



Are You Ready?

June 1 marks the start of the 1992 hurricane season. A two-page section in this issue includes a tracking map and preparation tips, in case a storm threatens. Pages 6-A, 7-A.



Waccamaw Champs!

Coach Tracey James is all smiles after West Brunswick wraps up the Waccamaw Conference softball championship Friday. Details are on Page 9-B.



Hats Off To Grads!

More than 500 boys and girls will graduate from three high schools next week. A special section inside features senior class photos, commencement details and profiles.

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Surprise Move Makes Gause District 1 School Candidate

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

The naming of a Democrat candidate last Thursday to replace Sam Fletcher Frink on the District 1 school board slate did not take the direction many expected.

After two meetings of special groups, 48-year old retiree Thurman Gause of Grissetown became the choice of the executive committee of Brunswick County's Democrat party.



GAUSE

When Frink, representing District 1, withdrew from the race, in which he would have faced Republican Janet Pope in November, party leaders began juggling names and interested candidates emerged. Vernon Ward was one of these; other names mentioned were Bud Thorsen and Moses Stanley.

Two nights before the scheduled meeting of the executive committee, where a choice would be made, a group of black Democrats gathered to put forward a black candidate to succeed Frink, who is white. Stanley begged off, pleading the constraints of his job with DuPont. Gause, who serves as president of the Brunswick County Citizens Association, was asked to allow his name to be recommended.

The next night, District 1 Democrats got together and were asked to support Gause before the committee. Ward, who had been an eager contender, agreed to accept the will of district leaders and withdraw his own name from consideration.

"Gause didn't want to run, but he agreed to do it," Ward commented.

The night of May 20, Ward felt moved to express his feelings about the choice, having wrestled for 24 hours with his feeling that Gause was not the right candidate.

"The more I thought about it, the more I believed it was done wrong" he said later in an interview. At the meeting of the executive committee, made up of chairmen and vice-chairmen of every county precinct, Ward spoke out.

"I told the committee they weren't choosing Thurman because of his qualifications or what he could do for the children, nor because he was electable, but because he was black and because of votes he could bring in for other Democrats."

Despite this admonition, the committee named Gause to the November ballot.

Questioned later, Gause denied his lack of interest in the candidacy, as well as a lack of qualifications.

"It depends on what people think it takes to be a school board member," he said. "All you need is common sense; you don't necessarily need to be an educated person, but should just have an interest in children."

Gause is a native of Brunswick County and a graduate of the old Union High School at Shallotte. He went directly from graduation to a job with Brunswick Electric in 1963, the first black to work there, he said. He has also worked as a sheriff's detective, in the insurance business and as a longshoreman, from which he recently retired. He is the father of three children, two of whom are in

college and another about to enter.

"I wasn't talked into this school board race," Gause said. "I'd have been on the ticket before, but didn't think I could win because it's too expensive. I ran twice for county commissioner. Black candidates just can't get elected here."

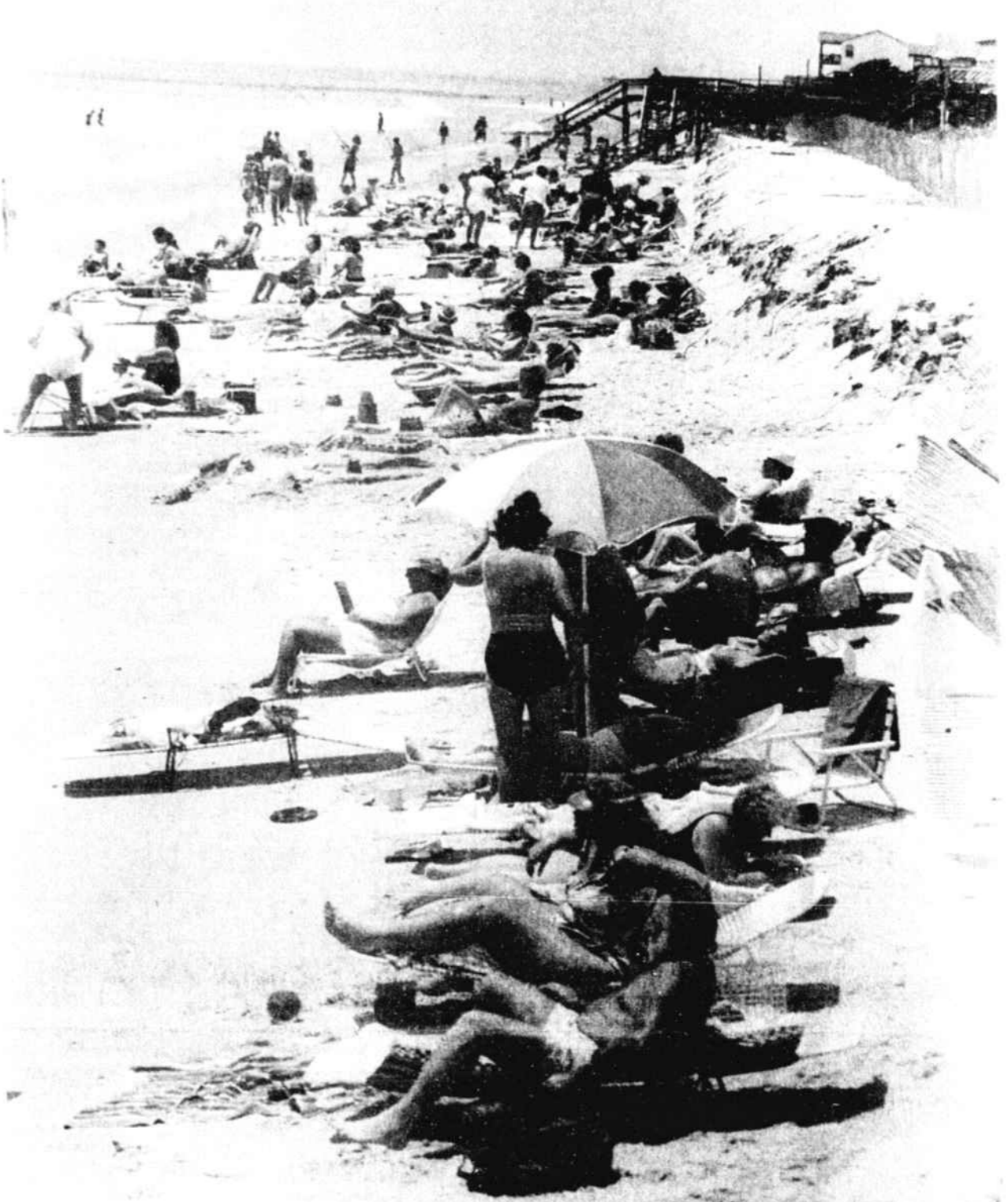
Eileen Kellagher of Long Beach was one of the executive committee members present Thursday who was disgusted with the outcome.

"We thought it would be Vernon Ward," she said. "Then we heard the blacks had met and come up with Gause. I can understand why, but everyone was hoping it would be Moses Stanley; he would be a great candidate."

"Gause is definitely not well qualified for the job. The word was put out from the Wednesday meeting that the blacks would vote a straight Republican ticket if they didn't get Gause."

Stanley explained his reluctance to accept a nomination. "I wouldn't have minded taking it, but my work is pretty involved," he said. "It's a 24-hour responsibility. People have been coming to me for years to run for the county commission or school board. I've worked hard in the Democrat party, though. I've been precinct chairman and vice-chairman of the county Democrats."

Ward pointed out that the May 20 District 1 meeting was ignored by all elected officials in the county. "Rep. David Redwine was invited to be there," he said, "and so was Polly Russ (school board member), but they did not attend. There were no elected officials taking part in the vote to recommend Thurman Gause."



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Picture Perfect Holiday

Tourists enjoyed a picture perfect Memorial Day weekend across the South Brunswick Islands. Conditions were ideal for fishing, swimming, sunning and relaxing. This was the view from Surfside Pavilion at Holden Beach Saturday.

Holden Beach Commissioners Nearing Close Of Budget Talks

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach officials expected to wrap up their budget talks this week after a series of number-crunching sessions that have consumed approximately 22 hours over the last three weeks.

"We're about to the end here, we're getting close," Town Manager Gary Parker said following a 3 1/2-hour workshop Tuesday morning. "Next meeting will probably do it."

That meeting is planned for today (Thursday) at 8:30 a.m. in town hall. Parker said commissioners hope to come up with a proposed spending plan they can take to a public hearing.

The preliminary 1992-93 budget features a tax rate of 18 cents per \$100 of property. That's the same rate that has been used for the last two years.

However, the tax rate was raised from 14 cents to 18 cents two years ago with the promise that three cents would be used to rebuild the fund balance and dropped in two years.

Commissioner Sid Swarts said Tuesday the town board is working to cut the three pennies, but it hasn't agreed on a tax rate yet.

"The whole objective is to get the tax rate down," he said.

Commissioners received a revised copy of Parker's proposed budget Tuesday incorporating all of the changes that have been made since the town board starting reviewing the plan May 8.

Commissioners discussed the town pay plan Tuesday and the possibility of paying off the bank loan that was used to buy the Davis Street house. The town uses the house for its police department headquarters.

The town board also met last Wednesday and Friday, discussing everything from occupancy tax expenses and overtime pay to a new health insurance plan and a paint

"I think the public has an erroneous impression that there is a lot of fat in government when actually the opposite is the case."

— Gary Parker
Town Manager

job for the water tank.

Occupancy Tax

Commissioners spent much of their workshop Friday talking about proposed uses of the occupancy tax, which is paid by tourists who rent cottages. Parker expects \$215,000 in revenue next fiscal year.

Proposed expenses include \$44,000 for police, \$40,000 for sidewalks, \$25,000 for sanitation, \$20,000 for administration, \$15,000 for street lights and \$10,000 for the fire department.

Other possible uses include \$8,700 for beach patrol, \$7,000 for the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, \$6,000 for accessways, \$5,300 for water rescue, \$3,600 for sanitation salaries, \$2,500 for the Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association and \$1,000 for the rescue squad.

The town board has also proposed putting \$15,000 of occupancy tax money in two special reserve funds.

Commissioners want to put \$5,000 aside for water fund system improvements and \$10,000 in a parks and recreation fund. Town officials said the \$10,000 could be (See BUDGET, Page 2-A)

COUNTY PLAN REFLECTS LESSONS LEARNED

Changes Give Brunswick A New Edge In Hurricane Readiness

BY ERIC CARLSON

As the 1992 hurricane season begins, Brunswick County will be better prepared for a major storm than ever before, thanks to the latest in computer flood models, a new emergency operations facility, 911 phone service and a few lessons learned from Hurricane Hugo.

Brunswick Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan Tuesday outlined recent improvements in hurricane preparedness and explained how the county gets ready for an approaching storm.

"I guess the biggest improvement from my standpoint is that this time we'll have enough room to move," Logan said. "During Hugo we operated out of three little rooms and a hallway."

Since then the county has completed its emergency operations center at the county complex in Bolivia. The building houses a vast array of sophisticated new communications equipment that will become the central command post during a hurricane. Large diesel generators will assure back-up electrical service in the likely event of a power outage.

The building's spacious garage area will become the staging point for emergency workers and vehicles. In a lengthy emergency, temporary sleeping quarters and food lines could be set up, Logan said.

"I think one of the big lessons of Hurricane Hugo, at least for the general public, was realizing just how far a storm like that will inundate an area."

—Cecil Logan, Coordinator
Emergency Management

In the center's briefing room, a wall-sized projection screen can project updated computer-generated maps of a storm's progress. Data from the latest computer modeling studies show which areas of the county need to be evacuated during various types of storms.

The computer uses a program called "Hurrevac," developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency with data supplied by state of North Carolina and Brunswick County. (See A NEW EDGE, Page 2-A)

County Suspends Permit For Holden Beach House

BY DOUG RUTTER

County health officials have suspended a septic tank permit for a Holden Beach residence, saying the ocean-front cottage has more bedrooms than the permit allows.

The permit issued for a four-bedroom house at 137 Ocean Blvd. West was yanked because the home actually has six bedrooms, according to an April 28 letter from the Brunswick County Health Department.

A contested hearing on the case was expected to be held Wednesday in Raleigh, said the county's environmental health supervisor, Andrew Robinson.

The county suspended the permit of Jimmie and Hazel Monroe of Holden Beach effective May 19, following a final inspection of the on-site sewage disposal system, according to the health department letter.

Robinson said the home has six bedrooms and the septic system can only accommodate the number of peo-

ple who would be expected to live in four bedrooms.

State septic tank regulations are based on the water flow expected from two people per bedroom, which means eight people could stay in a four-bedroom house and 12 could stay in a six-bedroom house.

Robinson said the county health department considers six rooms in the house as bedrooms because they each have doors, windows, closets and access to a bathroom. He also said the house has been advertised to sleep 12 people.

"The system just wasn't designed for that many people," Robinson said. The county suspends septic tank permits whenever someone exceeds what their permit allows without health department approval.

For years, Holden Beach officials have been complaining about the lack of enforcement by the health department, and talking about ways to control the over-

crowding of homes, particularly cottages rented during the summer.

Houses intended to accommodate six or eight people are often advertised and rented to sleep 10 or 12. The extra people put a strain on septic systems, which can lead to pollution and other health problems.

Several members of the Holden Beach Property Owners Association Board of Directors said the move was a "step in the right direction" at their meeting Saturday.

Holden Beach Building Inspector Dwight Carroll, who also serves on the HBPOA board, briefly mentioned the health department action at the Memorial Day weekend meeting.

Carroll said town policy prevents him from questioning what is presented on building plans. He's not allowed to interpret plans, even when it appears a room la-

beled as a den on a blueprint will be used as a bedroom.

"Finally the county has got someone with intestinal fortitude," Carroll said at Saturday morning's meeting.

Holden Beach Commissioners Sid Swarts, who has been among those who has accused the health department of ignoring abuses in the past, said Tuesday the county has "taken the lead" in this case.

Swarts chairs a committee that's looking into septic systems abuses on the island. He said he hopes the town and county can work together to control the problems associated with overcrowding.

"We're sort of watching like everyone else to see what happens with this one," Swarts said of the case.

As part of the committee's work, Holden Beach is compiling a list of all septic tanks on the island to document what exists. The information will be used later to determine who might be abusing their system.