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ELECTION 2019 | Georgetown County sheriff

Third generation sheriff plans different levels of engagement

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

His grandfather was sheriff for 15 years. His uncle was sheriff for 14 years.

Carter Weaver is on track to become the third generation of his family to be elected sheriff of Georgetown County. He won the Republican Party primary this week to fill the unexpired term of Lane Cribb, the county's longest-serving sheriff, who died in September.

Weaver was Cribb's assistant sheriff for 18 years and became sheriff under state law upon Cribb's death. While calling the primary vote a referendum on the sheriff's office, Weaver also plans to put his own imprint on the office.

Some are small things. He wants to redesign the uniform patch.

Others are not. "We're going to remain competitive in our salaries," Weaver said.

He is lobbying County Council to restore merit pay, which will allow up to 3 percent annual increases in addition to cost-of-living adjustments. The council was cool to the idea when it was proposed by Midway Fire and Rescue last year as it again had to draw on reserves to balance its budget. Weaver estimated that merit pay would add about \$150,000 to his budget.

He said he understands the budget problems, but said "you need to make hard decisions in life." Citizens place a premium on public safety, he added. "The voters have shown that cycle after cycle after cycle."

Weaver still has a Feb. 4 special election ahead, but with only a write-in challenge expected, he won't wait to implement changes.

SEE "SHERIFF," PAGE 4



Tanya Ackerman (above)/Charles Swenson (below)/Coastal Observer
Carter Weaver is joined by his father Vince, 90, as he celebrates his primary victory. Below, Darryel Carr and his wife, Sharon, watch the returns come in.

Weaver wins GOP primary in landslide with light turnout

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Carter Weaver swept past a challenger in the GOP primary this week to secure his position as Georgetown County sheriff for another year. Weaver has been acting sheriff since the death in September of Lane Cribb, who served as sheriff for 27 years.

Unofficial totals gave Weaver nearly 80 percent of the vote over Darryel Carr, a former deputy who was making his fourth run for sheriff and his first as a Republican. Weaver, who was assistant sheriff for 18 years, had 5,419 votes to Carr's 1,457. The turnout was just under 16 percent.

"I really believe it's a referendum on what we've been doing the last 20-plus years," Weaver told hundreds of supporters



gathered at Frank's restaurant to await the returns from Tuesday's primary. It was his first run for public office.

A special election on Feb. 4

will complete the process of filling Cribb's unexpired term. Birt Adams, who failed to file paperwork in time to appear on the

SEE "PRIMARY," PAGE 4

LITCHFIELD RACQUET CLUB

Developer withdraws plan for lots on clay courts

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The score stands at 4-0 in the fight over the future of the former Litchfield Racquet Club as another developer has asked to withdraw a rezoning request rather than face denial by Georgetown County Council. It is the fifth plan served up for the facility this year and the fourth to be withdrawn.

"We have withdrawn the application," Dan Stacy, attorney for AmeriBuilt homes, said. "There was no viable path forward to modify the planned development."

The property is owned by Founders National Golf, which bought it along with several golf courses owned by Myrtle Beach National. The tennis club and its 17 clay courts closed in October 2018.

Two plans for the property were proposed earlier this year by Trey Smith. One called for 108 one-bedroom apartments on the 8.5 acres adjacent to Litchfield Country Club, a community of single-family homes on lots of at least 10,000 square feet.

The apartment plan was withdrawn before a public hearing before the Planning Commission when county staff recommended denial. So was another plan for 32 lots of 4,600 square feet.

AmeriBuilt homes resubmitted the 32-lot plan, but also withdrew. It then proposed 19 lots with 10,000 square feet.

SEE "ZONING," PAGE 4



Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

There are 8,000 acres of intertidal land at Hobcaw Barony.

ENVIRONMENT

Baruch Foundation seeks clear title to marshes and ricefields

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Three centuries after the first land grant and 55 years after its creation, the Belle W. Baruch Foundation has gone to court to confirm that it owns all of the property known as Hobcaw Barony, particularly 8,000 acres of marsh.

A suit filed last month in Circuit Court asks that the portions of Hobcaw between the mean low and mean high water marks be declared property of the foundation, not the state of South Carolina.

"It's the ricefields and the marsh, the intertidal marsh," said George Chastain, the foundation's executive director.

He called the action "procedural."

"We have a good relationship with the state," Chastain said. "It's not a confrontational thing."

Bernard Baruch, a Camden native who made his fortune on Wall Street, bought the former rice plantations in 1905. He later sold it to his daughter, Belle, who left the property to the foundation created in her will.

"The ownership got resolved

SEE "HOBCAW," PAGE 2

SAFETY

As DeBordieu funds rescue craft, residents hope for ambulance

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Midway Fire and Rescue has a new personal watercraft, paid for by the people whose lives it might help save.

The Yamaha WaveRunner was donated by a group of DeBordieu residents, including a member of Midway's board of commissioners, Jim Christian. Nearly 100 residents chipped in \$19,000 for the WaveRunner and some rescue equipment to go with it.

"It is very much appreciated," said Midway Fire Chief Doug Eggiman. "It shows the support that we have from the community as a whole."

"DeBordieu has always been supportive of Midway Fire and Rescue," Christian said. "It's a wonderful asset to Midway's rescue capabilities."

Midway has three watercraft, SEE "MIDWAY," PAGE 3

BIKE THE NECK | North Litchfield connector

New pitch for long-awaited project



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

The proposed connector will link sections of the Bike the Neck path that now end at North Litchfield.

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County will try again to get a \$100,000 state grant to complete a key section of the Bike the Neck route that was denied last year. It is the same grant that the county had to return to the state Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism in 2014 because it wasn't able to obtain easements for the route.

The North Litchfield connector will link the existing Bike the Neck path at Boyle Drive with the segment that runs north through Huntington Beach State Park. It will run beneath the Santee Cooper transmission lines.

When the connector was first proposed in 2012, the cost was estimated at \$144,000. That cost is now \$289,000, said James Coley, the county's capital projects planner.

Only the amount of the PRT grant has stayed the same.

As part of the grant process, the county will hold a public

SEE "GRANT," PAGE 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Fall color, winter lights: Nights of a Thousand Candles returns for a 20th year to Brookgreen Gardens.

SECOND FRONT

Schools: Waccamaw High speech and debate team hopes to talk their way into national competition.

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The great pandemic: A historian's research on the local impact of the global flu outbreak in 1918-19 gives perspective on the start of another active flu season.

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