

Neighbors

Damage was relatively mild in the Southport-Oak Island area Thursday -- 1B

Our Town

Caswell Beach's sewer report will be presented to board Thursday -- Page 2



Sports

South Brunswick Cougars scheduled to visit 4A New Hanover Friday night -- 1C



Photo by Jim Harper
Bill Boyd -- "doing what neighbors do" -- rigs a tarpaulin to cover the bared side of Ralph Whitesides' Caswell Beach living room Saturday with the help of police chief Paul Osborne and Randy Whitesides. This damage was extraordinary in a storm which generally caused little property damage and no reported major injury in the community.

HURRICANE FRAN

Close call

Hazel still the storm by which others are measured as Fran skirts Cape Fear

By Jim Harper
Staff Writer

Southport-Oak Island's second eye-to-eyeball encounter with a hurricane this year left residents asking each other, "What did we do to deserve this?" ... and they were talking about their good fortune.

The eye of Hurricane Fran started passing over Brunswick County, from Bald Head Island to Shallotte, at roughly 9 p.m. last Thursday after hours of rain and raging northeast wind, and remained over some portion of the county for two hours before the "backside" came crashing in from the southwest.

The community had taken a direct hit -- in some places the eye took over an hour to pass -- yet by first light Friday it was apparent that the destruction was no worse than with Hurricane Bertha on July 12, when the eye of that storm extended from Lockwood Holly Inlet to Cape Fear.

Though the damage of the two storms was comparable, their conformation was not. Bertha, ill-formed and irresolute, had lurched into the area, seemingly headed west of the Cape Fear mouth, then east of it, and finally presenting a ragged eye with diminished wind before sliding off the east beach and working its way ashore up the coast.

Fran, by contrast, spent its last few hours at sea driving almost straight up the 78th meridian -- which practically runs through Bald Head lighthouse and the ADM water tank -- and then presenting a classically formed "eye" in which wind died to an eerie hush before turning and coming back fiercely off the ocean.

Some damage occurred after that shift -- the end of the Long Beach Pier was ripped off, to wash ashore dozens of blocks eastward -- but the main force of the storm swept like a scythe up east-facing beaches, ravaging New Hanover County resorts before taking a turn back toward the northwest and the Fayetteville-Raleigh-Durham corridor.

Seventeen North Carolinians were killed, nine more died farther to the northward as the storm spawned tornadoes and heavy flooding, but according to Cecil Logan, Brunswick County emergency management director, there were no deaths and no serious injuries here.

Top wind was measured at 105 miles per hour at 6:45 p.m. at the waterfront Cape Fear pilot's tower (where a gust from Bertha had reached 101 miles per hour). From the NOAA of-

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Little damage reported

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

For the second time in 55 days Southport-Oak Island dodged the bullet.

Hurricane Fran, which wreaked over \$1 billion damage and is blamed for 26 deaths in six states, left the Southport-Oak Island area with barely a scratch. Damage estimates in Southport-Oak Island area municipalities are nearly complete and range from only several thousand dollars to nearly \$1 million.

Even at Long Beach where, because of its size and building density, costs may reach the \$1-million mark, damage was scattered. No single area sustained critical damage.

Mayor Dot Kelly of Yaupon Beach had a typical reaction Friday:

"I was thrilled when I rode around at 6:30 this morning that there was so little damage. I am so pleased for everybody."

No severe injury was reported in the

See Damage, page 7

Storm salaries may be funded

By Terry Pope
County Editor

If federal funds become available, county employees who worked overtime during Hurricane Bertha on July 12 will be paid.

That decision was reached last week by Brunswick County commissioners in a resolution passed before Hurricane Fran also struck the coast on Thursday.

It is an issue commissioners say they wanted resolved by county administration. But opinions differ on the use of federal funds for salaries,

and rumors that some county department heads have already received pay may have gotten out of hand.

County manager Jim Varner indicated he asked the county's fiscal operations director, Lithia Horne, to seek Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds so he could pay workers for overtime. But nearly two months passed and his request had not been forwarded from finance to FEMA.

It produced a stalemate between Varner and Ms. Horne's department, forcing commissioners to step in.

"If we could receive the money as payment from FEMA, and I could keep (employees) working 30 to 40 hours," said Varner, "I saw it as the best of both worlds. He would stay at work, and he would be paid. We could have the same number of hours worked and not fall behind."

FEMA disaster relief funds are available to help counties, municipalities and property owners deal with the destruction from natural disasters. President Bill Clinton signed into law an order making funds available to a number of eastern North Carolina counties, including Brunswick

See Salaries, page 5

Spoil washes ashore

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is dumping huge stumps and blocks of solidified mud on a spoil site three miles off Yaupon Beach, ruining prime shrimping grounds and threatening area beaches.

That was the charge leveled by eight area shrimpers led by Yaupon Beach fisherman Billy Hickman in a Monday night appearance before Yaupon Beach commissioners.

"If you'll just take the time to go down to the beach and look to your left and look to your right, you'll see nothing but stumps and tires," Hickman said. "It's simply not right for them to do what they're doing and get away

See Ashore, page 6

End-of-course tests

Brunswick's reading, 'rithmetic scores low

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

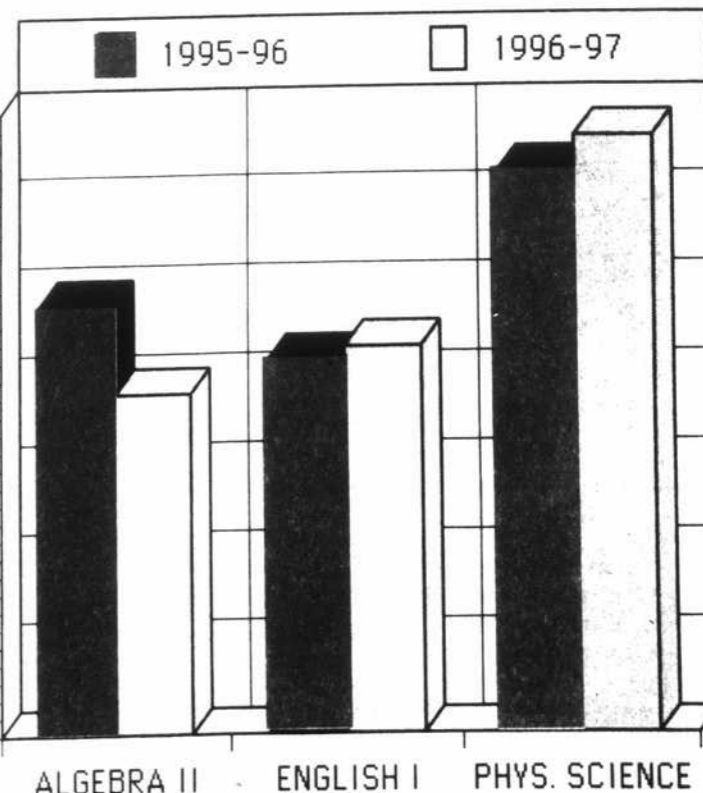
Brunswick County students made modest gains on most end-of-course tests for the 1995-96 school year, but scores on Algebra II and English II tests were alarmingly low.

"We did not do well in those areas and we targeted them immediately," assistant superintendent for instruction Mary McDuffie told the school board Monday night. "I always think it's a danger to think a group of children is the problem. Perhaps there are some things we could do better and some things we could change."

Only ten percent of Brunswick County high school students tested were proficient in English II, down just slightly from 10.7 percent last year, and Algebra II scores dropped ten percentile points from the previous school year -- from 48.4 percent to 38.4 percent.

Percentile points indicate the relative performance of a group of stu-

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Forecast

Our chance of rain and thunderstorms still lingers in the aftermath of hurricane Fran. There is also a chance of coastal flooding. Temperatures should range in the mid to upper 80's.