

Bald Head Island mayor Dick Messinger (foreground) was among officials welcoming visitors to the open house at the new village hall Saturday afternoon. Village offices have been in a trailer at the developer's maintenance area for several years.

Ruark festival this weekend

Tales of Robert Ruark, life in Southport and people Ruark knew and loved will be featured this weekend at the third annual Robert Ruark Festival.

Festival activities will begin at 10 a.m. Friday, November 27, and Saturday, November 28, and will be centered on Moore Street between Howe and Davis streets in Southport.

Storytellers will include James M. Harper, Jr., James C. Brown, Leila H. Pigott, Donnie Kirby, Noni Rogers, Foxy Howard, Harold Watson and Ephraim Swain. The storytelling is made possible by a grassroots grant from the Brunswick County Arts Council.

The Robert Ruark Festival, sponsored by the Robert Ruark Foundation, was established in 1989 to honor the nationally recognized writer who was born in Wilmington and spent his summers in Southport visiting his grandparents.

A street fair including arts and crafts, foods and live entertainment will highlight the festival. Many craftsmen will be exhibiting their wares for Christmas shoppers, and food vendors and restaurants will

have booths lining Moore and Howe streets.

The Southport Cloggers, a newly formed dance group under the direction of David Spencer, will perform both days. The Sea Notes Choral Society, under the direction of Cindy Sellers, is scheduled to perform a selection of holiday songs. Donna Rae Martin will be the mistress of ceremonies. She will also entertain with favorite songs of Patsy Cline and other artists.

At 3 p.m. Saturday, writer Elynn Bache of Wilmington will announce the winners of the two statewide short story contests. Copies of Bache's most recent book will be on sale throughout the festival.

Also in conjunction with the festival, Brunswick Little Theater will present the comedy "Noises Off" at the Centennial Center on Lord Street.

The Rev. P. D. Midgett will be on the scene throughout the two-day festival videotaping activities as part of Southport's Bicentennial celebration.

Federal Road project: Developers or village?

By Jim Harper
Staff Writer

Bald Head Island may have improvement of Federal Road included in its overall paving program as a result of meetings Saturday.

Strong property-owner support in both the October village meetings and again Saturday failed to spur strong action from either the village council or property owner association board, but a committee was formed to reassess priorities for paving, recommend standards and possibly to negotiate with developers for increased participation by them.

The group will report to the council in a special December 19 session.

Chairing the committee is councilman Bill Watkins, whose opposition to the village taking over Federal Road in its present condition is strong. Serving with him will be councilman Tom Bradshaw, association board member Ken Miller and Middle Island property owner Griff Weld.

The committee is charged with developing plans for Federal Road improvement, improvement of the lighthouse-village hall access road and repaving of North Bald Head Wynd.

In August the village council approved repaving of North Bald Head Wynd, but postponed the project in September for lack of funds.

Subsequently property owner annoyance over the condition of Federal Road grew, after lying dormant for most of the summer, and the need for paving of the lighthouse access also became an agenda item in council sessions.

In a special public hearing Saturday, property owners gave voice to the need for a better roadway link with Middle Island and east beach, and the property owner board approved a \$35,000 grant to help the village acquire Federal Road and pave it.

But in the village council meeting which followed the hearing and board session, Watkins opposed accepting the grant.

In the hearing Watkins had said, "We ought to have a great (Federal) road, and I don't blame people for wanting it, but my argument against taking it over is not only the cost of bringing it up to standards but the cost of maintaining it. That is the biggest cost -- the maintenance of the road."

Federal Road is owned by Bald Head Management, the major island developer, and is maintained on a marginal basis. Promised renewal of

the surface after recent installation of water pipe in the right-of-way has not occurred.

On Saturday Charlie Young, whose Middle Island development is reached via Federal Road, suggested that the village take over the road and use \$93,000 he says he and developer Kent Mitchell have pledged to improve it.

"I feel it can be brought to a reasonable condition for that amount," Young said.

Property owner Chuck Pardee suggested that a committee be formed to see that the road is acquired by the village and improved before next Easter, and later voted as a member of the association board for that to happen.

Property owner Pete Taussig complained that the road is a "running sore" in the island complex and urged doing whatever is necessary to have a "first-class road."

"If it costs \$200,000 or more to put up a first-class road, I say go after it," Taussig said.

But Sonny McIver, an association board member who later was to oppose the \$35,000 grant, said benefits of Federal Road paving would not be equal, and suggested that financing could be arranged on a benefit basis, as was done with beach renourishment.

Village councilman Bill Leineweber said that the roadway should be acquired by the village, and a deadline set for improvement, and Ron O'Keefe, a Middle Island neighbor of Leineweber, said, "This is not just a Middle Island problem ... If we don't take the bull by the horns now we're missing a big opportunity."

But the strongest advocate of any plan was Watkins, who said the primary beneficiaries of an improved Federal Road would be Young and Mitchell.

"The responsibility of building a proper road is up to those two developers," he said, "and if we hang in there it will happen."

Beach blaze

A two-story Long Beach house was heavily damaged by fire Saturday, according to police department reports.

The house, owned by Virginia Madlock, is located at 107-23rd Street NW, police major Johnny Freeman said. There were no occupants of the house at the time of the blaze, he said.

Freeman said the alarm was sounded at 4:45 a.m. Saturday. By the time the police, fire department and rescue squad reached the scene the house was engulfed by flame, he said. The fire probably started in the back corner of the house, Freeman said. Investigation to determine the cause of the fire are continuing.

Dosher reports fine opening to new year

By Marybeth Bianchi
Feature Editor

Dosher Memorial Hospital trustees welcomed the new administrator to his first board meeting Monday night and learned the hospital started out the new fiscal year in the black.

Edgar Haywood, III, reported an excess of operations for October totaling \$18,644, despite a drop in admissions for the month. He explained that was the result of operating the hospital below the budgeted costs.

The board approved spending \$1,718 for a new light in the emergency room parking lot and a new door at the flea market. They also agreed to pay \$345.69 a month to Haywood's current health insurance plan for three months until he can be covered by the hospital's plan.

Haywood reported that 41-year nursing veteran Anne Bruton is retiring from her job in the emergency room. Patricia Schlessinger, a

registered nurse, was hired for in-service education and infection control.

Trustee Gene Tomlinson asked if anything had been done about a designated parking area along Fodale Street. Gib Barbee suggested the City of Southport turned down the request because it didn't want the area designated specifically for hospital parking. He recommended the area be paved and be designated for general parking.

"It certainly would be a real adjunct to have parking there," Tomlinson said.

The new administrator reported that he has been "extremely impressed with everyone I've met." He complimented the staff and said their "smiling faces on the job" are a good sign.

"I think my primary job here is to not mess up a good thing," Haywood said.

The next board of trustees meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., December 28.

CAMA update is presented

The Brunswick County Planning Department has sent its proposed Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) land use plan update to the state division of coastal management, but due to the upcoming holidays the county cannot expect comments from the state until January or February, planning director John Harvey told the planning board last Wednesday.

Harvey also said he sent a copy of the proposed land use plan to incoming county commissioners Tom Rabon, Sr., Don Warren and Wayland Vereen for their input and comments.

The planning board is expected at its December 16 meeting to begin discussing possible procedures to handle requests for changes in the newly enacted countywide zoning ordinance.

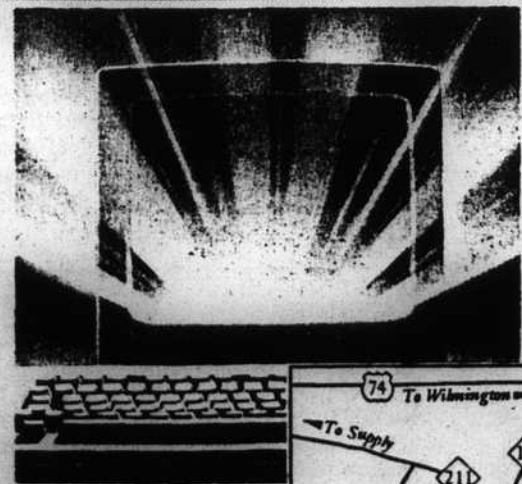
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In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, we will be closed on November 26th.

Have A Happy And Healthy Thanksgiving Holiday!

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