

THE STATE PORT PILOT



Cape Fear Coast
 Spring edition in this week's *Pilot*

Investigation
 Plane wreckage is recovered - 1B

Streak ends
 Cougar nine defeats Whiteville -1C

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Heroic effort saves 3

By Jim Harper
Staff Writer

Two parents and their 11-year-old daughter were saved from a stunning crash and growing flames at the Brunswick County Airport after their airplane crashed on takeoff there Sunday.

The crackup around 11 a.m. occurred in full view of visitors at the airport terminal as well as motorists atop the Oak Island bridge.

One of those motorists, David Parks Jr. of Long Beach, recalled Monday, "The airplane was lifting just fine and had kind of leveled off and then took a hard bank to the right and went down, nose first, and hit the ground hard."



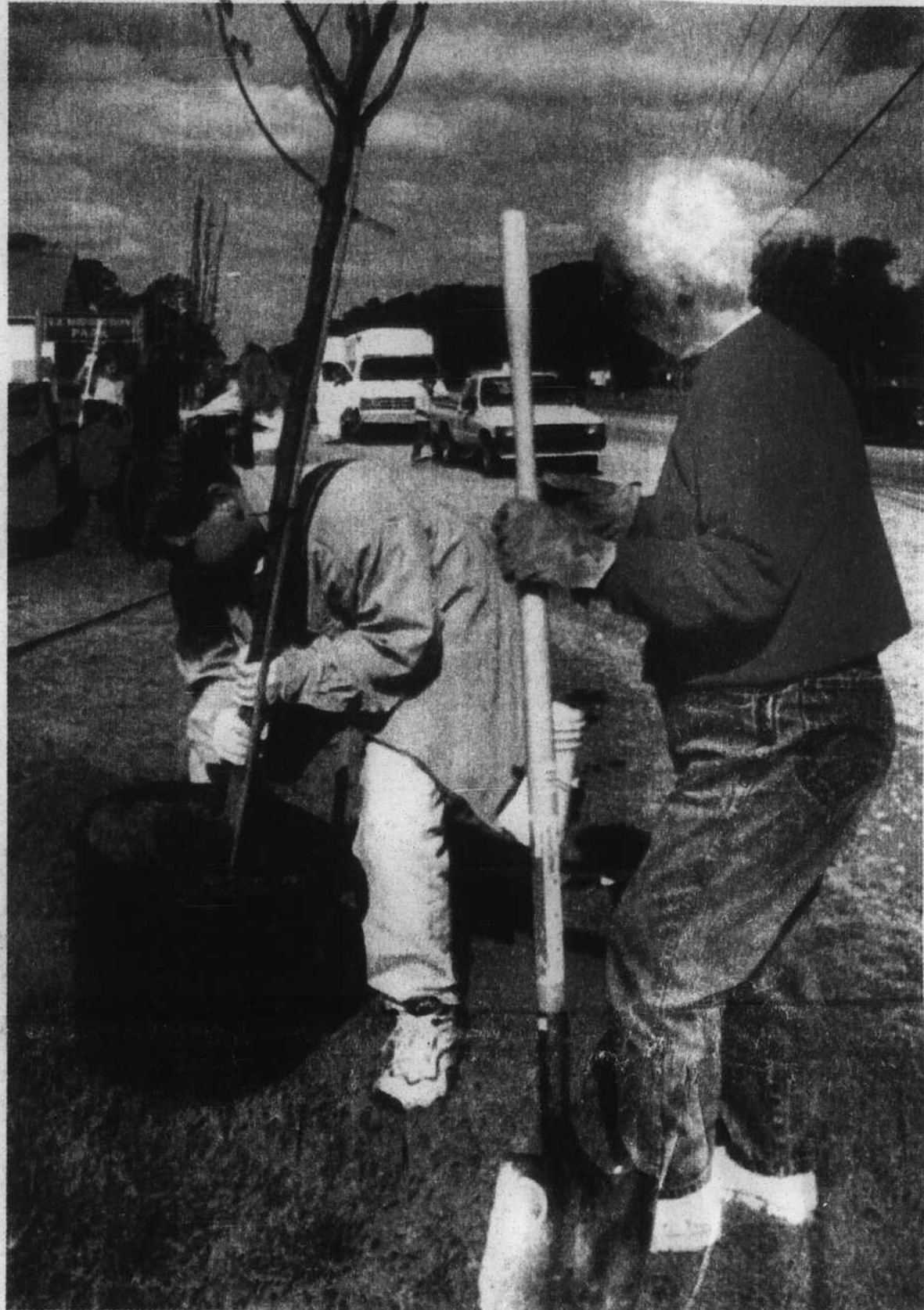
SCOTT

Parks, driving northward, sped into the airport and soon became an integral part of the rescue operation.

Ken Scott, a member of the airport staff and an experienced aviator, said that evidence he saw indicated that the right engine on the two-engine Piper Navajo was not operating when it hit the ground.

Federal officials were unable to determine the cause of the crash at the scene on Monday and interviewed the pilot at New Hanover Regional Medical Center, still without arriving at a resolution. Plans were to continue the investigation after the plane is removed from the dense woods where it fell.

At New Hanover, pilot Rex Cowdry, his wife Donna E. Patterson and their daughter Ryan See Crash, page 6



Arbor Day was celebrated in Long Beach Saturday with a morning of tree planting at Middleton Park and the recreation center. Approximately 60 volunteers planted over 60 trees; an additional 40 trees were planted by Long Beach employees this week.

Photo by Jim Harper

Remedial school tests

Data seems to refute civil rights assertion

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

A federal civil rights complaint alleges that Brunswick County and 27 other North Carolina school systems do not provide remedial help to ensure black students pass eighth grade competency tests in math and reading that are required for high school graduation.

But county superintendent of schools Marion Wise says data may indicate otherwise.

"When we look at the rapidly decreasing number of students failing the test, we can see that the programs we've put into place are working," Wise said.

Filed last Monday by the state chapter of the NAACP and the N. C. Education and Law Project, the complaint lists the state Board of Education, the state Department of Public Instruction and 28 of the See Schools, page 7

'We need to have a high level of expectation for our students, but we also have to provide a high level of support for them.'

Supt. Marion Wise

Murder case

'Bargain' accepted

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Completing plea negotiations Thursday, Varie Warren appeared before resident Superior Court judge William C. Gore Jr. and tendered a plea of guilty to second-degree murder.

By offer of that plea, Ms. Warren, 60, admitted she had shot her husband J. M. Warren, the popular owner-operator of Yaupon Exxon and former Yaupon Beach commissioner, four times in the chest with a .38 caliber handgun on December 8, 1996. The shooting occurred See Murder, page 6

Infrastructure

City 'studies' development plan of ac

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Facing decisions on the upgrade of infrastructure, Southport aldermen three separate times Thursday declined to let the city and its service area grow.

At a regular monthly meeting of the board of aldermen, city clerk Jim Brown reported a petition for annexation by Bald Head Island Limited was sufficient but the board did not immediately schedule the next step in the annexation process, a public hearing on the annexation. That hearing may be held in May, pending a workshop of aldermen on wastewater management system capacity and fees.

Aldermen tabled indefinitely a request from John and Beverly McCloskey, who had asked for out-of-town sewer service for a proposed 12-unit commercial complex they propose to build on the east side of N. C. 211 near the CP&L canal. They estimate 1,800-gallon-per-day flow from the complex. Ms. McCloskey was told she would be called when and if the city could help her.

Aldermen also tabled indefinitely a request from E. J. Prevatte who, on behalf of himself and two other

In fact aldermen have been preoccupied with reports about the city's wastewater management system

owners, had requested satellite -- or non-contiguous -- annexation of a 41-acre tract they propose to develop on the west side of N. C. 87 near the school board property. The board refused to direct Brown to even verify the sufficiency of the annexation petition Prevatte presented.

The board's refusal to allow the city to grow and extend services at this time is tied to questions of the city's ability to provide wastewater management services. Aldermen seemed confused, at times asking decisions be delayed until they See Growth, page 9

Three 'choices'

Plan is needed for north sewer

By Terry Pope
County Editor

County officials are driving toward regional sewer service in the northern district but with no "vehicle" yet to carry them there.

They are studying three ways to manage regional systems recommended by Brunswick County attorney Huey Marshall, and they are expected to choose one method soon. Towns and entities involved in the first joint, public-private venture to provide sewer in the Leland community say they want to work with the county to find the most acceptable method.

"There are actually 12 choices on how service can be achieved," said Marshall, who reviewed state statutes and compiled a report for commissioners. He outlined what he says are the top three the board should consider closely.

Last year, Brunswick County

commissioners voted unanimously to take the lead in providing sewer to the Leland community after breakdowns developed in discussion with the Town of Belville over purchase of the town-owned sewer treatment plant. Instead, a county facility that serves the Leland Industrial Park will be expanded as a first phase.

Developers of Magnolia Greens, a golf course community south of Leland, Navassa and the county to help provide sewer lines for the region. Construction has already begun on the project in areas where permission has been granted.

Last week, commissioners authorized Marshall to use the power of eminent domain to acquire easements for sewer line crossings where property owners cannot be reached or where negotiations would hold back progress. Eminent See Sewer, page 8

Contribution honors former publisher

In memory of its long-time publisher, the late James M. Harper Jr., *The State Port Pilot* has contributed to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In recognition of the gift, the school will name its new office for student organizations in visual communication in honor of Harper, publisher of the *Southport* weekly for 59 years. To be located in Carroll Hall, the school's new home starting in summer 1999,

the office will house student chapters of the National Press Photographers Association and the Society of News Design.

Harper became publisher of the *Pilot* in 1935 and remained active until his death in 1994. Throughout his tenure, he maintained a strong appreciation for photography and design; the newspaper has been widely recognized with awards in those areas.

"We couldn't imagine a more fitting tribute to his legacy," Harper's son, Ed Harper, said

of the planned School of Journalism and Mass Communication office.

For many years the *Pilot* was the only newspaper in Brunswick County. James Harper, as editor and publisher, felt that the newspaper should promote community development. He sought to report affairs of the whole community in non-partisan and non-controversial ways. At the same time, he was not afraid to take strong editorial stands, and he led a campaign in Brunswick to open county board

meetings to the public and the press.

Harper's enthusiasm for the paper drew in the whole family. His wife, Margaret T. Harper, ran the paper while Harper served in World War II. His two sons, James M. Harper III and Edward T. Harper, are both employed by the newspaper. James M. Harper III is an award-winning photographer and Edward T. Harper is the editor.

James M. Harper Jr. was graduated in 1933 See Publisher, page 5

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