

# Bookkeeper Gets 20 Years For Taking \$147,000

BY TERRY POPE

A bookkeeper accused of diverting more than \$147,000 from an Ocean Isle Beach developer was sentenced in Brunswick County Superior Court last week to 20 years in prison.

Catha Camp Mitchell, 35, of Masonboro Loop Road, Wilmington, pleaded guilty to one count of obtaining property under false pretense, seven counts of forgery and seven counts of uttering.

She was a bookkeeper for Sloane/Anderson Builders Inc. of Ocean Isle last year when the money disappeared. Grand jury indictments accused her of forging names on wire transfers and company checks to divert money into her husband's account, at Atlantic Coast Environmental Consulting.

Charges were consolidated for sentencing by Judge William C. Gore Jr. last Wednesday, Feb. 12. The prison term will run concurrent with a sentence she is now serving on an embezzlement conviction in New Hanover County.

Gore recommended work release when Ms. Mitchell becomes eligible and ordered that she make restitution to the victim and participate in psychological testing.

According to court records, she was convicted on forgery charges in 1983 and 1987 in Durham County Superior Court and on an obtaining property under false pretense charge in January 1988 in Durham County.

After spending about three years in prison, she was paroled Oct. 23, 1989, the records show.

Wilmington police charged her with five counts of embezzlement in May 1990. She was convicted on all five counts and sentenced to three years' probation and ordered to repay more than \$1,300 for checks she cashed belonging to a Wilmington business.

Sloane/Anderson Builders filed suit against Ms. Mitchell in Brunswick County Superior Court in October, hoping to recoup the company's money that was reported to have been used to build and furnish Ms. Mitchell's home in Wilmington.

Judge Gore also heard the following cases during the Feb. 10-13 session of Superior Court:

■Gregory Allen Robinson, 32, of Route 1, Supply, admitted to a probation violation, six-year sentence, credit for time served awaiting a hearing, not recommended for work release.

■Aaron Michael Burke, 19, of E. Beach Drive, Long Beach, admitted to a probation violation, continue on curfew and intensive probation.

■Charles Edward Stanley, 27, of Route 1, Ash, pleaded guilty to one count of possession of a controlled substance, five-year sentence, suspended, five years' supervised probation, ordered not to possess any controlled substances or illegal drugs, submit to tests, not associate with co-defendant Robert Collins, pay \$250 attorney

fees (Feb. 10). At defendant's request, in Feb. 13 session judge revoked probation and activated five-year sentence.

■James Elliot Hargrove III, 21, of West Street, Southport, admitted to a probation violation, three-year sentence with treatment for cocaine abuse.

■Charles Lewis Holmes Jr., 20, of Leland, admitted to a probation violation, continue on probation, pay a supervision fee, attorney cost remitted, ordered not to possess or consume alcoholic beverages, submit to tests, participate in the Impact program, pay restitution except what has been paid by co-defendants.

■Kristyn Jennifer Lind, 23, of Midway Park, Shallotte, sentenced for two counts of obtaining property under false pretense, seven days in jail.

■Marlie Frank Green, 25, of Long Beach, pleaded guilty to two counts of second-degree burglary, driving while license revoked and consuming malt beverage in a passenger area, charges consolidated, 14-year sentence, credit for time served awaiting trial, recommended treatment for alcohol abuse and DART (prison drug and alcohol rehabilitation program), pay \$500 attorney fees.

■Chuck Edward Gabbard, 30, of Pine Drive, Southport, defense motion to dismiss drunk and disruptive charge at close of state's evidence allowed.

■Ronnie Daniels, 34, of Ocean Isle Beach, admits probation violation, six-year sentence activated at defendant's request, with treatment for cocaine abuse recommended.

■Larry Lampkins, 21, of Route 2, Leland, pleaded guilty to felonious possession of stolen property, five-year sentence, pay \$300 attorney fees.

■Glen Williams Dowe, 26, of Ballard's Mobile Home Park, Leland, found not guilty by a jury on charges of selling cocaine and possession with intent to sell cocaine.

■Mitchell Dean Rodgers, 30, of Route 3, Shallotte, pleaded guilty to driving 50 mph in a 35 mph zone, court costs, voluntary dismissal of driving while impaired charge.

■David Eugene McNeil, 23, of Shallotte, asked that sentence be activated following probation violation, two-year sentence to run concurrent with sentence now serving, recommended for DART program for alcohol rehabilitation, no recommendation as to work release.

■Steven Lee Steel, 44, of E. Moore Street, Southport, mistrial declared after jury could not reach a verdict on breaking and entering, larceny and possession charges.

■Roger Dale Godwin, 35, of Route 2, Tabor City, pleaded guilty to felonious breaking and entering, three-year sentence, credit for time served awaiting trial.

Godwin was charged with a string of break-ins at Sunset Beach in January 1991. He pleaded guilty to breaking into a home owned by Greg Gore on E. Main Street and faced a maximum of 10 years in prison.

# Gunman Robs Manager of Cedar Hill Road Nightclub

BY TERRY POPE

Detectives have a suspect in the armed robbery of a local nightclub last Thursday, Feb. 13.

According to Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Sanders, someone entered the Crowd Pleaser Lounge on Cedar Hill Road with a gun and demanded money. The club is located in the Phoenix community in northern Brunswick County.

A manager told deputies the suspect entered the building with a small container filled with a liquid. When asked to leave, the man told the manager, "You listen to me. I'm not going anywhere," Sanders reported.

He then reached into his jacket and pulled out a .38-caliber pistol and placed it against the manager's chest, saying that he "wanted everything inside of his store, including the money," Sanders reported.

The gunman followed the manager behind the bar to a cash box where he was given about \$150, the report states. The suspect then backed out of the store with the gun pointed at the manager.

The case is still under investigation.

In other reports on file at the sheriff's department:

■Burglars who forced a door open stole two video recorders and a television from the Touch of Class shop on N.C. 179 at Ocean Isle Feb. 12,

## CRIME REPORT

Deputy J.M. Adams reported.

■A 1991 Nissan reported stolen from a Pigott Road home Feb. 14 was found on Bay Road at Shallotte Point, wrecked and with its radio speakers removed, Adams reported.

Deputy Randy Robinson said the \$13,000 vehicle had been hot-wired, had a broken window and a flat tire.

■Thieves broke into the Paul Clewis Engine Repair shop on N.C. 130 west Friday and took a computer tester, radio, air wrench, tools and gauges valued at \$2,340, Adams reported.

■A video camera worth \$1,300 was stolen from a Thomasboro Road home near Calabash Feb. 13, after someone entered the home through a bedroom window, Deputy Becky McDonald reported.

■Equipment worth \$2,900 was stolen from the Striplap Hose Manufacturing building in the Leland Industrial Park between Feb. 1-15, reported Deputy William Hewett. A copier, telephone equipment and wheelbarrow are missing.

■Four orange traffic cones, worth \$100 and owned by the Brunswick County Water Department, were stolen Feb. 13 from the construction site at Supply Elementary School, reported Sgt. Gene Browning.

■A 1987 Ford van, valued at

\$15,000, was reported stolen by a Southport resident Feb. 12, Deputy Charles Crocker reported. The van had been loaned to a friend for hauling furniture, but has not been returned.

■Someone broke a window at the H.B. Lee Oil Company in Leland Friday, setting off an alarm, Deputy Richard DuVall reported. Damage was estimated at \$200, and a \$100 television was taken.

■Drink machines were vandalized at the St. James Plantation tennis pro shop and in front of the Rose's Department Store in Southport Saturday. An estimated \$150 in change was taken from the St. James machine and an undetermined amount from the Rose's site, Deputy Cathy Hamilton reported.

■Damage was estimated at \$675 to a mobile home in Southgate Estates shot by a BB gun Friday, reported Ms. Hamilton. A glass door was broken and a wall damaged.

■Two teen-agers who gathered and stole 1,100 golf balls from the Pro Tee Driving Range on N.C. 179 at Brickland were caught Feb. 13, Adams reported. One suspect agreed to return the balls, valued at \$286, that were hidden in a shed on Copas Road. That suspect agreed to work at the range in retribution, but the second suspect did not report for work.

## SEVEN ATTEND MEETING

# Few Are Talking About Proposed County Noise Ordinance

BY TERRY POPE

A proposed Brunswick County noise ordinance drew few comments Monday night.

Seven people attended the public hearing, and only a few spoke.

An ordinance was first written in 1990 in response to residents' complaints about unruly neighbors, but the draft never made it to a public hearing. County commissioners pulled it from the shelf last month in response to more complaints from the Holden Beach area, where loud

music was reportedly knocking items off of residents' walls.

Commissioners took no action on the ordinance Monday.

Glenn Owens of Bolivia told commissioners the ordinance would involve the county in "policing of neighbors' squabbles."

"I think it's going to be a lot of money spent unnecessarily," said Owens.

Brunswick County sheriff's deputies are now powerless when responding to noise complaints. With-

out an ordinance on the books, deputies can only ask neighbors to turn down their stereos, to stop hammering or to quit making other noises in areas where there is no municipal noise ordinance in effect.

Punishment for violating the ordinance would be up to a \$500 fine or a 30-day jail term. Warrants would have to be filed through a magistrate's office.

It would only be enforced when there is a "blatant disregard and disrespect for one's neighbors," said County Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden.

But Owens said it may prompt feuding neighbors to make more frequent calls to the sheriff's department. The document sets no decibel level to help define when a noise is labeled a nuisance.

"You have to take a reading on it," said Tom Yeagle of Supply. "There's not a noise level stated in here."

The ordinance prohibits operating a radio, television, tape recorder, musical instrument, loudspeaker, phonograph or other electronic machine so that the noise or sound is audible at a distance of 50 feet from a building, structure, property or vehicle.

But many noises are heard beyond 50 feet away, said Yeagle. The ordinance should define nuisance noises rather than just loud noises, he said.

When persons learn that there is no ordinance, they often "turn the boom boxes even louder," said Holden, "knowing that nothing could be done."

He said the most complaints have come from the Holden Beach, Ocean Isle, Sunset Beach and Boiling Spring Lakes communities.

"I'm just mighty concerned about it," said Owens. "You'll start putting an ordinance in effect for the south end of the county that's going to affect the whole county, in areas without the urban development."

District 4 Commissioner Frankie Rabon said he is concerned that a paragraph prohibits the keeping of any animal that causes a noise to disturb, injure or endanger the quiet, comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of any other person.

"We're not going to put a muzzle on Mr. Rabon's deer dogs," added Holden.

Rabon owns "about 46" deer dogs in rural Town Creek, but they are far enough away from neighbors so that they do not disturb anyone, he said. But what about other animals in

more populated areas? he asked.

Rabon agree that it would be difficult to enforce a noise ordinance unless a reading is taken on volume.

With loud music, "once you get the decimeter out they're going to be gone anyway," said Rabon. "It's difficult, unless you have a constant noise to get a reading from."

Some feuding neighbors have resorted to taking out trespassing warrants against one another because of loud noises, said County Attorney David Clegg. It's up to the courts to decide if noise damage is a form of trespassing.

The proposed ordinance would also prohibit excessive noises from firms and corporations; loud horns

or signaling devices except as danger warnings; noises from chain saws, power mowers, motorboats or vehicles without mufflers; unnecessary grating, grinding or rattling noises from an automobile, motorcycle or other engine; shouting or crying of peddlers, hawkers and vendors; and drums or musical instruments to attract attention to a show or sale.

It would not apply to fire, rescue, sheriff or other emergency vehicles; parades; sporting events; public functions; churches; and activities conducted in a gym, arena, theatre, amphitheater, swimming pool, stadium, rifle range, gun club or other similar sporting facility.

## Two Drivers Escape Injuries

Two drivers escaped injuries Sunday afternoon in a wreck on U.S. 17 near Calabash.

Melvin Russell Riley, 80, of Southport was charged with failure to yield after his car pulled into the path of another car, State Trooper B.L. Wilkes reported.

According to Wilkes' report, Riley had stopped at a stop sign at the intersection of Persimmon Road (S.R. 1167) and U.S. 17. He then

pulled his 1986 Ford into the southbound lane of U.S. 17, Wilkes stated.

The Riley vehicle was struck by a 1990 Mercury traveling north and driven by Donald E. Blair, 69, of Nassau, New York, Wilkes stated.

Damage was estimated at \$2,500 to the Riley car and \$2,000 to the Blair vehicle. Neither driver was transported to the hospital following the 3 p.m. accident.

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