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Intermediate school named Palmetto's Finest

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

As hundreds of people waited anxiously on Tuesday to find out if Waccamaw Intermediate would be named one of the state's best schools, the unthinkable happened: the two computers set up to live stream the announcement failed.

As school staff struggled to fix the glitches, principal Tim Carnahan and other staff gathered around a television to watch the broadcast, hoping to add a Palmetto's Finest award to the National Blue Ribbon School honor from 2016.

In the end the computers were fixed in time to hear Waccamaw Intermediate named the state's top elementary school, setting off a raucous celebration



Principal Tim Carnahan joins students and staff in cheering the announcement.

Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

inside the school's cafeteria.

"All the hard work that these people have put in over the years was very worthwhile," Carnahan said. "This school should be a model school for others to come visit and see what we do that works for kids. Our kids are successful and we want to share that knowledge with everybody else. That's the whole idea behind Palmetto's Finest. We can share what works at our school with others and hopefully help kids across the state."

County Superintendent Randy Dozier called the award from the S.C. Association of School Ad-

ministrators historic.

"It's just a real accomplishment," Dozier said. "It's not just about a single individual. It's the school working together: the community, the parents, the staff. It's really a group effort and it's a reflection on the dedication and hard work of so many people."

As the students filed out of the cafeteria to head back to their classes, Carnahan, the only principal in the 11 years since the school opened, shook hands with as many of them as he could.

Waccamaw Intermediate is the third county school to win the annual Palmetto's Finest Award, joining Waccamaw High and Kensington Elementary.

Inside: School's award-winning culture. **SECOND FRONT**



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Austin Beard, left, leaves the courtroom as Marvin Neal, NAACP president, talks to the press after the vote.

LAND USE

Marlin Quay 3.0 prompts filing of lawsuit 4.0

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A Garden City restaurant is seeking damages from Georgetown County for its approval of plans to rebuild the Marlin Quay marina store and restaurant. It is the fourth suit stemming from the project, which has also gone through three versions.

The Gulfstream Café and the marina are part of a "planned development" zoning district created in the 1980s. The facilities share a parking lot.

Palmetto Industrial Development received approval to rebuild the marina store in 2016 and tore down the old building.

In November 2016, Gulfstream filed suit against Palmetto Industrial and its principal, Mark Lawhon, seeking an injunction against interfering with the parking easement. Last June, a jury found for the restaurant and awarded it \$1,000 in damages.

The judge in the case also ruled that any new building on the site must be built within the footprint of the former building.

SEE "SUITS," PAGE 4

COUNTY COUNCIL

Ruling on residency leaves Beard's future in doubt

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

"I want to take time to make an informed decision."

Austin Beard
Council
District 5

A Georgetown County Council member who was poised to become chairman less than three months ago is now deciding whether he should resign following a ruling last week that he does not live in the district he represents.

The county Board of Voter Registration and Elections voted unanimously that Austin Beard is not properly registered to vote. State law requires that officeholders in single-member districts be "electors" in their district and the law defines elec-

tors as residents.

Beard can appeal the decision to Circuit Court. "I'm sure there will be calls for my immediate resignation and I need to get clarification. It's my understanding that the action this board took today just basically invalidates my registration in that precinct. I don't think they have the authority to remove anyone from council," Beard said following the 8-0 vote.

Resignation is also an option. "I do not want friends and family or other members of council to be subjected to the kind of, I consider, harassment

SEE "COUNCIL," PAGE 3

"Georgetown County Council is not a private club serving a select few."

Marvin Neal
NAACP
president

SCHOOLS | Waccamaw High

Team talks itself into a ninth state championship

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The 11 members of the Waccamaw High School competitive speech team are very good at what they do. There's very little debate about that, even though debating is something they do best.

The Windtalkers won the Class 3A state championship earlier this month. It was the ninth Class 2A or 3A state title for the team in its 10 years of existence.

Derek Rollins won for humorous interpretation, Clark Dotson won for prose interpretation, Grace Cohoon won for novice interpretation and the top novice award in the drama category.

"This has definitely been a

The Windtalkers with the hardware they have collected this year.

Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

very successful year," said Rollins, who is the team's captain. "We've had a lot of new people step up, like Gracie, and take state champion. ... This team is definitely one of the better teams that we've had."

Dotson joined the team last year after moving south from Connecticut where his high school did not have a speech and debate team. His parents encouraged him to give it a try at his new school.

"Moving down here I was wary at first to try it," Dotson



said. "I do enjoy it but, I wasn't exactly good at it [at first]. ... I was able to learn that I do enjoy performing and doing pieces."

The Warriors finished the season ranked fourth in the state across all classifications.

SEE "SPEECH," PAGE 8

WACCAMAW LIBRARY

Parking shortage reflects growth at county's busiest branch

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

More parking is on the horizon at the Waccamaw Library.

A 26-stall lot is planned behind the library between the retention pond and Waccamaw Intermediate School. Access will be limited to one entrance/exit, as the lot will be next to the driveway to the school. Plans also include installation of a concrete sidewalk to connect the lot with the existing sidewalk alongside the building.

Work should start by summer, said Dwight McInvaill, the county library director. The plan needs local and state approval.

When the library was being designed, officials had no idea the retention pond was going to have to be so big.

"It's a good thing they did," McInvaill said. "We have these torrential rains and we have hurricanes. There needs to be a place for the water to flow."

Georgetown put its retention system for the main library branch underground. McInvaill thinks it's larger than the one at the Waccamaw Library.

"That, to me, would make perfect sense and then you would have that entire area in the back for expansion of the library ... or to have a place for additional parking," McInvaill said.

McInvaill said the plan was always to add more parking.

"We never had enough room." SEE "LIBRARY," PAGE 5

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Game on: ShushCon 2019 brings players to the table - and the screen - at Waccamaw Library.

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Pawleys Island: Plan for old Town Hall will focus on history and nature rather than retail. **PAGE 4**

Sports: Waccamaw High's first track and field invitational provides a test run for hosting the Lower State meet this spring. **PAGE 18**



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