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## Consolidation Forum gives public chance to air concerns

By Richard Nubel  
Municipal Editor

What is the new Town of Oak Island going to do to stem runaway development?

Are my property taxes going up after consolidation?

What will the Town of Oak Island do to protect Davis Canal?

Will the consolidated town have more power to get a second bridge built?

How about a new post office? Yaupon Beach lets its residents

ing them by July 1, 1999. The resulting new town will be known as the Town of Oak Island.

"This is not a perfect exercise, but it is useful in getting a pulse," meeting facilitator Glenn Harbeck told participants. Harbeck is a consulting planner who has done land use planning for Brunswick County and other area local governments. "I think we got a pulse tonight."

In order to take that pulse, the large crowd was divided into groups of about 15 persons with one facilitator assigned each group. Each group member was, in turn, asked to pose his greatest concern about consolidation or the question he or she considered most pressing.

Each question or concern was written down on a large piece of paper.

When all questions and concerns were listed, all were posted on the meeting room wall.

Each participant was then given ten red stickers to place beside the questions others had posed that he considered most important.

In that way, the questions took on priority.

For all the work that was done to compile questions Tuesday night, little was done in the way of providing answers to specific questions. The answers to most frequently asked questions will be the subject of a second public information meeting to be held at Ocean View United Methodist Church in Yaupon Beach on January 5.

Most in attendance seemed to like the approach to community consensus building. "I think it's great," said Long Beach resident Ailene Jeffries. She said she had asked if mosquito control efforts would be enhanced and if the option to burn yard debris could be given Oak Island residents on specified days of the week.

Ms. Jeffries said she called neighbors and asked them to attend the community information session. She said she favored the consolidation proposal.

"I think the whole island should have done this 20 years ago," Ms. Jeffries said. "I hope Caswell Beach

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## 'TIS THE SEASON



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas all through the community, with street decorations going up, house lights brightening our evenings and store windows cheering our days. This weekend provides the big kickoff to Christmas-by-the-Sea with the Oak Island holiday parade starting at 3 p.m.

Photo by Jim Harper

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burn leaves; Long Beach does not. How will this be resolved?

These were among the most frequently asked questions about 170 persons posed on the subject of Oak Island consolidation Tuesday night at the Long Beach Recreation Center. The large number of residents who turned out at the first of four planned public information sessions for Yaupon Beach and Long Beach residents took officials pleasantly by surprise.

The working session Tuesday night was a controlled exercise in community participation, designed to ferret out the most pressing concerns residents hold for the prospect of consolidating Long Beach and Yaupon Beach. The governing bodies of the two municipal corporations have committed to consolidat-

## Boiling Spring Lakes

# Police get new wheels

By Laura Kimball  
Feature Editor

Two new police cars may be roaming the streets of Boiling Spring Lakes soon.

At Tuesday night's town board meeting, commissioners agreed to enter into a lease contract with Fairway Ford in Burgaw for two new vehicles.

Commissioner Paul Toland discussed the feasibility of leasing the vehicles instead of buying them, whether new or used.

The most recent vehicles, which were purchased used, had over 70,000 miles and were four or five years old when they were bought, he said. Also, the price for used vehicles has increased from \$17,000 to \$19,000 for the same kind of car.

Toland's proposal would include leasing two vehicles with an option to buy after three years for \$1. The cost would be about \$7,000 a year per car, he said.

Four bids were presented at the meeting from Ford dealerships in Charlotte, Shallotte, Southern Pines and

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## Brunswick Players same, but new tune

By Terry Pope  
County Editor

There will be no new faces at Monday's organizational meeting of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, but some members want a more locally active and responsive government during the next two years in office.

The board will elect a chairman and vice-chairman, but with no changes stemming from the November election -- in membership or in political party control -- that leadership isn't likely to change. Ash resident JoAnn Bellamy Simmons is the current chairman, and Leland resident Bill Sue is vice-chairman with Democrats still holding a 3-2 majority over Republicans.

"One of the biggest complaints I heard while campaigning is that our county government doesn't go out to the people more," said District 1 commissioner Don Warren of Ocean Isle Beach. Warren, the third Democrat on the board, narrowly defeated his Republican challenger, Debbie Rupp of Ocean Isle Beach, by 155 votes.

Warren will ask commissioners that when the board adopts a schedule of meeting dates and locations for its 1999 calendar that some board meetings be moved to each of the five electoral districts on a rotating basis. This way, the residents who want to attend meetings would not always have to travel to the county government center near Bolivia.

The board meets at 6:30 p.m. Monday in the public assembly building at the government center.

"We could have a community meeting in each of the five districts at least once, and we could reach more people," said Warren.

It is a practice the Brunswick County Board of Education has used in the past to hold meetings on a rotating basis in each of the county school districts. The county has five electoral districts of nearly equal population with one school board member and one commissioner elected from each.

Ms. Simmons, in District 4, represents the largest in terms of land size, stretching from Ash to Maco and Boiling Spring Lakes. Warren's district extends from Calabash to Shallotte. David Sandifer of Hol-

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## Survivor attends ceremony

# Coast Guard rescuers recognized

By Laura Kimball  
Feature Editor

When Ivo Abraham left Holden Beach on his catamaran on the afternoon of June 19, he had no idea what was in store for him.

Neither did the Coast Guard on Oak Island. A severe summer squall moved into the area, bringing with it wind gusts exceeding 30 knots, dangerous lightning, driving rain and visibility near zero.

The Starboard Duty Section Team of the Coast Guard spent all evening responding successfully to calls for assistance, and when they received a report that a man left Holden Beach and never returned, they continued their rescue efforts, despite the dangerous conditions.

Meanwhile, Abraham realized that he was in trouble. His boat capsized multiple times. After righting the boat repeatedly, he realized that the best thing to do was to wait with the boat and not risk hitting his head on the mast while trying to turn the boat over.

He fired a single flare, held onto the boat with his life jacket on, drifted and waited.

Abraham's wife, Laurie, was contacted by BM1 Cheyney of the Oak Island Coast Guard. She had

'You want to find him, and you want to find him alive. This is what we wanted to do when we joined the Coast Guard. If you just find one guy, it's worthwhile.'

returned to their home in Charlottesville, VA, that day with their two children, Matthew, 13, and Kearson, 8.

After she learned of the terrible weather conditions she told Cheyney that her husband was healthy and athletic and that he had been sailing since he was a young boy. She was convinced that he was still alive, and she encouraged Cheyney to continue the search. The search went on until 11:15 p.m. In addition to

the Coast Guard crew that was searching the water, shoreline searches were conducted with a beach party and all leads were followed, but no one saw Abraham.

But throughout the search, Abraham saw the searchers. He saw the Coast Guard boat several times, but with such low visibility and nothing to see but his body and the hull of the boat, the crew couldn't see or hear him.

It gave him hope to know that the Coast Guard hadn't given up yet, until he saw the helicopter return to the station just before midnight. Abraham later said that knowing the search had been called off was one of the hardest parts about being adrift at sea.

At this time, Cheyney called Abraham's wife, who was waiting by the phone in Charlottesville, to tell her that the search had been called off and would be resumed in the morning.

But Laurie pushed Cheyney to reorganize the crew and go out again.

"I asked him, 'Are you in love?' and he said, 'Yes.' Then I asked him if he had any children, and he said, 'Yes.' I told him that I had two children," she said.

The search was resumed at 1:30 a.m., even though

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Photo by Jim Harper

Phenomenally warm weather continued to bathe the community Monday, and this worker preparing Trinity United Methodist Church for painting found summer attire very comfortable.