

Nothing Went Awry

All was going well for Chasidy Delts Thursday night when the Leiland Middle School eighth grade student spelled "awry" to clinch the Brunswick County Spelling Bee Championship. The story's on Page 6-A.



Come On Down!

Utility poles and above-ground lines should disappear from the Holden Beach skyline by the end of 1992. Details on the schedule and a town plan to make underground connections mandatory for all homeowners are on Page 8-B.



Goes For The Gold

Jill Snyder's off to a shining start in gymnastics competition. As overall champion in her division, the 13-year-old Calabash resident brought home the gold from the South Carolina state meet. Meet Jill on Page 11-B.



THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY
12/31/99
PO BOX 162
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Twenty-eighth Year, Number 23

01900 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, April 19, 1990

25¢ Per Copy

36 Pages, 3 Sections, Plus Insert



In Her Easter Beach Bonnet

Sporting a custom-made Easter bonnet, little Erin Evans of Charlotte plays with her toy bunnies and other Easter goodies Sunday morning on the strand at Ocean Isle Beach. Erin spent the holiday weekend with her grandparents, Ocean Isle Beach property owners Mr. and Mrs. Charles Foushee of Lenoir.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

Sunset Property Owners Assn. To Poll Members On Suing State Over Bridge

BY RAHN ADAMS

The Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association took another step toward the courtroom Saturday, as members supported a plan to take legal action against the state in hopes of blocking construction of a high-rise bridge to Sunset Beach.

With at least 100 members on hand for Saturday's 1 1/2-hour Easter weekend meeting, the group decided overwhelmingly in favor of a motion to poll all of the association's 519 members and then to file suit if two-thirds of them vote for legal steps and contribute enough upfront money to initiate the court battle.

SBTA Director Warren "Bud" Knapp, chairman of the group's bridge committee, asked — "with great reluctance" — for the motion, which ended up being an amalgamation of several motions and amendments offered by various members during the hour-long discussion of the issue. Only about two individuals, including SBTA Director Fran Pelletier, voted against the measure.

"We've tried logic, reason, economics — all to no avail," Knapp said prior to the vote, referring to SBTA officials' fight to stop what he called "the high-rise bridge to

"If you don't decide to take legal action, then you're giving up."

—Warren Knapp
SBTA Director

nowhere." He later added, "If you don't decide to take the legal action, then you're giving up . . . I plead with you to do what I firmly believe is our last shot."

The taxpayers association began a renewed "Save Our Bridge" campaign last fall to keep Sunset Beach's nearly 30-year-old pontoon swing bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway from being replaced by a high-rise fixed span similar to bridges now in use at both Ocean Isle Beach and Holden Beach. The one-lane pontoon bridge is said to be the last of its kind on the East Coast.

According to the N.C. Department of Transportation, construction bids on the new bridge are scheduled to be awarded Sept. 18. Construction is expected to take approximately two years. The \$7.88 million project is funded by both federal and state monies.

Saturday's SBTA action was similar to a measure that was informal-

ly approved by association members last September. At that Labor Day weekend meeting, the group supported a proposal which would allow the association's board of directors "to investigate other alternatives, to require a thoughtful and constructive consideration of the need for a high-rise bridge at Sunset Beach, with such action including the possibility of investigating and engaging legal counsel to take such legal actions as may be ultimately approved by the membership of this association."

SBTA Director and former President Al Wells explained to the gathering Saturday that the board of directors has been unable to agree on whether or not the association should take legal measures. Knapp added, "We're asking you for direction."

While she did not speak against filing a lawsuit, Mrs. Pelletier said

See PROPERTY, Page 2-A)

Corps Designing Dredge Test Of Eastern Channel

BY DOUG RUTTER

After debating with federal officials for the past year, supporters of a plan to dredge Eastern Channel near the mouth of Lockwood Folly River seem to be making progress.

The Army Corps of Engineers—which recently concluded that dredging the sand-clogged channel wouldn't significantly improve water quality in the river—agreed last week to design a test dredging project that could lead to the reopening of the channel if federal, state and local officials are willing to pay for it.

A test dredging project design and cost estimates should be completed in two weeks, said Ed Shuford, deputy district engineer for project management with the Corps of Engineers' Wilmington office.

The Corps is designing a plan to cut through a sandbar that is thought to limit the flow of water through Eastern Channel, which is located between the west end of Long Beach and Sheep Island in the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Brunswick County fishermen and many elected officials agree dredging the channel, which once served as the inlet between Lockwood Folly River and the Atlantic Ocean, would allow for a better flow of pollution from the river.

Lockwood Folly has traditionally boasted some of the best shellfish resources in the state, but has been closed to harvesting frequently over the past two years due to bacterial pollution believed to be coming from septic tanks and stormwater runoff.

Lt. Col. Thomas C. Suermann, head of the Corps' Wilmington District, said three months ago he didn't support the dredging of Eastern Channel. But at a meeting of federal, state and local officials last Thursday, he agreed to the test dredging program.

U.S. Rep. Charles Rose III set up the meeting at the Corps' Wilming-

"That's one of the stipulations in moving ahead with this program is that it be a joint effort. I think that's what sold the Corps on it."

—Keith Pitts

Legislative aide for U.S. Rep. Charles Rose

ton office to find out if state and local officials would be willing to help fund a dredging project, said Rose's legislative aide, Keith Pitts. "We've heard a lot of talk from different people, and we wanted to see what kind of financial support they would give," said Pitts.

Shuford said the Corps is designing a dredging plan that would increase flow through the channel and coming up with cost estimates for the project. The plan will be sent to Rose early next month, and it will be left in his hands to get Congressional authorization and funding.

In January, Suermann wrote a letter to the acting director of the state Division of Environmental Management stating that he didn't think dredging Eastern Channel would help the Lockwood Folly River. The state had requested a joint feasibility study of the dredging proposal last October.

Shuford said Tuesday that the Corps of Engineers still believes dredging the channel will have no significant impact on the amount of pollution in the river and has not changed its position.

But Pitts said the fact that the cost of any dredging would be shared by federal, state and local governments may be one reason the Corps of Engineers' apparent change of heart.

"That's one of the stipulations in moving ahead with this program is that it be a joint effort," said Pitts. "I think that's what sold the Corps on it."

If Congress accepts the plan, Pitts said the federal government probably would not allocate more than \$580,000 for dredging, which is what it set aside this fiscal year for maintenance of the existing inlet.

He said he had no idea how much more money state and local governments would have to kick in, but pointed out that the Eastern Channel is longer than the existing inlet and could require more dredging to open it up.

Pitts said he's not sure whether dredging of the present inlet would be abandoned if the Eastern Channel project is approved. "It would be premature to say anything about that."

Pitts said there's a "probability" federal funds for dredging Eastern Channel would be included in the budget for fiscal year 1991, which starts in October, but added that funding could also be delayed another year. "If we get cooperation from the other sources as we anticipate, it'll be looked upon favorably," he said.

State Rep. David Redwine, who attended last week's meeting in Wilmington, said he will be working to include the state's share of the cost of dredging in next fiscal year's budget.

The state frequently works with federal and local governments to fund "civil works projects" such as the maintenance dredging of ports at Wilmington and Morehead City, he said.

(See CORPS, Page 2-A)

Town Board Nixes ABC Merger

BY RAHN ADAMS

Mixed drinks will not be served before their time in businesses under the Brunswick County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board's jurisdiction—or at least until the county can find a municipal ABC board that will negotiate merger terms approved this week by commissioners.

Interim County Manager David Clegg, who also serves as county attorney and clerk to the county ABC board, told county commissioners Monday night that the Boiling Spring Lakes Board of Commis-

sioners rejected a proposed merger resolution earlier in the day.

According to Boiling Spring Lakes Town Clerk Barbara Cumbee, the town board voted unanimously to turn down the proposed resolution, which was drafted last week by Clegg and Town Attorney Elva Jess. Mayor H.C. Boswell and Town Commissioners Dennis Finley, Mark Stewart and Glen Long were present for the special meeting Monday. Commissioner Tom Simmons was absent.

For the past several weeks, the

county ABC board has sought a merger with an established ABC system, in order to allow businesses within the county's jurisdiction to apply for mixed drink permits for the upcoming tourist season. Also, county restaurants' brown-bagging permits expire April 30 and cannot be renewed under state law.

Due to passage of last November's county ABC referendum and previous votes in individual towns, mixed drink permits already can be obtained by eligible businesses in

(See ABC, Page 2-A)

Sunset Officials Ask Commissioners To Fund Water System Improvements

BY RAHN ADAMS

The Town of Sunset Beach made its plea for improved county water service official this week as two town representatives asked county commissioners to fund water system improvements southwest of Shallotte.

Sunset Beach Mayor Mason Barber and Town Administrator Linda Fluegel made the request near the outset of Monday night's 90-minute regular commissioners meeting in Bolivia. All five commissioners were present.

Sunset Beach is the first municipality in southwestern Brunswick County to officially support an estimated \$5 million capital improvements project that the county Utility Operations Board recommended to the county commissioners in early 1989 and again last fall.

A \$7,500 engineering study that was presented to the UOB in September 1988 pointed out that the water system currently cannot supply enough water to meet peak summer demands southwest of Shallotte—a section of the county that contains the resort areas of Ocean Isle

Beach, Sunset Beach and Calabash.

The proposed project involves construction of a 2,200-gallon-per-minute booster pump station near the intersection of N.C. 179 and N.C. 904; a one-million-gallon elevated storage tank near the intersection of N.C. 904 and Old Georgetown Road; and a 12-inch trunk line on Old Georgetown Road from N.C. 904 to N.C. 179 near Calabash.

Monday, Barber reiterated concerns that he and Mrs. Fluegel presented to the UOB last November. Under state health regulations, the town must keep a one-day supply of water on hand at all times—a difficult situation that becomes even more challenging during peak usage periods such as the Fourth of July weekend. The town owns a 200,000-gallon elevated storage tank which is part of the county system.

Barber also referred the county board to a Sunset Beach Town Council resolution which states that the town "strongly requests and urges the Brunswick County Commissioners to acknowledge the needs of the town and consider ini-

tial funding to start the process to achieve the goals of the recommended study as expeditiously as possible." The resolution was adopted unanimously by the town council March 5.

In response, Commissioners Chairman Gene Pinkerton told Barber and Fluegel that the county board continues to discuss water system improvements during on-going workshops dealing with a proposed capital improvements funding package. At a work session last Wednesday (see related story), Commissioner Kelly Holden indicated that he feels water system improvements rank immediately behind several state-mandated projects.

Bellamy Appointed

In the only split decision by the county board Monday, commissioners voted 4-1 to appoint former Brunswick County Clerk of Court Greg Bellamy to the county Resources Development Commission. Bellamy replaces District 2 representative J.W. Robinson, whose three-year term was to end in March 1991.

(See SUNSET, Page 2-A)



SUNSET BEACH MAYOR Mason Barber (standing) asks county commissioners to fund water system improvements that would supply additional water to southwestern Brunswick County. Also pictured (from left) are Commissioners Gene Pinkerton, Benny Ludlum and Kelly Holden.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS