

12/31/92  
HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY  
P.O. BOX 162  
SPRINGPORT MI 49284



Thirty-First Year, Number 13      Charlotte, North Carolina, Thursday, February 11, 1993      50¢ Per Copy      74 Pages, 4 Sections, 2 Inserts

## Inside...



Attention, retirees... (and people who want to). Section D is just for you!

**The South Brunswick Islands Chamber has a new leader. Story and photos, Page 11B.**

- Birthdays.....2B
- Business News.....10-11B
- Calendar of Events.....12B
- Church News.....11A
- Classified.....1-7C
- Court Docket.....10C
- Crime Report.....2B
- Entertainment.....2B
- Golf.....9B
- Obituaries.....11A
- Opinion.....4-5A
- People In The News.....5B
- Plant Doctor.....4B
- Sports.....6-9B
- Television Listings.....8-9C



**Song Fit For A Queen**  
Larniece Laneer McKoy of Winnabow sings her heart out to take the crown in the 1993 Miss Brunswick County Scholarship Pageant. More pageant coverage is on Pages 2-B and 4-B.

## DIRECTIVE COULD MEAN JOB CUTS

# Clegg Denies Hiring Freeze: 'Positions Are Under Review'

**BY ERIC CARLSON**  
Responding to complaints from department heads who want to fill job vacancies, County Manager David Clegg said Monday that the county could be facing "a massive reduction in force" if he strictly adheres to a Board of Commissioners directive to fill only essential positions.

In the closing minutes of the its Jan. 19 meeting, the commissioners voted to approve Tom Rabon's request that "all vacant employment positions be reviewed by the county manager prior to advertisement and that the county manager refrain from filling any non-essential positions."

Since then, Department of Social Services Director Jamie Orrock warned the DSS board that employee morale and efficiency will be compromised if he is not allowed to fill vacancies he feels are essential.

Monday night, Health Director Michael Rhodes told the county health board that Clegg has instituted a "hiring freeze" and that his refusal to fill five vacancies and two new job positions poses a "very serious situation" in the health department.

Rhodes gave the board copies of a memo he had sent to Clegg describing the essential nature of each unfilled position, including two nurses, an environmental health specialist, an animal control officer, a community health assistant, a social worker and a soil scientist.

In an interview after the meeting, Clegg said there is no hiring freeze in county government. But, he said hiring "will be in abeyance" until he has complied with the commissioners' order to determine whether each

vacant position is essential.

"If Mr. Rhodes thinks I have instituted a hiring freeze, then perhaps I should delete these positions from his budget," Clegg said. "Then he won't be in a position to send me any more memorandums because those positions will not exist. That is a hiring freeze."

County Commissioners Chairman Don Warren, also a member of the health board, said his intent in voting for Rabon's motion was not to completely halt hiring.

"There is no freeze in county government," Warren said. "Mr. Clegg has been given the directive to hire at his discretion and to fill positions based on whether they are essential. If Mr. Rhodes has a problem, he needs to talk to Mr. Clegg."

No one has been hired for a county job since the commissioners' directive, but not because the positions have been determined to be non-essential, Clegg said.

"I am intentionally not filling them because I have been assaulted with claims that this county government is over-staffed, which in many respects I find quite puzzling in the light of the past two budgets, in which we have reduced the number employees by a significant number."

"At the same time, we have had two management studies show that our departments are understaffed," Clegg said. "I find it easy for critics to make blanket statements that government is fat and inefficient when independent third-party inquiries make findings that are inconsistent with that belief."

Clegg said that since the commis-

(See COUNTY, Page 2-A)

# Task Group To Grapple With Growing School Safety Concerns

**BY SUSAN USHEP**  
Superintendent of Schools Ralph Johnston moved swiftly Tuesday to address concerns regarding safety in the Brunswick County Schools.

Early Tuesday he began putting together a "school safety task group" of 12 to 15 educators, law officers, parents, court system representatives and others. Their charge will be to examine ways to improve both school safety and communication with parents when incidents or rumors of incidents occur. Johnston said he expects to have group members selected and meeting by the end of the week. Options the group may explore range from an information "hotline" for concerned parents and others to call to a Crime Stoppers type of program.

"This is a fairly new concern for Brunswick County," Johnston said, and it is one shared increasingly across the state and country. His four months here have been a learning experience, he said, noting that while the area

may be rural in nature and a beautiful resort area, it "is not immune from the problems" experienced in school districts elsewhere.

Johnston is also talking with the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department about developing an in-service education program for school system staff and faculty. In a related move, the school board will hold a workshop today (Thursday) from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the central office at Southport to consider changes in its weapons policy and student disciplinary code as it relates to possession and/or use of weapons.

The actions come on the heels of several incidents school officials say are unrelated. Early last week, two students at South Brunswick High School were suspended for bringing pocket knives to school. Then, on Thursday, rumors that a fight was going to break out at either the high school or adjacent middle school began circulating. By Friday afternoon, parents were taking

their children out of school, concerned for their safety, and additional sheriff's deputies had been called to the school as a preventive measure.

On Monday, the extra officers were gone, but faculty were briefed to remain alert to conditions and central office personnel visited both schools throughout the day.

Monday night, at a school board meeting at Waccamaw School in Ash, parents Butch Leclerc, Ruby McDowell, Wendy Simon, Paula Almond and Tina Knox from the South attendance district voiced their concerns regarding safety, and said the troubles were not over.

"It's not a racial problem; it's a discipline problem and it's not over," said LeClerc.

"We're very aware this is not over," responded Chairman Donna Baxter.

Knox said parents need more reliable information than rumor on which to base their decisions regarding

their child's attendance.

"Parents are being criticized for taking their kids out of school, but under the circumstances what would you do?" she asked. "The rumors are pretty scary and we have nothing but rumors to go on."

Metal detectors are being used at at least one county high school, North Brunswick, to screen for weapons.

However, parent Joe Bryant of Leland voiced concern Monday, not about the use of the detector, but the inconsistent way it was used only to screen students who arrived at school by bus, not by private vehicle. He asked the board to develop an across-the-board policy parallel to that in place at airports: screening of everyone—teachers, staff, students, visitors—who enters a school.

**Weapons At School**  
Johnston said the board's current weapons policy calls for a minimum 10-day suspension if a student is (See SCHOOLS, Page 2-A)

# Judge Orders Closing Of Notorious Shallotte Night Spot

**BY ERIC CARLSON**  
Armed with a court order declaring it a public nuisance, Brunswick County Sheriff's deputies Friday padlocked the door of Freeman's Place, a popular Shallotte nightclub and the site of numerous shootings, fights, assaults on police, illegal drug activities and liquor violations.

After reviewing a nine-page complaint that documents nearly four years of escalating lawlessness at Freeman's, Superior Court Judge William C. Gore issued a temporary restraining order Friday closing the club until a hearing can be held to decide whether it should be closed indefinitely.

Two assistant district attorneys, several sheriff's deputies, narcotics detectives, the county ABC officer and a state Alcohol Law Enforcement officer converged on the Mulberry Street club at around 4 p.m. Friday.

A few minutes later, a car with a front license plate reading "Freeman's" pulled into the dirt parking lot. As he got out of the car, co-owner and manager Freeman Hankins was handed a copy of the court order and a thick stack of past felony indictments, ABC citations, arrest warrants and records of seizures documenting the club's infamous history.

The judges order states that the violations "constitute a nuisance" and that allowing the club to continue operating would present "immediate and present danger of serious and immediate injury to the State of North Carolina and the citizens and residents living in and near the property."

Although he was not charged with any criminal violations Friday, Hankins was named in the complaint along with Van Andrew Cobb and Lasalle Hankins Jr. as owners of the one-story wooden building and surrounding land.

"This is not an action against Mr. Hankins, it is an action against the property to abate a nuisance," said Assistant DA Lee Bollinger, who brought the complaint before Judge Gore in Whiteville.

Hankins said little as he unlocked the door and al-

## FREEMAN'S CALLED 'A NUISANCE'



**FREEMAN HANKINS sits at the bar of his Shallotte nightclub Friday and examines the court documents ordering that the establishment be closed as a "public nuisance."**

Situated at the end of Mulberry Street's pavement on the edge of the Green Swamp, Freeman's remote location helped make it a popular party hang-out, where patrons paid a cover charge for access to live music, disc jockeys, a dance hall, pool tables and other amusements.

Almost since the day it opened in 1988, there have been problems at Freeman's, including drug arrests, fights and shooting incidents. Residents along Mulberry Street often complained about loud noise, cars parking on their property and trash littering the road.

Freeman's has had several types of on-premises ABC licenses under different names, said Brunswick ABC Officer Mike Speck. All were subsequently revoked after investigators discovered liquor violations at the club.

Last summer, Speck said the building was leased to Cobb in an attempt to obtain an ABC permit, but the request was denied after Speck filed an objection to state ABC board.

Since then Freeman's has served only non-alcoholic beverages, Speck said. To avoid health department restaurant regulations, the club has offered free food to all who pay the entrance fee.

In recent months, Speck has coordinated the effort to document incidents at Freeman's that were used as evidence in filing the civil action to close the club. (See related story.)

According to the complaint, Hankins was convicted in six of the 14 ABC violations that have occurred at the club. In one case, Hankins was sentenced to 18 months in prison, of which he served 14 days, Speck said.

Although Hankins himself has not been implicated in any alleged drug activities, there have been five drug arrests at Freeman's.

There are 17 incidents of violence documented in the complaint, including an Oct. 4, 1992 altercation in which Hankins himself was shot in the arm.

Then on Dec. 26, a crowd estimated at more than 1,000 people was sent fleeing after gunfire erupted outside Freeman's. One shooting victim had to be taken (See FREEMAN'S, Page 2-A)