

No Fish Tales, Please

Samplers conducting a recreational sportfishing survey for the state are asking approximately 8,000 anglers to tell the truth about their catches. Page 9-C.

It's Their Week!

Eighteen Brunswick County small businesses won recognition Monday night for their contributions at a banquet saluting National Business Week, May 7-13. Page 7-B.

Don't Forget To Go

See what area businesses have to offer at the Small Business Expo, which opens today at 12 noon and continues through 8 p.m. at the Shallotte National Guard Armory. Admission is free.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Twenty-seventh Year, Number 27

1989 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

SHALLOTTE, N.C.

Monday, May 11, 1989

25c Per Copy

36 Pages, 3 Sections, Plus Supplement

Calabash Names New Councilman

Ed Rice is the newest member of the Calabash Town Council.

Rice was appointed Tuesday night and will be sworn in at the June 13 meeting.

He will fill one of the two seats on the town board that have been vacant since March 14 when former council members Ronnie Pittman and Sonia Stevens resigned.

Rice, 62, is a political newcomer who has lived in the Village Green subdivision in Calabash for the past four years. He worked 38 years for the New Jersey Department of Transportation before moving to the area.

He is presently serving on a town committee that has been negotiating a proposed merger with officials of the Carolina Shores subdivision.

Rice said he supports the growth of Calabash, but he did not want to talk specifically about the merger proposal. "We need to expand," he said. "If we don't grow, we'll die."

He received 11 votes as a write-in candidate during the last municipal election in 1987.

Rice was the only person nominated for the council seat Tuesday. The fifth seat on the board remains vacant.

Six Suspects Arrested In Ocean Isle Drug Raid

BY RAHN ADAMS

A Supply area man and five out-of-county residents were arrested by local and state authorities Friday in a drug raid at an Ocean Isle Beach motel.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Capt. Phil Perry identified the suspects as Robert Douglas Gore, 26, of Route 2, Supply; Donald Ray Mercer, 34, of Durham; Sidney Lamar Glover, 21, Eric M. Gore, 22, and Steven Henderson, 22, all of Warren, Ohio; and Robert L. Brown, 22, of Seaside, Calif.

All six men were charged with felonious possession of cocaine, and possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine, Perry said. He added that Robert Gore was also charged with maintaining a vehicle for keeping a controlled substance, and Robert Brown was charged with maintaining a residence for keeping a controlled substance.

According to Perry, the arrests were made Friday afternoon, after Ocean Isle Beach Police Officer Gene Hardee alerted county Narcotics Squad Lt. David Crocker and SBI Special Agent Kelly Moser about suspicious activity reported at the

motel, which Perry declined to identify.

Lawmen began surveillance outside the suspects' motel room and observed two suspects—Robert Gore and Glover—in a Toyota Celica allegedly purchase a substance from one of the men staying in the room, Perry said. The car was stopped after it left the motel.

After getting the pair's permission to search the car, officers found four grams of cocaine inside, the captain stated. Gore and Glover were taken into custody, and the vehicle was seized by Ocean Isle Beach Police.

Perry said authorities then obtained a warrant to search the motel room. Eight town, county and state lawmen were involved in the raid, which turned up 12 grams of cocaine, two pistols and \$701 in cash. Eric Gore, Mercer, Henderson and Brown were arrested inside the room without incident.

All of the suspects except Brown remained in the Brunswick County Jail Monday. He was released Saturday on a \$40,000 bond. Other bonds were set at \$30,000 for Robert Gore, and \$25,000 each for Eric Gore, Glover, Henderson and Mercer.

Woman Recovering After Leap From Holden Bridge

BY DOUG RUTTER

A woman who jumped 60 feet into the inland waterway from the top of the Holden Beach Bridge Friday night was released from a Wilmington hospital Monday in good condition.

Linda McGrady Johnson, 31, of Rt. 3, Supply, was released from New Hanover Memorial Hospital Monday.

Meanwhile, Holden Beach police were still trying to determine what prompted Ms. Johnson's plunge from the center of the high-rise Holden Beach Bridge into the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway last Friday shortly after 7 p.m.

Police Chief Raymond Simpson said the woman jumped at about 7:06 p.m. last Friday. He said she went directly into the water from the top of the bridge, avoiding pilings that run under the span and project from either side.

After being pulled from the water by an unidentified boater, Ms. Johnson, who was conscious, was taken to marina docks on the mainland side of the bridge, said Simpson.

Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad members treated the victim and rushed her to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply, where she was admitted in serious condition. Late Friday, she was transported to New Hanover Memorial Hospi. . .

Simpson said Monday he was not

sure how Ms. Johnson got to the top of the bridge. He said there was no vehicle abandoned there, but that she could have been riding in a car with someone else shortly before getting out and jumping.

He said he planned to talk to the woman's relatives to see if they could provide any insight as to why she jumped.

Police also said they had no idea of her condition at the time of the incident. "After she jumped and was pulled out of that water, you can't tell what her condition was beforehand," said town Patrolman Gary Dancy.

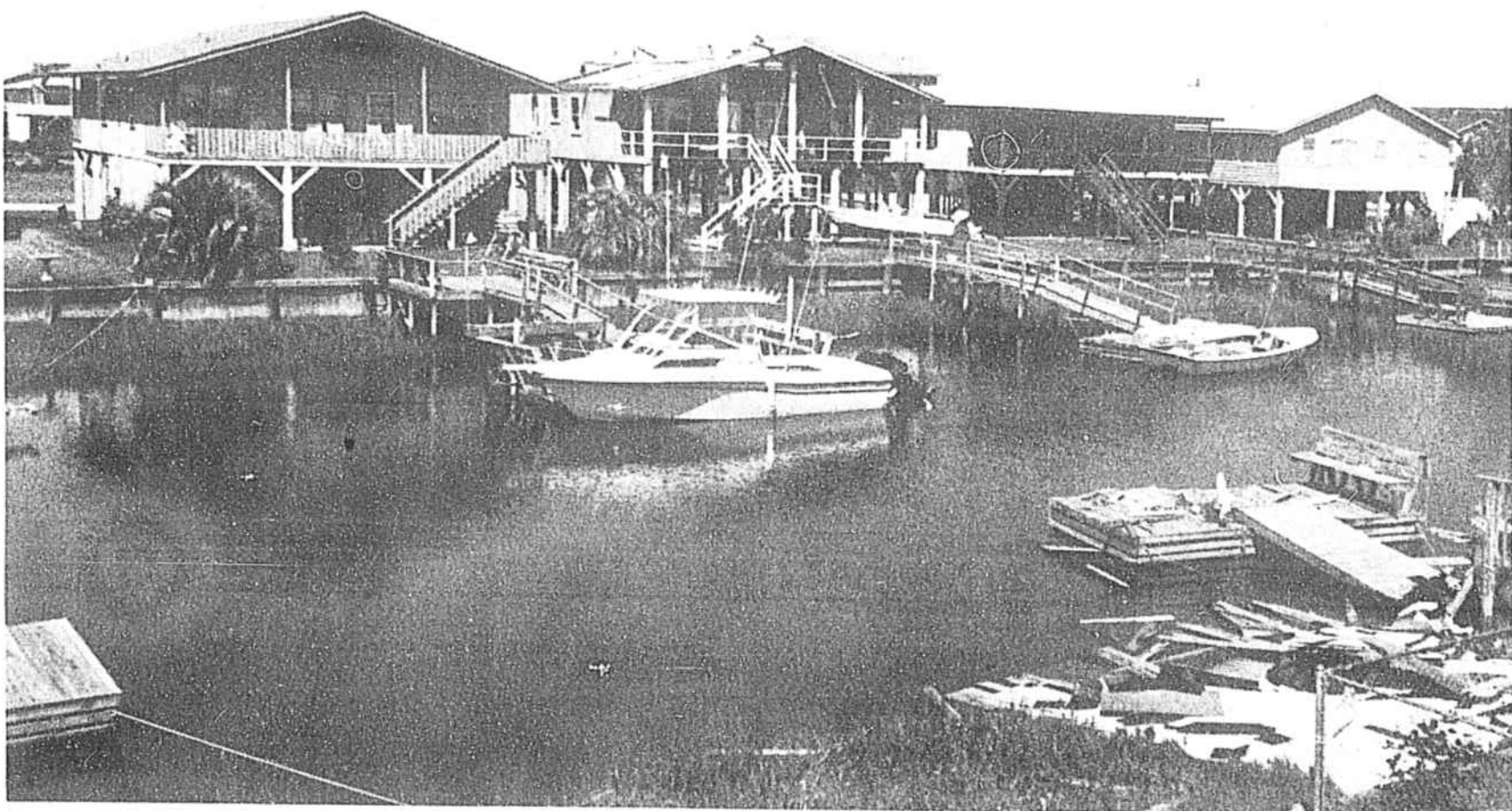
He said the victim suffered injuries that included bruises along the left side of her body. However, a New Hanover Memorial Hospital spokesperson refused to discuss the nature of the woman's injuries.

At the time of the jump, the tide was nearing its highest point.

The distance between the bottom of the highest point of the bridge and the waterway at mean sea level is 65 feet, according to Wayne Elliott, head of the bridge project planning section of the state Department of Transportation.

Elliott said the water level in the waterway varies two or three feet between high tide and mean sea level.

Friday's tide was an astronomical high tide.



THE ROOF OF 'SALTY WATERS' on Monroe Street rests in the canal between Monroe and Fairmont streets Saturday morning. The summer cottage,

owned by Joe Waters of Florence, S.C., was vacant when a wind downburst hit the island Friday night.

STAFF PHOTOS BY RAHN ADAMS

Winds Damage Ocean Isle Dwellings; No Injuries In Friday Night Storm

BY RAHN ADAMS

Ocean Isle Beach property owner Al Berry used one sentence to sum up the wind damage from a thunderstorm that hit the island Friday night: "I've seen it a lot worse."

That statement proved to be correct in more ways than one. Berry, a Bennettsville, S.C., resident, had

seen the destruction of killer storms near his home five years ago.

Also, the National Weather Service office in Wilmington reported this week that the damage at Ocean Isle Beach came from a wind downburst, not from a tornado.

Weather Service Specialist Chuck Holtzinger told the Beacon Tuesday that he surveyed storm damage Monday and found evidence of only straight-line winds, which he described as a "sudden gust of air" coming from a thunderstorm.

But in the aftermath of Friday's storm, individuals like Berry felt they had experienced a twister. It would have been difficult to convince Berry and his wife, daughter and four guests otherwise Friday at 11:20 p.m., when high winds ripped off the front half of the roof of their Wilmington Street house.

Fortunately, no one was hurt. "The damage is small, just as long as everybody is safe," Berry said Saturday. "I don't see anything that can't be replaced."

Of six Ocean Isle Beach dwellings with roofs extensively damaged, the Berry house was the only one oc-

cupied during the storm, according to town Building Inspector Druid Roberson.

No storm-related injuries were reported Friday at Ocean Isle Beach or elsewhere in Brunswick County.

After sunrise Saturday, Roberson found 24 instances of damage from Laurinburg Street to Scotland Street, including damage to roofs, porches and floating docks. Debris—including sections of roofs—littered several of the canals between those streets.

The building inspector estimated total damage on the island at \$150,000, with about \$40,000 of that amount being water damage to household property. He noted that mainly older houses were damaged.

Laurinburg Street residents were without electrical service throughout the night due to a downed power line, Roberson said. Power also was out on Wilmington Street for approximately three hours after the storm.

Roberson said damage on the canal streets in Friday's downburst was comparable to damage that occurred there during Hurricane Diana in September 1984 and during a severe

thunderstorm in July 1987.

Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan said the three- to four-mile line of damage from the downburst started near Seaside, then moved eastward near Gause Landing and across the island to Shallotte Inlet.

Holtzinger confirmed Tuesday that damage resulted from straight-line winds blowing from west to east. He pointed out that mainly the western sides of roofs were lifted off.

Logan said mainland damage—estimated at up to \$50,000—consisted of uprooted trees, overturned storage buildings, and blown-off shingles and roof vents mainly in the Seaside area.

No major wind damage was reported at Holden Beach or anywhere else in the county, according to Holden Beach Building Inspector Dwight Carroll and Brunswick County Building Inspector Billy Ingram.

While Logan admitted no one saw a funnel cloud in the darkness, he noted that several Ocean Isle residents said they heard tornado-like sounds.

(See WINDS, Page 2-A)

Holden Beach West Appeal Set May 17

BY RAHN ADAMS

Eighteen months after a Superior Court judge upheld the rights of property owners in the private Holden Beach West subdivision, the N.C. Court of Appeals next week will hear arguments over public access to the western end of Holden Beach.

The appeal will be heard on Wednesday, May 17, at 1 p.m., at the New Hanover County Courthouse in Wilmington, according to attorneys involved in the case. They said it is not unusual for the appellate court to hold a session outside Raleigh on occasion.

In November 1987, Judge Bruce Briggs ruled in favor of Holden Beach Enterprises Inc., the defendant in the lawsuit brought by a group called Concerned Citizens of Brunswick County Taxpayers Association and the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development. The non-jury trial lasted 1½ days in Brunswick County Superior Court.

The developer is represented by Shallotte attorney Nancy Guyton. Durham lawyer James Maxwell is counsel for the citizens group, and

Assistant Attorney General Allen Jernigan represents the state.

The suit, which was originally filed in 1985, involves the plaintiffs' contention that Ocean View Boulevard West through the subdivision is a public right-of-way to Shallotte Inlet, even though the developer has constructed a gate and guardhouse at the entrance to Holden Beach West to restrict public traffic.

A fundamental issue in the case is the theory of prescriptive easement: whether or not access rights were established by what the plaintiffs maintain was a continuous and uninterrupted use of Ocean Boulevard West over at least a 20-year period.

However, in his judgment, Briggs found that the public did not travel the road without interruption for 20 years, because the subdivision developer erected various barriers beginning in 1963 to block the road.

Also, the judge decided that public use "has not been confined to a definite and specific line of travel"—another key factor needed to prove that a prescriptive easement exists. "It would appear they drove

anywhere they needed to go," Briggs said in open court.

Maxwell told the Beacon last Thursday that the plaintiffs' basic position in the appeal will be that their line of travel was "close enough" to the same route for more than 20 years, due to the changing nature of beach property. The course deviated by only about 60 feet, he said.

"The state's position is the same as it was in the trial," Jernigan said Friday, later adding, "We will argue that the trial judge erred by failing to find a prescriptive easement and by failing to find that the public accepted dedication of the right-of-way."

The state's intent is "to try to preserve a public access that is established," and to keep developers from increasing the value of their property at the public's expense through the creation of "private" beaches, Jernigan said.

However, in the Holden Beach West case, the developer consistently has pointed out that the western end of the island still can be accessed by walking the beach. "We don't profess

to have any control over the strand," Holden Beach Enterprises President Jim Griffin said Friday.

In response to that position, Citizens spokesman Raymond Cope noted last Thursday that "80 or 90 percent of the people in our organization are senior citizens. . . . It would be ludicrous to ask somebody with a cane to walk a half mile" to reach Shallotte Inlet.

Cope, a Davidson County resident, said the group now has 15 to 20 active members. None of them owns property in Holden Beach West—a fact which Judge Briggs said kept the case from being a "more definitive matter."

Griffin said he feels the Superior Court decision will be upheld. "I hope this ends it," he said. "We're going to defend our right of private ownership."

Jernigan indicated that if the appellate court upholds Briggs' ruling, the state probably will petition the N.C. Supreme Court to hear the case.

Ms. Guyton, the defendant's attorney, did not return the Beacon's telephone calls Friday and Monday, and could not be reached for comment.