

Sports

South Brunswick Cougars drop 16-8 decision, look for win Friday -- Page 13

The State Port

PILOT

VOLUME 64/ NUMBER 2

SOUTHPORT, N.C.

50 CENTS

Our Town

Oak Island hosted a record number of turtle nestings, despite setbacks -- Page 2

Neighbors

It was postponed a day, but Sunday's art and craft fair was termed a success -- 1B

Records back up closure

Enough blame to go around

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

The reasons for failure of the Supply Elementary School septic system may be found in the design, installation and location of the drainage field, Brunswick County Health Department records reveal.

Records indicate the drain pipelines were made of corrosive metal, there were no timers installed to prevent overloading of the drainfield, poorly drained clay soils were used as fill material in the drainfield, drainage systems were not constructed to prevent flooding by stormwater run-off and to lower the groundwater level, the drainfield was too small to accommodate the amount of effluent generated at the school, and the drainfield was installed in an area on the site with the least absorbent soil material.

The N. C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources (DENHR) may also share a portion of the blame for approving a construction plan that contained some of these deficiencies.

"I don't think there's any one smoking gun," said county health department environmental health specialist Bruce Withrow. "I think you have a case where you can see flaws at every phase."

Health department records also indicate that the drainfield was malfunctioning at least five months before the drain lines were disconnected, and that during that time some raw sewage drained into the Lockwood Folly River basin adjacent to the school.

During rainstorms, effluent may also have drained down a nearby sidewalk and puddled in front of the school.

In an effort to contain the effluent, Withrow said school officials erected berms around the drainfield.

The school board last month asked its
See Records, page 10

Summer's Last Volley

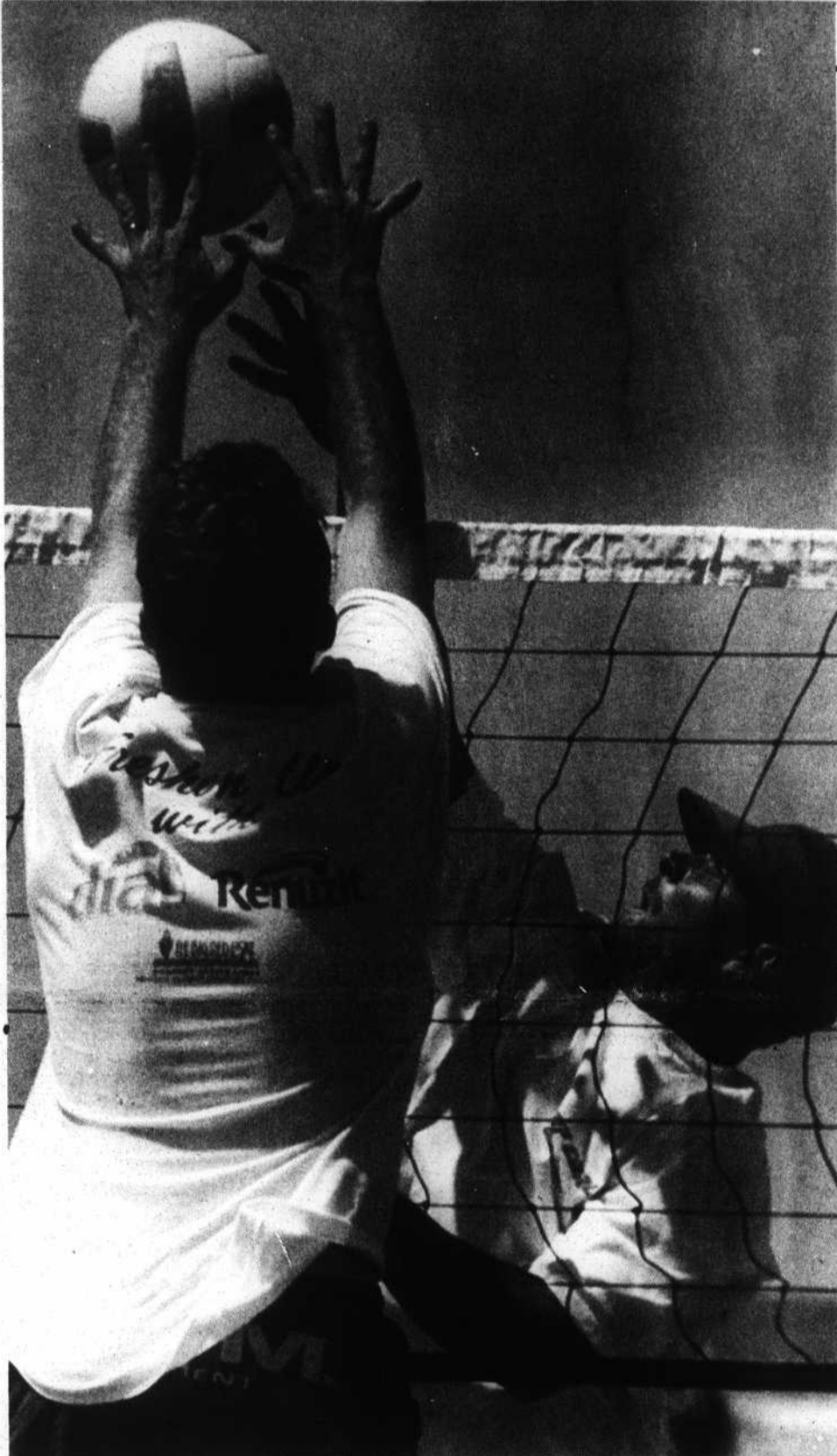


Photo by Jim Harper
Volleyball was the featured attraction at Sunday's Beach Day celebration at the Long Beach cabana. Scores of onlookers enjoyed the play, as well as the playing of the Cream of Soul band.

Zoning protects against cement, fish operations

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Some residents who say they don't want to live next door to a cement plant or fish factory used county zoning Tuesday to protect them.

A controversial vote would have allowed such land uses to clash.

But county commissioners decided they didn't like the smell of that planning proposal and crushed the idea with an unanimous vote.

A recommendation made its way to commissioners without the Brunswick County Planning Board holding any public hearings, said chairman Don Warren of District 1.

"That's why we opposed it," said Warren. "I had to ask why there were no public hearings held."

The change to the county zoning ordinance would have allowed cement plants and fish processing plants in the rural (RU) and commercial low-density (C-LD) zones. A large portion of land west of Ocean Highway (U. S. 17) is zoned RU.

The items were added to the end of a lengthy planning board agenda last month. Planning director Wade Horne said someone brought it to the department's attention that cement plants were prohibited in the rural zones where tracts are larger and may easily accommodate them.

Horne said the thrust to allow seafood processing plants in rural areas was his idea. The county ought to accept them somewhere, he said.

"We don't have a conforming seafood processing facility in this county," said Horne. "We are unique in this county in that seafood processing comes where there is water."

Most of coastal Brunswick County is zoned for residential development or for low-density commercial use, either by area towns or the county.

Southport area residents who have followed a request to drop zoning from the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point depot were lured into the debate again Tuesday. Their protest of how the cement plant and fish processing issue was handled by the planning board has resulted in a policy change by that board.

Because of the conflict, any items brought up by planners or the board and not already on

the agenda will be forwarded to the next monthly meeting if board action is needed.

"Putting a fish factory or cement factory in an area without anybody voting on it is wrong," Mel Hart of Southport told commissioners.

County zoning took effect January 1, but in the months since a steady stream of amendments has kept the planning department busy. Most are just minor adjustments, but the biggest battle has been over the zoning of property where Martin Marietta Aggregates plans to operate a limestone mine north of Southport.

"The zoning ordinance is changing faster than the clock ticks," said Sabrina Puckett.

See Zoning protects, page 15

Board denies zone changes at Beach Road

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A request to rezone a four-acre tract along Long Beach Road was denied by county commissioners by a 4-1 vote Tuesday.

Shirley Fowler filed to change property she owns at Rose Haven Drive from commercial low-density (C-LD) to R-6000, residential use which allows single-wide mobile homes. The 300 feet bordering Long Beach Road would have remained C-LD.

Several adjacent property owners opposed the request.

John Doshier said no one opposed the commercial zone when the ordinance was adopted. He questioned if a residential area would affect values of surrounding commercial land.

"As long as mine is not messed with it's all right," said Doshier. "If zoned residential, will it hinder what people want to use commercial for?"

Attorney Robert Serra, representing the Fowlers, said the property was purchased in 1989 without any restrictions. Since the zoning ordinance

See Changes page 15

School funding

County appeals decision of jury

By Terry Pope
County Editor

The decision to appeal a court-ordered, \$14-million award to the schools has the potential to be a major issue in the fall election.

County commissioners voted Friday to take the offensive and fight the jury verdict

which could produce a ten-cent property tax hike.

All five board members are seeking reelection in November, and not one wavered from the decision.

"I feel like the people elected us to operate or to manage county government in a conservative manner, and I think that's what we've

See Appeals, page 10

Judge Thompson:

'Issue not what county can pay'

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

A Superior Court jury spoke for the residents of Brunswick County when it awarded the school system \$14 million in local funding for the current budget year, and had ample evidence to support that decision, judge Jack Thompson declared last week.

In a court hearing Thursday, Thompson upheld the jury's verdict and denied motions filed
See Issue, page 10

'God's wake-up call'

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

A toilet bowl full of water rising and falling in pulsating rhythm, the rocking movements of the upper level of the house, the sound of tree limbs and wind-swept debris slamming against the windows, a living room full of wet dogs and children.

These are Southport resident Jenny Rabon's most vivid memories of Hurricane Diana.

Her husband, local veterinarian Bill Rabon, said he remembers little of the storm.

"I remember opening the door at midnight and my best friend and all of his dogs coming in soaking wet," he said. "But I slept through most of the hurricane. I just figured it would pass over."

See Wake-up, page 9

HURRICANE DIANA REVISITED

Storm's warning: preparation is key

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

It was ten years ago Monday -- September 12, 1984 -- that Hurricane Diana, thought to have passed the Brunswick coast, cracked back on the Southport-Oak Island area, pounding out millions of dollars worth of damage in her wake.

Diana was a fickle storm. She crawled up the coast packing winds first of barely hurricane strength. By September 11, she had mounted wind forces of up to 100 miles an hour, but skirted the Brunswick coast, pausing for a period off Wilmington, then moving farther north and east.

In that position, Diana stalled and grew. Southport and Oak Island residents who had evacuated Tuesday the 11th, after the near miss, soon heard on their Wednesday return radio and television reports of a change in

See Warning, page 8

... A generator allowed us to watch television and see all the erroneous reports of the nuclear plant being destroyed and Southport being blown off the map.'

Steve Foster
Former town manager

HURRICANE TIPS IN THIS ISSUE