



### 100th Day

Some students, like Bolivia fourth grader James Connolly, spent Friday learning about "100" as schools marked the 100th day of classes. The story's on Page 4-B.



### Solid Ground

Commissioners aren't wavering on their 3-2 decision to hire a private trash hauler, despite numerous petitions seeking a reversal. See Page 8-A.

### South Takes Lead

Latonya Hankins and the South Brunswick Lady Cougars took over first place in the Waccamaw 2-A Friday with a win over West Brunswick. Details are on Page 9-B.



# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Thirtieth Year, Number 14

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Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, February 6, 1992

50¢ Per Copy

40 Pages, 3 Sections, 1 Insert

## Shallotte Board Blasts Plans For Post Office

BY DOUG RUTTER

Saying it will hurt local merchants, Shallotte officials Tuesday blasted a plan to move most postal service operations from the downtown office to the new South Brunswick station.

"We're going to do everything we can to keep it here in town," Mayor Sarah Tripp said at Tuesday night's town meeting. "We kind of feel let down by the situation."

Mrs. Tripp said town officials were left entirely out of the decision to move the operations to the new office at Sunset Beach. "Nobody consulted us in any way."

Letters opposing the plans were mailed last week to U.S. Postal Service officials in Fayetteville and Greensboro as well as Congressman Charlie Rose.

Town officials fear moving postal operations from the downtown office will mean less traffic and fewer customers for area businesses.

"When they come for their mail, hopefully we get some revenue," Alderman Paul Wayne Reeves said. "What concerns me is the loss of people."

Superintendent of Postal Operations Ron Reeves, who attended Tuesday's session in place of Postmaster Frank Bringoli, agreed with the concerns.

"You have me in your corner," he told the board. "I agree that the post office should work hand in hand with the town officials on any move and this is a major move."

Bringoli told *The Brunswick Beacon* in December that he plans to move most mail-handling operations and employees to the new station on N.C. 904 at Sunset Beach.

Carriers for all 10 area routes will work out of the new office, as will the postmaster. Reeves expects the move to occur in mid-March.

Window and box service will continue in Shallotte,

where two employees will be stationed.

"This still will be the main office in name, but that's about the extent of it," Reeves said of the Shallotte office.

"It's not too late for it to be reversed," he added. "Even after we move it's not too late to be reversed."

Reeves, who is second in command at the Shallotte Post Office, said the postmaster has a responsibility to the people he serves and should be located where they can have contact with him.

"I think when the postmaster is removed from the main body of people he serves that's cause for concern," Reeves said. "It's not proper. It's not proper at all for the postmaster to be out of the main office."

Alderman Roney Cheers vowed to fight the postmaster's plans. "I think it's a far-fetched idea, and as a member of this board I am opposed to it."

Cheers later asked Reeves to deliver a message to

his boss: "You can advise him that Congressman Rose's office has been notified."

Reeves, the only local resident on the committee that helped select the site for the new office, said Sunset Beach was chosen because of the growth in that area of the county.

But Cheers said he believes there were factors other than growth involved in the selection of the Seaside location.

"I'm almost sure politics entered into it like everything else," he said. "There's even politics in the church."

Reeves said he wasn't influenced by politics. The final decision on the site was made by postal service officials in Fayetteville, he said.

### Other Business

In other business Tuesday, aldermen: (See SHALLOTTE, PAGE 2-A)



APPROXIMATELY 15 YEARS after other county government offices relocated to the complex at Bolivia, the Brunswick County Board of Education is asking to make the move. School offices are housed in a 60-year-old building at Southport that previously served as the county home, with six trailers picking up the overflow.

## Filing Opens Monday For Some If Not All Political Offices

BY SUSAN USHER

Barring a last-minute vote by the state's General Assembly, candidates can begin filing for county offices Monday at noon, but candidates for state legislature and U.S. Congress may have to wait.

Local seats up for election this year are the Districts 1, 3 and 4 seats on the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners and Brunswick County Board of Education, county coroner and county register of deeds.

The Brunswick County Board of Elections office is located at the county government complex at Bolivia.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the state legislature had yet to hear from the U.S. Justice Department on whether

it had accepted new redistricting plans for state House, state Senate and Congressional seats, said Rep. David Redwine.

Meeting Monday in Raleigh, he said legislators adopted a plan to cover several contingencies.

If the plans were approved by the Justice Department Tuesday or Wednesday, then filing for all seats would begin at noon Monday, Feb. 10. Otherwise, only candidates for local office can begin filing Monday.

Barring that early Justice Department decision, if the plans are approved after today (Thursday) but before Feb. 15, then filing will begin at 12 noon Feb. 17 for seats in the state House and Senate and U.S. (See FILING, Page 2-A)

## Schools Make Case For Building Plan

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County school officials made their case for a \$17.5 million, five-year construction program before the county board of commissioners Tuesday night.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden described the four-part presentation as almost a "state of the schools address," saying it was a lot more information than the board had expected.

Commissioners also heard a re-

sponse, of sorts, to that address, in public comments from audience members Tom Pope of Thomasboro and Warren "Bud" Knapp of Calabash. Both men expressed concerns about the state of the school system in light of its second "report card" from the state (See related board of education story in this issue).

Pope questioned whether taxpayers are getting what they pay for and warned commissioners that, "With

an 'F,' we don't need to worry about future growth..."

"I am appalled that the business community of Brunswick County is not more concerned about it," he continued, adding that most industries would put in place "new management" in a similar situation.

His comments paralleled those offered by his wife, Janet, at the school board's meeting Monday night.

Knapp raised similar general con-

cerns, saying the county needs to realize the schools have a problem that should be addressed.

In their earlier presentation, school system leaders asked commissioners to get back to them quickly with word on whether they should begin planning construction of a new administrative office at the county complex.

"We don't want to have to wait until July to start planning," said (See SCHOOLS, Page 2-A)

## Commissioners Set 120-Day Deadline For Zoning Ordinance

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County planners have 120 days to prepare a "basic" zoning ordinance for consideration by the Brunswick County Commissioners.

Meeting Tuesday, commissioners voted 4-1 in favor of District 3 member Gene Pinkerton's motion to set a deadline on the long-awaited set of regulations, making it clear they want to move ahead quickly with adoption of an ordinance.

Lost in other thoughts at the moment, District 4 Commissioner Frankie Rabon almost didn't vote no, slipping in his usual answer on zoning matters just as Chairman Kelly Holden began declaring the vote unanimous.

Holden, Pinkerton and Jones said that during the round of public meetings held in January on the county's CAMA land use plan update, zoning, solid waste management and education were the top issues raised by county residents. A need for zoning was the concern most mentioned at the District 3 meeting, Pinkerton said.

Pointing out that commissioners started asking for a zoning ordinance two years ago, Holden said he thought it was "about time" to set a deadline for getting the job done.

*"I've been hearing it was coming for a good while."*

—Gene Pinkerton  
District 3 Commissioner

Zoning, a means of guiding land use, also received support of a majority of those participating in a "straw poll" conducted in conjunction with the November 1991 elections.

Pinkerton first offered a motion setting a 60-day time limit. Warned that might be unrealistic, he extended the limit to 120 days.

District 2 Commissioner Jerry Jones, the commissioners' liaison with the planning board, said he understands that the planning department has been tied up with work on the 911 system, road naming and staffing changes.

"It's coming shortly, I think," he said of the requested ordinance.

But that answer didn't satisfy others on the board.

"I've been hearing it was coming for a good

while," said Pinkerton. "But 911 is almost finished."

If time and/or staffing are a problem in getting the ordinance drafted, said Pinkerton, "I have no problem with getting him help to get the ordinance done that we've been waiting for two years."

Two years ago commissioners designated the county planning board as the lead agency for getting the ordinance drafted, with the expectation that work would begin on the ordinance shortly thereafter.

The board has since told County Planning Director John Harvey it expects the ordinance to be completed. To date, no draft ordinance has been presented for the Planning Board's consideration. Once approved by the planning board the proposed ordinance would then go to the commissioners for consideration.

In an unrelated request, Rabon asked County Manager David Clegg to check on what the county needs to do to establish extended-area service within the county. The matter would have to go before the state Utilities Commission. If approved, such a system would make all calls within the county toll-free.

## High Wants Court Ruling On 1991 Drug Conviction

BY TERRY POPE

A former Calabash businessman sentenced to 70 years in prison on cocaine trafficking and conspiracy charges last year wants a judge to overturn those convictions next week.

Jerry Lynn High, 40, of North Myrtle Beach, S.C., says he was illegally charged and sentenced in Brunswick County Superior Court in January 1991.

In a motion filed Dec. 16, High asks to appear in court to argue for his release on bail and to have his convictions declared illegal. That hearing is scheduled Monday, Feb. 10, before Superior Court Judge Giles R. Clark.

High was convicted by a jury on two counts of trafficking by possession of more than 400 grams of cocaine, one count of trafficking by transporting more than 400 grams of cocaine and two counts of conspiracy to traffic and possess more than 400 grams of cocaine.

Those cases were consolidated for sentencing by Superior Court Judge William C. Gore Jr., who gave High two consecutive 35-year terms and gave him credit for 582 days spent in prison while awaiting trial. He was also fined \$500,000.

The motion contends that High's conviction violates the double jeopardy law under North Carolina state statutes, as he was convicted on two possession and two conspiracy charges. High believes the state trafficking law also covers transportation of drugs, as well as possession charges.

He also argues that the court sentence of 70 years in prison "was excessive, unjustified and (not) in proportion to sentences handed down to other similarly-situated defendants."

Trafficking of more than 400 grams of cocaine carries a maximum of 40 years in prison, a minimum of 35 years in prison and a fine of not less than \$250,000 on each count.

The case has also been appealed to the N.C. Court of Appeals. In October 1990, High had reached a plea agreement with the district attorney's office. He had agreed to plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to traffic in cocaine and one count of possession of more than 400 grams of cocaine in exchange for dismissal of the other charges.

Judge Clark later refused to accept the plea because High had indicated on the transcript that he was not

guilty of the charges.

A special investigative grand jury indicted High in June 1989 for his role in two drug trafficking cases.

He was accused of conspiring with Dewey Earl Rhodes and others to traffic in and to possess more than 400 grams of cocaine on Dec. 28, 1987. Another indictment accused him of conspiring with Christopher V. Parham and Allen Dale Brooks to traffic in and to possess more than 400 grams of cocaine on Jan. 2, 1988.

During sentencing, Judge Gore noted High's prior convictions for criminal offenses as an aggravating factor. High had previously been sentenced to 13 years in prison in 1984 in connection with the "U-Haul" marijuana smuggling case in Brunswick County dating back to the early 1980s.

Judge Gore issued the 70-year sentence immediately after the verdict was returned Jan. 22, but High had wanted to continue sentencing.

Gore's refusal to continue sentencing "substantially impaired defendant counsel's ability to adequately argue sentencing" or to allow time to present evidence at the sentencing, thereby prejudicing High, his motion states.

High had chosen to represent himself at the trial, al-

though the court appointed a stand-by counsel, Robert Floyd of Shallotte.

Another motion filed by High in July was denied by Superior Court Judge B. Craig Ellis. High had asked that the court rule his conviction illegal, alleging that he was indicted by a grand jury of fewer than 12 members.

Ellis ruled that the Superior Court lacked jurisdiction to rule on that matter since the case is now before the N.C. Court of Appeals.

### Sentencings On Docket

Also docketed for the special two-week session of Superior Court that begins in Bolivia Monday are sentencings for Henderson Matthew Davis and Roger Dale Godwin.

Davis, 36, of Route 1, Leland, earlier pleaded guilty to second-degree murder. He was charged in August with the shooting death of his mother, Juanita Grady, 53, who was shot in the head during a domestic dispute.

Godwin, 34, of Route 1, Clarendon, pleaded no contest last month to one count of breaking or entering a home. He was one of three men charged with a string of break-ins on Sunset Beach in January 1991.