



They're Back!
Big spots are back in full force, making local anglers and eaters happy. Page 10-C.

Welcome...

...to the 12th Annual North Carolina Oyster Festival. Read all about the food, fun and competition in store for you. **Section D.**

Come Home

Fresh off a big win, the Trojans face West Columbus for homecoming. Page 9-B.



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MORE THAN 1,200 ATTEND MEETING

Members Oust 5 Incumbents In BEMC Directors' Election

BY DOUG RUTTER

Apparent concerns over disproportionate representation on the Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. Board of Directors spurred members to elect five directors Saturday who had been nominated by petition.

In doing so, a majority of BEMC's members ignored nominating committee recommendations and voted for change at an annual meeting characterized by election-year politics.

In the two Brunswick County districts up for election this year, both candidates who had been nominated by petition handily defeated incumbent directors.

JoAnn Bellamy Simmons of Ash unseated W.T. Bowen 690-445 in District 2, while D.V. Jones Jr. of Long Beach defeated incumbent Kenneth Bellamy 632-494 in the District 8 race.

Another candidate nominated by petition, incumbent Robert G. Ward of Winnabow, was re-elected to Brunswick's at-large seat. Ward was the top vote-getter Saturday as he defeated Boyd Evans of Ash 704-404.

Members voted the same way in the race for two Columbus County district seats, opposing the candidates recommended by the Brunswick Electric nominating committee.

Jack Miller of Guideway edged Ray Canady 598-504 for the District 1 seat, and incumbent Frederick Tedder of Hallsboro defeated Jim Sessions 621-459.

Supporters of the five winners were encouraging voters to elect them as a group Saturday, distributing printed cards to the large, annual meeting crowd at Shallotte Middle School.

Jones, one of the local winners, said the five candidates decided to run as a group because they hoped they would get more support than they could as individuals.

"I wanted to do more for my church and more for my community, and that's why I ran" Jones said in a phone interview following the meeting.

As a candidate, however, Jones said he learned prior to the election that some members are disturbed by the apparent disproportionate representation on the board.

Although Brunswick County has about 29,500 BEMC members and Columbus County has around 7,500, the board of directors is pretty evenly balanced with members from both counties.

Seven of 13 seats on the board of directors are designated for Brunswick County residents, while Columbus has the remaining six.

Each county had six seats until April, when the board of directors voted to split the Shallotte area into two districts.

Jones said Tuesday he expects the board of directors to consider more changes in representation after the new directors take office in December.

"I don't know how the districts are organized," Jones said. "I'm sure it will be looked at. I'm just going to wait and see."

Jones also said he ran for election because he was concerned members haven't been kept well-enough informed.

"Not that that hasn't been done in the past, but you can always do a better job, he said.

BEMC General Manager David Batten said the newly-elected directors will take office at the regular board meeting in December.

Meetings are usually held the last Thursday of each month, but Batten said December's meeting will probably be changed due to Christmas.

Batten said he wasn't involved in the board of directors election and didn't know reasons for the vote.

"All through the campaign, we do not get involved in any of the political issues at all," he said. "We just put on the meeting."

Batten described the annual meeting as "extremely good." He said 1,234 members registered and be-

tween 1,100 and 1,150 people voted. "Normally it's somewhere around 800 people that vote," he said. "We had somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 people there based on our name tags."

Batten said the cooperative easily reached the minimum number of members it needed for a quorum, which is 2 percent.

"We had a good crowd that participated," Batten said. "We felt like it ran as smoothly as we had planned."

BEMC Seeks Appeals Court Review Of NLRB Decision

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. has chosen not to comply with a ruling by the National Labor Relations Board in a three-year labor dispute.

Instead, the co-op's labor relations lawyer, W. Britton Smith Jr. of Charlotte, confirmed Tuesday that BEMC is asking the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals to review the order.

By the time both parties file briefs and responses, make oral arguments before the court and the court deliberates on the evidence it hears, "it could be April, May or June before a decision is reached," said Britton. "That's just a wild guess."

In the three-member panel's decision announced in September, the NLRB affirmed earlier findings by an administrative law judge and adopted his recommended order. That order would require BEMC to stop certain types of "threatening" or "coercive" behavior by its managers, to resume negotiations with the union, and to rehire George Douglas (Doug) Smith Jr. of Whiteville. At the time of his firing, Smith was president of Local No. 495 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The local represents about 60 co-op employees.

"I talked it over with management and with the board (of directors) and everyone felt that the NLRB still hadn't got it right," said Smith. "We wanted a disinterested party—the court—to review the facts and how they applied the law."

The NLRB panel had ruled on the findings of its own administrative law judge.

Smith said the NLRB's order is not "self-enforcing." That means that by BEMC not choosing voluntarily to comply with the order, its enforcement would have to come through the court of appeals.

FIVE CANDIDATES GO ON RECORD

Election Will Decide Fate Of Zoning Law

BY ERIC CARLSON

When Brunswick County voters close the curtains on election booths next month, they will decide whether or not to close the book on recent efforts to establish county-wide zoning.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners is expected to enact a zoning ordinance before the Nov. 3 election. A majority of the board—Commissioners Kelly Holden, Gene Pinkerton and Jerry Jones—are on record as supporting the law.

Commissioner Frankie Rabon has said he will vote against zoning. Commissioner Donald Shaw has not publicly announced his position on the ordinance.

But with Holden and Pinkerton not seeking reelection, many have wondered if the fledgling law might be repealed by three new commissioners who could swing the voting balance against zoning. Rabon also has declined to seek another term.

In telephone interviews this week, both District 1 candidates said they were in favor of zoning

and would work to implement the ordinance.

One District 4 candidate said she would definitely vote to throw out the zoning ordinance. The other gave the zoning effort lukewarm support and would not rule out a possible vote to repeal the law.

Which leaves the possible deciding vote to District 3, where one candidate said he would vote to keep the law and the other failed to respond to numerous requests for his comments.

The candidates were asked three questions: Do you support the concept of county-wide zoning for Brunswick County? How do you feel about the current zoning law as drafted? Would you vote in favor of a motion to repeal the zoning ordinance?

DISTRICT 1—BRUST

District 1 Republican candidate Joe Brust said a county zoning ordinance is "absolutely essential" to protect property values.

"I am very much in favor of zoning," Brust said. "We have a county of 53,000 people that is

projected to grow to 80,000 by the year 2010. With such enormous growth, there is a compelling need for land-use planning and zoning.

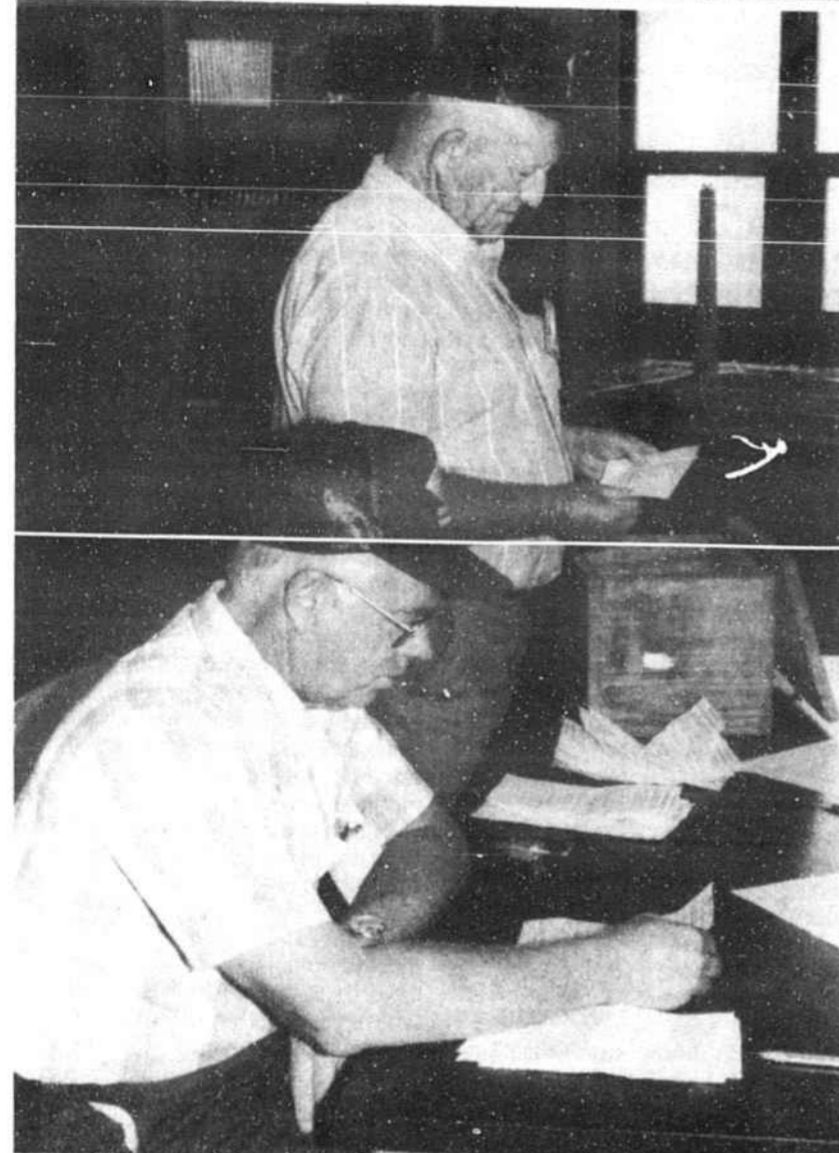
"We simply have to have zoning to make intelligent decisions about our schools, water lines, recreational facilities, etc. Families thinking about moving to Brunswick County will want to know if their property will be protected by zoning."

Brust said the current ordinance was a "good base document" that he expects to be modified over the years. He said the law "seems to strike a reasonable balance" in creating land-use districts. He feels there is a "silent majority" of voters that supports zoning and said parts of the law have been misunderstood.

"Some folks who live in smaller, single-wide (See ZONING, Page 2-A)



BRUST



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

ELECTION OFFICIALS Elwood Benton (seated) and Chester Stevens count ballots at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. annual meeting Saturday.

School System Critic Unhappy After Plan To Visit WBHS Nixed

BY SUSAN USHER

A Calabash retiree and "concerned taxpayer" is displeased with a local principal's refusal to let him make an investigative tour of a school, while the principal says he is working on a system to allow all interested persons to tour the school in groups.

Warren "Bud" Knapp Sr. said his request to look around West Brunswick High School was conveyed through Brunswick County Board of Education member Robert Slockett. He said Slockett called him Friday to notify him that the request had been turned down.

West Brunswick High School Principal Ed Lemon said Monday that the school is working on a plan to provide group tours to create as little disruption of classes as possible.

"Our school and community committee is working on that," he said, modeling the school's program on one instituted in Currituck County last school year. Schools in that county, he said, provide guided tours for community leaders, residents who do not have children in the schools and officials from other county agencies.

The school "is not in the business of tours, especially of people wandering about on campus wherever they want," said Lemon. "Here we are pressing our own people not to disrupt classes or come in late. I don't see how we can open it to the

general public to do that. We need to have control of that somehow."

However, he said it is important for the school to find a way to honor such requests from taxpayers, county officials and others who want to visit the school to see how students are being taught and how their tax dollars are being spent, but don't have children enrolled there.

"We think it is valid enough we're working on it," he said. "We don't want to put on a show. We understand they want to look at normal operations."

"If a taxpayer is interested in seeing how we spend tax dollars, then we want him to see that and he might miss it on his own."

Lemon acknowledged that the school has had very few requests similar to Knapp's in past years. A more typical request is for a parent to sit in on one or more of his or her child's classes.

The principal said it wasn't made clear to him why Knapp wanted to visit West Brunswick. "I don't know what Bud Knapp wants since he hasn't talked to me," he said.

Slockett could not be reached for comment. However, Lemon said Slockett had advised him that Knapp, a retired engineer, is "an expert on atmosphere" and wanted to observe the school's atmosphere.

Knapp, who has been urging the county school board to hire an outside firm to conduct a management audit of the entire system, said he is "acting as an investigative reporter" and wants to collect information to use in a report he intends to make at the Thanksgiving weekend meeting of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers' Association.

"If I make a report and recommendations to them I ought to be able to do it intelligently. At this point I'm not making recommendations. I just want to find out if what people are saying is true."

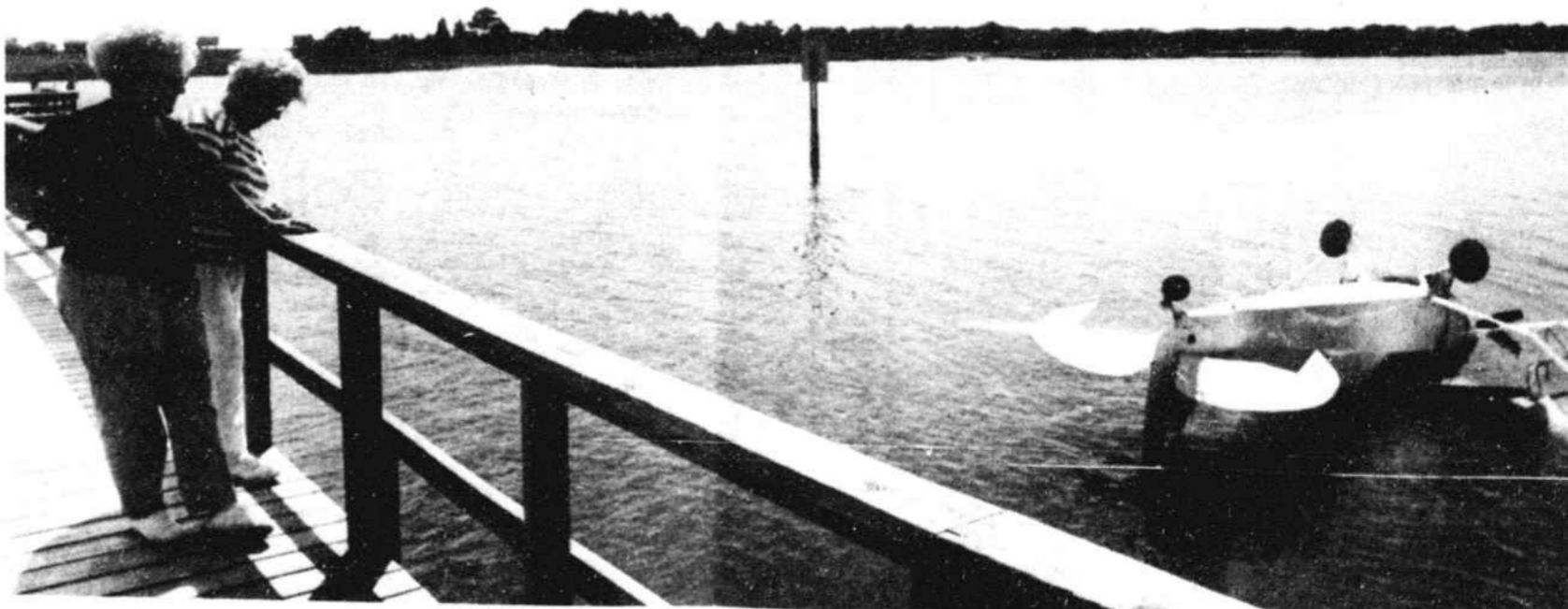
He said he wants to check out rumors he has heard about how the school handles student discipline, among other things, but that he had no plans to approach Lemon directly to request a visit.

Knapp asserts that student performance is proof that the school system is "a large, expensive, ineffi-

(See SCHOOL, Page 2-A)

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STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

A Dream Destroyed

Iris Bellamy (left) looks down on her late husband's newly restored 1946 Piper PA-12 shortly after it crashed into the Itracoastal Waterway near her Windy Point home Wednesday afternoon. With her sister, Ruby Jane Balint. The story is on Page 3-A.