interested in discussing it in executive session when he's (member Robert Slockett) talking about it on the street," said Baxley. "If he wants to talk about that subject let him come out here and talk about it or not talk about it all."

Baxley said he questioned his fellow board member's intentions in taking the issue public and "undermining" the integrity of the board's executive session procedures. "We should have some integrity in the executive session process or we

shouldn't have them at all and do everything in public."

"I personally feel he is just instigating, trying to create controversy," concluded Baxley as he waited for the three remaining board members—Slockett, Polly Russ and Yvonne Bright—to leave the closed-door session. "As a board member you win some and lose some, but you have to respect the integrity of the process."

Later, in open session near the close of the 3 1/2-hour meeting, Slockett raised the topic, but the chairman pointed out that it was not on the agenda.

A subsequent motion by Slockett to amend the agenda to include the topic failed for lack of a second.

"The board doesn't want to talk about it," Slockett said afterward. However, Baxley said later that

the lack of a second didn't necessarily mean the board would not discuss the topic in open session, but that it would prefer the item be placed on the agenda in proper fashion so that members will be prepared to discuss it.

At an earlier meeting, Slockett had relayed to fellow board members concerns expressed to him by Barbara Rogers, a finalist for the superintendent's post, and her husband, Ken, regarding the process by which Superintendent P.R. Hankins was hired. Slockett said questions were raised about whether Hankins' application should have considered since it did not include college transcripts the board had specified were to be included.

No action was taken, Chairman Donna Baxter said later, because the

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Survivors Tell Of Six-Hour Ordeal Floating In Atlantic

BY TERRY POPE

James Millis and Mike Lipp spent New Year's Day counting their blessings and shaking off the effects of hypothermia.

They spent six hours floating at sea with Captain Butch Benton after their 42-foot fishing vessel, *Seabird*, sank about 65 miles off the coast of Southport just before dark on New Year's Eve.

Their story is a dramatic tale of survival. In the dark waters of the Atlantic, waves crashed 12 feet over their heads as they frantically clung to life vests and a floating "poly ball" fishing buoy that had somehow worked itself free from the rail of the boat before it sank.

Millis believes it was his wristwatch that helped save them. As U.S. Coast Guard helicopters combed the area he kept flicking the lighted dial of his Timex into the air. The life vests also had reflector tape that might have been seen by rescuers.

"I had everything I own on that boat," said Lipp, a native of Kansas City. "My glasses, identification. I came away with the clothes I had on. We also kept the lifejackets."

Millis, 21, of Vineyard Landing in Supply, has been working on fishing boats for about five years. Lipp, 36, had spent about a month working on the *Seabird* after moving here from Hillsborough recently.

"Water has been my life," Millis said. "That's all I've ever done."

Now, the two men say they will never return to the water.

"A lot goes through your mind when you're out there floating like that," Lipp said. "It got so cold."

The three men had just finished eating supper when they went back out onto the deck. It had been a good

trip for the crew. The net was filled with grouper. They had wanted to argue about who was going to wash the dirty dishes when water started coming over the sides. Twelve-foot waves started crashing onto the deck.

To make matters worse, a bilge pump also quit working on the boat. The men frantically used five gallon buckets to bail out the water. The fish boxes were sliding across the deck. They barely had time to signal a distress message. Another fishing boat about 10 miles away heard the mayday call and notified the U.S. Coast Guard.

"We grabbed our lifejackets and jumped out the windows," Lipp said. The jackets had not been equipped with flares.

The three floated for about three hours. They could see the Coast Guard vessels in the distance. The ships dropped flares into the water, but with no luck.

On their last trip out, Coast Guardsman Bob Hannaford said he saw a flickering light in the water below. A bucket was lowered from the helicopter as the men took turns being hoisted into the aircraft. Just grabbing hold of the bucket in 12-foot seas was difficult, Millis said.

"If it hadn't been for him (Lipp) I would have given up a long time earlier," Millis said. "It was so rough. I didn't think any of us was going to make it back alive."

The men took turns helping to hold one another up onto the floating poly ball. Lipp, the taller of the three, wrapped his long legs around Millis to help keep his head above water.

The poly ball had appeared from out of nowhere, said the men, after they had been drifting for three hours in their life vests. The three men's legs had started

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STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

MIKE LIPP (left) and James Millis say they plan to keep the life jackets that helped save their lives last week 65 miles offshore.