

THE STATE PORT PILOT



Eight ball
Law enforcement takes effort to close business

Jamboree
South Brunswick, sev kick-off season Friday

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Volume 67, Number 52

Published every Wednesday in Southport, NC

Charge is now murder

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Raymond Lloyd Gamble, 20, will face a murder charge for the death of a 75-year-old Yaupon Beach man who had befriended him.

Robert Moeller, a popular retiree who played bridge regularly with friends at the Long Beach Recreation Center, died Saturday evening at New Hanover Regional Medical Center of injuries he suffered during an August 3 beating.

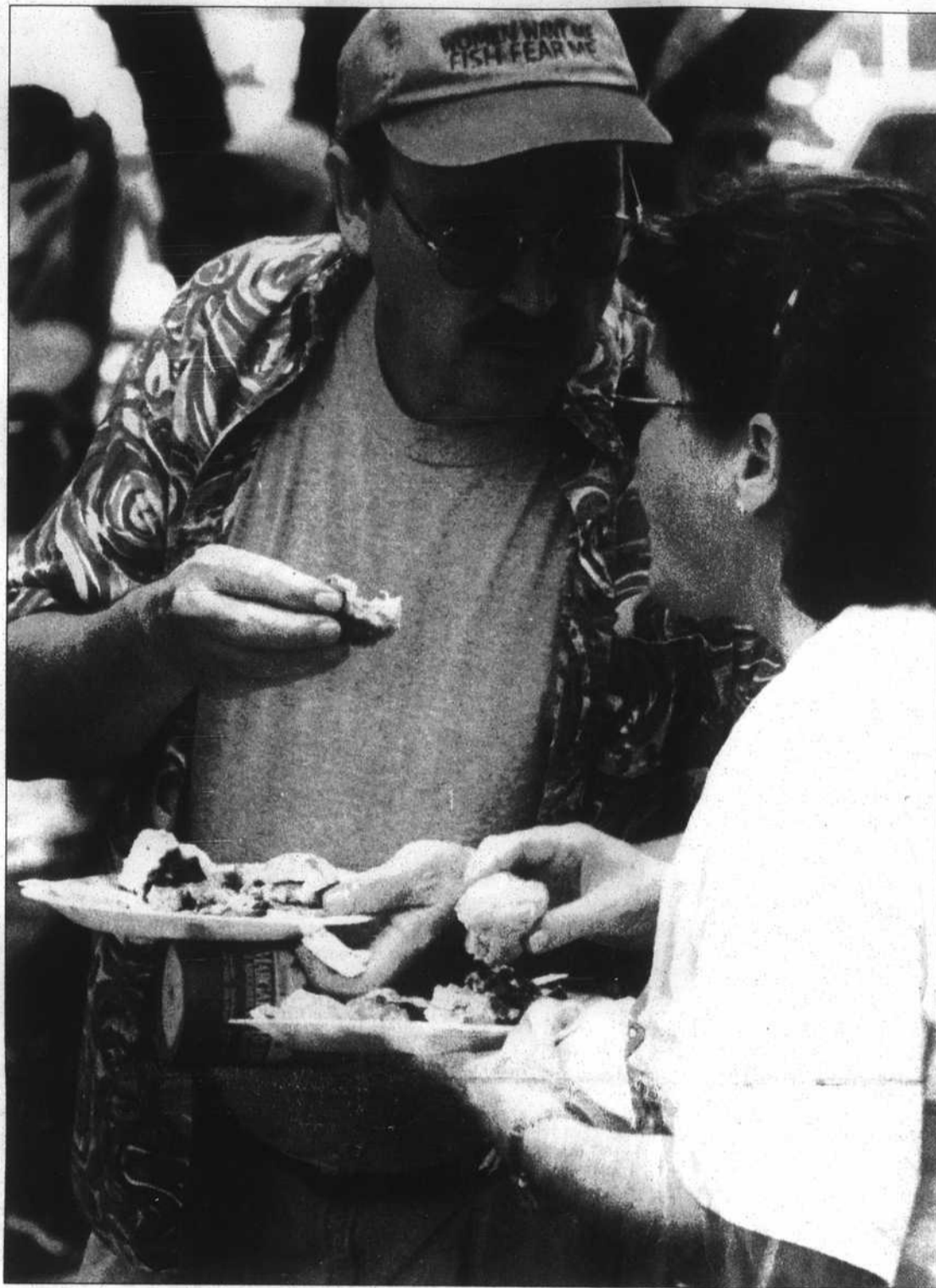
Police allege Gamble, whom Moeller had taken into his home and considered an adopted grandson, pistol-whipped the older man, robbed him and fled across the state line. The older man was found unconscious in his home at 311 Norton Street the next day by a concerned neighbor.

Gamble was arrested August 11 and charged with assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury, robbery with a dangerous weapon and forgery and uttering. Monday afternoon, SBI special agent Janet Storms, who has been involved in the investigation from its beginning, served Gamble with a murder warrant at Brunswick County jail. He was ordered held without privilege of bond by magistrate Elizabeth Lewis and first appearance before the District Court on the murder charge was set today (Wednesday.)

"Right now, it's just an open murder charge," Yaupon Beach police chief Van Eddinger said. The "degree" of murder will be determined later.

At first appearance, the district attorney will attempt to present enough evidence to convince the
See Murder, page 10

FINGER FOOD



The worst-kept secret in town Sunday afternoon was how good the food is in local restaurants. Eight establishments delighted some 500 visitors at the Southport 2000 "A Taste of Southport" benefit held at Southport Marina. More photos and story appear in the Neighbors section.

Photo by Jim Harper

Long Beach

Land, street-end actions highlight council meeting

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Recreation and public access to waters dominated deliberations of town council Tuesday night, as the body acted to purchase land adjacent to the Middleton Park ballfields and enacted an ordinance declaring all public road ends at the Intracoastal Waterway in Long Beach public parks.

Unanimously and without discussion, council agreed to spend \$320,000 to purchase a parcel extending along SE 49th Street between East Beach Drive and Pelican Drive from the Shannon family. The parcel includes two buildings and a large area now in use as a campground.

In a parallel action, council approved an agreement with BB&T to finance the land purchase for five years at 4.43-percent interest.

Mayor Joan Altman said purchase of the Shannon tract was of great interest to Long Beach because it provides a natural extension of the

"This action is significant in that it codifies something people were assured exists. It reaffirms the town's commitment to public access."

Joan Altman
Long Beach mayor

Middleton Park sports complex and can also provide second row beach access. But, plans for the parcel, the sale of which should close before the end of this month, have not been
See Long Beach, page 13

City live oaks are improving

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

City efforts and those of volunteers are paying off. Southport should stay its course in the municipal effort to rid stately live oaks of the insects that threaten to kill them, Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Service agent David Nash told aldermen Thursday.

"The water spraying is very good," Nash said. "It is killing many crawlers. I think we are going to eliminate a lot of the population through that."

Earlier this summer citizens began to notice leaves in live oak trees throughout the city had begun to brown-out. Nash and a forestry specialist with N. C. State University identified the affliction as infestation by the live oak kermid, a scale insect which, in sufficient numbers, can kill trees by attaching themselves to branches and sucking out sap.

Immediately, a volunteer effort began in response to the crisis facing city live oaks. Public meetings on the care of live oaks and the eradication of the kermid were conducted and a citizen-volunteer group

"I don't see long-term discontinuation of mosquito spraying. I don't think that is practical."

David Nash
Extension agent

began surveying trees, collecting vital statistics and comparing the circumstances of healthy trees to those of badly infested trees.

All of those efforts have begun to pay off, Nash said.

"It is probably a bigger job than anyone thought it would be," Nash said, adding it would take longer than the four weeks initially projected to survey all trees in the city.

Nash said use of volunteer fire department high-pressure hoses on publicly owned trees had paid an
See Live oaks, page 6

Brunswick County

Corridor route still question

By Terry Pope
County Editor

The Second Bridge to Oak Island Corridor Plan is still under construction while some have questioned what happens if the bridge route is changed from Midway to the Sunset Harbor community.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners Monday tabled formal adoption of the joint planning tool with Long Beach and also held off a vote to approve the
See Corridor, page 6

Plan is missing approved goals

By Terry Pope
County Editor

A number of long-range planning goals drafted by an appointed committee two years ago have not made it to the final draft of the county's land use update, which was presented for public hearing and approval Monday.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners asked county planners to review the document for consistency with the 16 recommendations presented in February, 1996, by the Long-Range Planning Committee, a group disbanded by commissioners in a battle for political control two years ago.

"We need to have consistency with the recommendations of the Long-Range Planning Committee," said District 5 commissioner Bill Sue of Leland. "It was adopted by two boards. We need to make sure that we don't have contradictions with the land use report and the recommenda-
See Missing, page 10

Leland seeking water

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Leland mayor Franky Thomas says he doesn't care if county officials treat his town like dogs, just as long as all towns are treated like dogs.

He requested Monday that the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners take action to sell county water at wholesale to Leland so the town can enter into the water distribution busi-
See Leland, page 11

Caswell water systems soon to converge

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

With homeowners associations chomping at the bit, Caswell Beach commissioners say the time to consolidate the five privately operated drinking water delivery systems into one municipally operated system is at hand.

"We think they will be adopted finally in September," commissioner Paul O'Connor said of the five separate agreements that will dedicate delivery lines and needed easements

to the town.

Consolidation of water delivery systems became a priority of town officials and the five homeowners associations last winter when the homeowners groups began complaining they did not receive equal service for the water bills they were paying. While residents of Caswell Dunes, The Arboretum, Oak Island Beach Villas, OceanGreens I and OceanGreens II paid an amount equal to that paid by Caswell Beach Road residents for their water, a portion of that sum paid for

maintenance of the Caswell Beach Road lines. If lines broke in one of the private subdivisions, the homeowners group was forced to foot the bill for repair.

Recently, all five homeowners associations completed initial contract drafts which would dedicate delivery lines and needed easements to them to Caswell Beach. But, as each agreement was drafted by a different homeowners group, each said something slightly different when presented the town. Although the same attorney drafted three of the five agreements,

even those three agreements differed, commissioner Bill Boyd said.

This latest delay angered Caswell Dunes Property Owners Association president Joel Hobby, who said his group would not pay to straighten the mess out. He said the town should have drafted a standard agreement for the homeowners groups to sign in the first place.

"We asked the town to write up an agreement," Hobby said. "We'd just as soon not pay
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