

COASTAL OBSERVER

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50 cents

COUNTY LEADERSHIP | Changes at the top

Council names interim administrator hoping his term will be brief

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The former county attorney will serve as Georgetown County's interim administrator while County Council continues to search for a full-time replacement for Sel Hemingway. That search could end next week, according to the council chairman.

Hemingway announced last May that he would retire at the end of the year. The council hoped to hire a new administrator in October, but after a 4-3 vote, its choice turned down the job offer.

A consultant, Slavin Manage-



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer
Wesley Bryant

ment, was hired to conduct a new search, also on a 4-3 vote.

Hemingway agreed to stay on

through Feb. 28. That's the same day the council will meet to interview four finalists. Their names will be made public Friday, Council Chairman John Thomas said.

The council named Wesley Bryant as interim administrator this week. He was county attorney for 13 years before leaving last month to become director of government services and compliance at the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments.

Bryant continues to provide legal services to the county under a contract with Waccamaw Regional. He will also serve as interim administrator under

SEE "COUNTY," PAGE 3

Superintendent search begins with public input across county

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
AND CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Reliable. Visible. Confident. Accessible. Able to make hard decisions.

These are some of the traits that people are looking for in the next Georgetown County superintendent of schools.

A team of consultants will give the school board a leadership profile next week based on three days of community input this week. They will also ask the board to pick a salary range for the person who will replace Superintendent Randy Dozier when he retires June 30.

Parents, grandparents, teach-

ers, district staff, community leaders and county residents showed up at four forums this week to give input on the qualities they are looking for in the next superintendent. The forums were hosted by BWP and Associates, the Illinois firm hired by the district to conduct the search. The consultants also interviewed school board members and groups of stakeholders in the district.

"There were a lot of similarities," said Frank Morgan, former Kershaw County school superintendent and a member of the BWP team. "Folks in Georgetown County have been very forthcoming, in a polite way."

SEE "DISTRICT," PAGE 3

ELECTION 2020 | Democratic presidential primary

Campaigns hit county in final bid for votes

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

It's been a mad dash to the finish for local Democrats this week as the presidential primary approaches on Saturday.

Candidates and their surrogates, including an Academy Award-winning actress, visited in the county as party officials pulled out all the stops to get out the vote.

"Enthusiasm is pretty high," said Debbie Smith, president of the county Democratic Party.

The latest candidates to stop in the county were Joe Biden and Tom Steyer, who were a few blocks away from each other in Georgetown on Wednesday.

Many polls have Biden, who appeared at a rally inside the Winyah Indigo Society Hall, with a comfortable lead in the state. More than 100 people greeted the former vice president with chants of "let's go Joe."

Biden reminded people that he helped craft the Affordable Care Act, and get it passed, so he is the only candidate who has actually done something about health care.

SEE "PRIMARY," PAGE 2



Photos by Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer
Clockwise from above, Joe Biden at the Winyah Indigo Society Hall, Susan Sarandon campaigning for Bernie Sanders at Pawleys Island and Tom Steyer at Bethel AME in Georgetown.



PAWLEYS ISLAND

Town starts strategic plan with survey of owners

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A survey went out last week to property owners on Pawleys Island as the town prepares to develop its first strategic plan.

"For us to go year to year and just react to what comes at us, I don't think is efficient," Mayor Brian Henry said.

The idea was proposed following last year's contentious

Town Council election by George Raftelis, a long-time property owner who runs a consulting firm that specializes in municipal utility finance. The council will

work with Gerald Wexelbaum, a Florida-based management consultant, who was recommended by Raftelis. They once worked together at Ernst & Young, and Wexelbaum offered to cut his fee from \$17,500 to \$7,000.

The goal is to "create a cohesive vision" among the council members, establish priorities for the next few years, identify resources to address them and devise a way to measure progress.

SEE "TOWN," PAGE 4



Brian Henry

SCHOOLS | Waccamaw High

Academic team continues its streak

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Waccamaw High School dominated the Senior Academic Bowl on Tuesday night, outscoring opponents 51-12 to win its seventh straight title.

"This is a great team, they're so much fun," coach Brad Kibler said. "They're not just smart kids, they're fun kids. It makes my job really easy."

"I'm just glad I kept the winning record going," said Covey Loftus, a senior. "The weight is off my shoulders."

"This was fun," said Zachary Rosenberg, a senior. "This was a good way to end it."

Kibler doesn't like to focus on the streak.

"I just come each year and act like it's the first time," Kibler said. "If you start messing with streaks, you start messing with the kids and messing with your mind. It's supposed to be fun. ... I just want these kids to come and do their best."

"It's awesome that you can bring home the trophy every year, especially seven times. That's a lot," said Wade Maring, a senior. "It's just great that we built the program the way we have. Mr. Kibler is a great coach and Waccamaw is a great school."

The Senior Academic Bowl is a double-elimination tourna-

ment that features teams from the county's four high schools. Each game has two, six-minute rounds plus a two-minute lightning round. If the game remains tied, the teams play another two-minute lightning round. Teams are quizzed on five subjects: math, English, social studies, science and the humanities. The tournament ends when one team is either undefeated or has only one loss.

In the championship game, Waccamaw beat Carvers Bay 21-3, scoring 8 points in round one, 7 in round two and 6 in the lightning round.

Waccamaw's Steven Insignares knew that FOIA stood for the Freedom of Information Act and that Suleiman was the longest reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

Waccamaw also beat Carvers Bay 18-1 in the fourth game of the tournament to advance to the championship. They scored 7 points in round one, 6 in round two, and 5 in the lightning round.

Loftus knew that an ill-tempered, nagging woman is sometimes referred to as a harpie and that Hindu is a religion whose prominent texts are written in

SEE "WHS," PAGE 4



Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer
Wade Maring, Hunt Grafe, Covey Loftus and Britana Myers confer in the last round of the Academic Bowl.

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The Hemingway years: County administrator steps down with a roar.
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Tech: Cell tower plans rarely greeted with opposition these days. One in a rural area is an exception.
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