

RESIDENTS ANGRY WITH LATEST MOVE

Leland May Assume Control Over Northern Library Project

BY TERRY POPE

Some northern Brunswick County residents have threatened to withdraw their donations that are needed to build a new library branch in Leland.

Following a meeting with State Library Director Howard McGinn last Thursday, the Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees appears ready to turn the \$217,000 project over to the town to build.

Some residents have accused Leland Mayor Russell Baldwin of using the library crisis for his own political gain. They say the library is for all residents of northern Brunswick County, and not just for the people of Leland.

"I resent the mayor of Leland trying to make this a political move, saying the town is saving the library," said Edith Tillman, who heads the building committee and is on the county library board of trustees.

She said there are two problems facing the branch library, which had been scheduled for completion in October. Although no work has yet begun on the project, a site has been chosen behind the Leland Town Hall on land donated by the town.

"One is that the trustees as a whole do not feel the responsibility that I feel they should," said Mrs. Tillman. "The other is that a town mayor is trying to use the situation

to help himself get elected."

Baldwin, who faces a challenge in the November election, denied that he or the town wants to gain control of the library.

If the town does oversee construction, said Baldwin, it would own the building, but would not operate it or control its use.

"If that does happen, I can assure you it would be operated by the county library board," said Baldwin. "We don't want that (control). That's the last thing on Earth we want to do."

The town would oversee construction, be responsible for major repairs and contribute annually to its upkeep, said Baldwin. The library board would still be responsible for routine maintenance, if an agreement is reached.

"Once we do this, it does bind us legally to support the library," he said. "We've had some misunderstandings and some hurt feelings, but I think the situation can be resolved."

However, neighboring Belville may be asking for its donation of \$21,500 back, said Belville Mayor Ken Messer. The library branch is for all northern Brunswick County residents and should not be controlled by any one town, he said.

"We donated our money to the library building committee to build a library," said Messer. "We did not donate it to the town of Leland."

"I resent the mayor of Leland trying to make this a political move, saying the town is saving the library."

—Edith Tillman, Library Trustee

Messer said he has suggested that the building committee secede from the library board and ask that the property be turned over to the committee.

In Brunswick County, county commissioners have no direct control over the county library system, which is run instead by a 12-member board of trustees that meets every other month. Six of the 12 appointed members are appointed by the Southport Board of Aldermen and the balance by the county commissioners.

In March, the library trustees signed an agreement with the building committee to build the Leland area library after a successful five-year fundraising effort was headed by Mrs. Tillman. The committee then signed a construction agreement with the contractor, Luther T. Rogers Inc. of Wilmington.

"We now know the committee cannot sign the construction agreement," she said.

McGinn was also "concerned

about the bidding procedures of this local building committee," said Baldwin.

Library trustees are still refusing to sign a contract, he said.

Since March, the trustees have taken no action on the matter. At a meeting with Leland and library officials last Thursday, McGinn said the board of trustees should not own the land on which libraries are built. Since most library systems are county-owned, it is not a common problem in other areas of the state, said Ms. Tillman.

In January, she registered a deed for trustee ownership of the town's land. However, trustees now want an unanimous vote before signing a contract to build the library, a move Mrs. Tillman said is "quite unusual."

"All indications show that some are opposed to the signing," she said. "I see no way we would get an unanimous vote to sign a contract."

At the Oct. 7 trustees meeting, she plans to ask that the board delay its decision on whether to turn the

project over to Leland until after the November elections.

"We need to know who the negotiator will be," said Mrs. Tillman.

The library board has misled people for months, claims Messer.

"Apparently, they are not in the library business," he said. "The people of northern Brunswick County want to build a library and these people have failed to function."

He also accused Baldwin of trying to gain control of the library, of stepping in to make unnecessary changes to the project, with causing delays and placing the state grant in jeopardy.

"It's just been stalled and stalled and stalled," said Messer, "and we're tired of it. The northern part of the county wants to build the best library, but somebody doesn't want to see that happen. It's going to be built."

Messer said if the community has to assume responsibility for building the library, then the county library board should have no say over how it is operated. He said Brunswick County Commissioners should either establish a countywide library system or allow the Leland library building committee to succeed from the present board and form a system of its own.

"If we have to build it and take responsibility for it," said Messer, "we don't need them to tell us how

to run it."

He hopes to meet with northern area mayors, Baldwin and Louis "Bobby" Brown, mayor of Navassa, to "see if we can't get it back on the right track." The town of Navassa has also donated money to the library project.

Baldwin said he is hopeful that the situation can be resolved so that ground can be broken for the library in January. It would take until December to get the paperwork in order, he said.

Leland Town Attorney Glen Peterson is acting as liaison between the town and the trustees to iron out problems, Baldwin said.

The \$217,000 in donations will still be used to build a library, said Baldwin.

"They couldn't actually get it (donation) back unless there's a major change in the resolution," said Baldwin. "They would have no grounds."

He said the library is too important to let personality conflicts stand in the way of building it.

Plans are to build a 4,000-square-foot colonial style building with a raised roof and town clock. Leland will build a street next to the town hall to provide access to the library.

The present Leland Library is a used mobile office building at the old Leland school park next to the post office.



PHOTO BY BOBBY LEWIS

Class Trains In Extrication

An emergency medical technician (EMT) class in progress at Calabash EMS received training in vehicle extrication Saturday from Gregory Cain, chief of the Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department. Learning to "flap" a roof for quick access to a patient above are (from left, clockwise) Bobby Lewis, Suzanne Cain, Greg Cain, Lisa Chaney, Greg Wood and EMT class instructor Dirk Parkson.

Shiny White Tops Cooling Off Buses

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County students traveling to and from school in buses with shiny white tops this fall are getting a cooler, more comfortable ride than fellow students whose buses happen to be yellow all over.

Interior temperatures are averaging about 12 degrees cooler for the 17 white-capped buses, William Turner, an assistant superintendent with the Brunswick County Schools, said last week after checks of electric digital thermometers mounted inside several yellow and white buses for comparison purposes.

In checks made Aug. 28, the temperatures varied anywhere from 4 degrees to a high of 17 degrees. At 12 noon, yellow top buses checked in at 104 degrees Fahrenheit and the white top buses at 87 degrees. At 3 p.m. the difference was less, but still noticeable—85 degrees in the yellow bus and 81 degrees in the white.

"We have 131 buses and we have 131 people (drivers) wanting

to know why can't they have white tops," he told county board of education members in a briefing on the experiment.

After one month of observation, Turner is optimistic that when the formal comparison ends, he'll be recommending to the state Department of Public Instruction that the state put white tops on all its buses.

The white tops are providing an unexpected bonus as well.

"I've been getting calls," said Turner. "People tell me they can see the buses better. The white paint is enamel and it shines."

The buses are being used on selected routes at Union Primary near Shallotte, South Brunswick Middle at Boiling Spring Lakes, and Southport Elementary in Southport.

Bypass To Get Caution Light

A flashing caution light is going up at the intersection of Old Shallotte Road (S.R. 1316) and U.S. 17 (the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte).

Division Engineer Doug Bowers of the N.C. Department of Transportation said the safety device will be placed at that location due to DOT's concern for the safety of construction sites along the Shallotte bypass, and to caution oncoming heavy traffic through that general area.

The light will flash yellow on the

bypass and red on Old Shallotte Road.

Bowers estimated that the signal will be operational within the next few weeks.

Last week Brunswick County Board of Education member Polly Russ informed fellow board members that the caution light would be going up. She said she and others had contacted DOT with concerns about the heavy traffic at the intersection, particularly the large number of school buses crossing it.

24 Hour Watch Planned For Parolees

The Division of Adult Probation and Parole of the NC Department of Correction has announced that effective Sept. 3, officers will now be available around the clock to respond to violations by offenders under electronic house arrest.

Brunswick County will soon join the 16 other counties who already are taking part in the program. Norman Holden, unit supervisor of probation services at the county complex in Bolivia, estimated that Brunswick and 57 other counties should have the necessary equipment to implement the plan within three months.

Since electronic house arrest became available statewide in January, some judges have indicated a reluctance to sentence offenders into the program without a 24-hour response by officers to reported violations. Several state lawmakers have also urged development of 24-hour response capabilities.

"We have one of the finest electronic house arrest systems in the country, but the system is not being fully utilized," said state Correction Secretary Aaron Johnson. "We hope that changes being made in the system will persuade judges around the state to sentence more offenders to house arrest."

In addition to answering calls Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., probation and parole officers will now be serving on response teams and responding to reported electronic house arrest violations at night (5 p.m.-8 a.m.) and on weekends.

"Fast response will allow us to begin the process of revoking offenders and seeking orders from the courts or Parole Commission to return them to custody," says John Patseavouras, director of the Division of Adult Probation and Parole.

The program will cost about \$450,000 and is expected to be funded in the first year through the

use of lapsed salaries. The funds will train, equip, and pay probation/parole officers who agree to serve on-call shifts.

Since the officers will be facing the increased danger of going to offender's homes in the night, the division is providing officers with special training and will equip them with handguns.

So far this year, 1,905 probationers and parolees have been placed on electronic house arrest. Currently, 559 offenders are being supervised under the plan. The system can handle up to 3,400 offenders daily.

"We hope that judges will sentence offenders to house arrest so that prisons can house the more serious offenders," says Secretary Johnson.

Under the statewide system, electronic house arrest specialists monitor computers that receive information by phone lines from a receiver in the offender's home. When the system indicates a violation may

have occurred, the specialist calls the offender's residence to verify the violation.

Once an officer determines a violation has occurred, he must go to the courts or state parole commission to revoke the offender's probation or parole.

It costs the state \$50 per day per inmate to imprison an average offender, but only \$2.88 per day per offender on electronic house arrest.

Said Secretary Johnson of the benefits of the program, "The courts continue to send record numbers of offenders to prison, and placing some of these offenders on house arrest may help keep more serious offenders imprisoned longer."

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