

November 6, 1996

The State Port PILOT

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Sports

South Brunswick and West Brunswick meet Friday to decide 3A playoff slot -- 1C

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Voters favor return to four-year terms

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Election totals, page 8-9

Four-year, staggered terms of office ruled Election Day of 1996. In separate referenda Tuesday night: 58.25 percent of a heavy turnout of voters in Brunswick County cast their ballots for a return to the four-year term of office for county commissioners and school board members; 52 percent of the 2,077 voters of Long Beach who cast ballots said they wanted town council members elected to staggered terms of four years.

The return to four-year, staggered terms of office marks the end of an experiment with two-year terms begun as the result of ballot initiatives of 1992. County commissioners, sensing a change in voter sentiment, ordered the question of office terms put to referendum again this year. The four-year term was supported by resolutions of both the county's Democratic and

Republican parties and by all those seeking election and reelection to the boards of county commissioners and education.

In Long Beach, where term of office has been a hot-button issue, town council members in March exercised their option to order a town charter amendment, returning to four-year staggered terms of office. Tuesday's balloting, initiated by the petitions of citizens who disagreed, was in essence a referendum on Long Beach Town Council's decision.

"I think this vote puts the issue to rest," Long Beach mayor Joan Altman said. See Four-year, page 8

Schools

Incumbents retain four board seats

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

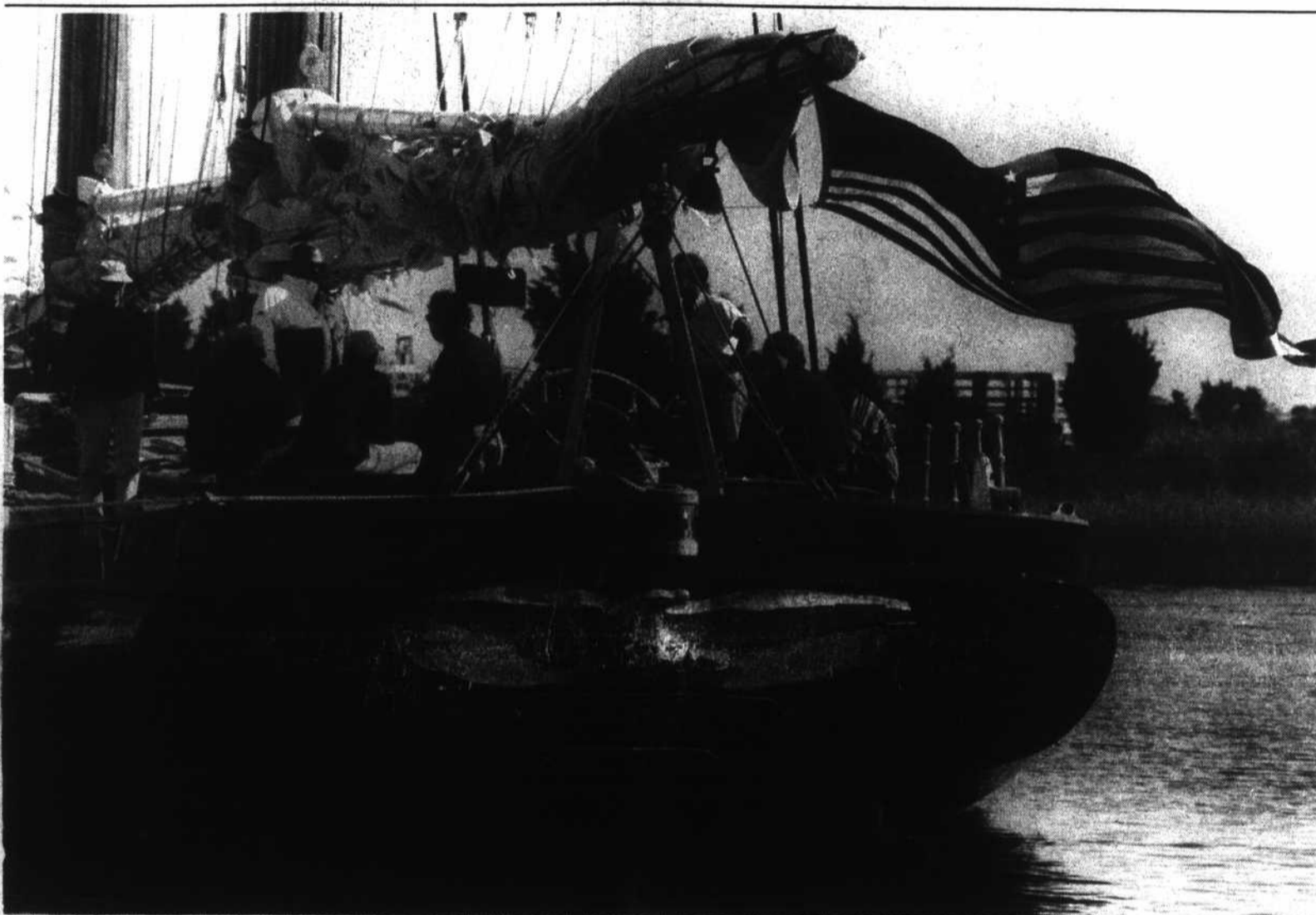
Although all five seats on the Brunswick County Board of Education were up for grabs, voters returned four incumbents for a second term.

Several incumbents said they viewed the election as a vote of confidence from the public.

"Tonight is the night I got my grade. This is the night I got my report card," said incumbent Bud Thorsen. "I hope over the past two years I made a lot of decisions and I made good decisions. I had a good two years and I'm ready for two more good years now that the people of Brunswick County have seen fit to reelect me."

Thorsen (12,109) soundly defeated challenger Rozell Hewett (9,236), incumbent Billy Carter (11,298) topped challenger David Buchman (9,661), board vice-chairman Glenda Browning (11,389) surpassed challenger Julia Wood (9,399), and incumbent Pat Brown

See Schools, page 8



The crew of the 105-foot schooner America prepares to get underway from Southport Marina Monday after a weekend of rest and repairs. The vessel, built along the lines of the 19th century schooner which gave its name to the America's Cup, encountered heavy weather Saturday and found shelter in the harbor. Photo by Jim Harper

County

Democrats gain control in tight races

By Terry Pope
County Editor

The former chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, Don Warren of Shallotte, narrowly won his old seat back Tuesday as Democrats regained control of county government following a heavy day of voting, with 59 percent of the registered 39,579 residents casting ballots.

Warren was ousted two years ago by Douglas Simmons of Calabash, but he tallied 50.69 percent of the vote to win by just 297 of the 21,417 votes cast for the District 1 seat, totaling 10,857 to 10,560 for the incumbent. He joins Democrats JoAnn Bellamy Simmons of Ash, District 4, and Bill Sue of Leland, District 5. Ms. Bellamy faced no opposition while Sue won handily over Republican David Bright of Leland, 11,919 to 9,072.

Republican Leslie Collier of Long Beach, District 3, was reelected over her challenger, Wayland

See County, page 8

Mistrial is declared after jury deadlock Defendant says close-range shotgun slaying accidental

By Terry Pope
County Editor

After deliberating for two days, a Brunswick County Superior Court jury told judge D. Jack Hooks Jr. it remained hopelessly deadlocked, 7-5, over the fate of 15-year-old Harold Vernard Greene Jr. of Leland.

Greene is charged with first-degree murder in the March 5 shooting death of North Brunswick High School student Mark Westcott Jr., who was shot in the face with a shotgun inside Greene's parents' home on Cedar Hill Road.

Judge Hooks declared a mistrial and released the jury, which deliberated for four hours last Wednesday afternoon and most of the day Thursday before it returned to the courtroom and declared it could not reach an unanimous verdict.

Two alternate jurors released from duty when deliberations began told news reporters they would have voted guilty for first-degree murder when considering all of the evidence. The jury was given the option of finding Greene guilty of first-degree murder, second-degree murder or a voluntary manslaughter charge or rule not guilty on any charge.

Prosecutors Lee Bollinger and Rick Green haven't decided whether to retry the state's case against Greene. It would be placed back on the court agenda and heard in Brunswick County Superior Court sometime after the first of the year, said Bollinger.

In closing arguments last week, See Mistrial, page 6

Long-range committee

Goals progress is criticized

By Terry Pope
County Editor

County government isn't moving fast enough on recommendations to please a long-range planning group that has developed a plan to prepare for the county's future.

Members of Brunswick County's Long-Range Planning Oversight Committee remain critical of how they say county administration has failed to tackle a list of 16 planning recommendations they forwarded to commissioners in February.

They released an updated list last week that outlines county activity since July 1 on the 16 goals. They want county staffs and various com-

mittees to request the funds they may need to carry-out the goals in budget preparations which begin in February.

But some committees haven't even been appointed. And some departments are without managers. County manager Jim Varner said he supports the goals and has worked to implement them as he has been directed by county commissioners, which last year appointed the long-range committee. It is a panel that has become increasingly outspoken on county government issues.

"The only thing that has been actually started is with our economic development commission, county commissioners and the schools," said committee member Rosetta Short of Long

Beach. "What's happened to our administration helping us? We're right back to where we started."

Glenn Harbeck, a consultant hired to work with the long-range committee, said there are many items that may not require county funds, just work on the part of various committees.

"They cost time," said Harbeck. "I think they'll be bringing recommendations forward to commissioners where there will be money involved. It would be nice if these committees, between now and February, could come together and begin making recommendations. The timing could be great, but three months is not an error. See Planning, page 7

New bank is state's largest

UCB sold; changes to come

Southern National Corporation and United Carolina Bancshares Corporation have announced the signing of a merger agreement that will create the largest bank in the Carolinas and the 30th largest bank holding company in the nation.

The merger between the Winston-Salem-based Southern National and the Whiteville-based UCB will form a financial institution with more than \$25 billion in assets, the largest share of deposits in North Carolina, at approximately 20 percent; and the third largest share of

deposits in South Carolina, at 11 percent. UCB's banking subsidiaries, United Carolina Bank and United Carolina Bank of South Carolina, will merge into Branch Banking and Trust Company (BB&T) and Branch Banking and Trust Company of South Carolina, respectively, the principal banking subsidiaries of Southern National.

"Southern National's announced acquisition strategy is to pursue very high-quality banks and thrifts in our current markets with the ultimate goal of improving our finan-

cial performance and fundamental franchise value," said Southern National chairman and chief executive officer John A. Allison.

"We could not be more pleased with the prospects of this merger with UCB, which meets these objectives. This in-market merger significantly strengthens our base of business in North Carolina and South Carolina. Both institutions have solid capital positions, excellent credit quality, strong branch office networks as well as very compatible corporate cultures,"

Allison said. "Considering the well-recognized benefits and potential cost savings inherent in an in-market merger, this transaction enables us to grow our franchise value and improve upon our strong efficiencies and momentum in selling fee-based products and services."

The merger, unanimously approved by the boards of directors of both companies, will be accounted for as a pooling of interests in which UCB shareholders will See New bank, page 6



Forecast

The extended forecast calls for partly cloudy skies with a chance of rain Thursday through Saturday. Temperatures will be 65 to 70 each and falling into the 50's at night.

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