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RENOVATION OF THE PLAYGROUND near Southport Primary School got underway this week as members of the Junior Woman's Club of Southport — along with some volunteer manpower — erected eight swings for use by children. Participating in the Community Improvement Project (CIP), left to right, were Mrs. Jerry Sherrod, Al "Red" Martin, Mrs.

Ed Harper, Mrs. John Lockhart, Mrs. Frank Hamel and Mrs. F.W. Spencer. Dave Moore, physical education instructor at the primary school, helped in the project and here assists swingers John Spencer and Julianne Harper while Billy Sherrod waits his turn. Janet Huggins, though not pictured, also participated in the project.

By State Law

Taxes Based On 100% Assessment

Efforts to clear-up confusion over the county switch to 100 percent assessment for property tax were made Tuesday by Acting Tax Supervisor Charles Mills. He said the taxpayer will not necessarily pay lower taxes as a result.

"Last year, if 100 percent assessment had been used with the same budget, the tax rate would have been \$0.71 instead of \$1.42," Mills said.

The county was previously on a 50 percent assessment ratio, with the tax rate set at \$1.42 per \$100 of property.

County commission chairman W.A. Kopp, Jr., said Monday, "In the upcoming budget, if all is equal, the tax rate will be one-half of \$1.42 — or \$0.71."

The county budget, by state law, must be presented by July 1.

Only seven counties had previously used the 100 percent assessment ratio, Mills said. Of the

remaining 93 North Carolina counties, the tax ratios had ranged from 35 to 100 percent.

Mills said those who have not yet listed their property can come by the Southport office prior to the February 15 deadline for listing to obtain forms. Those who own land were sent forms, he said.

He also suggested that county land owners change their address with the tax office when moving, to insure orderly listing of taxes.

By state law, those failing to list their property by the deadline must pay a 10 percent penalty.

Another change in tax laws is that all owners receiving property tax exemptions must now apply annually for their exemption, Mills said. The exemptions are granted on ownership and use factors, he noted.

"This is state-wide, 1973 legislation," he said. "This is not done by the county commissioners."

Long Beach Mayor Claims 'Syndicate'

Manager Retained In Emotional Meeting

By **BOBBY HILL**
After an emotional family squabble, the Long Beach town council Tuesday voted for the second time to retain Acting Town Manager Ed

Liggett until a suitable replacement is found. Mayor E.W. Morgan and Councilman Russ Morrison were outnumbered on the Liggett position by the other

four members of the board. Prior to the fireworks, Morgan and Morrison sat with an overflow crowd while the rest of the council held an executive session. Commissioners Ellis Dudley, Virginia Christenbury,

Nancy Leggett and H.E. Joyce came out of the closed session to vote in favor of keeping Liggett temporarily.

Charges and countercharges highlighted the evening. The vocal crowd mainly supported the Morgan faction, and cheering and jeering frequently interrupted the proceedings.

Morgan first asked the councilmen why he had not been asked to call the special meeting. He and Morrison said they were informed of the meeting only by a hand-delivered letter.

Dudley and the others charged that the two had made an "unauthorized request" that Liggett resign his manager position. He said the special meeting was legally called by a majority of the councilmen.

"You did not consult us when you asked the town manager to resign," Dudley said. He maintained that the charter allocated power for hiring the manager equally among the six-member board.

"I don't have to consult anyone," Morrison replied. He said he was an elected

official.

Morrison later rose from his seat and threw the letter calling the meeting at Dudley. "There's your powers," he shouted.

Morgan repeatedly interrupted Dudley as he attempted to explain why the special meeting was called. Mrs. Tommy Helms told Morgan he was being impolite to Dudley. "I can interrupt any time I want to," Morgan told the audience.

Morgan then charged that the other four councilmen were forming a "syndicate" against him and Morrison.

Councilman Leggett also charged that Morrison and Morgan "didn't call us" (the other four members) before asking Liggett to resign. She also pointed out that the town charter states that the town "shall" have a town manager. She said she is in favor of hiring a "qualified" manager.

Town attorney Edward Green verified that the town must have a town manager. He said "you are in violation" because Liggett is an "acting" manager.

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Superior Court Judgments:

Guilty Of 2nd Degree, Pigott Gets 30 Years

Johnnie Pigott was convicted of second degree murder in Superior Court last week and sentenced to 30 years in state prison for the September 13 slaying of Mrs. Vivian Lewis, 30, of Supply.

Pigott, a 37-year-old longshoreman from Shallotte, surrendered to county officers within 15 minutes of the slaying.

Mrs. Lewis was killed by three shots from a .308 caliber rifle as she drove to her Dupont, Inc., job along Lanvale Road in the vicinity of Leland.

Pigott was charged with first degree murder.

An investigation by sheriff's deputies revealed that Pigott followed Mrs. Lewis' vehicle from the

Bolivia area. On Lanvale Road, he attempted to force her vehicle to halt.

Two passengers in the Lewis vehicle stated the suspect blinked the lights of his car and pulled close to the victim's car.

Witnesses told deputies that the suspect held a rifle out of the left window of his

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ODELL WILLIAMSON



V.A. CREECH, JR.

Creech Named Party Chairman

Members of the Brunswick County Democratic Executive Committee met Friday night at Shallotte and elected V.A. Creech, Jr., to serve as county chairman. He succeeds Odell Williamson, Shallotte real estate developer, who resigned recently.

Creech is from Leland, where he is engaged in the real estate business. He is a former member of the board of commissioners for Brunswick County and has been active in the Democratic party for many years on the county, district and state levels.

In accepting his new role,

Creech solicited the united loyal support of Democrats in the county and promised political resurgence if party members will work together.

Another impressive plea for party unity came from party vice-chairman Franklin Randolph of Supply, who urged Democrats to nominate a strong ticket, then support it all the way.

A reminder was given that the February 25 deadline for filing leaves only a short time for candidates to make up their minds about entering the contest for party nominations in the May primary election.

Grand Jury Files Report

A Grand Jury report last week to Superior Court Judge Maurice E. Braswell found 18 true bills, one non-true bill, and reported on the condition of county jails.

The jury found the Southport jail "in need of better security," and the fact-finding group found both the Southport and Shallotte jails requiring a "general clean-up."

The jury cited the Southport jail as needing a lock on the front door, since the present lock reportedly does not work at this time. Also recommended is bullet-proof glass for the Southport facility.

"All of the above was brought to the court's attention December 4, 1973, and to date nothing has been done about these matters," the report states.

A non-true bill was found for James "Mack" Pellom for breaking and entering and larceny.

The jury found true bills for the following persons: William H. Bryant for breaking and entering, William R. Jackson for burglary with intent to commit rape, Wallace Fields for assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, Ricky Jones for three counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, John Nickolson for forgery, Johnnie Simmons for two counts of unlawful burning of an automobile;

Richard Cliff for two counts of burning of an automobile, Gary Wilson for three counts of breaking and entering and larceny, James E. Frink for breaking and entering and larceny, Franklin Barbee for two counts of breaking and entering and larceny and receiving stolen goods and for attempting to open a safe, and Johnny G. Fields for discharging a firearm in occupied property.

Dosher Patient Load Increases

Dosher Memorial Hospital has seen a recent upsurge in the number of patients and may be facing a brighter financial horizon, administrator William F. Cupit said Tuesday.

Dosher has averaged 38 patients per day for the past week and a half, Cupit said. This is above the 35 patient level needed to "break even," the administrator noted.

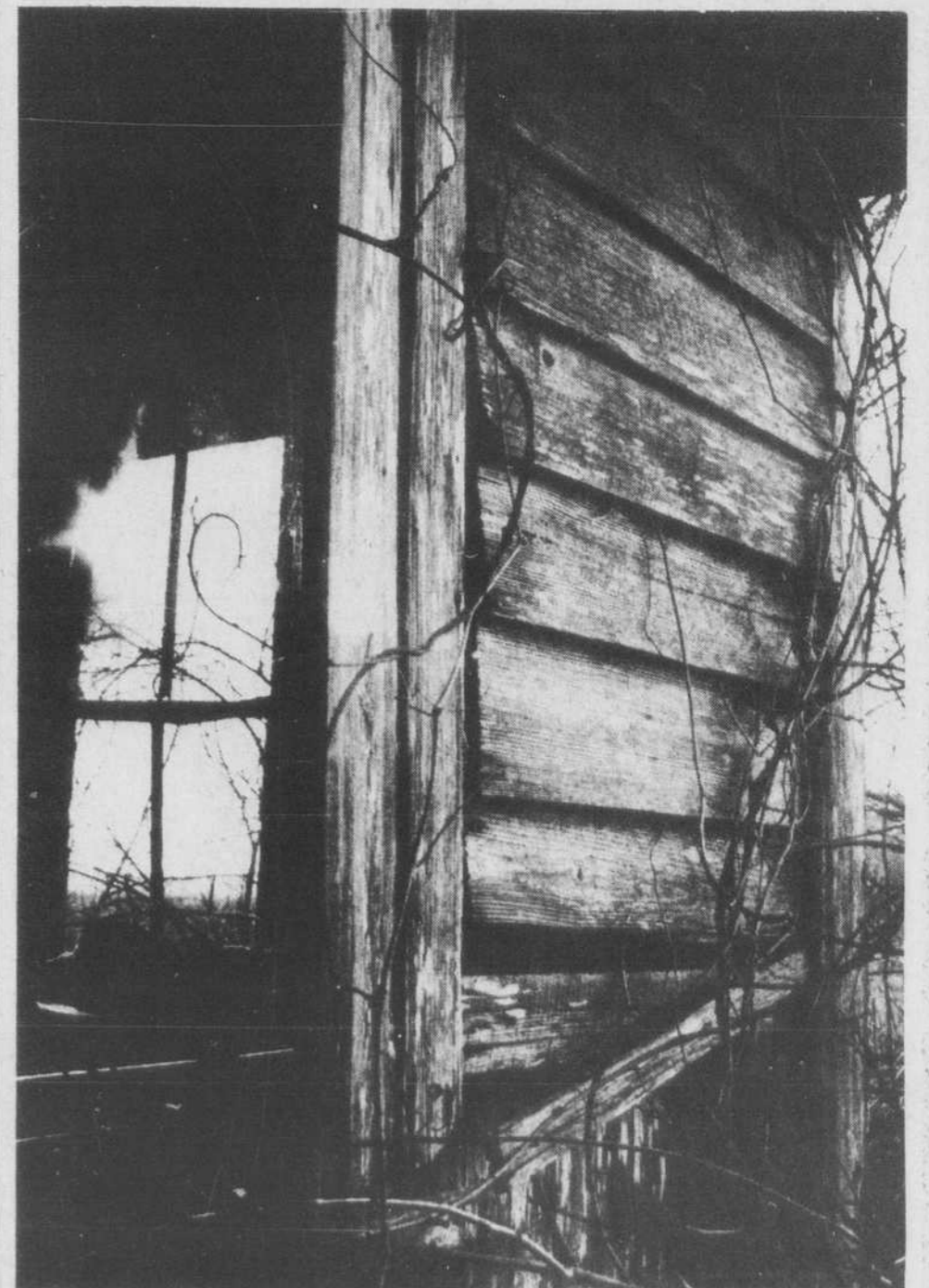
"Anytime it gets over 35, it's a paying proposition," Cupit maintained. However, he cautioned that the patient census must be "a continuous thing" — that the patient level must remain above 35 for the entire year.

The financially and politically beleaguered hospital has lost money for more than a year, with the patient census recently dropping below 20.

Cupit said the weather recently has affected the number of patients staying in the hospital. "It's pneumonia weather," he said, pointing out that the hospital is now housing 12 patients with respiratory problems.

The administrator also said morale has received a boost from the increased business at the hospital. Several personnel have been rehired to provide services for the patient boom, he said.

Brunswick Landscapes



Sales Tax Declines

Collection of the local option, one-cent sales and use tax in Brunswick County totalled only \$52,112.72 in December — the lowest amount since June, 1973.

The N.C. Department of Revenue reports that the total was the second lowest since last February and the third lowest since July, 1972. The totals have declined steadily since the all-time high of \$76,762 was recorded last August.