



### Dedication...

A new ferry is named after the last governor from Brunswick County. Page 7-A.

# Island Living

Supplement included in this issue.

### Happy 4th!

See Page 4-B for a calendar of N.C. Fourth of July Festival events.



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# NICK BEACON



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## Dredging Money Is Short

**BY DOUG RUTTER**

Holden Beach Harbor property owners will have to reach deeper into their pockets if they're interested in having their canals dredged this fall.

They only have three more weeks to come up with about \$73,000 in voluntary payments for the work.

Charlie Pahl, who represents Holden Beach Harbor on the town's canal dredging committee, said lot owners had paid \$27,000 as of last week.

Town commissioners had agreed to help coordinate the dredging, but asked property owners to pay at least two-thirds of the project cost in advance.

They set a July 22 deadline for the lot owners to come up with \$100,000 of the \$150,000 projected cost.

Town officials haven't decided what they'll do if property owners don't come up with enough money by the deadline.

Plans call for the dredging of all nine finger canals and the feeder and entrance canals in Holden Beach Harbor.

At its meeting last Wednesday, the town board passed a resolution setting forth plans to assess lot owners for 100 percent of the project cost.

A public hearing on the preliminary assessment resolution is scheduled for Wednesday, July 22, at 7 p.m. in the town hall.

Pahl said last week he was still negotiating with the Corps of Engineers to get the permit needed for dredging.

Meanwhile, commissioners have started talking about plans to dredge the entrance canal in Heritage Harbor subdivision.

"We're anxious to be in a position to get our dredging done this fall," said Heritage Harbor Property Owners Association Chairman John Broadnax.

Town Manager Gary Parker and Broadnax are working on a schedule for voluntary payments from lot owners.

Broadnax expects the small-scale dredging project to cost about \$18,000. He has a dredging permit and said the 30 lots in the neighborhood that don't front on a canal will not have to help pay for the project.

Ted Rivenbark said the entrance channel in Harbor Acres probably won't need dredging until next winter or the fall of 1994.

**Ordinance Tabled**

Concerns about the number of affected properties prompted the town



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

### Surf's Up!

Brett Fulford of Holden Beach catches a wave near Holden Beach Fishing Pier last Friday evening. Strong winds out of the south made conditions just right for surfers.

## Interest In Incorporating Seaside Picking Up Steam

**BY SUSAN USHER**

A group of residents interested in preserving Seaside's identity as one of the area's oldest communities are seeking support for its incorporation as a town.

A meeting will be held today (Thursday) at 7:30 p.m. in the Coastal Auction building on N.C. 179 that formerly housed Island Supply.

Joe Huber, a member of the steering committee leading the effort, said Seaside is the oldest community in the area. Like Vamantown, he said, it has a history and unique identity that warrant preserving through incorporation.

"We don't want to lose that identity," he said.

Seaside is a small community along N.C. 179 that now has as its neighbors two towns, Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach. Once dominated The idea has gained support in the community since serious feelers were first extended in April, mainly by word of mouth. Huber said 29 people attended the first meeting on the issue while a second meeting last month drew 37, all supporters.

Proposed boundaries closely follow the area traditionally known as Seaside. The line begins at Seaside Road, at the N.C. 179/N.C. 904 intersection, and follows the south side of Dale Drive east, doglegging north around natural boundaries, to Kennedy Drive, then south to the waterway and back to Seaside Road.

"We want to keep the boundaries simple and within the old community known as Seaside," said Huber.

Steering committee members are also proposing a

different approach to self-government that would provide more citizen involvement—a mayor-council with town meeting format. Major decisions, such as extension of a new service or adoption of a budget, would have to be voted on not by the council alone, but by vote of the town's registered voters.

While non-resident property owners will not be eligible to vote, they could submit items to the council and townspeople for consideration, he said, and could attend town meetings.

The town meeting format is used with success in several mountain towns in North Carolina, he said, but "is unheard of down here."

Steering committee members are working with a local lawyer to prepare the required documents and have met with Rep. David Redwine to find out the procedures necessary to pursue incorporation through the state legislature. Among other things, Redwine requires communities to hold several public meetings and then a referendum on incorporation.

Huber said the group will have at least two more meetings after today's, with Rep. Redwine present to answer questions.

Gary Hendrix is chairman of the steering committee. In addition to Huber and Hendrix, other members are Buck Thorpe, Edna Ludlum, Barbara Ferrone, Malcolm King and Jimmy Gore.

If Seaside were to be incorporated—sometime in 1993 at the earliest—it would become Brunswick County's 18th municipality.

### VACATIONERS ESCAPE

## Condos Damaged, Cars Destroyed In Ocean Isle Fire

**BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN**

Tommy Walker and his family had been vacationing at Myrtle Beach, S.C., for several years when they decided this summer to travel from their Albemarle home to try the "family atmosphere" of Ocean Isle Beach (OIB).

Their week on the beach was scarcely under way, however, when it was interrupted by fire. A blaze beginning about 3 a.m. Monday spread from parking spaces under their Starboard by the Sea condominium, forcing them, along with 21 others, out into the night.

Others evacuated from Building 21 included 13 members of the Cozart family, hailing from Shelby, Salisbury, High Point and Raleigh, and Mrs. Gerry Lofin's family of seven from Sherrill's Ford.

Twenty-four hours later, these other vacationers had rented cars and returned home; only the Walkers remained for the week. Their group included a daughter and son-in-law, and a 15-year-old daughter and her friend.

Damages to four condos in Building 21 and complete destruction of two vans and one car amounted to an estimated \$250,000 value, estimated OIB Volunteer Fire Chief Terry

Barbee. Because gypsum board was used in the ceiling of the parking space, the spread of flames was slowed.

"They went up through wiring chases and the common wall," Barbee said. This confined damage to the effects of heat and smoke in two of the units, and flames around the sliding glass doors of the living rooms in units adjoining and above the fire were quickly extinguished.

Origin of the blaze had not yet been determined at press time, but Barbee said it started "in the area of the Aerostar van parked beneath the unit."

Walker, a former volunteer fireman, said he had smelled hot wires about an hour before he awoke and heard "hollering in the parking lot."

"I looked out my window and saw smoke from underneath us," he said, "and I woke everybody up."

"My wife said, 'Let me get my pocket-book,' but I said, 'To heck with your pocket-book,' and we just got out and left everything in the condo."

Sleepers in the other three units were aroused by a neighbor and all escaped without

(See SHAKEN, Page 2-A)

## Incident Raises Questions About Bridge Openings

**BY SUSAN USHER**

An incident Monday morning at the Sunset Beach Bridge has Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan concerned because of a delay there that could have been avoided.

The incident also raises questions about the procedures followed in determining when to open the bridge to waterway traffic.

Sunset Beach firefighters had just returned from assisting at a fire at Ocean Isle Beach and were at the fire station putting away equipment when a call of their own came in.

At a house on Sailfish Drive, a youngster had dropped a lighted smoke bomb from the porch of a cottage. It fell into pampas grass, which ignited, said Logan, whose son, Keith, is chief of the Sunset Beach VFD.

Firefighters head out immediately, but were brought up short at the Sunset Beach Bridge.

Under a schedule set by the N.C. Department of Transportation, the bridgetender is to open the span to waterway traffic only at the top of the hour, for commercial vessels as needed and in the event of emergencies.

However, when the Sunset Beach VFD members got to the bridge at an approximately 8:20 a.m., said Logan, it was open, and not for a commercial vessel, but for a large, pleasure-type craft. The firefighters had to wait seven minutes before they could cross to the island.

Normally the VFD or any local rescue unit bound for the island notifies the bridge by radio, but in this case they had not, said Logan,

because they expected the bridge to be open to vehicular traffic.

"At the fire station we had a clear view of the waterway; we knew there was no commercial traffic waiting at the bridge, just the pleasure boat. Not a shrimp boat or tug. We didn't see a need to call."

"If it had not been for a volunteer firefighter on the island grabbing a water hose," continued Logan, "we could have lost that house and possibly two or three more the way the wind was blowing."

As it was, only the grass burned.

No one from the state Department of Transportation's bridge division could be reached for comment, but the incident may relate to a shortcut some boaters are taking to get the bridgetender to open the pontoon

bridge between regularly scheduled hourly openings.

When asked about the incident after a Sunset Beach Town Council meeting Monday night, Town Administrator Linda Fluegel said boaters have learned to identify themselves as commercial when approaching the bridge.

"All they have to say is, 'We sell from our boat,' she said, "and they open the bridge just like that."

While favoring construction of a high-rise bridge to the island for improved emergency response, Logan wants the existing system to work in the meantime, with all parties following the procedures established.

For his part, he plans to call the bridge ahead next time, whether the need is apparent or not.

## Illegal Dumpers Force County Crackdown

**BY ERIC CARLSON**

How would you like to come to work in the morning and find a large pile of stinking garbage blocking the front door of your office?

That's what James "Bunt" Simmons puts up with almost every day when he arrives at his job as manager of the Oxpen waste disposal and recycling site off N.C. 130 between Shallotte and Holden Beach.

"This is how it looks every morning," Simmons said last Thursday as he waited for a truck and loader to remove a half-ton of bagged garbage piled just outside the chain-link fence gate.

Simmons works for Waste Industries Inc., of Wilmington, which is under contract with Brunswick County to haul garbage and collect recyclable items. The company operates three solid waste transfer stations and two "convenience centers" like the one at Oxpen.

When the convenience sites were operated by the county, they were

unmanned and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Because of stricter state and federal regulations on solid waste disposal, the county decided to contract with Waste Industries to manage the trash sites.

But since the county couldn't afford around-the-clock staffing, opening hours were established to regulate when residents could deposit their household trash and recyclables. Beginning in March the convenience sites were kept open until 7 p.m., seven days a week, with varying morning hours, for a total of 62.5 hours.

That's when the trouble began, said County Engineer Robert Tucker. Many residents and visitors who use the dump sites ignored the opening hours and simply left their garbage outside the locked fence. Some went to even greater lengths to keep the sites open.

"The first day we put up the gate someone tried to force it open with a vehicle," Tucker said. "When they found out it was secured with a

(See TRASH, Page 2-A)



SITE MANAGER James Simmons stands amid the piles of garbage illegally dumped outside the gate at the Oxpen solid waste convenience site Thursday morning.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON