

# OUR TOWN

## Bald Head Island

Bald Head Island Transportation Inc. has announced ferry fare increases to become effective July 1.

The fundamental passenger ticket will cost \$15, where individual property owners now pay \$14. Prices of bulk-sale tickets and annual passes will increase substantially. Lots of 50 tickets now sell for \$500. After July 1, 40 tickets will cost \$500. The present \$1,200 price for general annual passes will increase to \$1,500. The \$800 price for senior citizen annual passes will go to \$1,000.

The rates are among those which the transportation company will provide to the North Carolina Utilities Commission as part of an application for license to operate. In the future, price increases will be in accordance with state rules.

Transportation manager Hill Goodman said that parking costs, which are not under state jurisdiction, are to remain the same.

## Boiling Spring Lakes

The planning board is scheduled to meet Monday, June 28, at 7 p.m. in City Hall. Permits for two town residents to put doublewide mobile homes in a residential area requiring special use permits for manufactured homes will be considered.

Also on the agenda is discussion of a proposed subdivision at Holly Point. The realtor is expected to present the site plan for the development. Final approval for the subdivision will have to come from the board of commissioners.

## Caswell Beach

Commissioner Bill Boyd reminded all town residents this week that gill nets must be attended at all times between Memorial Day and Labor Day, from sunset Friday to sunrise Monday. Persons who leave their gill nets unattended may be subject to an \$85 fine. Boyd stressed that gill net rules require users to remain physically present during supervision, and that people who watch their nets from a kitchen window are still considered to be in violation of the law.

Department of Transportation personnel are in town this week clearing vegetation along the state right-of-way of Caswell Beach Road. Town clerk Linda Bethune said the town asked the state to clear the roadside because trees, bushes and other vegetation were impeding visibility.

The owner of the condemned property at 124 Caswell Beach Road has demolished the unsafe dwelling, but has not yet cleared the debris from the demolition. The town has given Elizabeth Bell of Greensboro until the end of June to clear the lot before proceeding with a lawsuit.

## Long Beach

Beginning July 5, twice-weekly trash pickups will resume throughout Long Beach. A complete schedule of trash collection pickups is available from Town Hall.

Town manager Tim Johnson announced this week that the town's second newsletter is in the making and he expects it to be published in mid-July.

Bids for constructing sidewalks along 40th Street and Middleton Street were higher than expected, Johnson told the town council at its last meeting. Council members subsequently gave Johnson permission to negotiate for a lower price without going through the bid process again. The average cost of sidewalk is about \$6 per foot, Johnson said, and the bids were for approximately \$9 per foot.

Council members also agreed to allow the Long Beach Police Department to swap a radio console it could no longer use for two mobile radios and a portable radio from Bladen County worth an estimated \$2,000. The police department has been unable to use the console since the county's 911 system was activated, said police chief Danny Laughren. Because Bladen County does not yet have a 911 system, Laughren said a deal was arranged through Wilmington Communications in which Bladen County's radios were traded for Long Beach's radio console.

## Yaupon Beach

The town received official word last week that it has been awarded a \$3,400 state grant to pay for erosion control projects and swale construction. The grant stipulates that the town must also put up \$3,400 for similar projects, said town clerk Nancy Wilson.

The town's erosion control committee has been renamed the "beach preservation committee" to emphasize its primary function. All Yaupon Beach residents who are concerned about preventing erosion and preserving the beach are encouraged to join the committee by contacting Town Hall. Commissioner Mack Aman has been coordinating committee efforts.

Wilson also reminded residents this week that the first day to register as a candidate for town commissioner is Friday, July 2. Three seats will be open on the board, with commissioners Dot Kelly, Hugh Zachary and Bill Smith up for re-election, if they choose to run. Commissioners have maintained four-year terms, but a new mayor is appointed, or the current mayor is reappointed, every two years.

## Southport

The office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management announced last week that it has officially recommended to the state Grants Management Division that Southport be awarded an additional three-month extension to complete the Riverwalk project, and that final approval on the extension should come within 30 days. The city would then have until the end of September to complete the walkway.

City manager Rob Gandy indicated that he is now prepared to begin renegotiating with the contractor, Telesis Ventures of Wilmington, and hopes to have a new proposal to present to the board of aldermen at its next meeting on July 15.

Members of the Southport Beautification Committee were busy this week painting the water tank fence. A local volunteer, who asked to remain anonymous, recently completed construction of a fence around the water tank.

Another film company is expected to be in town on July 8, 9 and 27 to film the motion picture "The Inkwell". Filming will take place in Southport at Fort Johnson, and in various locations in Caswell Beach. The movie is a coming-of-age story about a boy who visits wealthy relatives in a seaside community in 1976 during the Bicentennial celebration.



Southporters hammered in the morning on Saturday, repairing the city dock at the west end of the yacht basin. Mayor Norman Holden (center) helps install one of the planks donated by private citizens. Other planks were provided by makers of the movie "Birds II".

Photo by Ed Harper

## Change of governance considered

# Democracy may come to BHI

By Jim Harper  
Staff Writer

Appointment of a "conference committee" to study the direction that community governance will take is expected in the July Bald Head Island village council meeting.

Such a committee was recommended by the Bald Head Association's finance and administration committee, which has discussed island governance in two recent public meetings, and by the association board itself.

The committee will be formed by the new council in July. The weight of that responsibility was emphasized Saturday by retiring mayor Dick Messinger, who expressed relief that he will not have to address the issue.

Concern over how Bald Head is governed heightened recently as an island-resident group, including councilman Bill Leineweber and association board member Chuck Pardee, held conversations and conferences about moving the island toward democratic rule.

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appointed by the major developer and by the association board. The association consists of property owners, regardless of where they live. Island residents who own no property have no vote.)

But the issue is not new. A report to the association annual meeting in January, 1990, said, "The finance and administration committee believes that it would be better to commence dealing with issue (of the constitutionality of the village charter) as a separate and remedial project, rather than having the issue forced on the community at an inopportune time by an unhappy populace."

And in February, 1991, a special association committee on governance wrote, "It is our opinion that a change is inevitable. The board of directors and village council face a number of issues that can be resolved only if commitments can be made and sustained, if challenged. We do not believe that our present system offers the degree of certainty needed."

In a June 5 finance and administration committee meeting, former mayors Jim Harrington and Tom Storrs were among those who commented on island governance.

Storrs said, "The record shows that the government has been effective in

building the physical and organizational infrastructure of Bald Head Island." Yet he also noted "transitional characteristics" in the charter (the developer has no appointive power after 1999) and said, "It may well be that other special aspects of the charter will outlive their usefulness at some time in the future. If so, they should be phased out."

Harrington said, "The village government under the present charter has worked well."

One of the village government's designers, Harrington said that at the outset "there were too few eligible resident voters, and among them even fewer with the experience and willingness to govern in the unique circumstances of Bald Head Island."

He continued, "It's my opinion that this limitation still prevails!"

But later Harrington said, "I believe that it is appropriate and necessary for the council to address the issue of change in governance," and suggested appointment of a "select committee of 'elders'" to propose amendments to the charter for possible legislative consideration in 1995.

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## Who can employees turn to?

# Personnel body is dissolved

By Holly Edwards  
County Editor

Calling it "weak," "unnecessary" and "unsavory," the Long Beach Town Council voted 4-2 last week to eliminate the personnel advisory board and leave employee grievances to courts of law and state and federal committees.

"I feel the PAB, as a quasi-judicial body, represents nothing more than a point where 'dirty laundry' is aired," council member David Durr, who recommended the board's dissolution, said in a letter to the mayor and town council. "It has been the focus of public resentment, of distorted public opinion and derogatory comment."

Allegations against town manager Tim Johnson arose

*'I don't think the town manager can be the accuser, prosecutor, jury, judge and executioner all in one. And if employees are falsely or wrongfully accused, how do they spend \$5,000 to \$10,000 in a court of law to defend themselves?'*

Jeff Ensminger  
Town councilman

during former town maintenance garage supervisor Frank Lombardi's public personnel hearing. Lombardi was fired after an engine block from a 1989 Chevrolet Caprice used by the

Long Beach police was found in his car. Lombardi's attorney, James Payne of Shallotte, suggested during the personnel hearing that Johnson may be guilty of misappropriating town property himself

because he allegedly ordered town employees to dispose of some asbestos pipe in another town employee's yard.

However, Johnson indicated that the pipe was 14 years old and of no use to the town. He also said the only order he gave was for employees to clean out the garage.

Durr said hearings such as these serve no useful function since after all of the "dirty laundry" is aired, the town manager can either accept the personnel board's recommendation, or reject it.

Council members Danny Leonard and Jeff Ensminger voted against eliminating the personnel board, and said they believed town employees need somewhere to turn besides their immediate supervisor or the

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