



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

LINWOOD GRAY receives a pat on the back from his boss, Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis, at a retirement dinner last week. Gray's wife, Irene, is at his side.

Beloved Court Bailiff Set For Retirement

BY TERRY POPE

For 17 years, Linwood Gray has been a familiar face around the Brunswick County Courthouse.

The Shallotte resident retired last week from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and vows now to spend more time traveling with his wife of 44 years, Irene.

"It's kind of a sobering thought," noted Gray at a retirement dinner held in his honor by fellow deputies. "It's the first time in about 50 years that I've not had a job."

He began as a jailer in 1975 but for years has served as court bailiff, acting as messenger and usher of prisoners to and from the courtroom.

"That's a pretty long sentence," he added, while checking the exact dates on a retirement cake.

For 15 years, Gray also owned a gas station in Shallotte.

Now the couple plans to buy a truck and camper and travel the United States.

Those at the dinner last week, in-

cluding their three children and two grandchildren all had kind things to say about Gray.

"I'm thankful that the Good Lord has blessed us this long," added Mrs. Gray.

On a lighter note, Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis joked that he would make sure Gray still had a key to the courtroom in case he had trouble sleeping at nights. He could then settle into his favorite chair by the courtroom door, added Davis.

"During the time that he worked in the jail," said Davis, "all of the prisoners loved him just as much as I do."

A larger than expected crowd gathered for the dinner at a Shallotte restaurant.

"The next time I hold a departmental meeting I'm going to tell everyone it's a party for Mr. Gray," said Davis "so they'll all show up. He's been mighty gracious to me. He's a fine, fine person."

District Attorney Rex Gore said he has worked with Gray as an attorney, when the retiree helped to keep clients safe, and as a prosecutor in the courtroom.

"What I've enjoyed is talking with him about things that have nothing to do with any of our jobs," said Gore, "of knowing him not just as a comrade but as a person."

Gray received an engraved watch and plaque from the Sheriff's Department honoring his years of dedicated service.

"He is truly a man of his word," said Gore. "You can count on him."

"Those kind of men are rare today. I hope people can say the same thing about us when we're no longer employed."

Court Deputy Troy Dunkin said Gray is a man that "lives what he says."

"I don't think you can say anything more about a man," said Dunkin, "than that he's lived what he said."

Arson Suspected In Mobile Home Fires

BY TERRY POPE

Arson is suspected in fires that destroyed two unoccupied mobile homes on Cedar Hill Road (S.R. 1430) in the Phoenix community north of Leland Sunday morning.

The adjacent homes burned simultaneously around 11:20 a.m., reported Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputy Steve Mason.

A neighbor saw smoke coming from the area and at first thought it was a woods fire, Mason reported. The man then went to the Phoenix Country Store on Mt. Misery Road to call the Leland Volunteer Fire Department.

Brunswick County Fire Marshal Cecil Logan and Sheriff's Detective Ken Messer are investigating. The homes are owned by two brothers who had a feud over property about two years ago. Two brick homes burned as a result of that incident, Messer noted.

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

■ Damage was \$300 to a ramp and post at Victoria's Ragpach in Calabash Saturday, reported Deputy Keithan Horne. Someone pulled a

CRIME REPORT

post from a concrete bed at the Ragpach Row shop.

■ A boat motor and gas container valued at \$745 were stolen from a home in Sea Village Saturday, Horne reported. The resident woke up and saw the items missing.

■ A car parked behind the Carolina Shores 76 station sustained \$200 in damage Friday, reported Deputy Richard Long II. A glass, glove box and door handle were broken, and a tire rim was stolen.

■ Someone tried to break into a home at Holiday Ranches Saturday, causing damage to a front door, reported Deputy Robert Allen. However, nothing was taken.

■ Nothing was stolen during a break-in at a home in Villa Nova Mobile Home Park in Southport Saturday evening, Deputy Becky McDonald reported. Someone reached through a window, unlocked a door and scattered items inside the home.

■ A child staying with grandparents in the Brick Landing community south of Shallotte may have been taken by a parent to California,

Detective Billy Hughes reported. The father, who had custody of the child, reported Thursday, April 30, that the boy was taken from the home by its mother without permission.

■ A pry tool was used to break into a Shallotte Point home between April 12 and 26, resulting in \$100 in damage, reported Deputy Patti Hewett. A television worth \$500 and drinks worth \$25 were stolen.

■ A convertible top worth \$550 was stolen from a vehicle parked at Sea Oats Motors in Shallotte Saturday, reported Horne. A gas cap and lens cover, each worth \$10, were also stolen.

■ An employee of Roses Department Store in Southport told Deputy Charles Crocker that someone stole \$20 from her purse while at the store Sunday.

■ Items worth \$3,900 were stolen from a home on Mill Branch Road in Ash Friday, reported Long. Damage was listed at \$300 to a door. Taken were a video recorder, satellite receiver, jewelry and video camera.

BUT FEDS MAY NOT IMPLEMENT

EPA Proposes \$10 Million Cleanup Of Potter's Pits Hazardous Wastes

A hazardous waste site in the Brunswick County town of Sandy Creek is getting the full attention of the Environmental Protection Association (EPA), but the federal agency will stop short of a final Superfund cleanup until North Carolina demonstrates the ability to handle its hazardous waste disposal.

A public meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, at the Hood Creek Community Center on N.C. 87, will be used to inform the public as to preferred plans for a proposed \$10 million cleanup by the EPA.

The 1986 Superfund Amendments and Authorization Act requires a state to build or provide for disposal facilities, meeting certain specifications, in order to qualify for Superfund cleanup money. That congressional action may be used against North Carolina in the case of a Sandy Creek cleanup being planned by the EPA.

Potter's Pits in the area that is now the town of Sandy Creek was a dump site for creosote, oil and septic sludge in the 1970s and it was designated a Superfund site in 1989, based on its scores in the Hazard Ranking System. The site's value for lead, alone, was 64.5, with values above 1.0 indicating an unacceptable risk.

Families in the immediate area of the hazardous pits have been moved out of the community along U.S. 74 76, including the Earl Gurkin Jr. family. Gurkin has said they will return if the site is cleaned up because he has little hope of selling his home, despite the EPA assessment that cancer risks there are between one in 50,000 to three in a million.

The proposed clean-up plan would include groundwater recovery and treatment at a cost of \$5.3 million, which would require about 10 years, and a year or more of soil treatment, costing \$4.7 million.

An on-site treatment plant the size of a small shed would be used to purify the groundwater. Soil cleanup would be accomplished by removing topsoil and heating

it to 300 degrees to 500 degrees, burning off contamination, then returning it to the site.

Diane Barrett, community relations coordinator for the waste management division of Region IV, EPA, said the treatment plans would continue up to the point of implementing them.

"If the state does not at that point meet the requirements of the law," she said, "the EPA will go no further in paying for cleanup." She added that any other entity, such as the state or community, could pick up the tab for remediation.

Had ThermalKEM been successful in its attempts last year to construct a hazardous waste incinerator in Pender County, Barrett said, or if it accomplishes the same objective, currently being pursued, in the town of Woodland in Northampton County, the requirement would be fulfilled and Superfund money would be available.

She said North Carolina had several years ago submitted a plan to EPA for its hazardous waste disposal, but it was rejected as unsuitable and a second plan is now under consideration.

Meanwhile, community participation is being sought in decision-making regarding cleanup of Potter's Pits. EPA is conducting a 30-day public comment period from April 30 to May 30. During this time, the public can make oral comments at the May 12 meeting or submit them in writing to: Diane Barrett, NC Community Relations Coordinator, U.S. EPA, Region 4, North Remedial Superfund Branch, 345 Courtland Street, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30365.

Barrett said every comment will receive a written response and that within 30 days after the close of the comment period, a decision should be made as to remediation in Sandy Creek. The actual cleanup, she said, is at least a year away.

State Board Expected To Increase Funding For Local Road Budgets

The state Board of Transportation is expected to increase funding by \$149,000 for five Brunswick County projects when it meets Friday in Raleigh.

At the 9 a.m. meeting, staff will ask the board to approve project budget increases as follows:

■ \$75,000 in addition to the \$7.17 million previously approved for construction on the U.S. 17 relocation from southeast of Galloway Road (S.R. 1401) to U.S. 17 north of Bolivia, a distance of 6.84 miles called the Bolivia bypass.

■ \$40,000 to complete the paving of 3.7 miles of Royal Oak Road (S.R. 1345), a loop that runs from north of Shallotte toward Supply.

■ \$10,000 to complete paving of 2.1 miles of a segment of Town Creek Road (S.R. 1413A).

■ \$10,000 more for obtaining right-

of-way signatures for various projects in the county;

■ \$5,000 in addition to the \$675,000 previously approved for preliminary engineering and utilities on U.S. 17 from N.C. 211 at Supply to N.C. 87 at Bell Swamp, a distance of 13.5 miles.

Also, the board is expected to authorize the transportation secretary to

allocate \$9,000 to the Cape Fear Council of Governments to assist in preparation of a regional transportation study for Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover and Pender counties.

The transportation board meets in the Highway Building in Raleigh. Marilyn Williams of Wilmington is the board member who represents Brunswick County.

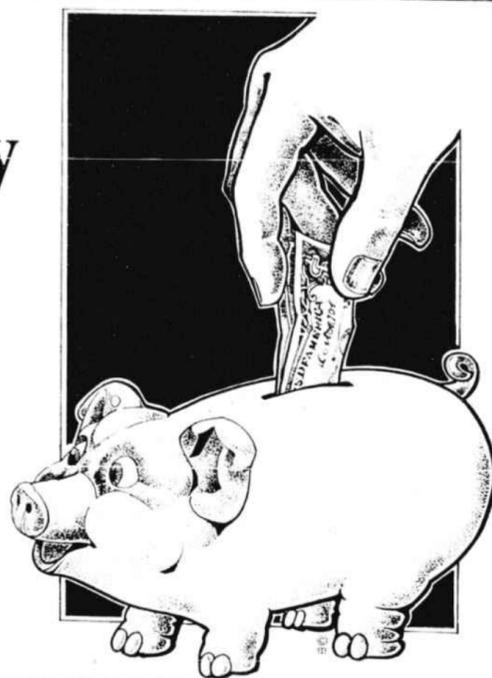
Student, Parent Orientation Set

Parents of South Brunswick Middle School eighth graders preparing to make the transition to high school next year can get answers to some of their questions at an informational session Monday, May 11, at South Brunswick High School.

Guidance counselors and department representatives will be avail-

able at the high school at Boiling Spring Lakes from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. to meet with parents of incoming ninth graders and the students themselves, said Guidance Counselor Marsha Cochran. They will be available to answer questions, register students for classes and provide tours of the school.

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