

## In The Running

Calabash is one of six communities being considered for the N.C. Coastal Initiative program and state officials plan to visit next week. For details turn to Page 12-B.



## Basketball Preview

A young West Brunswick High School men's team defends the conference hoop title this year, while all five starters return on the women's team. Season previews are on Pages 8-B and 9-B.



## Cranped Quarters

Narrow, twisting staircases typical of beach houses from the 1920s are the focus of rescue personnel like the efforts by local (left) and Midget Varnum. The story's on Page 10-A.



# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

1986 & SONS BOOK BINDERY  
PO BOX 162  
SPRINGPORT, NC 28264



Twenty-ninth Year, Number 3

©1990 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shallotte, North Carolina, Wednesday, November 21, 1990

25¢ Per Copy

38 Pages, 3 Sections, 2 Inserts



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

## Tears Of Joy

Lisa Dale Young of Long Beach, right, sheds tears of happiness Saturday night after being named Miss Brunswick County 1991. At left, Miss Brunswick County 1990 Wendy Williams prepares to crown her successor. The story and more photos are inside this issue.

## JUDGE ORDERS NEW ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

# Opponents Stop—For Now— High-Rise Bridge At Sunset Beach

BY SUSAN USHER

After an 11-year battle the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association (SBTA) has stopped—at least temporarily—the planned construction of a high-rise bridge at Sunset Beach.

A contract for the bridge, which was expected to cost \$11.1 million when completed, was to have been awarded at the state Board of Transportation's October meeting. The project was put on hold after the 530-member SBTA and eight individuals sued to stop it.

A federal judge in Wilmington Monday declared all existing state and federal permits obtained for construction of the bridge null and void. He ordered state and federal transportation agencies and officials to stop work on the bridge. Work cannot be resumed until "an adequate environmental impact statement" (EIS) is prepared and circulated for comment and review.

"Clearly we have stopped the bridge at least for the time being," said attorney Jim Maxwell, attorney for the SBTA and eight other individual plaintiffs in the case. Britt's decision came approximately a month after three days of hearings in the case.

"I wasn't feeling too good today until I got the news," SBTA President Cletus Waldmiller said Monday afternoon. SBTA members would celebrate the decision at its meeting Saturday "with coffee and doughnuts," he said, after having had time to review the full opinion. They will also seek added contributions to the SBTA legal fund, since the lawsuit has cost more than anticipated.

However, at least one advocate for a replacement bridge, Sunset Beach Mayor and former SBTA President Mason Barber, suggested Monday that the SBTA's victory may be hard-won and costly in ways other than dollars.

"I think all they will achieve is a delay. There will be a bridge," he predicted. "It will cost more to build and it will split the community more and more."

*"Clearly we have stopped the bridge at least for the time being."*

—Jim Maxwell  
Plaintiffs' attorney

The state had proposed replacing the one-lane pontoon bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway with a 65-foot clearance fixed span. The existing bridge has become a symbol for both opponents and proponents of the replacement span during the 11-year dispute.

The SBTA and other plaintiffs fear a highrise bridge would encourage denser development and increased tourism that in turn would harm the environment and destroy the island community's family-oriented atmosphere.

In turn, supporters of a replacement span see the pontoon bridge as antiquated, unsafe and inadequate to handle existing and projected boat and vehicular traffic.

In his 47-page opinion and separate two-page order, U.S. District Judge W. Earl Britt Monday said the state must identify and discuss in detail the "direct, indirect and cumulative impacts" of the proposed project and alternatives to it in an EIS, in accordance with state and federal environmental law.

When the state first began the bridge project it completed an environmental assessment, which must be followed by either a finding of no significant environmental impact or a full environmental impact statement.

In his arguments for the plaintiffs, attorney Maxwell contended that, based on evidence that should have been considered from the beginning, the state Department of Transportation should

have completed a full impact statement, not issued a finding of no significant impact.

He said the earlier environmental assessment gave no consideration to the impact of the bridge on loggerhead turtles, plovers or wood storks, or endangered or threatened plant species on the island, he said Monday. The new document must do this as well as consider the sociological impact of the project, its effect on the human environment. This includes the potentials of increased development, increased traffic, and the adequacy of the town's septic tanks to accommodate such growth.

## Appeal Is Possible

Should the state choose to appeal, he said, the plaintiffs are well-equipped now with expert testimony and other material to fight the project during the public hearing and agency review process.

DOT spokesman Bill Jones said attorneys and administrators for DOT had not had time Tuesday to review the opinion and decide whether to file notice of appeal. Britt's decision could be appealed to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va.

## Islanders May Counter

Barber predicted that the division among Sunset Beach full-time residents and non-resident property owners will widen as a result of the bridge decision, and that the SBTA will lose support and possibly draw active opposition.

"I think the people have had enough of the taxpayers' association. I think they will start standing tall and getting the people's attention," he said. "This group (of residents), that I don't want to identify right now, won't take this lying down. And before they go public with what they intend to do, they will seek legal advice."

Barber said he hopes the state and federal transportation agencies will not appeal the ruling because of the additional time that might be lost

(See OPPONENTS, Page 2-A)

## President To Honor Pringle

A local man was to be honored Thanksgiving Day by President George Bush for outstanding volunteer service.

Donald Pringle of Holden Beach, a volunteer with the South Brunswick Interchurch Council, was to be designated the 307th "Daily Point of Light" Thursday, honored by Bush as an example of how volunteers can help their communities.

Under the program Bush has committed to recognizing one outstanding volunteer or volunteer organization a day, six days a week, until 1,000 have been named, said Andrew Pryor of the Office of National Service at the White House. Their accomplishments will be compiled in a publication aimed at inspiring and mobilizing others to volunteer.

"Mr. Pringle, for example, could be used as an example of a volunteer working with elderly people with low incomes," said Pryor.

Pringle is involved in numerous volunteer efforts, including the recent establishment of the Brunswick Adult Day Care Center, a not-for-profit day care service for older adults at Southport.

## Beach Owners Meet Saturday

Property owner groups at the three barrier island communities included in the South Brunswick Islands will gather Saturday, Nov. 24, for their final meetings of the year.

The Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners Association holds its annual meeting Saturday at 9:30 a.m. at the town hall. An agenda was not available.

The pontoon bridge and the proposed high-rise bridge will once again be a main topic of discussion when the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association (SBTA) meets Saturday at the Sunset Beach fire station.

Coffee will be served at 10 a.m., and the business meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m., according to SBTA President Cletus Waldmiller.

Other items on the agenda include a Dec. 3 public hearing on annexation of an area that includes the Food Lion shopping center at Seaside and nine golf holes at Sea Trail Plantation. Waldmiller said

members also will discuss a proposed dune ordinance and underground utilities project.

SBTA members will fill three seats on the board of directors Saturday. Ballots have been mailed to members, and nominations will be accepted from the floor during the meeting.

Waldmiller and treasurer Fran Pelletier have been nominated for reelection. Don Hiscott of Lumberton has been nominated to fill the seat vacated by Fitz Dove of Charlotte.

The Holden Beach Property Owners Association Board of Directors meets Saturday at 9 a.m. in the town hall. The general membership meeting starts at 10 a.m.

An update on the group's information booklet, discussion of a membership questionnaire and winterization of houses are among the items on the agenda. Town Manager Blake Proctor also will bring members up to date on various town projects.

## U.S. 17 Detour To Begin Soon

Commuters and others who drive U.S. 17 north of Shallotte may need to allow extra travel time in their schedules starting the middle of next week.

Dave Boyleston, resident engineer with the N.C. Department of Transportation, said the contractor on the bypass project just north of Shallotte near Lettles Grove Church expects to begin temporarily rerouting traffic as early as next Wednesday, Nov. 28.

The exact date the detour goes into effect will depend on arrival of construction materials, weather conditions and subcontractors, he said.

While the northern access to the bypass is completed, motorists will be detoured from U.S. 17 along N.C. 130 East (Holden Beach Road) and Red Bug Road, S.R. 1136, for as much as 90 days. A temporary traffic signal has been erected at the intersection of Holden Beach and Red Bug roads to help control the flow of traffic there.

Boyleston said Propst Construction Co. expects its work may take "pretty close" to the allotted time to complete. Before, Boyleston had estimated the work might be completed ahead of schedule.

## School Board, Hankins Agree On Contract Terms

BY SUSAN USHER

More than two months after the vote to hire him, Brunswick County Board of Education members Dorothy Worth and James Clemmons signed Superintendent P. R. Hankins' employment contract Monday afternoon.

The 3:30 p.m. ceremony marked one of their last official acts as members and officers of the board. Mrs. Worth, chairman, and Clemmons, vice chairman, were defeated in their bid for re-election to the board and leave office Dec. 3.

At its Sept. 1 meeting the board voted 4 to 1 (with member Robert Slockett opposing) to employ Hankins as superintendent for the period Oct. 1, 1990, through Sept. 30, 1992. He had been acting superintendent since the dismissal of former superintendent John Kaufhold last June.

Shaped over the course of several board meetings, the contract signed Monday is retroactive to Oct. 1, with any exceptions or variations in

its provisions to be by written consent of the board and superintendent.

Among other details, the contract specifies how certain information is to be handled by the superintendent and board members—a sore point in board relations with Hankins' predecessor.

The board—as individuals and as a whole—is to refer to the superintendent "all criticism, complaints and suggestions called to its attention, and shall direct any inquiries, questions or requests for information through the superintendent, who will, in a timely fashion, direct such inquiries, questions and requests for information to the appropriate staff members for response by him."

Also, if during the term of the contract a specific clause of the contract is found illegal in federal or state law, the remainder of the contract not affected by such a ruling is to remain in effect.

Kaufhold's employment was ter-

minated after the board obtained legal opinions stating his contract was valid only through June 30, 1990, when he had understood it was valid until June 30, 1992.

Phlander Roosevelt Hankins will be paid at the state salary scale plus a local supplement of \$12,696, to be paid in monthly installments. However, the board retains the right to increase the supplement paid Hankins at any time, as an amendment to the contract and without reducing Hankin's aggregate annual salary.

Kaufhold's last contract with the board provided that in the event of an increase in the state salary schedule, the superintendent's local supplement would be automatically increased by one-half of the percentage of the state salary increase.

Hankins' contract specifies that the superintendent is to maintain valid and appropriate certification for the post. It also "encourages" him to attend appropriate professional meetings, specifying at board expense. In turn, Hankins is to file

itemized expense statements with the board's fiscal officer.

The contract generally provides that Hankins will have "adequate freedom" to organize, reorganize and arrange the staff as in his judgment best serves the school system and that he shall be responsible "for selection, placement and transfer" of personnel, subject to approval of the board.

In addition to the usual benefits paid other school system administrators, he will have the use of a board-owned car, as have his predecessors.

Unlike Hankins' contract, Kaufhold's last contract also included requirements for Brunswick County residency; 60 day's notice should he plan to resign; monetary compensation to him for any annual leave days he was unable to take; provisions for an annual written, composite evaluation of the superintendent not to be released to the public; and provisions for buy-out of his contract by the board.

## Thonged Beach Jogger Wants To Boost 'Body Acceptance'

A man who until cooler weather set in jogged regularly on the Sunset Beach strand in a thong swimsuit says he would "like to foster greater body acceptance."

"I go down there to run and enjoy the beach," Otto Schuster told *The Brunswick Beacon*. "I don't think there's anything wrong with the naked human body. If everybody else thought that way I wouldn't be here."

Schuster was responding to a news story in the Nov. 15 edition of the newspaper that discussed efforts by the Town of Sunset Beach to adopt an ordinance regulating beachwear. Interest in the ordinance was sparked in part by complaints about Schuster's appearance as he jogged about three times a week up and down the strand. He was apparently the only regular visitor to the beach this past season who wears a thong, and doesn't see why the suit should be considered offensive to other beachgoers.

Schuster said since moving to the area approximately five months ago, he has jogged between 200 and

300 miles at the beach, about 50 runs back and forth the length of the strand.

Right now he's not jogging at the beach because it is too cold. "I told the police chief I'm looking forward to spring," said Schuster.

Schuster started out wearing a competition-type suit on his jogs, then decided to graduate to a skimpier suit, a thong. But first, he said he checked at local beaches to see if there were any ordinances forbidding the suits.

"In effect, I got permission," he said. When asked, police chiefs at both Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach told him there were no town ordinances forbidding the suits.

Once he began wearing the thong, Schuster says "no one has asked me to leave."

While Sunset Beach town officials have logged complaints from visitors to the beach and local residents, Schuster says he hasn't received any. "No one has approached me on the beach with ill will," he said, "and I've gotten quite a few waves and nods."

In the course of his jogging, Schuster said he's seen, on single occasions, two other males and two females also in thongs.

Schuster said he spends most of his time improving his mind or his body. He said he has begun reading the Bible for the 52nd time, and that the work has had "a great influence" on him and his attitudes toward life.

In addition to jogging he works out three times a week at a fitness center and generally takes care of his body. He doesn't drink, doesn't smoke and he doesn't drink caffeinated beverages. He doesn't watch television and is a ham radio operator.

Meanwhile, the town is continuing its effort to come up with a suitable beach apparel ordinance, but a spokesman for the N.C. League of Municipalities said it will be a difficult task.

Kim Smith, assistant general counsel for the League, said she has been researching the topic, trying to come up with examples of similar

ordinances from other towns or cities. "I did not come up with any examples," she said.

Wrightsville Beach had adopted an ordinance banning toplessness, but it may be subordinate to a state ordinance regulating indecent exposure. "If breasts are deemed private parts then it would be regulated by the state law," she said, otherwise it could fall under the town's ordinance.

North Myrtle Beach, S.C.—and possibly Sarasota, Fla.—has a general ordinance regarding nudity that forbids exposure of genitals, the pubic area, breasts and buttocks, she said.

"By and large I wasn't able to find much," said Ms. Smith. "The trouble is in trying to draft one that isn't too vague, that adequately defines how much exposure is too much, particularly with thongs. Where do you draw the line to begin enforcing it?"

"It's a difficult area of law, a gray area, trying to regulate beachwear," she said.