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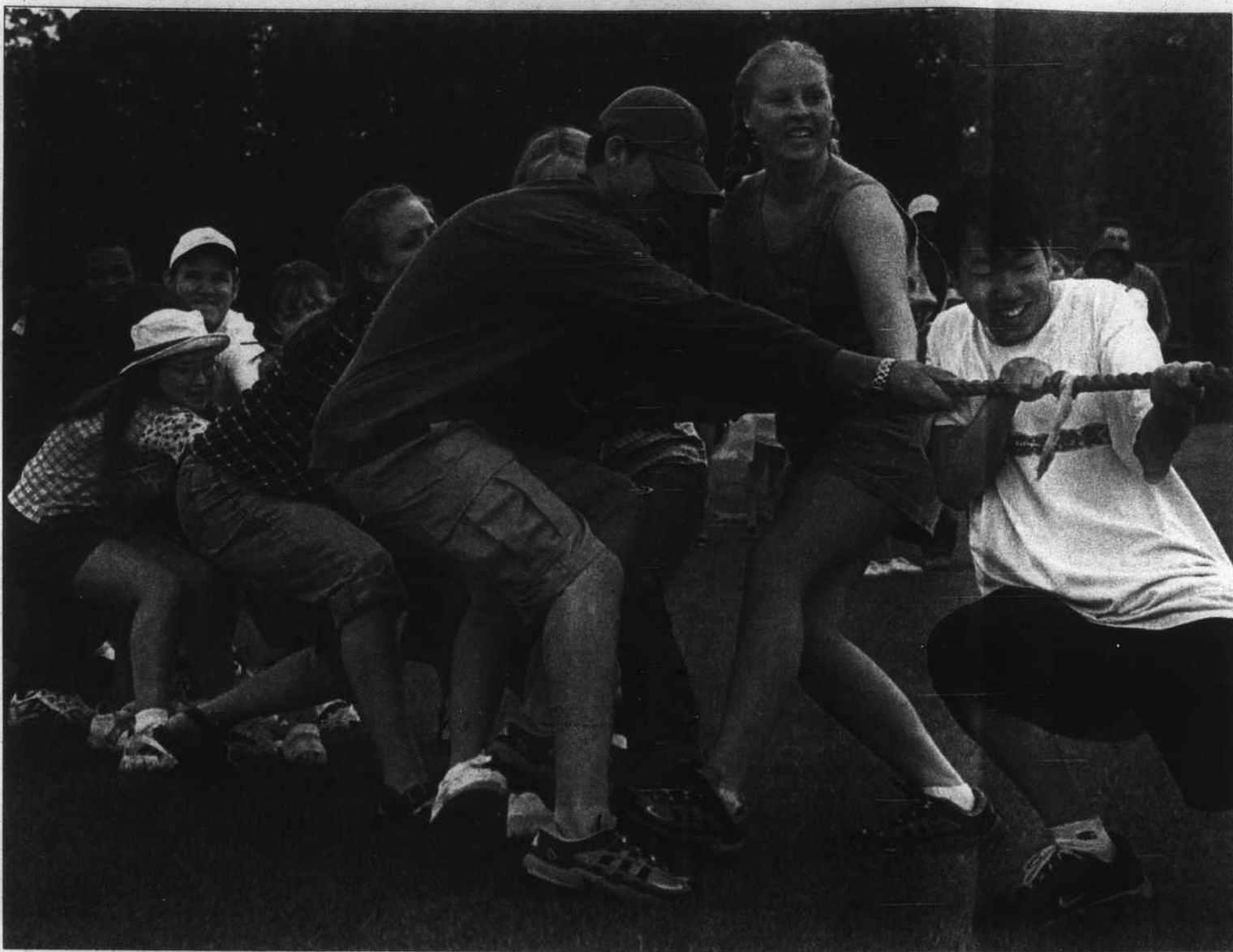


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TUG O' WAR



Clad in overalls, boots and plaid shirts, students get a taste of fun — Mark Twain style — last week at North Brunswick High School.

North Brunswick has a field day Students get a jump on learning

By Laura Kimball
Staff writer

Tug-of-war, sack races, seed-spitting, jello-eating and frog jumping were the main events last week at North Brunswick High School, but for some students the real fun came the night before Mark Twain Day.

You see, to participate in the most exciting event — the frog jumping contest — you have to catch

your own frog.

Modeled after Mark Twain's short story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," the field day events were intended to give students in English classes the taste of a good time back in the days of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Jennifer Cospoer found her frog, Ichabod, the night before the contest. She and some friends, who had never been frog hunting before, spent four hours finding their large, slimy friend.

"It was so much fun," she said. "At first we got kind of tired when we couldn't find a frog, but when we did we were excited."

The preferred method of frog hunting was at night, from a boat on a small pond.

With a flashlight, hunters looked for the gleam of a frog's eyes in the night. The light also temporarily blinded the frogs, making it possible — or at least probable — to sneak up on the frog and

See Mark Twain, page 9

Consolidation July 1 Oak Island's first budget asks 36 cents

By Richard Nubel
Staff writer

A first-ever budget proposal for the Town of Oak Island was delivered to Long Beach town councilors and Yaupon Beach commissioners Tuesday night.

A bill now pending before the N. C. General Assembly is expected to consolidate the towns of Yaupon Beach and Long Beach on July 1 — the same day the new fiscal year will begin for North Carolina local governments.

Staff's recommended budget calls for a property tax rate in the town's first year of 36 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. Property tax rates in Long Beach and Yaupon Beach this year were 42 cents and 38.5 cents, respectively, but property was revalued by Brunswick County this year.

Ad valorem tax receipts in the Town of Oak Island in its first year are expected to be \$2,577,589, including property taxes from the nearly 500 acres on the mainland along Long Beach Road which are to become part of the town by annexation on September 1. This year, Long Beach and Yaupon Beach together projected ad valorem tax collections to be \$2,215,123 — or \$362,466 less than it will take to operate the bigger town after both consolidation and annexation.

In his budget message, town manager Jerry Walters predicts increases in solid waste costs and wastewater management costs in the coming fiscal year. Cost of water for town residents is to remain unchanged.

The town manager also predicts
See Oak Island, page 11

Southport board told No fire district this fiscal year

By Richard Nubel
Staff writer

Special legislation allowing formation of fee-supported fire districts will not clear the N. C. General Assembly in time to be included in Brunswick County's budget for fiscal year 1999-2000.

But volunteer fire departments, including Southport's, will receive money from the county's general fund next year, county commissioners chairman JoAnn Bellamy Simmons told city aldermen Thursday.

"This year, the fire departments will be funded as they were last year," Ms. Simmons said.

In the current budget year, all volunteer fire departments operating in Brunswick County get a base donation from the county of \$17,500. Departments also qualified to receive money for capital purchases from a fund into which county commissioners placed \$625,000 last year.

Ms. Simmons appeared before aldermen at mayor Bill Crowe's request to discuss county policy which may affect city budget planning for the coming year. Proposed county and municipal budgets, for the fiscal year to begin July 1, must be presented publicly no later than June 1 and must be ratified by governing boards no later than June 30.

Crowe had asked Ms. Simmons to be prepared to talk about the county's recent revaluation of real property, equipment changes and backup facilities for the county's 911 emergency operations center, EMS system development and plans for the Doshier Memorial

See Fire tax, page 6

Chairman Simmons:

■ Revaluation figures may not be known before August

■ County likely won't give up any of 50-cent telephone surcharge for 911 service

■ Southport emergency system will no longer serve as backup to county communications

■ Future of Doshier hospital tax past year 2000 will depend on township voters

Wall replica to highlight July festival

The Moving Wall, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C., will be on display in Southport during this year's N. C. Fourth of July Festival.

The festival, North Carolina's official observance of Independence Day, will attract as many as 40,000 visitors. Activities will include arts and crafts, waterfront entertainment, parade, regatta and fireworks, as well as Beach Day in neighboring Oak Island. Dates of this year's festival will be July 2-5, with the parade and fireworks scheduled on Monday.

The Southport festival is not all fun and games, though, as the military plays a major role each year and a naturalization ceremony adds a patriotic theme that will only be enhanced by The Moving Wall. The Wall will be erected at Fort Johnston, on the Southport waterfront, throughout the period July 2-8.

The Moving Wall is a half-size replica of the Washington memorial, measuring 252 feet in length. It is composed of 74 separate frames, placed on two walls angled to match the original Wall.

Construction began in 1983 following experiments with various methods of replicating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. John Devitt, who along with fellow Vietnam veterans Gerry Haver and Norris Shears constructed the replica over an 18-month period.
See Wall, page 16

County budget rises 25 percent this year

By Terry Pope
Staff writer

A freeze on hiring likely will thaw as Brunswick County heads into the new millennium and tries to get a handle on its substantial growth under a budget that could be 25 percent larger than the current fiscal year budget.

County manager Jim Varner's proposal Monday would add 62 new full-time employees to the county payroll and increase spending from \$83.3 million to \$104.5 million. The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners has scheduled a series of workshops starting June 1, with a public hearing Thursday, June 3, at 7:30 p.m. to hear from residents.

Varner believes it is time to help county departments grow so that services they provide won't lag. Brunswick County continues to be the second
See Budget, page 10

Sand tops wish lists

By Richard Nubel
Staff writer

From Bald Head Island west to Holden Beach, all of the beach communities that have been offered sand from the Wilmington Harbor Project say they want to begin stabilizing their beaches now.

"In one manner or another, all the communities have said, 'Hey, we want some sand,'" said Caswell Beach resident Harry Simmons, newly elected chairman of the Brunswick Beaches Consortium.

The Brunswick Beaches Consortium
See Beaches, page 5

Entrepreneurial School South Middle recognized

By Diana D'Abruzzo
Staff writer

Applauded for taking responsible risks and using innovation and creativity to teach in the classroom, South Brunswick Middle School has been named a state Entrepreneurial School.

"It's like an affirmation of the wonderful things the kids and teachers are doing with the community," said principal Rick Lawson. "And doggone it, it's nice for someone to notice."

More than 100 schools across the state applied for the award, and South Brunswick Middle School is one of ten winners. It is being honored for its innovation, particularly involving its annual Arts Impact celebration, Technology Club, physical education class and Communities In Schools programs, all of

which rely on community and school partnerships. Members of Gov. Jim Hunt's Teacher Advisory Committee visited the school in April to see first-hand how it uses these programs to get children excited about learning.

"The committee was impressed with your efforts to improve learning and to advance teaching," wrote Karen Garr, teacher adviser to the governor, in a letter announcing the award. "Your work exemplifies the kind of responsible risk-taking Governor Hunt had in mind when he created the Entrepreneurial Schools Program."

Entrepreneurial Schools are chosen based on community involvement, an emphasis on helping students succeed and use

See Volunteers, page 9



Tutoring played a major role in selection of South Brunswick Middle as one of ten Entrepreneurial Schools in North Carolina.