

# Holden Beach Board Forces Town Manager's Resignation

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Town Manager Gary Parker has resigned under pressure from the town commissioners, who say they don't think Parker has put his heart into his work.

Commissioners say Parker hasn't become part of the community in his two years on the job. He's traveled to Chapel Hill most weekends to visit his wife, who hasn't been able to find a job in Brunswick County.

"He never committed to us," Commissioner Gay Atkins said Monday. "When he was hired I understood they would be moving here permanently and this would be their home. It just hasn't worked out."

Parker's last day on the job will be Aug.

4, nearly two years to the day after he started working at Holden Beach. Former manager Gus Ulrich, an island resident, will serve as interim manager.

Commissioners asked Parker to resign during an executive session at last Wednesday's town meeting. The board met behind closed doors for more than two hours to discuss "legal and personnel" matters.

Parker, who wrote his letter of resignation the following day, declined to comment on the reasons.

In his brief letter, Parker wrote, "I regret that the Board feels that I am not the right manager for the Town of Holden Beach. However, I recognize that I serve at the pleasure of the Board. I wish the Town of

*"We're amateurs. We need a professional. We need an activist, not a reactivist."*

—Commissioner Jim Fournier

Holden Beach and its citizens nothing but the best." All five commissioners agreed to ask for

Parker's resignation. "Each commissioner had different reasons," board member David Sandifer said. "We discussed them in detail in executive session."

Because Parker left town on weekends, Sandifer said he didn't think the manager was committed to Holden Beach or responsive to its town board, residents and property owners.

"I think it's hard to have your heart in one place and work in another," he said. Sandifer added that Parker has the ability to be a good town manager, but he wasn't right for Holden Beach.

Fournier also mentioned Parker's weekend trips when asked about reasons for the town board's action. "He was sort of a commuting manager, which didn't work

out real well."

"There were a lot of instances where things we asked for didn't get done in a timely manner," Fournier added. "It wasn't anything big. It was just an accumulation."

"Everybody liked Gary. It was just a question of we didn't think things were getting done and thought we needed a change," he said.

Atkins said town officials don't feel Parker ever made a "commitment" to Holden Beach. "When he was first hired he was excited about moving here and making it permanent," she said.

Two other commissioners, Sid Swarts and Gil Bass, declined to discuss reasons for the town board's action.

(See PARKER, Page 2-A)

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ACCUSED MURDERER Bradley Tyrone King, flanked by his attorneys Steve Yount (left) and Michael Ramos, listens to testimony as his trial in Bolivia entered its second week Monday.

## Judge Gore Sends \$4.8 Million Budget Dispute Into Mediation Process

BY SUSAN USHER

A hardball dispute over funding for the Brunswick County Schools is bound to court-ordered mediation.

The immediate question to be resolved is whether the school system, after trimming \$1.1 million from its proposed budget, still needs another \$4.8 million next year in order to operate adequately. Unless the court deems otherwise, the schools will receive \$9.4 million from the county.

However, also at issue is the nature of the two board's continuing relationship—a relationship one school board member suggests is in serious jeopardy.

Legally, mediation is a procedure in which a neutral party intervenes between disputing parties—in this case the Brunswick County Board of Education and the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners—in order to effect a settlement or compromise.

A professional mediator is tentatively scheduled to meet with representatives of the two boards in closed session Aug. 10, Brunswick County Clerk of Superior Court Diana Morgan said Tuesday. That third party is expected to be Andy Little of Chapel Hill, who earlier this month mediated a similar dispute between the Bladen County Board of Education and Board of

Commissioners.

After meeting Tuesday morning with acting county attorney Michael Ramos and school board attorney Glen Peterson, Morgan said she decided the dispute could not be successfully arbitrated by her office, since both parties indicated they were prepared to appeal a ruling not in their favor.

She signed an order referring the matter to Brunswick County Superior Court, where Chief Judge William Gore immediately referred the dispute to professional mediation, following the 13th District's rules of procedure.

"It is all moving very quickly, as it should be," said Morgan.

If Ramos were not a defense attorney involved in a murder trial in progress in Brunswick County, mediation would have been scheduled next week, she said.

Following a 4-1 vote by the school board Monday night to continue the appeal, Peterson referred the dispute to Morgan Tuesday morning.

At Monday's meeting, it was member Thurman Gause who cast the lone dissenting vote. He explained afterward that he would have gone along with other

(See SCHOOLS', Page 2-A)

### THE PROSECUTION RESTS

## State's Witnesses Testify King Admitted Shooting Someone After Evans Murder

BY ERIC CARLSON

Prosecutors rested their case in the first-degree murder trial of Bradley Tyrone King Tuesday after the state's final witness testified he was threatened by the 18-year-old defendant a few days after Ronald Everett Evans was shot to death.

"Don't drive off from here or I'll blow your brains out," King allegedly told Earl Lee Reese as the two discussed a cocaine deal. "I already shot one white (person) this week."

Reese was the last in a series of witnesses called during two days of prosecution testimony aimed at proving that King and his friend William Earl Hill kidnapped Evans, stole his new car and shot him to death after they realized Evans could identify one of them.

Lora Dawson said she had stopped to get formula for her baby that night when she saw King and Hill talking to some men in the Shalotte Revco parking lot, where Evans was allegedly abducted.

Valentino Bryant, a friend of the two men, said he saw King with a gun shortly before the kidnapping. He said he heard King remark that the two were "about to get a car" that night.



SUPERIOR COURT Judge Orlando Hudson hears attorneys argue whether a photo of murder victim Ronald Everett Evans should be shown to the jury in the trial of Bradley Tyrone King Monday.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Tom Hunter described Evans' partially decomposed body as it was found in a ditch beside a remote dirt logging road.

Dr. Robert L. Thompson, a foren-

sic expert, showed the jury photographs of the two bullet wounds that killed Evans—one that passed through his thigh and out his hip and another that entered his shoulder, went up his neck and exited through his mouth.

He said Evans did not die instantly and probably choked on the blood hemorrhaging into his lungs as he was dragged off the road.

An SBI ballistics expert testified that the bullets that killed Evans were fired from a gun owned by Hill. The same kind of gun King was seen carrying on the night of the murder.

David Mishoe, an SBI fingerprint specialist, described how he lifted one print from a cassette and another from a tape case found in Evans' car after the murder. Fingerprints that he said matched the inked impressions taken from the hands of King.

Agent Mack Warner described the interview he had with King 10 days after the murder. He testified King admitted going along with Hill as he drove a car like the one Evans owned to a dirt road leading into the Green Swamp from Mulberry Street.

Warner said King claimed it was Hill who let a white male out of the

trunk and led him to the front of the vehicle as the man begged for his life; that it was Hill who shot the young man twice from behind; and that it was Hill who made him help drag the body into the ditch.

But William Dean Hewett, who was in jail with King and Hill last winter, testified that he overheard the two defendants discussing the killing in the hallway outside his cell. He said he heard King say that it was he who did the shooting.

Seated between his attorneys, Steve Yount and Michael Ramos, King seemed to pay close attention as each witness spoke. He glanced occasionally toward the jury box, expressed no visible emotion and rarely spoke during the two days of testimony.

Several members of Evans' family have watched the proceedings from the second row of audience seats since attorneys began questioning prospective jurors July 13. The selection process continued through Friday, when the last of 12 jurors and three alternates was chosen.

As District Attorney Rex Gore began his opening statement Monday, he walked to the front of

(See STATE, Page 2-A)

### OUT OF REACH FOR SMALL GROUPS?

## BCC Sets Base Auditorium Fees

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick Community College Trustees would like the new Odell Williamson Auditorium to be affordable for any group when it opens later this year. But, from necessity, reality may be something different.

A base fee schedule for using the auditorium was adopted unanimously by the BCC Board of Trustees last Wednesday on a motion by newly-installed member Dean Walters of Ocean Isle Beach.

The schedule starts at \$300 for a non-profit group to use the facility for a week-day event for which no admission is charged, and ranges

from \$650 to about \$1,250 (on a sliding scale) for a for-profit event for which tickets are sold—a very competitive weekend pricing, according to Auditorium Manager Michael Sapp.

Adopting the fee schedule sets the stage for Sapp to begin booking events into the facility and signing contracts.

New trustee Willie Fullwood of Shalotte, who came to the meeting with an entourage of family and friends, said he would like to see some kind of exception allowed "to provide for small (not-for-profit) community groups with only a little

money."

He asked the board not to forget the community groups that helped pass the bond referendum that financed construction of the auditorium and other campus buildings. "We may need them again," he said.

Fellow board members shared Fullwood's concern, but didn't have an easy answer.

"This is probably the greatest dilemma we have," said Board Chairman Dave Kelly. "But clearly there's nothing written down that can't be erased or amended. But we can't pull money for the auditorium (See AUDITORIUM, Page 2-A)

## Beach Gill Net Ban Takes Effect Monday For Brunswick Only

BY DOUG RUTTER

Fishermen won't be allowed to use gill nets on area beaches for the rest of the summer tourist season or leave them unattended if they are set within 300 yards of shore.

The regulations take effect Monday morning and will be enforced through Labor Day as part of a state policy aimed at settling conflicts between local beach communities and fishermen.

Bill Hogarth, director of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, included the new rules in a proclamation issued last week. The beach net ban will apply each year Memorial Day through Labor Day in Brunswick County.

After Labor Day, gill nets can be used at area beaches but they must be attended by fishermen. Also, all gear such as ropes, anchors and buoys will have to be removed from the beach when nets are not in use.

Rich Carpenter, southern district manager for the Division of Marine Fisheries, said the rules were drafted in response to complaints from the beach towns and comments made at a recent public hearing at Long Beach.

"We had a situation where there was a lot of gear being left in the water and on the beach to set these nets," Carpenter said. "It was causing problems for the beach towns with people walking on the beach."

Gill nets are set vertically in the water to catch fish which become entangled in the webbing. They are used extensively each fall at Holden Beach and Oak Island to harvest spots and mullet that swim near the beach.

Gordon Winfree, a professional netmaker at Brick Landing, likes the new regulations and doesn't think they will have a negative effect on his business or commercial fishermen.

"As far as I'm concerned it's

really not going to hurt any of the guys that do it for a living," he said last week. "I think it's a good law really. Something had to be done."

Winfree likes the idea of requiring fishermen to remove gear from the beach when nets aren't being used. Leaving gear on the beach or in the water can be a hazard to walkers and swimmers.

"This as far as I'm concerned has been a much-needed law for two or three years," he said. "I agree that if you're going to set one on the beach you should stay there with it."

Winfree says the rules will affect part-time fishermen more than commercial fishermen who depend on gill nets to make a living. Most commercial fishermen set their nets from boats beyond the breakers.

He said recreational anglers, people who own beachfront property or visit on weekends, typically set their gill nets from the strand.

"It's going to make some people mad because they've done it for years off the beach. They're just going to have to change the way they fish and stay with the net."

Winfree says there's no reason to set nets off the beach in the summer when fish are scarce and the water is hot. If nets are used, he thinks they should be attended because fish spoil in less than an hour in hot water.

Carpenter says the new rules should solve the conflict on local beaches. "It just had gotten to the point that it was causing quite a bit of problems. Hopefully this will remedy the situation."

The rules apply only to Brunswick County because gill nets aren't used as much on the state's other beaches. At the Outer Banks, fishermen typically use haul seines that are constantly attended.

### Inside...

- Birthdays.....2B
- Business News.....6A, 9C
- Calendar.....8B
- Church News.....5B
- Classified.....1-9C
- Crime Report.....7A
- Entertainment.....3B
- Fishing.....10-12C
- Golf.....12B
- Obituaries.....5B
- Opinion.....4-5A
- People In The News...10A
- Plant Doctor.....4B
- Sports.....10-12B
- Television.....6-7B