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Sports

Play Ball! Area youth leagues swing into action early this season -- 1C

Long Beach action that traffic at

Paul Pitt striking up for quite some time -- 1B

Southport Library
3112 N. Moore Street
Southport, NC 28461

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City rates generate concern

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

"The ball is back in your court," Southport public services director Ed Honeycutt told aldermen.

But, are city fathers game enough to set guidelines which will make city risk a match for that of heavy commercial users in a joint venture to cut electric power costs at times of peak demand?

Restaurant owners who spoke before the board of aldermen Thursday night don't want to double fault.

As the city proceeds to implement its plan to offer customers rate cuts as incentives to allow load management of water heaters, heat strips and central air conditioning units, restaurant owners are among the few city customers who are ill-prepared to either shift heavy electric use to off-peak times of day or realize savings from conventional load management techniques.

Restaurant owners are among those commercial-demand electric customers who must turn to self-generation -- utilizing a fuel generator -- at times of peak demand to avoid demand charges the city plans. See City rates, page 12

Spring concert Sunday

The Brunswick Concert Band's eighth annual Spring Concert will be presented at Brunswick Community College this Sunday, April 28, 3 p.m.

The performance will include selections for every musical taste, from a "Count Basie Salute" to Gustav Holst's "Broadway Showstoppers," "Blues in the Night" featuring Southport dentist Dick Conrad on clarinet, trombonist Rusty Garman's rendition of "Danny Boy," and a medley of Henry Mancini's most popular tunes.

Under the direction of Paul Pittenger since it began ten years ago, the Brunswick Concert Band has grown from a dozen local musicians to more than 40 working adults, retirees and students.

Tickets are \$3 at the door. Children under age six will be admitted free.

DRUG BUST



Photo by Richard Nubel

John Wesley Bines, 16, was arrested at his Jabbertown Road home, the third of seven alleged crack cocaine dealers snagged in the joint undercover drug-buying sting "Operation Mayberry" conducted by Southport Police Department and

Brunswick County sheriff's narcotics unit. Deputy Lewis Ward and canine Rico had covered the rear of the home as sheriff Ronald Hewett (leading Bines) and city police chief Bob Gray participated in the arrest.

'Mayberry' drug sting cracks local operation

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

In the span of one hour and twenty-seven minutes last Wednesday, Southport police officers, Brunswick County's sheriff, his deputies and a canine swept through Southport, arresting seven men they say are among the most active crack cocaine dealers in the city.

The sweep of arrests brings to an end the operational phase of Operation Mayberry, an undercover sting targeting the crack trade on Southport's west side.

First planned in December, 1995, the first "buy" of Operation Mayberry was made by an undercover officer attached to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department on January 29 of this year.

Of the seven arrested Wednesday, all but one face charges of possession with intent to sell and deliver crack cocaine, a Class H felony which carries a maximum penalty of ten years in prison. The "sell and delivery" charge implies that officers were able to document one or more actual drug transactions in which the accused was the seller. Brunswick County narcotics detective Sgt. Gary Shay, who, with county investigator John Ingram, designed the sting, said all "buys" associated with Operation Mayberry were videotaped.

Chief Bob Gray, who initiated the joint operation with Brunswick County sheriff's narcotics detectives, said the operation will have an impact on the city's crack cocaine trade.

"The impact here is, these are the people we were See 'Mayberry,' page 11

Two or four years?

Beach terms are weighed

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Sentiment to reject or keep the two-year term of office for Long Beach Town Council members appeared equally mixed among a large crowd of residents attending a public hearing on the matter Thursday night.

Supporters of the two-year term of office may have cheered their spokesmen more loudly, however.

Council last month set the public hearing on a proposal to return to four-year, staggered terms of office for members of council. The mayor's term of office will remain at two years, under the proposal. No action on the proposal was taken Thursday. The matter is to be scheduled for council action next month.

From 1969 until 1993 members elected to the board of commissioners of the Town of Long Beach, later town council, were elected for staggered terms of four-year duration. Every two years, three members of the six-member board of commis-

'At the end of two years we'll vote on keeping you in or throwing you out.'

Becky Holt
Long Beach resident

sioners, or council, were elected.

After a referendum on the matter in the early 1990's, council terms of office were established at two years. As state law dictates municipal elections may only be held in odd-numbered years, terms of office cannot be staggered. Hence, the entire town council, and the mayor, must run for election every two years. The mayor and entire board may be replaced on See Beach terms, page 13

Leland student death

Youth now facing charge of murder

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A murder charge has now been filed in the shooting death of North Brunswick High School student Mark Anthony Wescott Jr., who was allegedly killed March 5 by a Leland area juvenile.

An original juvenile petition charging the suspect with voluntary manslaughter was upgraded last week to first-degree murder following an extensive investigation by members of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department major crime unit and the State Bureau of Investigation.

A joint news release from district attorney Rex Gore and sheriff Ronald Hewett states the manslaughter charge was issued using the evidence available at the time of the petition. But now more

details are known about the shooting that resulted in tense moments at school.

"The many hours of work and great number of interviews done since that time has produced additional evidence that caused us to make this move," the release states. "This investigation was aided considerably by the many concerned citizens in the community who had contact with witnesses who could give us additional details about the events leading up to the death of Mark Wescott."

Wescott was killed by a shotgun blast to the head in the home of a 15-year-old black student, but his body was found in the rear of his pickup truck about a mile away from the shooting scene. Since Wescott is white, the shooting resulted in racial tensions at school. See Murder, page 14

School central office to be relocated



The present school administration building, located at the intersection of highways 87 and 133 near Southport, once served as the county nursing home.

All county departments will be together at Bolivia center

By Terry Pope
County Editor

When Bill Sue of Leland served on the Brunswick County Board of Education in the late 1970s, that board began plans for a new central office building.

Now 16 years later and with Sue serving as District 5 county commissioner, it will finally become a reality.

John Thompson Architect of Southport was chosen by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners last week to design the new office

and an addition to the agricultural building at the county government center near Bolivia.

As part of the 1995-96 county budget, several capital projects were approved for funding through innovative financing plans. Building a new central office for the school system has been a major concern at recent liaison meetings between the two boards.

The current school administration building near Southport is overcrowded and in poor condition. It once served as the county nursing home.

"That place down there is an accident waiting to See School office, page 11

Forecast

The extended forecast calls for warm temperatures in the mid 80's and ever present chance of thunderstorms.

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