



Jane Fishman

Young Rider Learns Value Of Kindness

Jennifer Moeach was early for her riding lesson at Wicklow Stables. Running up to her teacher, Beth McAleer, Jennifer showed off her new black crop, reached in her pocket and started feeding treats to Miss Muffett, the palomino pony she likes to ride.

"It's a good idea to save one for when you finish," Beth said. Jennifer, 5 years old, started riding when she was 3.

Beth, 17, started when she was 7. "You didn't put your hair in a pony tail," Beth said. "Do you remember why I wanted you to do that?"

"So it doesn't get caught in my hat?" answered Jennifer, dressed in riding jeans, brown boots and a black cap.

"Jennifer's just like I was," said Beth, bending down to secure the strap of her young charge's hat. "She loves horses."

Beth trains with Cindy Banks at Wicklow Stables, just south of Victory Drive in Savannah. She also teaches beginning riders.

Beth is in the math and science program at Jenkins High School's magnet program. She figures she spends four hours a day, seven days a week, at the stables - longer if she is in competition. Last Sunday, for example, she and her horse, Nick, took three third-places and one seventh in fields that ranged from 16 to 26 riders per class.

Crazy about horses since she went with a friend to her lessons, Beth said the expensive and time-consuming passion almost backfired for her parents.

"But then I got a riding scholarship to St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Lenoir, N.C.," said Beth, who plans to major in pre-veterinary and equine sciences.

It's the instinct of horses - not so much their intelligence - that impresses her.

"They're just phenomenal," she said. "You can see it in everything they do."

After watching Jennifer swing her leg over Miss Muffett from the three-stepped mounting block, Beth walked to the center of the ring and started the lesson.

"Hold your reins tight, so she can't run away," Beth said.

Erect in her saddle, Jennifer navigated between the green-and-white jumps scattered in the ring, her black hat bobbing up and down.

"Know what you're doing," Beth said. "If you pull and kick at the same time, what does that make Muffett think?"

"Then she doesn't know what to do," Jennifer answered.

Jennifer's grandmother, Louise Moeach, stood outside the ring, watching.

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SURPRISE DISCOVERY: SPD Sgt. Millie White examines confiscated marijuana plants

Burglar Alarm Leads City Police to Marijuana Plants

\$3,600 in Pot Found During House Search for Intruder

By TOM ROSE
Staff Writer

Police investigating an activated burglar alarm at a downtown Savannah residence Wednesday discovered a small-scale marijuana growing operation in the attic.

Police charged three people who returned to the home while officers were searching the residence.

Arrested on felony charges of possessing more than an ounce of marijuana and manufacture of a controlled substance were Leo Charles Kregul, 24; Henry Mark Leiniger, 26; and Katrina Beth Hansen, 22.

Police said the three lived at the residence. They remained in custody without bond at the Chatham County Jail Wednesday evening.

At 1:30 p.m., police Cpl. Max Wallace and Officer Frank Hickey responded to the alarm at 313 W. Bolton St. and found the back door of the home unlocked.

Officers entered the home to check for burglars and found a knocked-over jar of pennies and noticed that stairs to the attic had been pulled down, said Savannah police Sgt. Millie White.

When the officers went up to the attic to see if a burglar was hiding there, they found an indoor garden of five marijuana plants and 12 marijuana seedlings.

When the three residents returned home and gave police consent to search the house, White called in a task force of local, state and federal agents. Chatham County sheriff's Deputy Tony Derryberry and drug dog "Bobo" also assisted searchers.

Police seized the plants and seedlings, plant food, growing lights and reflectors and assorted drug paraphernalia, including a pipe, razor blades and a mirror. Approximately \$1,300 in cash was confiscated. Officers estimated the drugs had a street value of \$3,600.

Doctor Cleared Of Rape Charge Now Called Plot

Police Arrest Husband of Woman Who Accused Ex-Savannahian

By WAYNE FORD
Morris News Service

COMMERCE - A rape charge against a former Savannah obstetrician was dismissed Wednesday in the wake of allegations that the physician was the victim of an extortion plot.

The husband of the woman who said she was raped was arrested Wednesday on charges that he made his wife participate in a scheme designed so the couple could file a civil suit against Dr. Joe Wardlaw of Commerce.

"I want to thank all my friends in Commerce and throughout the state for their expressions of confidence in me," Wardlaw said. "I have known all along that I would be completely exonerated from these charges."

Dennis McElreath, 32, of Commerce was charged with attempted extortion and two counts of attempting to commit aggravated assault, a Georgia Bureau of Investigation spokesman said.

The assault charges stem from McElreath intimidating his wife, Tammy McElreath, to "go along with his plot to have her allege the doctor raped her so they could file a civil suit and collect money," GBI spokesman John Bankhead said.

Mrs. McElreath had reported to Commerce police and the GBI that Wardlaw raped her Sunday afternoon at the doctor's private office.

After she met with the doctor in his office, she went immediately to a local hospital where an examination was performed, authorities said.

"She recanted her story to investigators (on Tuesday) and indicated that she and the doctor had consensual sex," Bankhead said. "It was not rape."

News of the dismissal came as a relief to Wardlaw's friends, family and patients who had shown their support. Just a week before he was arrested, some patients held a surprise party to honor him for his work in the community. Wardlaw had moved to Commerce from Savannah about 15 months ago.

Wardlaw's wife, Jana, said Tuesday that the accusations were difficult to bear.

"The last three days, he's been the most distraught I've ever seen him," she said. "It's been an extremely painful ordeal."

"It threatened everything he's worked for his whole life," she said. "To have it almost destroyed by one person is almost more than we could handle."

Wardlaw said he especially wanted to thank his family for standing by him "during this very difficult time, and more than that, I want to thank the Lord Jesus Christ."

McElreath remained in the Jackson County Jail late Wednesday.

Bankhead said no charges have been filed against Mrs. McElreath.

Sheriff Candidate Faces Charges of Loan Fraud

By KELLY KEATING
Staff Writer

A former Effingham County sheriff's deputy who announced his bid Monday for sheriff was arrested Tuesday on two felony and two misdemeanor charges involving a bank loan.

Jerry Williams was held briefly at the sheriff's office Tuesday afternoon before posting a \$2,500 bond, according to Ogeechee Circuit District Attorney Joe Martin.

The Effingham County grand jury returned a two-count felony indictment Monday night on charges of altering a manufacturer's serial number and a two-count misdemeanor indictment on charges of fraud involving a bank loan.

Williams was fired by Effingham County Sheriff Van Findley Feb. 6 after Findley said he could no longer work with Williams. Williams, a six-year veteran, joined the department as a deputy and later served in the Criminal Investigations Division.

Rincon police Chief Doug Lanier

said Effingham Bank and Trust president Herb Jones reported a burglary Nov. 1 of heavy equipment, gun-smithing tools and rifles from Williams' former residence in the Rincon Governor's Ridge subdivision. That report prompted an investigation, leading to the discovery of the altered serial plates.

The investigation revealed that Williams allegedly used a Central Machinery milling and drilling machine valued at \$1,000 and an Atlas lathe valued at \$4,500 to secure a \$2,500 commercial loan from Effingham Bank and Trust for his business, Rincon Gun Works. Later, Williams removed manufacturer's serial numbers from the items, sold or traded them to a gun shop owner in Stilson and placed the serial plates on similar items of lesser value, Lanier said.

"Throughout this investigation, the district attorney has been a tremendous help," Lanier said.

Rincon police secured three war-

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Felser Running for County Commission

Staff Report

A longtime Savannah resident who considers himself "one of the small guys" announced Wednesday that he is running for the Chatham County Commission.

Martin "Marty" Felser, 66, said he will run on the Democratic ticket in the 1st District. The only other candidate so far for the district is Bill Stephenson, a Republican. Incumbent Julie B. Smith is running for the chairman's position.

"Why am I running? I've always wanted to do something to serve the community, and I feel I have the background and education, and I feel I have the opportunity to do it," Felser said. "I'm one of the small

guys who wants to listen to the people to see what they have to say. I'm not a politician."

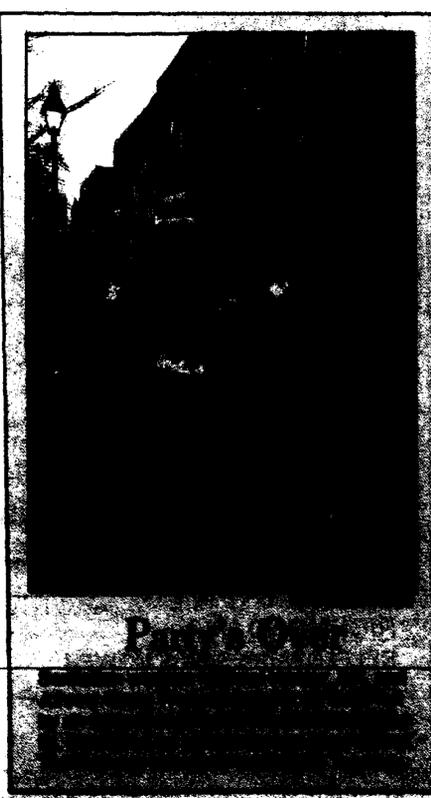
Felser served on the Board of Equalization for three years, through December, was Chatham County grand jury foreman in 1988 and served on the grand jury in 1991.

His two main concerns are jobs and crime. "I think the kind of work hand in hand," he said. "If we can get the people good-paying jobs, they may not have to turn to a life of crime. ... Once you get them unemployed, they will never have a better chance of securing a job and raising a family here."

"I want them to say, 'Savannah's a nice place to live.'"

Felser works with senior citizens in job development

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Pembroke Man Seeks Chairmanship in Bryan

By KRS EPLEY
Richmond Hill Bureau

RICHMOND HILL - A Pembroke man has added his name to the short list of candidates vying for Bryan County Commission chairman.

Democrat Thomas Bacon, 56, is the second person to announce for the seat being vacated by Chairman Carlton Gill, who chose to not seek re-election.

Commission Vice Chairman Larry Panzitta announced in January his candidacy for the chairman's seat.

The qualifying period does not begin until April. But several potential candidates have filed intent to collect campaign contribution cards in the county probate court.

Pembroke police Chief Jeff Simmons has filed a card stating his intent to run for sheriff against incumbent Tim Pope. Richmond Hill resident Gary Bunker, who owns a construction company, has also filed an intent card for the sheriff's race.

Bacon, a former Bryan County resident, has never held an elected office, but he said in a meeting with the people, their concerns and

the problems facing a county that has seen tremendous growth in the last 10 years.

Although he is uncertain what issues will be focal points in the upcoming campaign, Bacon said the county's zoning ordinances will probably be a peripheral issue.

"I don't think zoning will be a big issue, but it is important to a lot of people, and I'm sure it will come up during election time," he said.

Bacon said he agrees counties need zoning laws and did not express any specific concerns about existing ordinances. But he added that elected officials "have to be fair with them" and might have to consider addressing zoning issues on an individual basis, rather than adhering strictly to regulations.

Although he has not dealt directly with zoning or other political matters, Bacon, a retired state Department of Transportation engineer, said his 20 years of DOT experience have given him a knowledge of issues, such as road construction, and priorities that face many counties.

"I have dealt with many counties over many years," he said. "I think my experience and background will speak for itself."



BACON: Political newcomer

Bacon was Department of Transportation assistant district engineer for 25 southeastern counties, working closely with commissioners from each area. He also is a certified public manager, receiving certification from the University of Georgia.

Bacon said he had not considered running for public office until he had been making industrial contacts from politicians that he felt the chairman's race. He changed his mind, however.

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