



POSTER CONTEST WINNERS at Southport Primary School were (left to right) Marlyse Rollison and Candy Somers, ribbon winners; Rodney Marion (2nd); Avis Creech (1st); Joey Huggins (3rd); and Charlie Miller, ribbon winner. The

contest was sponsored by the Junior Woman's Club of Southport, which was represented at the program by Mrs. June Harper, Mrs. Martha Eagle and Mrs. Marilyn Deneke (left to right).

## If Brown-Knox Fails

# Tests Possible On 2nd Choice

By BILL ALLEN  
Staff Writer

Soil analysis tests will only be made on the Canal Woodland if the Brown-Knox site proves unfeasible, the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners ruled Monday.

The board voted on a split decision to have a soil analysis made on the Canal Woodland ONLY IF the Brown-Knox site proves to be unfeasible for the construction of the courthouse complex.

Commissioner Willie Sloan, who voted in opposition, said it was too early to make the decision since the board had not received the results of the Brown-Knox tests.

Chairman Steve Varnam, Jr., said he had been told by LBC&W officials, the firm doing the engineering and architectural work on the multi-million dollar project, that the results of the soil analysis made on the Brown-Knox site will not be available for two to three weeks.

Commissioner W.T. Russ, Jr., originally made a motion to have LBC&W conduct soil analysis tests on both the Brown-Knox and the Canal Wood sites. Chairman Varnam seconded the motion, but Commissioners Sloan, Ira

Butler, Jr., and Franky Thomas expressed opposition.

However, Russ changed his motion at the suggestion of Chairman Varnam to have the tests made on the Canal Wood land only if the Brown-Knox site is unfeasible. Thomas seconded the second motion and it was approved with Sloan in opposition.

Both Russ and Chairman Varnam said they did not

make the motion to "knock" the Brown-Knox site. They said they wanted the two tests made to be sure the county obtained the best land for the complex.

Russ said he wanted to make the original motion because people were upset because both sites were not being tested.

Thomas said he was con-

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## Tax Still Due Before Jan. 1

Despite the fact county taxpayers received their notices late this year, 1975 county tax must be paid in December to avoid penalty, Brunswick County Tax Collector Homer McKeithan said this week.

"The Machinery Act of North Carolina requires that county taxes be paid before the end of December to avoid the two-percent penalty, which takes effect January 1," McKeithan pointed out.

The county was late sen-

ding out tax notices to taxpayers this year because of revaluation. In fact, the last 500 tax notices were not mailed until Tuesday of this week.

McKeithan said he had received no instructions to extend the period that taxes can be paid without penalty because notices were late. He said he doubted that the penalty-free period could be extended.

"The Machinery Act places the burden on the property owner to list and pay taxes even if no notices are sent out," he pointed out.

The law requires that taxes be paid before the last day in December. A two-percent penalty is charged during January. An additional three-fourths of one percent is added each month after January that the are not paid.

McKeithan said collections of 1975 taxes are slow this year because the notices were late being sent to property owners. "I don't think we have collected one

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## County To Reinstate Position Of Coroner

By BILL ALLEN  
Staff Writer

The position of coroner will be reinstated in Brunswick County, commissioners decided during their regular meeting Monday.

Chairman Steve Varnam, Jr., announced that the board will select a person to fill the vacant coroner's position at the next meeting. Other commissioners agreed that having a coroner was the best way to have a "qualified person" go to the scene of all deaths in the county.

Sheriff Herman Strong and County Manager Don Flowers, Jr., were instructed to talk with Dr. Landis G. Brown, county medical examiner, and "work out some agreements before the board makes the appointment."

The newly-appointed coroner, replacing Lowell Bennett who resigned earlier this year, will serve until the 1976 election when voters will make their selection.

Brunswick County has been without a coroner since Bennett, who held the post almost 20 years, resigned. Dr. Brown, who was appointed by the state, has been serving as medical examiner under a new system.

Since being appointed, Dr. Brown has been involved in controversies with Sheriff

Strong and rescue squad personnel about which death scenes he should visit.

Under the proposed new system, the coroner will work under Dr. Brown. "The coroner will do the leg work for Franky Thomas pointed out.

Flowers and County Attorney James Prevatte, Jr., told the board that the recommendation to appoint a coroner was made during a meeting held last week to discuss the problem. Dr. Page Hudson, state medical examiner, Sheriff Strong, and Dr. Brown attended the meeting along with the two county officials. Flowers reported that Dr. Brown agreed that the appointment of a coroner will be the best solution to the problem.

Prevatte also said Dr. Hudson agreed that a coroner should be appointed to work in Brunswick County. But he said Dr. Hudson still favors the medical examiner system since it provides him better medical reports.

Sheriff Strong told the board that he supported the proposal to have both a medical examiner and coroner in the county. He suggested that the county have two coroners and two assistant coroners.

Under state law, Prevatte

said that the county can only have one coroner. But he said the coroner could have assistants to help him with the work.

The county attorney also said that the board can appoint a coroner without asking for a recommendation from the county democratic executive committee. The procedure is used to fill other vacant elected offices to make sure the person named is a member of the same political party.

Sheriff Strong told the board that the county has had problems with the medical

examiner system because people expected an official to go to the scene of all deaths.

"This is what Mr. Bennett did and the people expected it," he stated. "He was paid \$20 per call plus mileage to go to the death scenes."

The sheriff said problems developed because Dr. Brown did not go to death scenes. "Dr. Brown did not feel he should attend all deaths," Sheriff Strong declared. "He expected law enforcement officers to declare a person dead and give it to him on a platter."

Sheriff Strong said the

could have worked if Dr. Brown had gone to the death scenes. But he said Dr. Brown did not "sell himself or the program to the people."

Sheriff Strong said the problem he faced was that he and law officers needed the authority to pronounce a person dead. In addition, he said the person making the pronouncement needed to be "qualified as an expert witness" to testify in court.

"The coroner is a prestigious position that should be elected by the people," Sheriff Strong stated.

Glenn Kye, a member of the Town Creek Rescue Squad, told the board that he agreed with Sheriff Strong that the county needed an official to go to all death scenes.

Chairman Varnam said the coroner would have to work with Dr. Brown. "The coroner will not be able to remove a body or sign a death certificate without the approval of Dr. Brown," he stated.

Commissioners expressed the hope that agreements can be worked out between Dr. Brown and the coroner to avoid any problems with the system. "If Dr. Brown does not want the job (medical examiner), he can resign," Prevatte told the board. "This is just another alternative."

Sheriff Strong said he had recently learned that the state will pay rescue squads 30 cents per mile to transport dead bodies. But he said squads in the county have not been collecting the money because they did not know they could get it.

## Holiday House This Weekend

The annual Holiday House sponsored by seven area woman's and garden clubs will be presented on Saturday and Sunday of this week in the Southport Community Building, each day from one o'clock until 6.

Those who are preparing the building will be working on Friday to have everything ready on Saturday morning for citizens to bring their exhibits beginning at 9 o'clock. All items must be in by noon, as it will take the committee the final hour to ready the show for opening.

Many are helping with various duties. Mrs. Vi Scarborough will be in charge of registration on Saturday morning. The Woodbine Garden Club is in charge of

readying the building for the show. The Green Thumb Garden Club is lining up hostesses to serve while the show is open.

Mrs. Jean Fairley is in charge of the wassail. Mrs. Fonda Stephenson is arranging for all the doors to be decorated and the Junior Woman's Club of Southport is decorating the fireplace, using the theme of the show, "There's a Song in the Air." Several persons are in charge of specific categories of entries: madonnas, Barbara VanDerlice; bells, Susan Miller; packages, Gretchen Hegler; angels, Jane Minard; candles, Dorothy Hardee;

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## Steve Varnam New Chairman

The leadership of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners changed hands during the regular meeting held Monday at the Hood Building in Southport.

Commissioner Steve Varnam, Jr., who has served as vice-chairman during the past year, was unanimously elected chairman. He replaces Franky Thomas, who was not nominated to serve another term as chairman of the board.

Commissioner Willie Sloan was unanimously elected to serve as vice-chairman of the Brunswick County board. He is the first black to hold the second highest elected post in county government.

"I don't know what to say about this shuffling of chairmen," Chairman Varnam said after taking Thomas's chair at the head of the commission's table. "It

(the chair) feels good." Chairman Varnam, who represents Lockwood Folly Township on the board, is a Varnamtown seafood dealer. Sloan is from Town Creek Township.

Thomas, a controversial figure in county government, was elected chairman last December when the all-Democrat board took office. He served as the paid interim county manager while chairman of the board this spring and summer.

It has been rumored since September that a move was underway to remove Thomas and elect Varnam chairman and Sloan vice-chairman.

After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Thomas said that state law requires county boards to reorganize every year and elect a

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## Leland Site Purchase Among Board Topics

By ED HARPER  
News Editor

The Brunswick County Board of Education decided Monday night to seek an additional five to ten acres of land to provide "a more-than-adequate buffer" for the proposed Leland Middle School.

Supt. Ralph King reported to board members that paperwork is nearly complete on the purchase of 36.1 acres from International Paper Company for the proposed school. Member William Sue, who is from the Leland area and familiar with the site, asked King

about "squaring up" the property by acquiring additional land.

King said the owner of the adjacent property was willing to sell part of the land, which the school would like to have, or the entire tract at a considerably lower price per acre. The superintendent was authorized to make an offer on the five- to ten-acre section.

Neither the owner nor the asking price was made known to the public, the acquisition of land being an exception to the N.C. Open Meetings law. The press was allowed to stay in the meeting

room, however.

In another matter related to the proposed Leland school site, the board authorized its attorney to "pursue the swap" of land with V.W. Herlevich that would allow 338 feet of additional road frontage for the school property. Herlevich, who earlier had offered the property at the price he paid for it, suggested in a letter to the board that he exchange his acreage for an equal area on another side of the school property.

The Herlevich deal is contingent upon finalizing the purchase from International,

the board noted.

The board scheduled a meeting for Dec. 22 with representatives of Ballard, McKim and Sawyer, architects of Wilmington, to review and approve steps to correct roof-leak problems at the three consolidated high schools.

The board was told that bids could be awarded by mid-February and that work could be done during the spring and summer months. Estimated cost of the project exceeds \$300,000, and the Board of Education will seek court action to recover the cost from the responsible

parties (the architect, the contractor or the subcontractor, depending on the court decision).

"We spent enough money (in initial construction) to have schools with roofs that don't leak," said Chairman Wilbur Earl Rabon.

All three schools are affected by roof leaks, the board noted, the only exception being the middle building at West Brunswick High School. The North and South area schools have no middle building.

Ballard, McKim and Sawyer also will make a general presentation to the

board on Dec. 22. The board acknowledged letters from two architectural firms that made recent presentations about their work.

The board acknowledged a letter from the Progressive Group of Brunswick County concerning the planned banquet on Dec. 23 for college athletes who graduated from Brunswick County schools since consolidation. Reuben Sloan of the organization cited the high cost of holding the affair at the Wilmington Hilton and asked for any help the Board of Education could

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