



Sports

Hook a Kid on Golf gives county youngsters a chance to explore new sport -- 1C

The State Port

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SOUTHPORT, N.C.

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Fourth of July

Festival events start on Sunday

Festival Fever has struck Southport-Oak Island with its annual show of force.

The N. C. Fourth of July Festival begins in earnest next week, but there are still a number of teaser events between now and then the locals especially will want to note.

Tonight (Wednesday) the U. S. Marine Band will offer a 7 o'clock concert on the Garrison at Fort Johnston. Be sure to bring along a lawn chair or a blanket for this patriotic performance.

There will be plenty of festival-related things to do Sunday, starting bright and early at 8 a.m. when the festival sponsors its one-mile Fun Run. The 1997 N. C. Freedom Run, the five-kilometer competitive run through the streets of Southport, will follow at 8:30 a.m. Both races will begin and end at Waterfront Park on Bay Street.

The Firemen's Competition will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday on Nash Street, between City Hall and the emergency services building. The games, which test many skills required in firefighting, will include volunteer organizations from throughout Brunswick County.

Sunday night Southport-Oak Island neighbors are invited to gather at Southport Baptist Church on Howe Street for the Community Worship Service. Worship is to begin at 7 p.m.

The festival begins in all its splendor Tuesday morning, July 1, with the opening of festival headquarters, the

See Fourth, page 6

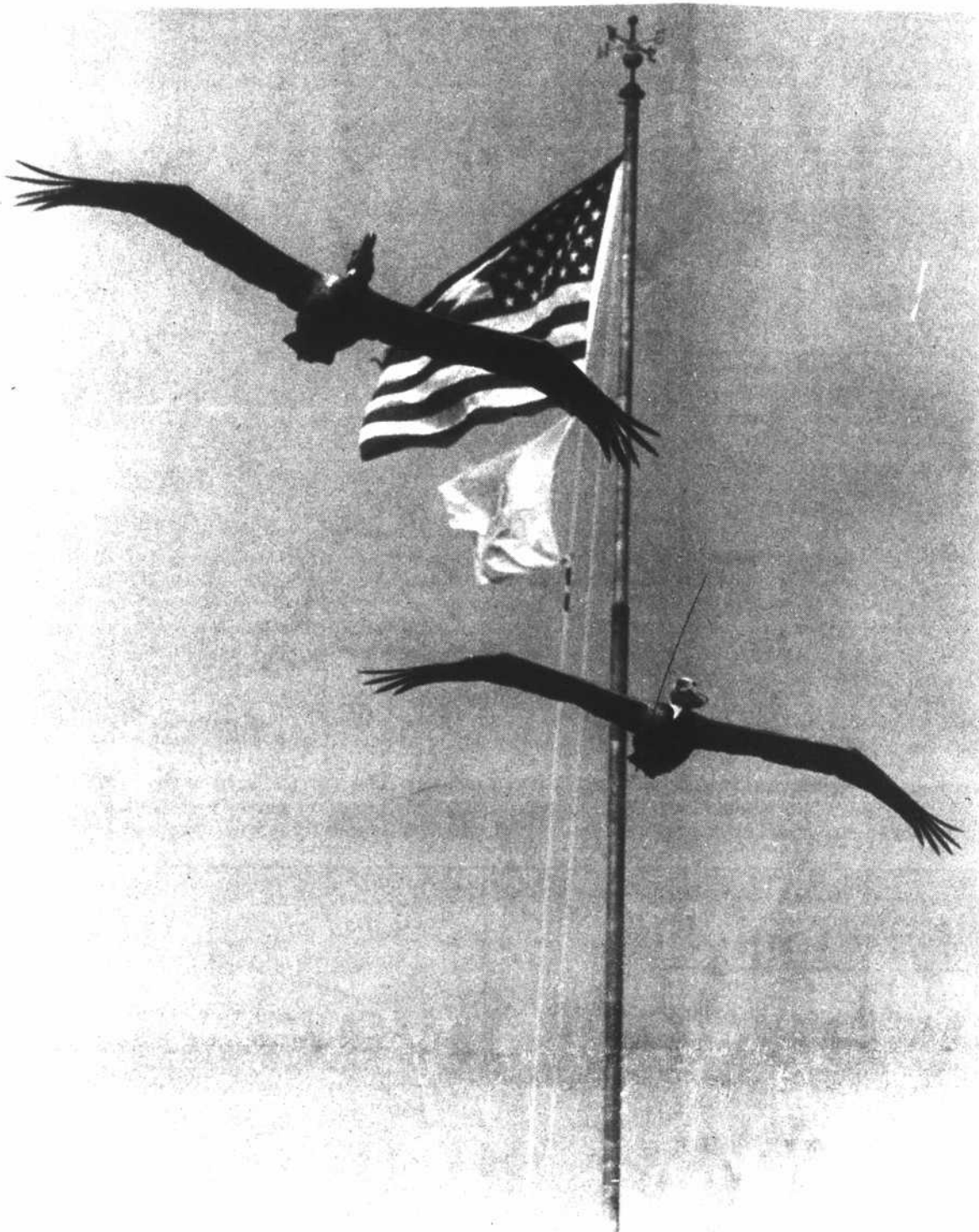


Photo by Jim Harper

Yes, that Star-Spangled Banner still waves on the Southport waterfront, and will wave gloriously for the next ten days as the N. C. Fourth of July Festival presents a full program for the Independence Day observance. It starts Sunday with the 8 a.m. Freedom Run, followed by the Firemen's Competition at 2 p.m. and the Community Worship Service at 7 p.m.

Early edition

Next week's edition of The State Port Pilot will be published early for distribution before noon on Wednesday.

Mail will be placed in the post office that afternoon for delivery as usual.

The N. C. Fourth of July Festival program will be included in newsstand and counter sales of the July 2 edition; the program was mailed to all Pilot subscribers in this issue, and festival volunteers will begin distribution to key locations this weekend.

Classified advertising deadlines will remain unchanged. Display advertising for the July 2 edition must be in the newspaper office by noon next Monday.

Town elections filing period opens July 4

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

For the politically inclined, July 4 may be a bigger day this year than in years past.

July 4 marks the first day residents of towns and cities in North Carolina may file notice of candidacy for election to municipal office.

Although neither town halls nor the Brunswick County Board of Elections office will be open July 4, the state has set noon that day as the opening of the filing period for municipal offices nonetheless. For a \$5 fee, those who would serve their towns and cities may file notice of candidacy at any time before noon August 1.

In Brunswick County that means 18 municipalities, two sanitary districts, See Elections, page 10

Water supply down

Customers of the City of Southport water system are asked to help conserve water, particularly in afternoons for the next few days.

As the city prepares this year to locate another well in the city to assure an adequate supply of drinking water, Southport remains dependent on the Brunswick County water system for some of its drinking water needs. This is particularly true in summer months when water consumption is highest.

For the next several days, See Water, page 6

Long Beach issue

Not just fine, but principle of the thing

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

No sea turtle was ever endangered when the Town of Long Beach pushed sand in May, 1996.

The town will contest a \$700 penalty the state has assessed it for the sand-pushing effort, mayor Joan Altman said Tuesday.

Roger Schechter, director of the Division of Coastal Management of the N. C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, June 12 ruled Long Beach had willfully and intentionally violated a ban against sand pushing during sea turtle nesting season and doubled a \$350 base civil penalty he assessed the town.

"We will appeal," mayor Joan Altman said Tuesday. "We do not agree any fine is warranted. The Town of Long Beach did not do anything to endanger sea turtles."

The dispute between the Town of Long Beach and the Division of Coastal Management has been fester-

'It is not our fault they couldn't get information from another agency and I will not agree to pay any fine because of it.'

Joan Altman
Long Beach mayor

ing since June, 1996, when DCM field representative Edward Brooks proposed a \$2,500 civil penalty be assessed Long Beach for pushing sand between 14th and 58th streets SE from May 15 to May 22, 1996.

Although the town has a general See Principle, page 9

Brunswick County

'Lean' budget gives schools more funding

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A revised budget presented to Brunswick County commissioners Monday is \$2.3 million leaner, and increases spending to public schools by \$732,225.

That is still less than the extra \$1 million school officials told commissioners they need to operate the schools during the 1997-98 fiscal year. The school board requested \$15.3 million while the total allocation under the revised plan would be approximately \$14.7 million.

County fiscal operations director Luthia Horne said Monday the extra funds would come from the \$2.3-mil-

lion cuts in various departments and by adjusting the projected county tax base to \$6.15 billion at a 95.5 percent tax collection rate instead of 94.4 percent as previously figured. The property valuation was \$6.10 billion in the first draft.

The revised spending plan would set aside 24 cents instead of 23 cents of the proposed 68.5 cents per \$100 of property valuation tax rate for county schools. Last month, the school board asked commissioners to increase its allocation from a recommended \$14 million (\$12.3 million in ad valorem dollars plus other funds) to \$15.3 million, and a majority of commissioners agreed to study the issue.

Faced with heavily tapping the county fund balance, commissioners last week ordered county manager Jim Varner to trim another \$1 million from the \$84.3-million budget. They received their first look at Varner's See Schools, page 6

Second floor, other amenities cut

Community Building is scaled down

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

As expected, Southport aldermen rejected all bids for rebuilding the Southport Community Building, the waterfront structure lost to fire in January, 1995.

Although the four-member committee charged with rebuilding the structure on the city's behalf had expected construction costs to be between \$87 and \$95 per square foot, actual bids set cost at \$157 per square foot, alderman Paul Fisher, a member of the committee, said.

A \$1.102-million apparent low bid last week for the project, designed by architect John Thompson under the committee's direction, was more than \$380,000 over the

'I was as surprised as anyone. I was just astonished, the way the bids came in.'

Paul Fisher
Ward I alderman

committee's fund-raising goal of \$720,000. It was even farther beyond the \$650,000 a local contractor had predicted bids would be after reviewing the project for the committee.

Alderman Meezie Childs, another member of the community building reconstruction committee, said Thompson has been instructed to scale-down the project severely. He has been instructed to remove from the project a second story, decks, landscaping and all things non-essential to the basic structure.

"We didn't feel we could negotiate down with the lowest bidder, because the changes will be so significant," alderman Childs said. In essence, what Thompson has been directed to deliver to the committee today (Wednesday) is a new project entirely.

Aldermen Thursday said building costs were not what they were "led to believe," but didn't say how they were misled. See Building, page 6

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