

N.C. ALE AGENCY CRACKS DOWN

Agents Raid Illegal Bars, Arrest Six In Brunswick

N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement agents raided seven illegal "shot houses" in Brunswick County last week, arresting six people and seizing liquor, wine and beer intended for resale.

The raids were part of a three-county sweep of illegal liquor operations. Warrants were obtained after undercover agents visited the establishments while posing as customers, said ALE Agent Tom Harper.

Most of the illegal nightclubs were located in rural areas, far from traditional outlets for alcohol. Many of those arrested have been involved in illicit liquor sales before, Harper said.

"None of these people are strangers to the business of bootlegging," Harper said. "Most of them only keep small quantities (of liquor) on hand because they know they might be seized."

In addition to the Brunswick warrants, three suspects were arrested in Pender County and two in Columbus County. Most of the raids were conducted Friday night. More arrests are expected.

At a club known as Freeman's on Mulberry Street in Shallotte, agents arrested Freeman Hankins, 35, of that address and charged him with two counts of selling tax-paid liquor and two counts of possession for the purpose of resale.

During a raid at Gore's Service Station on N.C. 211 in Supply, Daniel C. Gore, 43, of Route 3, Supply, was arrested and charged with two counts of selling tax-paid liquor and three counts of possession for the purpose of resale. Twelve cans of beer were seized at the establishment, Harper said.

Elijah Johnson, 69, was arrested at his home on Robinson Road (S.R. 1403) in Bolivia and charged with one count of selling tax-paid liquor and one count of possessing liquor for sale without proper permits.

Also arrested at Johnson's house was Carolyn Bryant, 37, of Route 2, Bolivia. She was charged with two counts of selling liquor and two counts of possession for the purpose of sale.

Warren Evans, 40, of Route 2, Bolivia, was arrested at his home and charged with three counts of liquor sales and four counts of possession for resale. Agents seized 97 cans of beer and eight liters of liquor.

At a club known as The Wolf's Den in Spring Hill community, agents arrested Leroy Hill, 69, of Route 5, Leland. He was charged with three counts of selling liquor, three counts of possession for the purpose of resale and one charge of misdemeanor conspiracy to sell alcohol without permits. Officers seized 26 cans of beer, 1.5 liters of wine and 750 ml of liquor.

The Oak Inn on Blue Banks Loop Road in Leland was also raided and searched. Arrests are expected in the case after agents seized 73 cans of beer and 3.5 liters of liquor, Harper said.

More arrests are planned in Southport in connection with another illegal liquor operation there, Harper said. Warrants have been left with the Southport Police Department, he said.

Assisting in the arrests was Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputy Mike Speck, who is under contract to the county alcoholic beverage control board.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON
JOSEPH GORE (left) looks on as Calabash Fire Chief Jerry Prince examines the faulty wiring blamed for the Thursday afternoon fire that destroyed Gore's mobile home.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

Fire Destroys Mobile Home Near Calabash

Joseph Gore saw smoke billowing above the trees as he turned onto Pinecrest Road near Calabash Thursday afternoon. A few moments later he saw the smoldering platform of twisted metal that was once his mobile home.

"I called the fire department, but it was halfway burned up when I got here," said Gore. "There wasn't anything I could do."

The home was fully involved in flames when trucks arrived from the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department shortly after 4 p.m. Fire hoses and a steady rain prevented the blaze from spreading, but it was too late to save the structure.

A lifelong resident of Brunswick County, Gore lived alone in a wooded area of Shingletree Acres subdi-

vision. He is employed as a carpenter in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and was just returning from work when he discovered the fire.

Gore said the fire apparently started in the living room area of the house and spread toward the kitchen. He said no electrical appliances were left on when he left home that morning at 9 a.m.

Digging through the hot rubble near the center of the mobile home, Calabash Fire Chief Jerry Prince pulled out the melted wall receptacle where the fire probably started. He showed Gore the spot where current had apparently arced between two wires.

Prince said the home was a total loss valued at about \$12,000.

Gore said he was not insured and

lost practically everything he owns in the fire.

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No Decision Yet On Hill Residency

Following a daylong hearing last week, the Columbus County Board of Elections does not expect to rule until early July on whether N.C. House nomination candidate Dewey Hill was qualified to run.

Hill finished second in a field of four in the May Democratic primary, seeking one of two Democratic slots on the November ballot for the two-seat district.

However, two parties—primary opponent Shirley T. Greene of Robeson County and Lake Waccamaw resident Erma McNeill of Lake Waccamaw—challenged Hill's qualifications to run, questioning whether Hill actually resides in the 14th District.

In May, the State Board of Elections declined to certify Hill's finish, pending a decision by the Columbus County Board of Elections. Should either of the three parties involved disagree with the board's ruling when issued, the next step of appeal would be to Superior Court. The Columbus County board had initially refused to rule in the case, saying it had no jurisdiction.

During a six-and-a-half-hour hearing Thursday, said Columbus County Board of Elections Supervisor Annie Strickland, the board heard evidence from Hill, Mrs. McNeill, and neighbors and acquaintances of Hill.

Attorneys involved in the case are to provide the elections board with final briefs, additional evidence and proposed findings no later than June 26 in order for the board to issue a "finding of fact" by July 3.

At issue is whether Hill's actual residence is a home he owns at Lake Waccamaw, which he says is his primary residence, or one of two houses he owns in Whiteville, including one that was his mother's home. Both those houses lie within the 98th House district, a new predominantly minority district. The Lake Waccamaw home is in the 14th District, a two-member district that also includes most of Brunswick County.

The two challengers contend Hill has not resided at the Lake Waccamaw home for the one-year period required by the state constitution and that he misrepresented where he lived to voting officials.

Hill contends he has lived in the Lake Waccamaw home since July 1990, while occasionally staying overnight in Whiteville because of work. While challengers introduced utility bills suggesting the lake home was not used during the winter, while a Madison Street house was. Hill has said that caretakers have added to the utility costs for the

house in question.

Two Democratic nominees will appear on the November ballot. Kelly Holden of Shallotte is the Republican contender for one of the district's two available seats. Incumbent Rep. E. David Redwine was the top vote-getter in the Democratic primary and was certified by the state elections board as a November contender.

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