



**Sports**

Wrestling is a big sport at South, especially when Brad McLean's on the mat -- 1C

**The State Port**

**PILOT**

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**Our**  
Long Beach town council inspections e 2

**Yaupon seeking tax hike**

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

Taxes will likely be raised to 13 percent of motel bills and cottage rental fees in Yaupon Beach beginning in January, 1998, commissioners decided Monday night.

By a 3-1 vote of the board of commissioners, a resolution asking the N. C. General Assembly to raise the town's occupancy tax from three to six percent was approved. Only commissioner Dick Marshall, a real estate agent and property manager, voted in opposition to the occupancy tax hike.

The resolution will be forwarded to 14th House District Rep. E. David Redwine, of Brunswick County, who will be asked to introduce the accommodations tax hike as a local bill before the General Assembly in its current session.

The resolution adopted Monday night notes the three-percent tax on short-term lodging rentals in Yaupon Beach which was authorized by the General Assembly in 1992 no longer provides adequate revenue for the town.

"... even though the revenue from this tax levy has helped Yaupon Beach improve its beach, recreation areas and services to its visitors and tourists, the financial burden of providing such services has exceeded the financial resources of the town," the resolution notes.

Yaupon Beach is among the smallest -- if not the smallest -- coastal municipality to levy an occupancy tax. The one-square-mile town is also more residential in character than other coastal communities and has fewer rental units than most, the resolution notes.

Earlier in the evening, commissioners heard from representatives of the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce who, with the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, have asked Redwine to sponsor a local bill establishing a one-percent countywide occupancy tax to support the promotional and marketing efforts of Brunswick County Travel Pack, a joint venture of the two

See Yaupon, page 9

**Murder charge is filed**

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

It was a drug deal gone sour that left a former South Brunswick High School standout athlete dead of five gunshot wounds sustained during a dispute on a rural road near Bolivia.

It was a murder to which there were at least two eye-witnesses, sheriff Ronald E. Hewett confirmed Tuesday.

Aaron Thomas (Petey) Swain, of 732 North Lord Street, Southport, died in the Doshier Memorial Hospital emergency room early Saturday morning, 19 days after his 28th birthday.

"Homicide was over a dope deal that went bad," Capt. Phil Perry of the sheriff's major crime unit reported to sheriff Hewett. A .22 caliber handgun was located 75 feet from the scene of the shooting and a quantity of a white powdery substance believed to be cocaine was also recovered nearby on Rutland Road, Bolivia.

See Murder, page 6

**HAPPY VALENTINE**



Addie Taylor displays the Valentine's Day card she made for mom last week at the Southport library branch. The Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department sponsored Valentine's Day crafts programs for children at libraries throughout the county.

Photo by Holly Edwards

**Long Beach Horse-a-Thon**

**Town tightens reins on VFD fund-raiser**

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

Horse-a-Thon, the annual fund-raiser for the Long Beach Volunteer Fire Department, may have no more than 250 participants this year, town council ruled in a specially called meeting Tuesday morning.

Breaking with tradition, council chose also to dictate other conditions of the March 21-23 event to the fire

department volunteers. Council ruled by unanimous vote the fire department is to charge a fee of \$100 per horse and \$25 per rider. Horses, when not being ridden on the beachfront, will be restricted to an area bounded by East Oak Island Drive on the north, 46th and 58th streets on the west and east and Beach Drive on the south.

Volunteer fire chief Jim Pittman, in discussions with town manager Jerry Walters, had proposed to limit the event to 300 horses and charge \$65 per horse and \$25

See Fund-raiser, page 9

**Bolivia, Belville, Leland**

**Year-round schools suggested**

By Holly Edwards  
Feature Editor

Principals of Lincoln Primary, Belville Elementary and Leland Middle schools will seek community support to implement a year-round school program, superintendent of schools Marion Wise told the school board Monday night.

Parent forums are tentatively scheduled at 7 p.m. at the following locations and dates: Belville Elementary, Thursday, February 27; Lincoln Primary, Monday, March 3; Leland Middle, Tuesday, March 4.

The principals say a year-round school calendar would offer 180 school days just like the current calendar, but would provide students with more frequent and shorter vacations.

Instead of a long summer vacation, students would attend school for nine weeks and have three

"What we've seen in other areas, and we have research to back this up, is that year-round schools have a positive effect on student achievement."

Diana Mintz  
Leland principal

weeks off for three cycles, then attend school for nine weeks and have five weeks off.

Students who are having academic trouble could

be targeted for remediation every nine weeks rather than at the end of the school year, the principals say, and students would retain more of what they learn with shorter breaks rather than a long summer vacation.

"What we've seen in other areas, and we have research to back this up, is that year-round schools have a positive effect on student achievement," said Leland Middle principal Diana Mintz. "Because students and teachers get a break more frequently, they come back refreshed and ready to work. And when you have students who are eager to be here and refreshed, learning is going to be more significant."

In addition to the parent forums, principals will gather parent input through surveys sent home with students.

"We want the public to have a clear understanding of the program," said Leland Middle principal Diana Mintz. See Schools, page 8

**Commissioners retreat**

**Long-range plan group now history**

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

County commissioners say long-range planning won't stop with the sudden 3-2 vote Saturday to disband a committee which last year drafted the county's plan to deal with growth over the next 25 years.

The Long-Range Planning Oversight Committee was appointed in 1995 and developed a list of 16 recommendations to handle projected growth. It was kept intact to track implementation of its goals and objectives and had recently hired a professional planner to study ways to protect the Castle Hayne aquifer.

"They have done a great job," said commission chairman JoAnn Bellamy Simmons of District 4. "It's not something that we're planning to do away with completely. We have plenty of recommendations on what we need to do. We just felt like the

'We have plenty of recommendations on what we need to do. We just felt like the time had come that we wanted to get some of these things done.'

JoAnn Bellamy Simmons  
Board chairman

time had come that we wanted to get some of these things done." When the issue was raised by Ms. See Long-range, page 6

**No 'surprises,' county board tells member**

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

Leslie Collier says she is just a journalist at heart and as the District 3 county commissioner isn't shy about asking questions during a public meeting.

Other board members say they don't like to be surprised by non-agenda items. At a board retreat Friday they questioned her motives stemming from a January 21 board meeting where she asked about the use of county emergency vehicles for the filming of a movie in New Hanover County last October.

"It all came up, and it was a shock," said chairman JoAnn Bellamy Simmons of District 4. "I felt like it was an embarrassment to the staff." See Surprises, page 8

'... I reserve the right to question why staff made a decision. I just have a hard time deciding which questions can be asked in public and which ones can't be asked in public.'

Leslie Collier  
District 3 member



**Forecast**

The extended forecast calls for a chance of showers on Thursday & Friday with highs mid 50's to mid 60's. Saturday will be fair and cooler with highs in the 40's to mid 50's.

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