

'CAREER CRIMINAL' SENTENCE SOUGHT

Dale Varnam Could Get Another 25 Years Without Parole

BY ERIC CARLSON

Federal agents hope to keep confessed cocaine smuggler, thief and state prison inmate Olaf Dale Varnam of Supply behind bars for another 25 years by convicting him on a federal firearms charge and sentencing him as an armed career criminal.

Varnam is currently serving a 35-year sentence imposed June 1, 1992, after he pleaded guilty to 12 felony charges stemming from a series of burglaries in the Holden Beach area.

But under current N.C. Department of Corrections policies, Varnam could end up serving less than seven years of his sentence.

So Brunswick County Sheriff's Detectives and agents of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms joined forces to bring charges against Varnam

in federal court, where sentences carry no possibility of parole.

Their efforts paid off June 22, when Varnam was indicted in U.S. District Court in Raleigh on a charge of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Varnam was on probation for 36 felony drug convictions when he was arrested Jan. 6, 1992, on 24 charges involving burglary, breaking and entering and possession of stolen goods. Brunswick Detectives Kevin Holden and Gene Caison searched Varnam's home and seized five truck loads of stolen goods valued at \$50,000.

They also confiscated a .357 magnum pistol and a .45-caliber replica of a Thompson submachine gun with a 30-round clip. Both guns were loaded.

"Gene and Kevin kicked things off when they made that search and found the weapons," said ATF Special

Agent Charles Mercer. "Under state and federal law, a convicted felon is not permitted to have a firearm on his person or anywhere near him. He (Varnam) knew that. Apparently he ignored it."

If Varnam is convicted of the federal firearms charge, he could receive a sentence of up to 10 years in prison. But because of his lengthy criminal record, Mercer said the U.S. District Attorney plans to ask the judge to declare Varnam an "armed career criminal," which carries an additional mandatory 15-year prison sentence.

In 1988, Varnam was indicted on 72 felony counts and pleaded guilty to 36 drug trafficking charges. He avoided a possible life sentence by informing on 150 drug suspects. In exchange for his cooperation, Varnam was allowed to go free on probation.

Three years later, a Brunswick County Sheriff's Department investigation determined that Varnam was

the head of an organized theft ring responsible for a string of Holden Beach break-ins. Many of the items seized in his arrest—including appliances and bathroom fixtures—were installed for use in his fenced compound home on Stone Chimney Road known locally as "Fort Apache."

"If anyone qualifies as a career criminal, it's Dale Varnam," said Mercer. "Those were not just minor drug charges he pleaded guilty to. They involved quantities in excess of 400 grams (about a pound) of cocaine."

No date has been set for Varnam's trial in Wilmington's U.S. District Court. And investigators have not ruled out the possibility that additional charges might be brought against Varnam.

"This is not over," Mercer said. "There is a current, ongoing investigation concerning Dale Varnam and his associates."

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BEACON FILE PHOTO

MARSHALL SEAY (right), former head football coach at West Brunswick High School, is under investigation for possible recruiting violations at Polk County High School.

WEST BRUNSWICK FILES COMPLAINT

Former Trojan Football Coach Accused Of Recruiting Players

BY DOUG RUTTER

Former West Brunswick football coach Marshall Seay is being investigated by the N.C. High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) on charges that he tried to recruit local students to play football at Polk County High School.

West Brunswick Athletic Director Jim Brett confirmed Tuesday that the school has filed a formal complaint against Polk County High for possible recruiting violations.

"We feel like a couple of our athletes have possibly been recruited which is not legal in high school sports in this state," Brett said last Thursday following a trip to the NCHSAA office in Chapel Hill.

Brett said the school's one-page complaint was mailed Monday morning. Other evidence was turned over to the NCHSAA last week. "It's now in the hands of the high school athletic association," he said.

Rick Strunk, associate executive director of the NCHSAA, said Monday the agency would begin investigating the charges after re-

"I wouldn't say that anybody has moved yet, but they are definitely considering."

—Athletic Director Jim Brett

ceiving West Brunswick's complaint.

"We have had some conversation with Coach Brett and we have had some conversation with people in Polk County which they have initiated..." Strunk said. "I'm sure there will be more about this before it's all over."

West Brunswick officials believe Seay, head football coach at Polk County, has tried to get two Trojan football players to move to Polk County and play football there.

Asked if any players had relocated to Polk County, Brett said, "I wouldn't say that anybody has

moved yet, but they are definitely considering."

He declined to identify the two players in question. "I'd rather not call a name right now," said Brett, who succeeded Seay as West Brunswick's head football coach last year.

Strunk said the rule on high school football recruiting is "relatively vague." It says students shall not be subject to "undue influence" to change schools for athletic reasons. The NCHSAA defines "influence" on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, the accusing party bears the burden of proof.

Richard Knox, deputy executive director of the NCHSAA, will handle the investigation. He was out of town this week at football camps. Strunk said Knox will talk with people at both schools, study documents and possibly conduct a hearing.

Strunk says formal complaints about recruiting are uncommon in North Carolina high schools. In his eight years at the NCHSAA, he said there have been one or two

(See SEAY, Page 2-A)

School Task Force To Beef Up Minority Candidates' Recruiting

BY SUSAN USHER

Responding to concerns raised by members of the black community, the Brunswick County Schools is forming a task force to aggressively recruit minority candidates.

Superintendent of Schools Ralph Johnston said the task force will focus in two areas: working to build the percentage of certified minority staff to equal that of student enrollment (about 26 percent) and developing a program for grooming new administrative leaders, black and white, from among existing employees.

The new assistant superintendent for instructional services, Jan Calhoun, is organizing the task force.

Calhoun said he will serve as an ex officio member, and that he wants to pull together the task force very quickly, first naming a black chairman from within the school system to head the group and then pulling people from throughout the system to serve as members.

"It's an important group," said Calhoun. "I think we can make a difference."

He is targeting the second goal as a top priority. "We need to act quickly on that if we are to offer leadership experiences starting this fall," said Calhoun. "We're going to be getting some outside help."

Spurring the board's focus on the proportion of minorities holding teaching or leadership posts is a call from the Brunswick County Citizens Association asking the black community to keep children at home when school starts to protect what it calls unfair hiring practices.

School board member Thurman Gause is president of the BCCA. He and the organization want to see more blacks hired, particularly in top leadership positions.

Gause says his concerns have been ignored by fellow board mem-

bers. After first considering resigning from the board, he decided to remain and "go along," he said. "I'm going to sit back and wait and see what happens; I'm going to let them hang their own selves."

He has since refused to discuss the issue with other board members.

The schools' student population of about 8,580 includes 2,200 (25.7 percent) black children. To pressure the school board, the BCCA has proposed keeping at least 500 out of school for up to 10 days in order to reduce state funding. Members are checking on availability of churches to be used as make-shift schools,

and proposes to call on retired teachers to lead classes for youngsters during the boycott.

Statistics compiled by Personnel Director Ralph Ward show that there are no blacks in top administration—superintendent and assistant superintendents, but that of the 12 directors or supervisors, six are black.

The school system also has 10 white and two black principals, and eight eight and five black assistant principals.

Among the 576 certified personnel that include teachers, counselors and media coordinators, 480 are white and 96 black.

School Board Not Giving Up Appeal For Additional Funds

BY SUSAN USHER

Despite early warning signals, the Brunswick County Board of Education plans to pursue its effort to obtain additional county money for the schools.

The school board will meet with county commissioners Friday at 6 p.m. in the Public Assembly Building at the Government Center near Bolivia.

After Chairman Donna Baxter and several other school representatives met with county officials last week, the school board refreshed its budget situation Monday and emerged from a closed-door session saying it would continue on a course that could lead to Brunswick County Superior Court. That closed-door meeting included a call from county commissioners to see if the school system still wanted to meet.

In talking last week with Don Warren, chairman of the board of commissioners, Baxter said that while Warren appeared supportive of the schools, "he had the feeling

we are not going to get the money."

"But we need more money and the law says we have a right to ask for it," she said, in announcing that the meeting would be held as scheduled.

The school board had asked for a 26 percent increase in funds and received 5 percent, plus a special \$1 million allocation for technology.

Specifically the school board says it needs \$525,000 that was cut from its original request: \$285,000 to fund the lead teacher program that was to be the focus of its county-wide school improvement program; \$31,000 for bus driver raises; \$10,000 to cover increased health insurance costs; and up to \$199,000 to cover a shortfall to cover higher pay for classified employees, and to provide locally paid teachers with the same raises the General Assembly gives state-paid teachers.

"We're talking about the heart and future of county education," said Glen Peterson, board attorney. (See SCHOOL, Page 2-A)

Septic Rules To Be Enforced Statewide

BY ERIC CARLSON

The repercussions of a July 15 meeting in Bolivia will be felt throughout North Carolina next week as environmental regulators begin a statewide crackdown on real estate agents who advertise rental home occupancy levels that exceed the capacity of septic systems.

At a meeting with state and local health officials last week, real estate agents from the Brunswick beaches were told by Assistant Attorney General John Barkley that the widespread practice of over-advertising the capacity of rental units is against the law.

Several rental agents indicated

that they will alter their brochures for next season in response to the ruling. But they asked for some assurance that other coastal communities with competing rental markets would be told to do likewise.

"I have no intention of breaking the law," said David Sandifer, a Holden Beach commissioner and real estate agent. "All I'm asking for is a level playing field. I don't want Brunswick County treated one way and Dare County treated another."

Richard Rowe, Director of the N.C. Division of Environmental Health said Tuesday that each of the state's 86 health departments will be notified of the enforcement effort

currently under way in Brunswick County.

"They will be made aware that if advertisements are being published showing levels of occupancy greater than the capacity of their septic systems, appropriate action will have to be taken," Rowe said.

State Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources Secretary Jonathan Howes was briefed on the meeting in Brunswick County earlier this week. Rowe said the department is "ready to move" on the enforcement effort and will begin sending out memos to county health officials next week. (See MEETING, Page 2-A)

Commissioner To Run For Calabash Mayor; Incumbents File In Sunset, OIB

George Anderson of Carolina Shores wants to change jobs. The District 2 commissioner has filed as a candidate for mayor, the job now held by Doug Simmons.

Anderson is one of only two candidates for town office thus far. A Carolina Shores North resident, Theodora "Teddi" Alreuter, has filed for one of three District 2 commissioners' seats (including Anderson's) up for election.

From Sunset Beach, incumbents Mayor Mason Barber and Councilman Edward M. Gore Sr., have filed for re-election, which means all town officials whose seats are available are seeking another term.

That's the case also at Ocean Isle Beach, where Commissioner Terry Barbee has added his bid for re-election.

No candidates for the Shallotte Board of Aldermen had filed as of mid-afternoon Tuesday.

At Holden Beach, Nash Greene was the

first candidate to file for commissioner.

Incumbent Ada McDonald and first-time candidate Charles McDonald are seeking election to the Varnamtown board of aldermen.

Incumbents Bill Kirby and C. William Newnam, both of Southport, have filed for election to the Doshier Hospital Board of Trustees. Newnam is serving out Bill Sizemore's unexpired term.

The second incumbent, Robert C. (Bob) Terry, filed for re-election to the Caswell Beach town board. He was appointed in 1992 to serve the unexpired portion of Duncan Stuart's term.

Two more candidates, Doris Hertel and former commissioner David Drummond, have filed for Long Beach commissioner. Johnny Vereen, who has held the job for multiple terms in the past, became the third person to toss a hat in the ring for the Long Beach mayor's post.

In northern Brunswick County, incumbents Julius C. Adams and Edison Moore are seeking re-election to the Leland Sanitary District. Candidates have until noon Aug. 6 to file for office. The filing fee is \$5.

Filing Earlier

Already declared candidates include: **Sunset Beach:** incumbents D.G. "Bud" Scramont and Julia Thomas, council.

Ocean Isle Beach: incumbent Betty Williamson, mayor; incumbent Bill Benton, commissioner.

Holden Beach: incumbent Wally Ausley, mayor.

Varnamtown: incumbent Judy Galloway, mayor; Chris Lancaster and incumbent George Ennis Swain, alderman.

Boiling Spring Lakes: Raymond Hicks, commissioner.

Southport: incumbent Norman Holden, mayor; Phil Joyner, Ward II; and incumbent

William Crowe, Ward I.

Long Beach: Rupert Riley and incumbent Joan Altman, mayor; Frances Allen and incumbents Danny Leonard and Jeffrie Ensminger, commissioner.

Yaupon Beach: Jackie Slockett, commissioner.

Caswell Beach: incumbent William A. Boyd Jr, council.

South Brunswick Sanitary District: incumbent Ginger Canady.

Sandy Creek: Danny Canady, council.

Belville: incumbent Kenneth D. Messer Sr., mayor.

Leland: incumbent S.L. Doty and Franky Thomas, mayor; Jimmy Cooke, Donald T. Sellers and incumbents Sadie Richburg and Lucille Blake, council.

Leland Sanitary District: Joe Gainey.

Navassa: incumbent Louis "Bobby" Brown, mayor.

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