

# Judge Gives Teen Driver Curfew, Verbal Warning

BY TERRY POPE

A Sunset Beach teen-ager convicted of misdemeanor death by motor vehicle last April appeared in Brunswick County District Court in a wheelchair Tuesday to face six additional driving-related charges.

Matthew Shawn Arnette, 17, is now confined to a wheelchair after losing partial movement in his right leg and full movement in his left leg, the result of an accidental gunshot wound to the neck in December.

Arnette pleaded guilty in court Tuesday to driving while his license was revoked and driving after drinking as a provisional licensee. Judge Jerry A. Jolly gave him a two-year suspended sentence, placed him on curfew and ordered that he not obtain a license for five years.

"If you were not physically disabled, you'd be going to jail," Judge Jolly told Arnette, who was represented in court by his attorney, Roy Trest. "You have been found guilty of causing another man's death as a result of your driving. I can tell you quite frankly, if you were not in that wheelchair you'd be going to jail."

Trest told the court that since Arnette was shot he has had a change in attitude and has been receiving counseling. The night he was arrested by State Trooper B.D. Barnhardt on the six driving charges, he had been visiting a friend who had threatened to commit suicide, Trest said.

Judge Jolly ordered that Arnette follow a 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. curfew at his home and to not go outside of his house during those hours without a parent present.

Charges of driving while impaired, failure to heed a blue light and siren, reckless driving and resisting and obstructing a police officer were dismissed in a plea agreement with Assistant District Attorney Lee Bollinger, who declined to be heard regarding the case in court.

Trooper Barnhardt told Judge Jolly that the defendant registered a .04 on a breathalyzer test following

his arrest Nov. 3. A reading of .10 is considered too drunk to drive in North Carolina.

Barnhardt explained how he spotted a vehicle spinning around in the roadway on Brooks Drive at Seaside and attempted to stop it, reaching speeds up to 100 mph before the car ran off the road on the left and came to a stop. The driver, whom Barnhardt identified as Arnette, then ran from the car and hid in a nearby mobile home for about 15 minutes, the officer testified.

"He indicated that he had panicked," Barnhardt said. "He advised that he was driving the vehicle. He also fit the identity of the person that fled the car."

Barnhardt said Arnette was 16 at the time of his arrest.

He had pleaded guilty last August to misdemeanor death by motor vehicle, a charge stemming from a traffic accident March 18, 1990, that claimed the life of Clyde Justice Olive, 37, of Supply.

In that case, Judge Jolly gave Arnette a two-year suspended sentence and placed him on unsupervised

probation. Judge Jolly also ordered then that Arnette's license be revoked until November 1991.

In that March 1990 accident, Arnette was charged by Trooper C.E. Ward with running a stop sign and failure to wear a seatbelt, charges that were voluntarily dismissed April 23. The accident occurred on Sabbath Home Road near Holden Beach.

In December, Arnette was shot once in the neck with a .25-caliber pistol while sitting in a car parked outside of a store at Seaside. Arnette told Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Larry Joyner that the gun accidentally fired while he was holding it.

After interviewing two other people who were in the car at the time of the shooting, Lt. Joyner ruled that the shooting was an accident.

Judge Jolly also fined Arnette \$200 Tuesday and ordered that he submit to alcohol and drug tests as mandated by his probation officers. Judge Jolly also ordered that he not have in his possession any alcohol or drugs.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

## Building Had To Go

Supply Volunteer Fire Department members did the State of North Carolina a favor Feb. 27. Assistant Chief Jeff Sellers, Chris Robinson, Chief Roger Suggs and Lloyd Fields were among those involved in razing the old Alton Hewett wood refinishing and antique shop, which stood in the right-of-way of the U.S. 17 four-laning project. If the shed had had a full roof and normal ventilation, the burn would have been a training drill. Without it, said Suggs, "We thought we'd do a quick burn and go home." However, the shed took longer to burn than expected.

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## Officers Charge Ocean Isle Man With Bribery

An Ocean Isle Beach businessman was arrested last Thursday on fugitive warrants stemming from 11 counts of bribing a police officer in Marietta, Ga.

Robert Craig Cain, 39, of Richmond Street, Ocean Isle Beach, owns Cain and Associates Tax Services at Cornerstone Plaza on N.C. 179 south of Shallotte.

Warrants from Georgia also charge Cain with conspiracy to sell cocaine and one count of selling of marijuana. He was arrested last Thursday around 7:30 p.m. by SBI agent Fred McKinney and Lt. David Crocker of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department narcotics division.

Crocker said that after Cain was arrested, he was taken to his residence at Ocean Isle where a search uncovered a small amount of marijuana. Ocean Isle Beach police officers also aided in the arrest.

Cain was charged locally with misdemeanor possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, Crocker said. He was released last Friday morning under \$100,000 bond.

Crocker said Cain had moved to Brunswick County in January and established the tax preparation business at Ocean Isle. The warrants were filed by sheriff's detectives in Cobb County, Ga.

According to affidavits filed by Cobb County authorities, Cain is alleged to have paid undercover police officers there on 11 different occasions money for his "protection in protecting the accused criminal organization."

Crocker said the defendant offered no resistance during his arrest.

## State Offices Have Relocated

Friday, March 1, was moving day for several state agencies with offices in Wilmington.

The N.C. Dept. of Environment, Health and Natural Resources has moved from the old Babies' Hospital site near Wrightsville Beach to 127 Cardinal Drive Extension, off Market Street. The new telephone number is (919) 799-2882.

Also sharing the same address are the N.C. Dept. of Economic and Community Development's Division of Community Assistance (919) 799-0712, and the Submerged Lands Unit of the Attorney General's Office, (919) 799-0267.



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