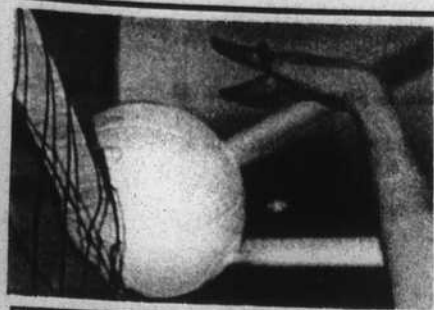


The State Port

PILOT

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Long Beach primary election next Tuesday

By Richard Nubel News Editor

Candidate profiles, pages 8-9

The 3,761 registered voters of the Town of Long Beach will have the opportunity to go to two separate polling places Tuesday to narrow a field of 14 town council candidates to 12.

There will be no primary election for mayor Tuesday, as three-term incumbent mayor Joan P. Altman is officially unchallenged in her bid for reelection.

Both the Long Beach Recreation Center in Oak Island II precinct and the Shannon Fire Station on Oak Island Drive at SE 2nd Street in newly created Oak Island III precinct will be used as polling places for the Long Beach non-partisan primary election of 1997. Oak Island II includes the area from 79th Street to East 20th Street and is home to 1,947 registered voters, records at the Brunswick County Board of Elections indicate. Oak Island III extends from East 19th Street to the town's western boundary and includes 1,814

registered voters.

Polls will open at 6:30 p.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

While the prospect of eliminating only two candidates from a field of 14 vying for six council seats seems an expensive proposition to most, this is likely the last time the non-partisan Long Beach primary election will be trivialized. The non-partisan primary election process was begun in Long Beach after the election of 1983 when 13 candidates stood for election to three seats on the town's board of commissioners. Long Beach remains the only Brunswick County municipality to conduct a primary election.

Proponents of the non-partisan primary election in the early 1980s said the primary election narrowed the field of candidates to two for each available seat on the governing body. Members would more nearly be elected to the

town's governing board by a majority of votes, they said.

But, that was when three candidates were elected in each odd-numbered year and four-year terms of office were staggered. After the election of 1991, the town's charter was amended to establish two-year, non-staggered terms of office for council members. Because of this, six seats would be filled every two years.

This year, however, council amended the town charter once again. The top three voter-getters in the general election this November will be seated for four years, beginning the process of a return to four-year staggered terms of office and making the non-partisan primary election an important event once again, if fields of candidates continue to reach to 13 and 14 persons.

How many votes will it take to make the cut on Tuesday?

That will depend heavily on voter turnout, but the Long Beach non-partisan primary election of 1995 may be instructive. In 1995, like this year, 14 candidates sought 12 slots on the November ballot. Only 34 percent of the See Election, page 11

Dogfights a concern for county

By Holly Edwards Feature Editor

A reward is offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of dogfighters in Brunswick County, animal control officer Greg Thompson announced Tuesday.

He stressed that the identity of persons reporting a dogfight will remain confidential. The reward could be as high as \$500.

Brunswick County sheriff Ron Hewett vowed to crack down on dogfighters in the county. He said dogfighters are often involved in other forms of violent crime, as well as drug trafficking and gambling.

"I think the exploitation of animals and the blood bath involved in dogfighting is deplorable," Hewett declared. "We need to get hold of this thing now before it gets any worse. The violence involved in dogfighting is indicative of criminal behavior in general, and it could encourage people to commit violence against people."

The sophistication of dogfighters ranges from the professional handlers who invest huge sums of time and money training and breeding their dogs, to the backyard "street fighters" who torture and torment animals to make them mean, Thompson said.

Street fighters also frequently use See Dogfight, page 6



Photo by Holly Edwards

What does Kasey Long have here, and worse, what is it likely to do next? North Carolina Museum of Natural Science's Melanie Doyle brought all sorts of creepy, crawly, swimmy and hoppy things for students at the Brunswick Learning Center to get to know first-hand on Monday. More on the program in the Schools section.

Southport

SPA curtails marina input responsibility

By Richard Nubel News Editor

Nine months from now, the N. C. State Ports Authority will stop paying the City of Southport to oversee the state's lease of the Small Boat Harbor, if aldermen accept new agreement terms established by the SPA board while meeting in Wilmington Monday.

The city board of aldermen may get a first chance to publicly react to a moneyless SPA proposal when it meets October 9.

"They want to continue the agreement basically, with the exception that they will pay a management fee only through June 30, 1998," city manager Rob Gandy said late Tuesday, after

'They want us to continue to support the facility, but they aren't going to give us any money.'

Bill Delaney Southport alderman

learning of SPA's decision. SPA has agreed to continue paying the city a \$1,500 monthly management fee See Marina, page 11

Population boom

School projects total \$13 million

By Holly Edwards Feature Editor

Student population in Brunswick County is growing fast and school officials are racing to keep up with demand for classrooms.

Three major school construction projects totaling more than \$13 million will begin in early 1998. A new elementary school at Winding River Plantation is scheduled to be complete by the summer of 1999 and classroom additions at South Brunswick Middle and Bolivia Elementary schools are scheduled to be complete by next summer, said assistant superintendent of school operations Clarence Willie.

"In the bigger picture of how the county is growing, yes it's going to be a challenge to keep up," Willie

said. "Although it's stable now, one area of the county could take off at any time."

Total student population in Brunswick County schools grew from 9,512 last year to 9,782 this term.

Brunswick County school officials will close on a 19-acre tract at Winding River Plantation immediately after architectural blueprints for a new elementary school are completed next Wednesday, Willie said.

The board of education voted unanimously to purchase the 19-acre tract for \$150,000. The site is located about 500 feet from Highway 211 and bordered by Zion Hill Road and the Winding River Plantation golf course and development.

Architect Mete Gruel of the Ra-See Project, page 10

'The violence involved in dogfighting is indicative of criminal behavior in general, and it could encourage people to commit violence against people.'

Sheriff Ron Hewett

Boats capsize in inlet

By Jim Harper Staff Writer

Three small boats capsized and one larger craft was damaged in Lockwood Folly Inlet in strong southerly winds between noon and 4 p.m. Sunday.

Seven people were dumped into the water, five were rescued by boats in the area and two made it ashore on their own.

Report of the first sinking came to Oak Island Coast Guard shortly after noon, with the vessel Sugarfoot reporting that it had rescued three people from the water after a 17-foot pleasure boat overturned.

The three survivors were taken to Columbia Brunswick Hospital.

At 1:23 p.m. came a report from the Jaw Breaker that a 14-foot jon boat had swamped.

Coast Guard, Tri-Beach Rescue and BOAT/U.S. craft were at the scene after responding to the first call and found two survivors in shallow water. A Coast Guardsman was transferred to the BOAT/U.S. craft which was used to make the rescue.

The two were treated for minor injuries at Holden Beach Marina as BOAT/U.S. recovered both vessels.

At 2:09 p.m. the Sea Bug reported that The Other See Boats, page 11

U.S. Open to offer \$100,000 cash



By Richard Nubel News Editor

As if by magic, the multi-colored tents began to rise at Southport Marina Tuesday in anticipation of the 19th annual U. S. Open King Mackerel Tournament which begins Thursday.

"The tents are going up now and the trailer will be in place tomorrow for Thursday's registration," a confident 1997 U. S. Open chairman Bill Owen

said Tuesday. "We're going to be ready."

Owen, committees and volunteers will be "ready" for the oldest and most favored king mackerel tournament in North Carolina -- the U. S. Open. Begun in 1978 as a primary fund-raising event for the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce, the \$100,000 all-cash U. S. Open King Mackerel Tournament has more than fulfilled its mission to promote this area as an excellent fall fishing venue and to extend the summer tourist season into the

fall months.

Registration for the 1997 U. S. Open will be conducted all day Thursday, with the registration tent at Southport Marina manned until midnight. Captains meetings will be held at 5 and 7 p.m. on the marina grounds, as fishermen and community members enjoy refreshments and the sounds of local disc jockey Tommy Robbins.

Precisely at 7 a.m. Friday, competition fishing See U. S. Open, page 10

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