



Just Give Us A Sign...

Candidates' signs compete for space at one of dozens of sites along U.S. 17. Polls open Tuesday at 6:30 a.m. Sample ballots are on Page 6A, and profiles of candidates are throughout this edition.

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More Than \$61,000 Spent On Sheriff's Race So Far, Reports Say

BY ERIC CARLSON

If you read newspapers, watch television or travel our local roadways much, you probably suspect that a lot of money is being spent to gain your vote in the May 3 primary elections. And you would be correct.

It's hard to say for sure, since this is the first year that local candidates have had to make their campaign financing records public, but election officials can't remember a more expensive political campaign than this year's contest for Brunswick County Sheriff. Candidates in that race have spent more than \$61,000 so far.

Brunswick County recently reached the 50,000-per-

son population threshold at which the N.C. Campaign Reporting Act requires the filing of regular campaign finance reports. The pre-primary reports were due Friday afternoon.

All candidates who expect to spend more than \$1,000 on their election bid must list the name and address of contributors who donate more than \$100 to their campaign. The names of small donors need not be listed, as long as their total contributions do not exceed \$100. No individual may give more than \$4,000 during an election cycle.

Only three candidates for Brunswick County offices

missed the Friday deadline, said Elections Supervisor Linda Britt. All three turned in their reports Monday morning. The state can levy a penalty of up to \$20 per day for delinquent reports, but candidates are more likely to receive a notice from the state cautioning them to comply with the law.

"I think everybody did real well, considering it's the first time they've had to do it," Britt said.

The Democratic Primary campaign for Brunswick County Sheriff has sparked the most significant flurry of contributions and spending, especially by Deputy Lt. Ronald Hewett and retired State Trooper Jerry Dove.

Since their pre-filing activity reports were filed in January, Hewett's campaign took in \$21,634, while Dove collected \$18,098. In all, Hewett has received \$40,424 in contributions. Dove's campaign fund has collected \$19,310.

On the spending side, Hewett leads again with \$38,834 in outlays since the campaign began. As of last week, Dove had spent \$15,074. Nearly all the expenses for both men went to various forms of advertising.

Dove has outspent Hewett on television commercials by a margin of \$5,298 to \$4,616, while Hewett leads Dove \$1,710 to \$1,246 in spending on local newspaper (See SHERIFF'S, Page 2-A)

Parties Will Nominate 17 Candidates In May 3 Primary

BY SUSAN USHER

More than 32,000 Brunswick County voters are eligible to go to the polls Tuesday, May 3, to nominate party candidates for local, state and congressional races.

Twenty-two precinct polling places will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. for the county's 18,558 Democrats, 11,244 Republicans and 2,318 unaffiliated voters. Results will be tallied at the Brunswick County Government Center at Bolivia.

Democrats will nominate candidates for eight local offices and five state offices, while Republicans will nominate candidates for three local seats and for U.S. congressman.

Unaffiliated candidates may vote in the Republican primary but not in the Democratic primary, according to the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

To win his or her party's nomination, a candidate must receive 40 percent of the vote, plus one vote. If no candidate receives that, then the candidate with the second-highest vote may choose to file for a run-off or second primary.

For county Democrats, a four-way race for the sheriff's nomination is drawing the most attention, followed by the 18th Senate District race between incumbent R.C. Soles Jr. and Ron Taylor (the party nominee will be unopposed in November).

Also on the ballot are a three-way bid for a 13th District district court judgeship; and primaries for all but one seat (District 2) on the board of commissioners and for two seats (Districts 1 and 2) on the board of education. A District 4 school board race between incumbent Donna M. Baxter and the late Liston Hawes remains on the ballot; Hawes' death came too late to remove his name from the ballot.

Democrats will also nominate candidates for the two 14th District House of Representatives seats, a seat on the N.C. Court of Appeals and an associate justice on the state Supreme Court. The candidates will be unopposed in the fall.

Republicans will nominate candidates for the District 1, 3 and 5 seats on the county board of commission- (See VOTERS, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Pre-Prom Message

Miss North Carolina Mary Susan Runion, on a visit to West Brunswick High School last week, encourages students to remain drug- and alcohol-free. Her appearance was one of numerous activities sponsored by Students Against Drunk Driving leading up to Friday's Junior-Senior Prom.

SUSPECTED IN ANOTHER KILLING

Red Springs Man To Be Charged In Ash Murder

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Bamboo Corner Ash Beverage store was always a friendly spot to stop for refreshment after a hard day's work, a place where you could always expect a hearty smile and some warm conversation from the man behind the counter.

Just about anyone who lives around Ash can picture Burns Babson sitting in his old familiar chair last Friday evening wearing his ever-present beige hat and a blue plaid shirt.

Monday afternoon that flannel shirt, soaked in blood, was drying in the sun outside the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

Tuesday morning, Babson's hat rested on a casket in the living room of his son's home on Longwood Road.

A white flower wreath hung on the wall facing the road outside the store, reminding passing neighbors that Burns Babson had waited on his last customer.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Detectives say a man named Daniel Cummings Jr., 38, of Red Springs stopped outside the store shortly after 7 p.m. and asked for a drink of water. Someone directed him to a nearby hose. He took a sip and drove off in a White Ford van.

But investigators say Cummings was looking for more than water. They believe he was in search of easy money to buy crack cocaine, and that the white wood frame store with the 74-year-old man behind the counter must have seemed like the perfect place to get it.

Just to be sure, Cummings reportedly drove around the Ash area and checked out some other businesses. Witnesses have told detectives they saw Cummings and the van at several locations that evening. They are glad he didn't stay. But they wish he had never returned to

the Bamboo Corner store.

It appears that when Cummings went inside and demanded money, Babson refused and grabbed his .38-special revolver. The two men struggled over the gun and Babson lost the fight.

He was shot at least three times—in the arm, in the back and in the right eye—according to sheriff's Detective Tom Hunter, who tracked down Cummings and had a warrant issued for his arrest on a murder charge Tuesday.

Babson's wife Jewell had just returned to the couple's trailer next door after bringing her husband a plate of biscuits and strawberries when she heard the gunshots. She went outside and looked into the store, where she saw a man standing at the far door.

She walked around the building to investigate. When she came around the corner, the man fired the pistol. As she turned and ran off, she heard another shot.

After the man left, Jewell went into the store and found her husband lying on the floor behind the counter with his head resting in the chair.

Late Saturday night, Detective Hunter was returning from Babson's autopsy in Jacksonville when he heard a call on the radio. He had issued a bulletin to watch for the suspected killer. But he wasn't expecting much, considering that the only description available was "a white male driving a white Ford van."

"A real sharp Sampson County deputy was questioning a guy he picked up that morning for breaking into a car and stealing a purse," Hunter said. "He remembered the guy was driving a white van that had just been reported. He called Brunswick County and I headed straight for Clinton."

Authorities there found out that Cummings' van had been reported stolen from Lumberton, Hunter said. They also told him that Cummings had apparently parked it (See RED SPRINGS, Page 2-A)



BABSON

Thomas Appointed To Holden Beach Board

BY DOUG RUTTER

"I'd like to balance the beauty of the island with growth and development. I'd like to have a balance there."

That's the goal of Marlaire Thomas, the newest member of the Holden Beach Board of Commissioners.

"I think it's an honor to be a commissioner," said Thomas, an island property owner since 1979 and permanent resident for four years.

A receptionist at Coastal Development and Realty, Thomas was appointed to the town board last Wednesday. She had been serving as an alternate on the Holden Beach Board of Adjustment.



THOMAS

Thomas was one of two people nominated to fill the vacant seat that was created earlier this month when Mayor Wally Ausley died and Commissioner Gay Atkins was appointed mayor.

Nominated by Commissioner Sid Swarts, board members Jim Fournier and Dwight Carroll also voted to appoint Thomas.

Commissioner David Sandifer nominated and voted for Holden Beach builder Jeff Lee, who had fallen three votes short of being elected to the board of commissioners last November.

Lee received 140 votes in the 1993 town election, while Fournier, the fifth-highest vote-getter among town board candidates, received 143.

Prior to the appointment, while the board was receiving public comments, resident Jim Lowell suggested that commissioners appoint the sixth-highest vote-getter in the last election, which was

Lee. "I would think such a decision would not be challenged by anyone," Lowell said.

However, most of the commissioners disregarded Lowell's suggestion. There was no public discussion of the two nominees before the vote.

Immediately after the appointment, Town Clerk Joyce Shore administered the oath of office and Thomas took her seat at the commissioners' table for the rest of the meeting.

Thomas and her husband, Cosby, live at 118 Frigate Drive. Their daughter and her family lives in Charlotte, and their son will graduate from Wake Forest University Law School next month.

Swarts, who has served as a commissioner since 1991, was later appointed mayor pro tem on a unanimous vote of the board. He fills the position previously held by Atkins.

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FIRST FUEL SHIPMENT EXPECTED THIS SUMMER

Sunny Point Selection No Surprise To Local Official

BY SUSAN USHER

News that Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal will be the port of entry for 409 spent nuclear fuel elements being returned to the United States from European research reactors was no surprise last Friday to Cecil Logan, Brunswick County's emergency management coordinator.

"I feel like when we had the public meeting here they had just about made up their minds. Based on their questions and comments, I kind of expected this," said Logan.

"I have some concerns, but I'm not fighting it. Any time you're dealing with a shipment of hazardous waste there's a concern of an accident. I do appreciate the Department of Energy listening to our concerns about transporting it by rail instead of the highway."

His department already has a spent fuel plan in

place for CP&L spent fuel rod shipments from the utility's Brunswick Nuclear Plant to its Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant near Raleigh. The same route through Brunswick County will be used for these spent fuel shipments.

Logan's biggest concern is that the U.S. Department of Energy or some other party "stay on top of things" and carefully monitor the loading and unloading and shipping of the casks, as is done with domestic fuel shipments.

Sunny Point was named the port of choice over four other likely sites, Charleston, S.C., Jacksonville, Fla., Savannah, Ga., and Wilmington, because of its relative isolation, experience handling hazardous materials and proximity—429 miles by rail—to the Savannah River Site.

The decision was made over protests by state

and local officials and was part of a federal finding of no significant environmental impact announced Friday.

"Although the impacts are minimal regardless of the port selected, the use of Sunny Point is advantageous," said U.S. Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary. Shippers will use Sunny Point "to the maximum extent practicable," with use of the other four ports not entirely ruled out.

The fuel is being returned here to limit international commerce in highly-enriched uranium that can be used to make nuclear weapons, in keeping with the country's nuclear weapons nonproliferation policy. The reactors were running out of storage space, facing either shutdown or reprocessing of spent fuel probably into the same highly-enriched formula instead of the less efficient, low-

(See SUNNY, Page 2-A)

'Nuclear Port Of Choice?'

Sunny Point isn't necessarily on its way to becoming the "nuclear port of choice," a possibility one speaker warned of at a county commissioners' meeting in March.

But that possibility hasn't been ruled out.

The 409 spent fuel rods expected to begin moving through the terminal as early as this summer may be just the beginning of a renewed flow of spent fuel coming into this country from foreign research reactors.

The U.S. Department of Energy is preparing an environmental impact statement for a proposed policy to accept up to 15,000 spent fuel elements over a 10- to 15-year period. A draft statement is expected to be issued for public comment and hearing this December, with a final statement and a decision expected by the end of 1995. The goal of the project is to keep weapon-quality nuclear materials off the international market.

Tim Harms, a U.S. Energy Department spokesman, said the Army terminal's selection for these first shipments doesn't mean it will be the port chosen to receive post 1995-shipments.

"We're wide open as to where would be the best place to bring those in, if we decide to do it. We haven't made that decision," he said.

Sunny Point's military mission and level of activity are the key factors

(See JUST A BEGINNING?, Page 2-A)