

## New Police Chief Is No Stranger To Ocean Isle

BY TERRY POPE

It was a move that Bill and Sandra Ozment had hoped to make one day. They own a home at Ocean Isle Beach and had planned to make it their permanent residence whenever Bill retired.

"I got to come ten years sooner than I had planned," said Ozment, 43, who was sworn in last week as Ocean Isle Beach's new police chief.

Ozment, a Greensboro native, has owned a home on Newport Street at Ocean Isle since 1983. He has worked for the Greensboro Police Department for the past 20 years, working his way up from patrolman to lieutenant and district coordinator.

"It wasn't easy to drive away from there last Friday," Ozment said, "but there was also the excitement about coming here to Ocean Isle Beach."

Town commissioners welcomed Ozment to the job last Tuesday afternoon, but they didn't have to tell him much about the town. He recalls how it was love at first sight on the couple's first visit to Ocean Isle seven years ago, when they purchased a lot.

"When I crossed the bridge," Ozment said, "I fell in love with Ocean Isle. Its planning and the commitment of the residents to make it such a nice place to live really makes this town a special place."

For the past 2½ years, Ozment has served as coordinator of police activities for a 30-square-mile district in the northwest section of Greensboro. The role required that he serve as liaison for the police department and the citizens, schools, corporations, merchants and local businessmen.

It was a role he enjoyed. In addition to offering emergency help, Ozment said, the police department should offer many services to the residents. Sometimes residents just need help in finding needed services, he added.

"A lot of times, the goal wasn't just public relations," Ozment said. "It was like having a personal police manager. They knew one-on-one that they could call Bill Ozment and that I was there to help them."

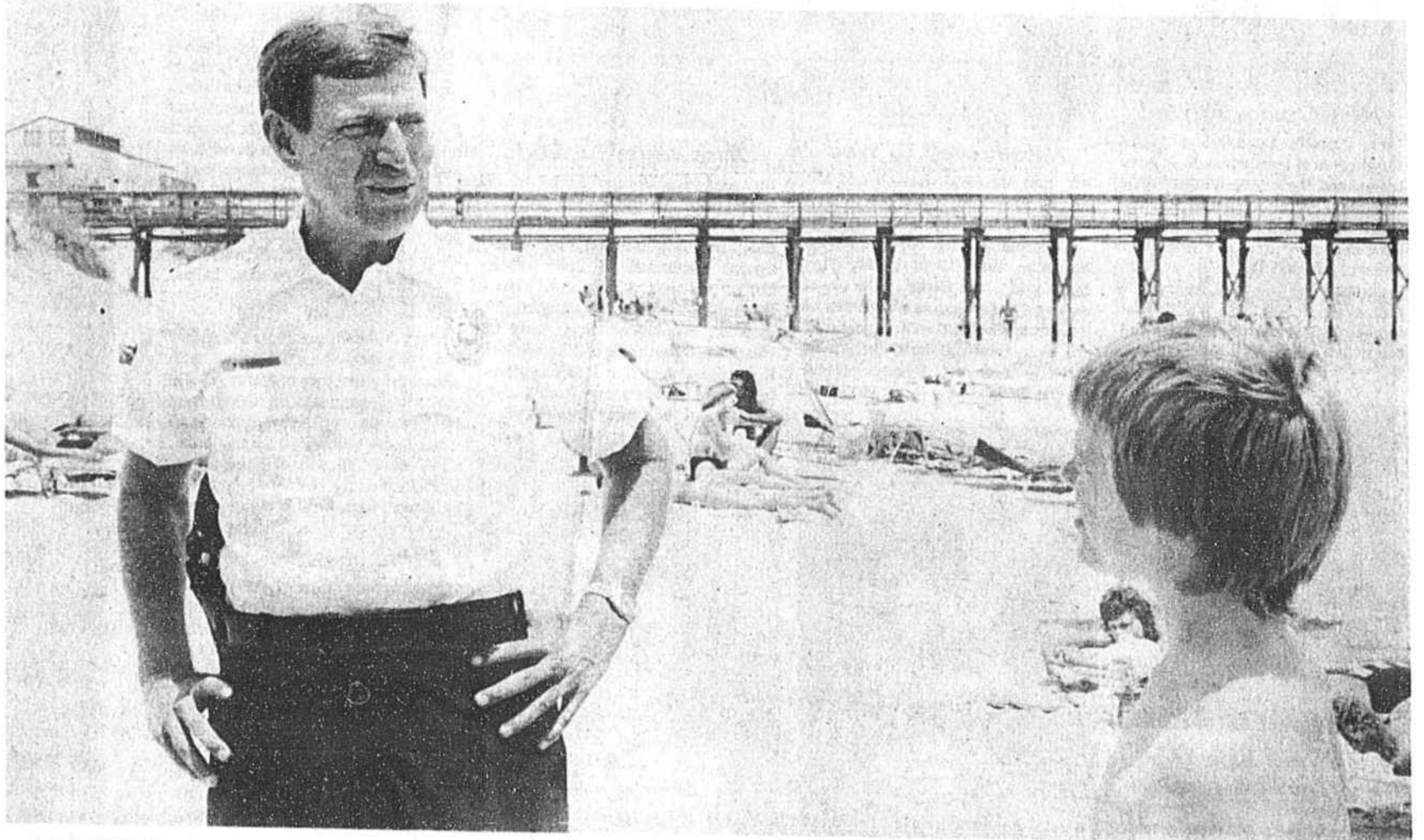
It is an approach Ozment hopes to establish at Ocean Isle Beach. In addition to serving as police chief, Ozment will also be the town's superintendent of streets and sanitation, overseeing the contracted services that can have an impact on the residents of Ocean Isle.

"It's the police working with the people," Ozment said. "That's what makes us a better police department. That has been my style throughout my career."

Ozment was born, raised and educated in Greensboro. Except for a four-year stint in the U.S. Air Force, he has always lived there, earning an associate degree in police science from Guilford Technical Institute and a B.A. in administrative science with high honors from Guilford College.

While stationed in North Dakota with the Air Force, Ozment served with the air police. In October 1967, on his return home, a recruitment drive to hire more officers by the Greensboro Police Department caught his eye.

"Since that day, it has been a very rewarding experience," Ozment said.



OCEAN ISLE BEACH Police Chief Bill Ozment talks with Josh Kayser of Columbus, Ohio, whose family was vacationing at the beach last week. Ozment was sworn in as the town's new police chief last week. STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

The move to Ocean Isle from a larger police department offers few differences, he said, except for the seasonal influx of vacationers and residents.

"It all involves people—their concerns, the protection of lives and property," he added. "The individual involvement is basically the same. I'm finding that I average 12 to 14 hours a day at the department, even though the number of residents is smaller. There's still a lot to do."

For Sandra, his wife of 15 years, the timing was also right for a move to Ocean Isle. She has worked for the past 22 years with Southern Life Insurance headquarters in Greensboro. But that business was recently purchased and the company was shut down. She was left without a job.

"She doesn't intend to become a housewife," Ozment said. "She also enjoys becoming involved in the community."

In Greensboro, Ozment became active in the community, serving as past president of the Youth Services Bureau, where problem juveniles are counseled and encouraged to lead better lives. The goal was to provide alternatives to juveniles who may be facing confusion or a family crisis but end up in the hands of the law.

The Ozments and their poodle, Benji, are now calling Ocean Isle home.

"It was easy in the decision making process once I

was accepted by the town," Ozment said, "because of the warmth and the friendly welcome we have received from all of the people here."

People at Ocean Isle, Ozment said, seem to enjoy working together—the commissioners, the mayor, the property owners association and residents—to make the island a better place to live.

"It's the right ingredients," Ozment said. "I like being a part of that neighborhood."

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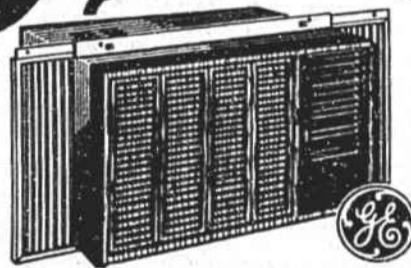
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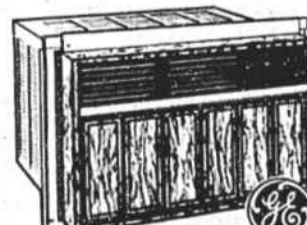


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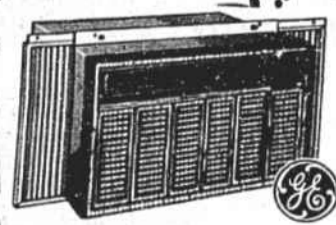


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