

School Superintendent's Contract Includes Rewards For Achievement

BY SUSAN USHER

Incoming Superintendent Ralph J. Johnston will reap annual cash bonuses of up to \$5,000 if the school system under his leadership meets or exceeds yearly performance goals adopted by the Brunswick County Board of Education.

A four-year contract signed last Wednesday for the period Oct. 1, 1992, through June 30, 1996 ties Johnston's employment to improving the school system's overall achievement on its annual "report card" or evaluation by the State Department of Public Instruction, improving student performance on the SAT, or Scholastic Aptitude Test and maintaining system accreditation.

Rate of improvement will be taken into account in

Johnston's annual evaluation and salary reviews, tied to achievement of objectives set each year by the board.

"We're trying to hold the superintendent more accountable to us since the public and the state want school boards to be more accountable. The superintendent is the only person who answers to us," she said. "We want Brunswick County to be proud of its schools."

By "dangling a carrot" or offering performance incentives for the superintendent, the board hopes the superintendent will be motivated to "to achieve that, trying to get everyone working at that higher level of achievement."

In turn, she said, the contract also recognizes that if

board members expect Johnston to "to go out there and make a difference," that "we must be able to back him and we must remember that our role is to make policy," she said, not attempt to run the schools on a day-to-day basis.

Over some objections voiced in the community, Baxter said the board chose a four-year contract rather than a two-year contract for Johnston to provide "a fail-safe in the system, some continuity for staff and students," since that continuity may be lacking on the board itself in future years. Starting in 1994 the entire five-member board will be up for election at the same time, for two-year terms.

Johnston will have four months to study the county school system before he and the board determine their

first set of annual objectives in January. Those goals will be short-term, achievable by the end of the school term. After that annual goals will be set each spring for the coming year.

Specifically, the contract provides for Johnston to receive:

- state salary and usual benefits such as annual leave, sick leave and insurance benefits, plus a local annual supplement of \$15,235 per year, with a portion of that compensation and any bonuses to be placed in a tax-favored annuity or retirement program of the superintendent's choice, with annual salary review;
- an annual bonus not to exceed \$5,000 per year, based on achievement of objective goals set by the

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House Allocates Money For OIB Erosion Study

BY DOUG RUTTER

The U.S. House of Representatives last week approved a bill that would provide an extra \$200,000 for an ongoing erosion control study at Ocean Isle Beach.

The bill also includes \$906,000 for routine dredging in Lockwood Folly Inlet and another \$10 million for other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects in southeastern North Carolina.

Bob Henshaw, a legislative aid for Congressman Charlie Rose, said the Senate was expected to vote this week on the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Conference Report for fiscal year 1993.

The House passed the bill last Thursday, approving Rose's funding requests for the Corps' erosion control study at Ocean Isle and maintenance dredging of the inlet.

The Corps' district office in Wilmington has been studying long-term erosion control at Ocean Isle Beach since July 1990 and was expected to be finished last December.

However, Ocean Isle Beach Mayor Betty Williamson said the study had to be expanded. She expects it to be completed late 1993 or early 1994.

The Corps is looking at the possibility of long-term flood control project at Ocean Isle that would include construction of a 28,000-foot ocean-front dune.

Williamson said if the study goes well, the project could be undertaken in 1995 or 1996. The town would pay 35 percent of the cost, and the federal government would pick up 65 percent.

The Corps study is focusing on construction of two beachfront dunes that would be designed to protect the town from flooding and other damage in the event of a serious storm or hurricane.

The primary dune would be 25 feet wide at the crown and 20 feet above mean sea level and would be

fronted by a smaller berm 50 feet wide and 15 feet high, under the Corps proposal.

Congress first authorized flood control projects along the Brunswick County beaches in the Flood Control Act of 1966. The project was reclassified as "inactive" in 1974 because local cooperation requirements couldn't be met.

Due to changes in the density and character of development along the county beaches and the increase in tax base, the project was reclassified as "active" in 1985.

The Corps considered an erosion control project at Long Beach and Yaupon Beach at that time, but the project was never approved.

Ocean Isle Beach requested a study of its oceanfront in November 1989 after Hurricane Hugo caused extensive damage to the frontal dunes and many residences.

Besides funds for the Ocean Isle Beach study, the House appropriations bill includes \$906,000 for maintenance dredging in Lockwood Folly Inlet.

Henshaw said the House of Representatives was expected to vote this week on another bill involving the Eastern Channel at the inlet.

Congressman Rose has included authorization in the Water Resources Development Act for a demonstration dredging project in the channel.

The Corps of Engineers would perform the one-time dredging project and determine if it improves water flow in the channel and Lockwood Folly River.

Save Our Shellfish, a local river preservation group, has pushed for the dredging of Eastern Channel for the past three years.

Members say opening the channel near the west end of Long Beach would help water circulation in the river and help reduce problems associated with bacterial pollution.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Walkin' The Nose

Rick Edwards of Raleigh enjoys a recent morning of glassy waves all to himself at Holden Beach. A regular visitor to the Brunswick coast for the past 20 years, Edwards is one of a growing number of surfers who has forsaken the modern short surfboard for a nine-foot model like those popular in the sport's early years.

Local Builder Questions Library Hiring Out-Of-County Architect

BY ERIC CARLSON

Saying the deal "smells of politics," a Shallotte area builder Monday said the Brunswick County Library Board should have hired a local architect to oversee a \$1.5 million construction and renovation project instead of awarding the contract to a Wilmington firm.

Library Board Chairman and Commissioner Gene Pinkerton defended the decision, noting that the board unanimously agreed to hire architect John Sawyer because of his extensive experience in library design.

Speaking at the county commissioners regular meeting Monday night, contractor Thomas Pope said he was "flabbergasted" with the library board's decision. He said that if the contract had gone to a Brunswick County firm, it would have given "a \$7.5-million boost" to the local economy.

He said he expected Sawyer to rig the bid packages so only large New

Hanover County contractors could participate in the construction project, which includes new libraries at Leland and Oak Island and the renovation of the Shallotte and Southport branches.

"I know and you know that not a dollar of that money will be spent in Brunswick County," Pope said.

Sawyer was selected Sept. 14 after he and three other firms made presentations to the library board. Also considered were Johnson/Renaud of Sunset Beach; Guidry, Hill and Barker of Wilmington and Southport; and a newly-formed collaboration of architects J. Quinn Sweeney of Wilmington and John Thompson of Southport.

Asked in an interview if he intended to use local firms for the project, Sawyer said, "Bidding requirements may cut out a lot of small builders, but we'll be trying to use Brunswick County contractors as much as we can."

Pope said Monday that John-

son/Renaud had underbid Sawyer by an estimated \$17,000. He made the thinly-veiled accusation that Pinkerton was responsible for choosing Sawyer.

"This thing has an odor about it and it smells of politics," Pope said. "There is one member sitting on this board who has his fingerprints all over this."

Pinkerton immediately rose to his feet and denied the charge, saying "Mr. Pope is totally wrong!"

He said one of the firms Pope termed as local "just moved here" and another had recently linked up with a more experienced Wilmington architect so he could be considered for the project.

Pinkerton said the library board conducted the interviews and made its selection while he was out of the state.

Pinkerton said Sawyer was chosen because he is the most qualified to do the work, having designed and built five libraries in southeastern

North Carolina. He disputed Pope's contention that a library is "just four walls and a floor" and noted that Sawyer, in his presentation to the library board, had offered specific ideas about library design.

None of the other firms considered for the project have overseen the construction of a public library. In interviews after the library board's decision, members said they had chosen Sawyer because of his experience.

In other business commissioners agreed to appropriate \$25,966 in contingency funds to the Emergency Medical Services budget to upgrade the county's recently suspended Advanced Life Support program.

The allocation will provide \$10,000 to contract with Dr. Harry L. Johnson as medical director. The remainder of the funds will go toward overtime pay to provide 24-hour EMT service and to hire a paramedic supervisor/training officer.

MISSING SINCE SEPTEMBER 4

Accused Molester May Have Abducted Family

BY ERIC CARLSON

Foul play is suspected in the disappearance of a Shallotte woman, her four children and her estranged husband, who was indicted last month on charges of raping a girl under the age of 13 and molesting another girl.

Fugitive warrants have been issued for the arrest of Robert Nelson Burroff Jr., 36, who authorities fear may have abducted and possibly killed his family, according to Brunswick County Sheriff's

Detective Nancy Simpson.

"The worst-case scenario is that he's killed all of them to prevent them from testifying," Simpson said Tuesday.

The sheriff's department has put out a bulletin on the national police information network alerting law enforcement agencies to watch for Burroff, his wife Gail and their children Sarah, 12, Melody, 11, Michael, 8 and Sammy, 2.

They may be driving Gail Burroff's light blue 1991 Hyundai

hatchback with North Carolina license tag number DZS 6371, Simpson said.

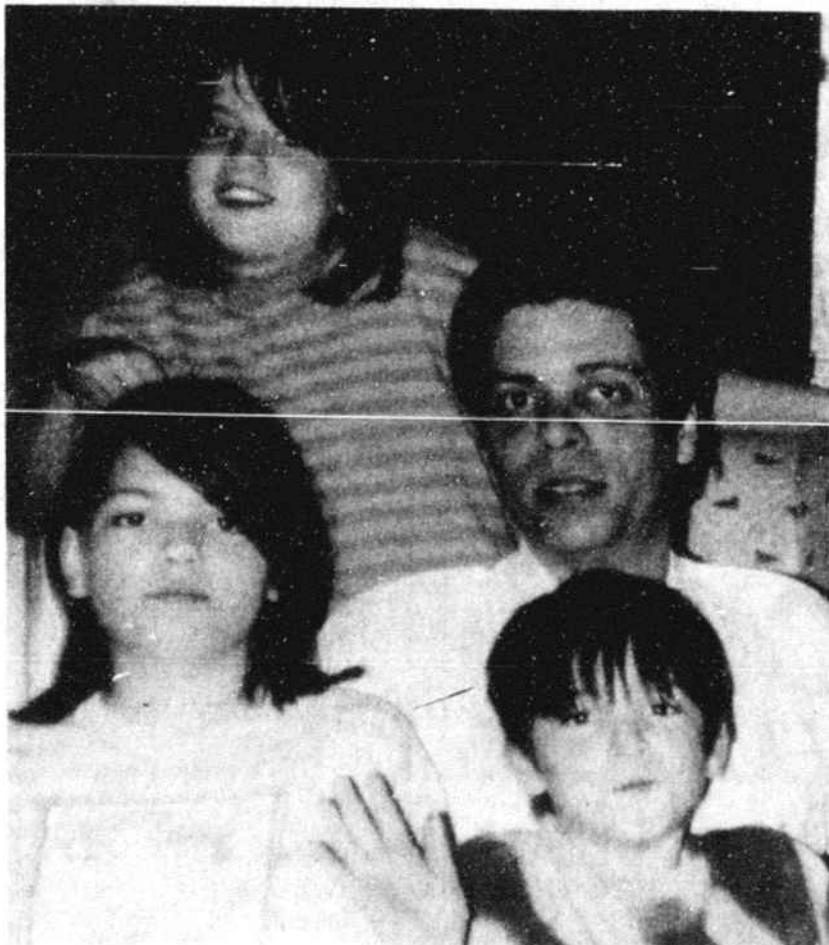
Police say they have no leads as to the Burroff family's whereabouts. Robert Burroff has numerous local family members, Simpson said. He has also lived in Louisiana and is known to have friends in the Raleigh area.

Burroff was indicted by a grand jury Aug. 31 on one count of first-degree rape of a child and two charges of taking indecent liberties

with children. The offenses were alleged to have occurred in January and May of this year.

Simpson said that in sexual abuse cases she normally conducts interviews and collects evidence to present to the grand jury. If an indictment is returned, she will prosecute.

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

REPORTED MISSING under suspicious circumstances are members of the Burroff family of Stone Chimney Road. Pictured in this photo, provided by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, are Robert Nelson Burroff Jr. with (from left) Sarah, Melody and Michael. A photo of Mrs. Burroff and the couple's fourth child, Sammy, 2, is on Page 2-A.

Orton Property Left In Rural Class

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Brunswick County Commissioners Monday declined to change the county land use plan to accommodate the owners of lands surrounding Orton Plantation, but agreed to consider modifying the proposed zoning law to allow light industrial development there.

Lawyers representing the Sprunt family, owners of the more than 10,000-acre Orton tract north of Southport, told a joint meeting of

the county planning board and commissioners that the family hopes to attract heavy industry to the site.

They expressed concern that the latest draft update of the county's Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) land use plan classifies the area as "rural" and asked that it be changed to "rural industrial."

"They are concerned that the designation may preclude them from the highest and best use for the land, which would be some sort of indus-

trial development," said attorney Henry Foy.

The Orton lands make up the largest contiguous tract of land under individual ownership in Brunswick County and have been in the Sprunt family for more than 100 years, Foy said.

Included on the property are Orton Plantation and gardens, a pop-

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