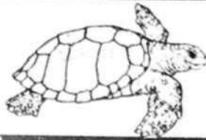


Looking To Grow

Calabash wants help in side-stepping lengthy involuntary annexation procedures in order to expand the town's limits—and tax base. The story's on Page 10-C.



Lights Out?

Holden Beach officials are looking at rules aimed at protecting sea turtles from sources of artificial light that could lure them off-course. Details are on Page 8-A.

Sports In Review

Sports Editor Johnny Craig highlights the resurgence of prep basketball as he looks back at the Brunswick County sports scene during 1990. His review is on Page 7-B.

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Girl Dies From Moped Accident

A Holden Beach area girl died early Monday morning from injuries sustained in a moped accident that occurred near her home Saturday afternoon.

Crystal Crabtree, 14, was riding a moped near the family home in Holiday Ranches, a subdivision near Holden Beach, when she apparently ran off the hard surface, fell and hit her head.

"Apparently, her head struck the concrete," said Connor Cox, a friend of the family.

Crystal was the daughter of Richard and Jackie Crabtree. Mr. Crabtree is employed by Cox at Brunswick Realty at Holden Beach.

The accident apparently occurred around 4 p.m. As related by Cox, a girlfriend inside the Crabtrees' house said she heard a scream and ran out to check. Crystal and her moped were down. Crystal told the friend to get help right away, said Cox, and she did so.

It is not known if the moped flipped or what caused the rider to fall from the bike. No cars were involved.

"She never regained consciousness," said Cox, who stayed with the family at the hospital Sunday.

A spokesperson at the State Highway Patrol office in Wilmington said no report was filed on the accident.

Miss Crabtree was taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply then transferred to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington.

"All I know at this point is that she died sometime this morning," said Iris Baker, a public affairs officer at New Hanover Memorial.

Ms. Baker said Monday that information was still not available from a medical examiner's report.



Feeding Time

Betty Martin and her mother, Cleve Capps, both of Gastonia, feed a flock of hungry gulls at Holden Beach Sunday. Mild, spring-like temperatures over the weekend made it difficult to believe it was the first weekend of winter.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Water Director Asking County For Workers To Handle Growth

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County Commissioners have received two reports from the water department, one asking for more employees to handle the growth brought on by water system expansion.

Director of Public Utilities Jerry Webb said the number of water customers served by the department has increased tremendously since 1987 while the number of new employees during the same period can be counted on one hand.

In a yearly "Brunswick County Water System Historical Data" report compiled by the water department,

Webb says the need for additional employees is "an area requiring immediate attention."

At its December meeting, the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board passed a resolution praising Webb for the report. Board members also acknowledged the need to add more workers to the staff. UOB members oversee county projects for water line extensions and make recommendations to county commissioners.

Last week, the new board of commissioners received Webb's report and one that outlines water extension projects to the year 2010.

The Brunswick County Water Distribution System Marketplan was drafted by Daniels and Associates of Cary. That master plan uses anticipated population increases and industrial growth to recommend where future water lines should go.

The first phase of expansion is scheduled for 1991. However, commissioners did not discuss either report at their meeting last week. They carried copies home with them instead.

"We simply cannot continue to operate this system on what I consider to be knee-jerk operations (See WATER, Page 2-A)

Paving Contractor Delays 17 Detour 'Til Spring

BY SUSAN USHER

A planned detour of traffic at the north end of Shallotte to accommodate work on the U.S. 17 Shallotte bypass will be delayed until spring.

Concerned about winter weather conditions, Propst Construction Co. of Concord has decided to postpone the work until sometime in March, said Dave Boyleston, the N.C. Department of Transportation resident engineer overseeing the project.

Propst had initially expected to divert traffic from U.S. 17 to Red Bug Road and the Holden Beach Road shortly after the Thanksgiving holidays. Red Bug Road was resurfaced and a traffic control light installed at its intersection with N.C. 130 to accommodate the rerouted traffic.

However, once traffic is detoured, the contractor will have only 90 days in which to complete work in

the closed-off area and return traffic to U.S. 17.

"He needs to have as good a weather as he can to meet that schedule," said Boyleston. "He had a little bit of trouble with his asphalt and didn't want to pursue his 90 days in the middle of the winter's cold, wet weather."

Instead Propst Construction will "winterize" the work that as been completed and shut down operations until around March. Workers will cover stone with asphalt binder, which will be covered with surface material to seal it. Erosion control measures such as seeding and mulching must also be completed before the project shuts down for the winter.

While the detour will be in effect during the Easter holidays, Boyleston said the contractor is obligated by contract to turn traffic on to the

Shalotte bypass by the Memorial Day holiday weekend or else go into a stiff penalty situation.

The final completion date for all work relating to the bypass is August 1991, according to the \$3.9 million contract awarded to the firm last Dec. 1.

Propst was contracted to pave the 4.8-mile bypass from west of S.R. 1316 to east of S.R. 1136 north of Shallotte.

The bypass is part of a project to four lane U.S. 17 to the South Carolina stateline.

The initial contract for building the bypass was awarded in October 1987 to Vecellio & Grogan Inc. of Beckley, W.Va., for grading and drainage work on 2.3 miles of the bypass. In July 1988 BMCO Construction Inc. of Lumberton received a \$1.4 million contract to grade the final 2.5 miles of the bypass.

Divided County Leadership Prompts Vote For Change

BY THE NEWS STAFF

The first day of filing for political office in Brunswick County was brisk, serving as a barometer of the public's concerns heading into 1990. It was a year in which residents were determined to make an impact on county government and its divided leadership.

Nowhere was their dissatisfaction more heavily felt than at the ballot box where voters elected two new commissioners, giving Republicans complete control over the board for the first time since 1972. Voters also elected two first-time candidates to the Brunswick County Board of Education, unseating one incumbent in the primary and the other in the general election.

Large crowds spoke at county water hearings and budget talks. A record number of people signed up to vote and the candidate list quickly grew heavy. By May, the campaigns were heated and incumbents sweated it out.

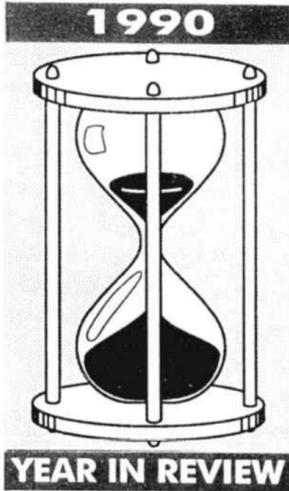
In the primary, State Rep. E. David Redwine of Ocean Isle narrowly defeated his opponent, Ralph King of Ash, by about 600 votes in what Redwine dubbed a general-election style campaign. More than 26,000 voters went to the primary polls, an early hint that residents were ready to elect new local leadership.

Meetings Reveal Infighting

The fight had only just begun. Meetings of the county commissioners and county school board showcased just how divided the county leaders had become.

In an unexpected move in February, Commissioners Grace Beasley, Frankie Rabon and Gene Pinkerton voted to hire William Kopp, a Bolivia native, as new county manager. However, 11 days later the board rescinded the action in the face of public outcry over how the manager was chosen: The position wasn't advertised. No applications were accepted. No formal interviews were held.

Kopp had been interviewed secretly by at least two board members, but Commissioner Kelly Holden said he was kept in the dark about the hiring coup until the night of the meeting. Holden and Commissioner Benny Ludlum, who vot-



YEAR IN REVIEW

Change is what voters got, both on the county board of commissioners and board of education.

Holden, the man in the dark just 10 months earlier, emerged as chairman of the board of commissioners in December, replacing Pinkerton. Newly-elected District 2 commissioner Jerry Jones of Shallotte became vice chairman.

On the board of education, Donna Baxter, considered a mediator during the previous term, was elected chairman in December on unanimous vote, making her the third person to hold that seat during the 1990 calendar year. Doug Baxley was elected vice chairman on a 3-2 vote.

In January, bowing to pressure from several board members, Baxley had resigned as chairman, clearing the way for Dorothy Worth's election on a motion by Ms. Baxter. The board also voted to begin electing officers each December rather than only following election of new board members.

On the same 3-2 split vote by which Mrs. Worth was elected, the board in April took advantage of a technical error in his contract and fired Superintendent John A. Kaufhold effective June 30—only 15 months after voting to extend his contract by two years to June 30, 1992.



ELECTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS Donald Shaw of District 5 (left) and Jerry Jones of District 2 in November gave Republicans complete control of the board for the first time since 1972.

Kaufhold, in turn, sued the board as a whole and the members who voted for his dismissal — Mrs. Worth, Ms. Baxter and Robert Slockett — specifically. The board settled out of court in June, paying Kaufhold \$30,000. In turn Kaufhold agreed to pay any sum he might owe the board following a special audit of administrators' expense accounts ordered as part of the deal.

Kaufhold's former assistant superintendent, longtime administrator P.R. Hankins, served as interim superintendent and then was named superintendent effective Oct. 1.

The county's first black superintendent, he was elected on a 4-1 vote by the board on Sept. 1. Slockett voted against the hiring, having committed himself earlier to candidate Barbara D. Rogers, who appeared to be top contender for the post until questions were raised about her past record and the vote was delayed pending further investigation.

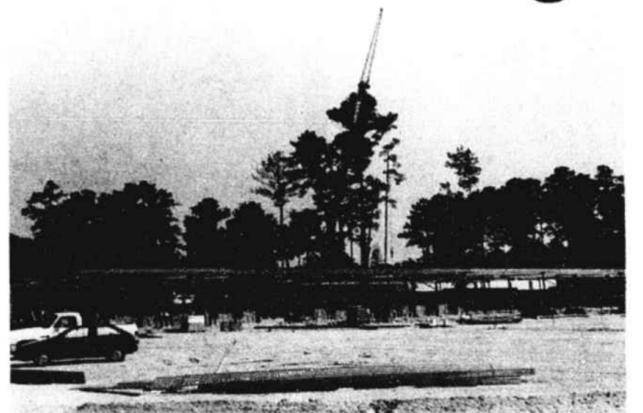
Results of the special expense report audit were not made public until mid-November, when it was learned that Kaufhold would be billed for approximately \$700.

After a year of trying to straighten out its financial records, in mid-December the school board finally adopted a budget for the 1990-91 school year and its 1989-90 fiscal year audit report was due any time. Meanwhile the board continued with plans to begin construction of a new elementary school at Supply in early 1991.

Mrs. Worth lost the May Democratic primary to childcare center owner Polly Russ of Shallotte and moved her official residence to the Worths' Longwood farm, saying she might challenge Baxley for his District 1 seat in two years.

In a voter turnout that rivaled that of a presidential election year, approximately 62.5 percent of eligible Brunswick County voters cast ballots in November.

Longtime District 5 school board member and vice chairman James Clemmons was unseated by Republican Yvonne Lewis Bright, a former Democratic candidate for the same office, in the surprise vote of the season. Mrs. Russ won election to the District 2 seat.



GROWING PAINS at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia stirred the county to build a new \$1.3 million Department of Social Services building. A new 911 emergency medical services building will be constructed in 1991.

In the county commissioners' races, Shaw's campaign slogan of, "Let's do away with the good ole' boy style of politics in Brunswick County," struck a familiar note. Ms. Beasley had defeated Shaw in 1986, but on this night she came up about 800 votes short.

In District 2, Jones was elected to fill the seat held by Ludlum, who had chosen not to run for re-election. Both Jones and his opponent, Joseph Stevenson of Supply, ran a gentleman's campaign, focusing on the issues instead of race. Stevenson was the only black candidate for the county board; Clemmons was the only black candidate for the school board.

But Jones' clear victory was overshadowed by the resignation of five black Democratic party leaders from their posts. They vowed to seek black voting districts and said they would no longer work to elect white Democratic candidates if voters failed to support black candidates.

Complex Situation

County Attorney David Clegg served as interim county manager for the year. Although 47 applications were accepted in April, commissioners refused to hire a new manager. The new board readvertised the position in December,

vowing to hire someone.

Clegg worked efficiently to help stabilize departments at a county government complex which was undergoing change in 1990. The enhanced 911 emergency communications system got off the ground with the public's overwhelming approval. Set to begin in January 1992, the 911 program coincided with the county's decision to fund an Emergency Medical Services program, hiring Southport Attorney Doug Ledgett as supervisor. Surcharges to fund 911 appeared on resident telephone bills starting in August.

The construction of a \$1.3 million new Department of Social Services building began with hopes of easing some of the growing pains. Through lease-purchasing agreements with private businesses, the county planned \$25 million in capital improvement bonds over a 15-year period, taking advantage of a special state law which eliminated the need for voters' approval. At year's end, departments were not sure who'd get what at the complex when added space became available.

The sheriff's department got added jail space through a \$116,000 expansion and the county purchased a \$1.1 million facility from Landmark (See BRUNSWICK, Page 6-A)