

Helping Baby Brett

The community rallies to the aid of a family whose newborn has a rare heart condition. Page 7-A.

Island Living

Supplement included in this issue.

See Irene Jump

A WBHS student caps a brilliant high school track and field career by winning the state's triple jump title. Page 9-B.

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TAX HIKE 'UNACCEPTABLE'

Board Dumps Budget Proposal, Starts Over

BY ERIC CARLSON

In an effort to head off a firestorm of protest expected at an upcoming public hearing, Brunswick County Commissioners Chairman Don Warren announced Monday that the board will scrap most of Interim County Manager John Harvey's proposed budget and develop a new one that won't raise taxes.

At the first of three budget workshops scheduled this week, Warren read a prepared statement calling Harvey's proposed 10-percent tax hike "unacceptable." He said the board would re-work the budget "to get the tax rate back to (the current level of) 68 cents per \$100 valuation."

Disregarding Harvey's proposed reorganization of county departments, Warren asked Finance Officer Lithia Hahn to prepare estimates of each current department's 1992-93 spending. Warren said the board will use those figures to draft a new spending proposal, allowing no more new spending than can be accommodated by the present tax rate.

Warren called "totally unacceptable" Harvey's plan to eliminate the Resources Development Commission and to make industrial recruitment a function of the planning department under Harvey's direction. "We will continue to have a Library Board of Trustees," Warren said, rejecting Harvey's proposal to eliminate the unpaid advisory board. The interim manager had suggested that the library board members would "better serve the citizens of Brunswick County" by seeking "endorsements and legacies from our many well-to-do users of the system to further develop it."

Warren's statement also said Harvey's recommendation to eliminate the Parks and Recreation Department "is not acceptable." In response to a reporter's question, Warren said that the deleted position

To Voice Your Opinion

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the proposed 1993-94 budget Thursday night at 7 o'clock in the public assembly hall at the county government complex in Bolivia.

Anyone wishing to speak on the budget proposal will be required to sign up before the hearing. Each speaker will be given three minutes to address the board.

Sign-up sheets will be available in the assembly hall beginning at 5 p.m. Thursday.

of parks and recreation director, currently held by Bobby "B.J." Jones, would be put back into the budget. Harvey's proposal recommended

deleting from the county payroll the positions held by Jones, his administrative assistant Renee Robinson and Special Projects Coordinator Kelly Fields. Most parks and recreation employees would have been transferred to a newly formed grounds maintenance division of the engineering department.

Harvey had recommended that four recreation staff members form a "light human services division" working under the county manager with guidance from a committee of six members representing the health department, county schools and the department of social services.

"The operations of our recreation program by a working committee so diversified as the group you proposed seems logistically unsound, and management by committee of a department the size of our present recreation department to be not efficient government," Warren said of Harvey's proposal.

(See BUDGET, Page 2-A)

NO FIRE DISTRICT MONEY?

Logan Said Hurt, Puzzled By Proposed Budget Plan

BY ERIC CARLSON

After more than ten years of overseeing Brunswick County's response to fires, auto wrecks, hurricanes, waste spills and mock nuclear disasters, Emergency Management Director Cecil Logan says he can't help feeling demoralized by Interim County Manager John Harvey's plan to demote him to fire marshal.

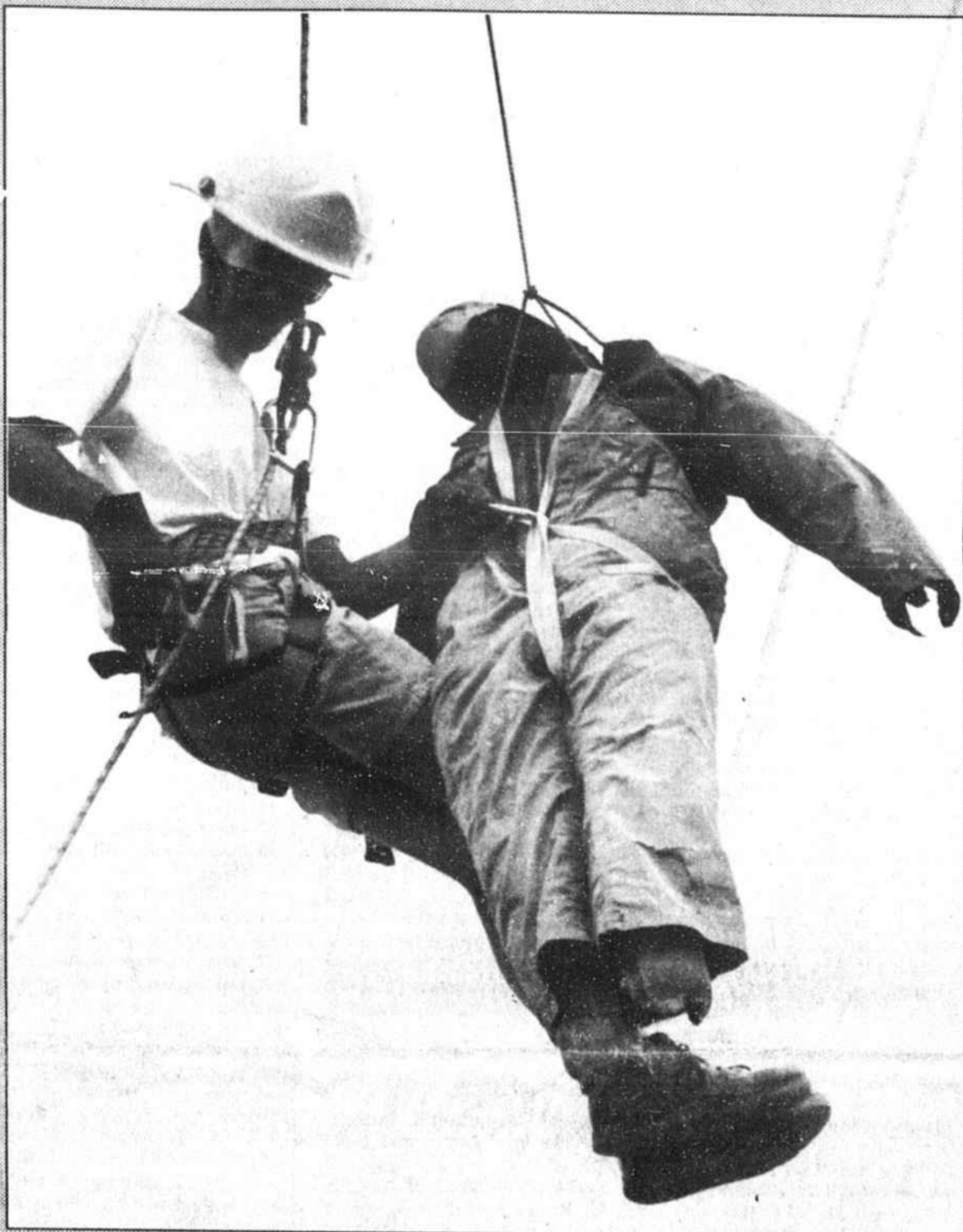
He also expressed concern over Harvey's proposal to cut out the district funding allocations that local volunteer fire and rescue squads count on for buying new equipment.

Harvey's draft 1993-94 budget would eliminate the emergency

management department and the position of director. It would make Logan the county fire marshal and elevate his assistant, Brenda Freeman, to the position of emergency management coordinator in a combined department headed by current Emergency Medical Services and 911 Director Doug Ledgett.

"It will not work," Logan said Tuesday. "It can't work. There's too much difference between the functions of EMS and 911 and emergency management and the fire marshal."

"Both of us (Logan and Ledgett) (See LOGAN, Page 2-A)



STAFF PH. BY ERIC CARLSON

Dangling By A Thread

David Moore, assistant chief of both the Shalotte Volunteer Fire Department and Shalotte Rescue Squad, prepares to lower an "accident victim" to the ground in a rappelling demonstration featured at an Emergency Services Show in Shalotte Friday afternoon. Several area volunteer rescue squads and county EMS personnel participated in the show, which organizers hope to make an annual event.

Health Board OKs 'Grace Period' For Overcrowding Violators

BY LYNN CARLSON

Property owners who allow their vacation cottages to be rented by more occupants than septic systems are designed to handle will get a one-season "grace period" to come into compliance, following action by the Brunswick County Board of Health on Monday.

On recommendation from Environmental Health Supervisor Andrew Robinson, the board voted to back off of its plan to send letters to 75 percent of the county's vacation rental property owners threatening criminal penalties for those who refuse to reduce occupancy or upgrade their cottages' wastewater treatment capacity.

Robinson said he received "many phone calls" from rental agents and others after the health board voted May 10 to crack down on violators whose septic systems may be malfunctioning and allowing sewage to pollute area waters.

"They want to meet and talk. They appear willing to do everything they can to correct the problem, but they're concerned about the time of year. Their brochures are done; they're already advertising for this year," Robinson said, adding that many cottages are booked up to a year in advance.

He said he plans to meet with rental agents on each beach to discuss the problem and seek solutions. "They're willing to negotiate," Robinson said. "They agreed not to pack them in this year, and to comply next

year."

The five health board members present at Monday's meeting unanimously agreed to Robinson's request after a spirited discussion of the issue.

"I thought the state was pushing this," said board member George Young. "What are they going to say about you circumventing this?"

Robinson said that, though he had not talked with state health officials, "I think they'll go along if they see that satisfactory progress is being made."

"It seems to me you'd have to be relying a lot on the

Davis Resigns As Health Board Chairman

Citing his growing chiropractic practice and appointment to the N.C. Chiropractic Association executive committee, H.J. "Skip" Davis has resigned as chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Health.

Davis, in a Monday telephone interview, said he has been spending "an awful lot of time" on health board matters while trying to see 35 to 45 patients a day in his own practice.

He added that he would "like to see the health board change its focus, which is what I've been trying for a few months to do," declining to elaborate.

Under Davis' leadership, the board has advocated de-

velopment of a regional stormwater and wastewater management system, adopted a countywide leash law for dogs and begun developing procedures for inspecting mobile home parks and certifying food service establishment managers.

He will be succeeded by Maliston "Moe" Stanley of Shalotte, who has been serving as the board's vice-chairman. Stanley in September was honored with the N.C. Public Health Association's Distinguished Service Award. He was also appointed to the Governor's Council on Minority Health by Gov. Jim Martin.

honesty of Realtors," member Arthur Knox said. Thumbing through one agency's rental brochure, Young said, "If you've got four bedrooms, you don't put 17 people in the house. You know that when you build it. They're just coming out and saying, 'We're going to defy you.'" Robinson said some cottages are equipped with septic systems designed to accommodate four people per bedroom.

Chairman Maliston Stanley said the board should take into account that vacationers often book "the same house for the same week the next year, with the same

number of people," making it necessary for Robinson to begin his meetings with agents soon. Robinson said he will begin the meetings during the second and third week of June.

In May, Robinson asked the board to authorize the mailing after a study by his department revealed that a large majority of rental agencies in the county have been advertising that cottages can sleep more renters than the number for which septic tanks are permitted.

He said the study compared septic tank permits with occupancy levels advertised in 1993 rental brochures. Listings for four-bedroom cottages, whose septic systems are designed for two renters per bedroom, frequently advertise that the units will sleep 10 or more people, Robinson said.

While the advertisements are not against the law, Robinson said renting the cottages to the number of occupants advertised is illegal.

Robinson said Monday that his department has been working with state health officials to develop a procedure for warning and penalizing violators. He said they are "leaning in the direction" of an administrative penalty, with a per-day charge until problems are remedied, against homeowners.

Suspension or revocation of septic tank permits can be a "long, drawn-out" process taking at least 60 days, he added.

Attorney Sues Calabash Over Building Inspector's Actions

BY ERIC CARLSON

An attorney who owns commercial property in Calabash has filed a lawsuit against the town claiming that Building Inspector Edward Schaack harassed him, trespassed on his property and offered to take money for designing improvements that would allow him to pass a building inspection.

The complaint, filed by Holden Beach attorney Benedict Del Re Jr., accuses Schaack of acting outside the scope of his authority by "enforcing the code incorrectly and illegally." It claims that the town also should be held liable because it "acquiesced" in Schaack's behavior.

But Calabash Town Attorney Mike Ramos said Monday that the suit "sounds pretty meritless to me" in regard to the town's liability. He said that if the alleged offenses occurred

while Schaack was exceeding his authority as a Calabash official, then the town would not be responsible for his actions.

District Court Judge Jerry A. Jolly last week issued a temporary restraining order preventing Schaack or any other town official from visiting the seven-unit "Shops of Calabash" plaza Del Re owns on Beach Drive for the purpose of removing or modifying his signs.

Judge Jolly has scheduled a June 3 hearing to decide whether the order should remain in effect until the case is heard in civil district court.

The suit is the first to be filed against Calabash over Schaack's strict enforcement of town sign ordinances, which has angered many business owners and resulted in numerous legal actions being brought against them

by the town. The ongoing dispute has been blamed for fueling a recent push to divide Calabash into two municipalities.

Del Re outlined his charges against Schaack at a recent town board meeting, where it was suggested that he apply for a variance to the town sign ordinance. When Del Re failed to apply for the variance, the commissioners turned the matter over to Ramos for court action.

Ramos said he had prepared a civil suit against Del Re for allegedly failing to comply with the sign ordinance and had sent him a "courtesy copy" before filing it. Now that Del Re has sued Calabash, Ramos said the town's complaint would likely become part of a counter-claim against Del Re.

In an interview last week, Del Re said that one of the reasons he had filed his suit was to

head off action against him by Calabash. "I'm not going to allow them to sue me when I'm in the right," Del Re said.

Del Re's suit claims his problems with Schaack began last spring, when Del Re obtained a building permit to do extensive renovations at the plaza. Once the project got underway, the suit claims that Schaack "was present on the property on a daily basis and sometimes on an hourly basis throughout the day and evenings."

During construction of a wheelchair walkway, the suit claims that Schaack ordered the subcontractors off Del Re's property. Schaack also ordered Del Re to remodel the air conditioning system and to re-configure the roof rafters, the suit claims. Then Schaack allegedly refused to grant Del Re an occupancy permit. (See CALABASH, Page 2-A)

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