

# New Head Bullshooter Challenges Locals To Enter

**BY TERRY POPE**  
 Brunswick County has a new head bullshooter in charge, just in time for the eighth-annual storytelling contest at the N.C. Oyster Festival at Seaside Saturday. Billed as "North Carolina's Greatest Bullshooting Contest," the event was founded by Brunswick County Veterans' Service Director Jess Parker, who has moved to Washington upon his retirement. Cecelia "CeCe" Gore, former

mayor of L.A. (Lower Ash), will emcee this year's contest that begins on center stage at 2 p.m. She says Brunswick County is filled with the best bullshooters found anywhere, an abundance of storytellers

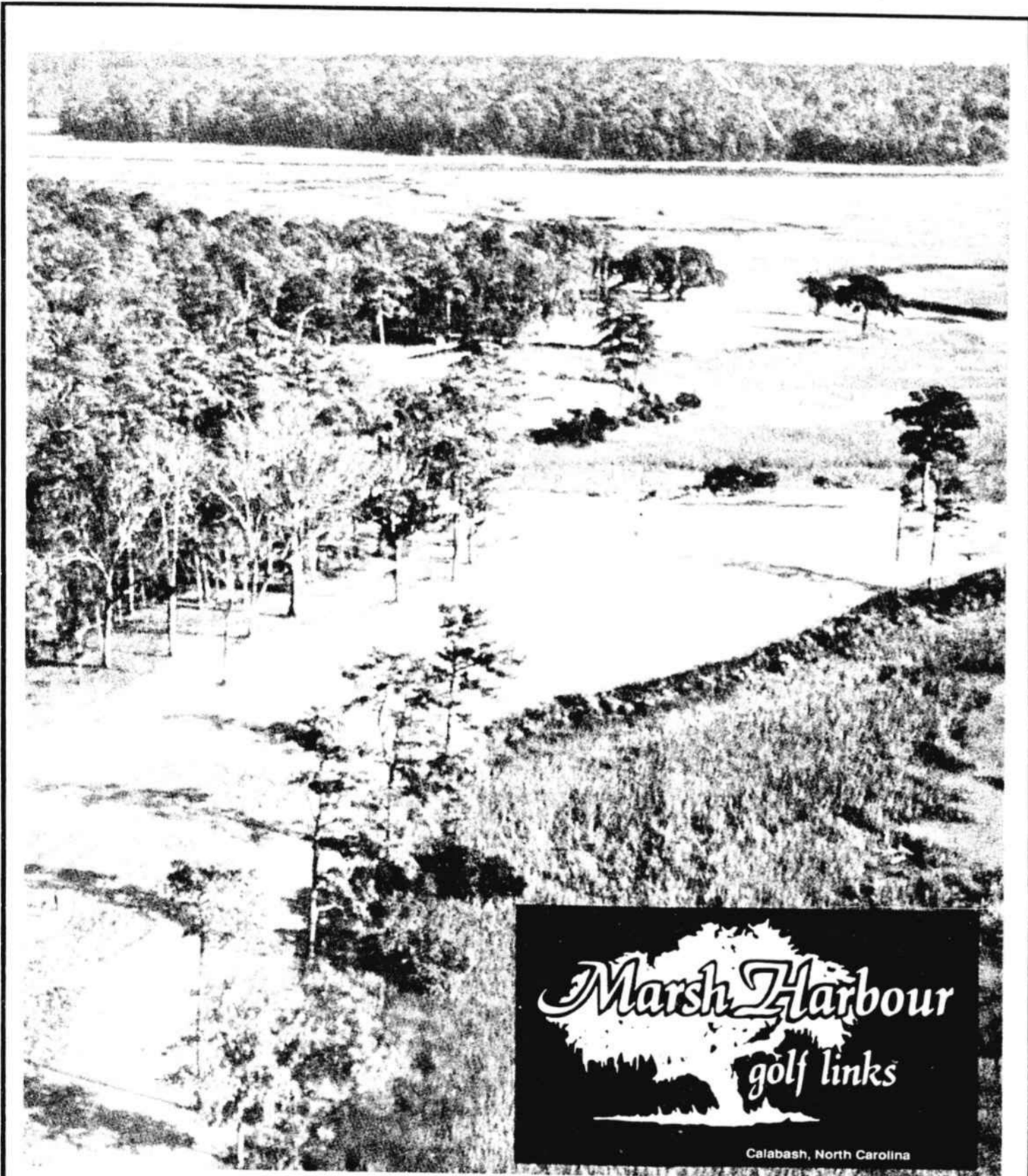


GORE

whose talents will go unnoticed if they don't enter this year's event. But grabbing the spotlight is nothing new to Ms. Gore, who admits to buying her way into office, the subject of one of her bullshooting contest stories that did not win. "I told the truth and lost," said Ms. Gore. "I guess they didn't believe me." She has been a judge, a participant and now emcee of the contest, proving that "only in the South



**JAMES TRIPP OF Longwood** has raised some of Brunswick County's finest bulls, but they won't be at Saturday's annual bullshooting contest as area storytellers take center stage instead.



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Brunswick Islands can you be anything you want to be," she said. How did Ms. Gore, an advertising account executive, get this coveted title? "Somebody probably knows more of the secrets than I do," she said. But on a more serious note, she adds, "Jess will be a hard act to follow." Storytellers from both near and far are expected to enter this year's event, which has been part of the family entertainment at the N.C. Oyster Festival for six years. Participants may register up to 30 minutes before the contest, when a meeting will be held to discuss the rules. Winners will receive trophies sponsored by T.J.'s Electric of Shalotte and the Veterans Service office. "It's a fun session, where people really pour their hearts out on their honest feelings," said Ms. Gore. "They tell stories which they themselves believe to be true, and they speak from the heart on their experiences." Stories can be told on anything that a person has experienced, believes in or encountered. Props are allowed on stage and stories should be from three to 10 minutes in length. The contest is open to all ages and to both men and women. There is no entry fee, but participants are asked to follow one standard rule—keep the stories in good taste, for it is billed as a family event. "We have to be careful of a lot of little oysters running around," she

said. Why are there so many talented bullshooters in Brunswick County? "It's something that's in the water where the oysters were raised," said Ms. Gore. "That's the reason I say that, hopefully, the winner will be from Brunswick County." Festival goers are asked to come dressed for the occasion, too. "Hip boots would be appropriate," said Ms. Gore. "And a shovel to dig their way out." Stories are judged on content, general interest, originality and use of exaggeration to create a story that is almost believable. "Official" judges will also consider each bullshooter's use of body language, vocal expression and appropriate language. Storytellers may speak into a sound system on stage. "It's always extremely entertaining," said Ms. Gore. "The audience will not believe some of the stories that will be told." For those who may get winded on stage, Ms. Gore will keep a cattle, or bull, prod handy—just in case. Last year, six tall-tale tellers took the stage with June Porter of Charlotte, who owns a home at Seaside, taking first place. His story about a large flounder that got away beat out James Boone, of Rock Hill, S.C., and Carroll Sexton, of Greenwood, S.C., second and third place finishers respectively. For more information, contact the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, 754-6644.

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