



Swing Time...

Big band sounds will again highlight the annual Charity Ball. Page 8-B.

Island Living

Supplement included in this issue.

Grudge Match

The Trojans have a new coach at the helm for their first home game Friday, 11-B.



THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

12/31/99 #FPO
HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY
P.O. BOX 162
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Thirtieth Year, Number 44

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Shalotte, North Carolina, Thursday, September 3, 1992

50¢ Per Copy

98 Pages, 4 Sections Including Supplement, 2 Inserts



STAFF PHOTO BY CECE GORE

Some Guiding Arms

Kyla Williams discusses her breakfast order with Waccamaw School cafeteria manager Sharon Long, as her kindergarten teacher Louise Gause gives a little help. More photos and story about schools' opening, Page 14-A.

Residents, Visitors Empathize, Share With Storm Victims

BY LYNN CARLSON

Mary and J.R. Legg weren't the only Brunswick Countians feeling heartsick and helpless as they watched televised scenes of Hurricane Andrew's devastation.

But they were among the first to do something. Within three hours of Mary's telling her husband, "I wish there was some way we could help," the seed of their idea had germinated to become a relief effort involving five churches, a rent-free Shallotte storefront, a donated telephone line and a free-of-charge 18-wheeler which in a few days will truck as much as \$10,000 worth of food and other supplies to South Florida.

The churches have set up a collection site for hurricane relief supplies in the old Community Grocery space next to McDonald's in Shallotte. On Monday afternoon, the Leggs and their two young children were the sole staff of the sweltering storefront, which was filling up with baby care items, paper products, clothing, canned goods, pet food, bottled water and the other everyday products folks tend to take for granted until they're no longer available.

Her enthusiasm undaunted by the oppressive heat of the room, Mary said people had been stopping by all day to see what was needed, later coming back with grocery sacks full of goods just purchased for the effort. A doctor's office sent a case of baby formula. A motel sent a load of pillows and bedsheets. A woman whose house had burned—"who is just getting back on her feet and knows what it's like to be wiped out"—shared what

canned goods she could spare from her own pantry. "She said she wanted to give what she could," J.R. explained.

The project, sponsored by five churches—New Covenant, New Life Assembly, Seaside Christian Fellowship, Lighthouse Mission and Oak Grove Baptist Church—will remain in place for the next few days, when there's enough to fill the tractor trailer truck that will pick up the goods and deliver them to one of two Baptist churches in Miramar and Coral Ridge, Fla., for distribution.

J.R. arranged for the truck and fuel from Inway Trucking of Ohio, for which his father works. Inway is covering the truck expenses and has a full sheet of volunteer drivers willing to haul the goods to Florida without pay.

The church-sponsored project has linked with at least one other relief effort, started by the staff of Brunswickland Realty at Holden Beach. "People have been bringing stuff by all day," said Bonnie Cox on Monday afternoon, when a former U-Haul truck storing the contributions was already filling up. Meanwhile, inside the office, Teresa Reintz answered a steady stream of phone calls from people interested in giving. Cox said plans had been made to transfer the donations to have them trucked down with the supplies being collected in Shallotte.

She accepted a load of bed linens Monday afternoon

(See LOCAL, Page 2-A)

Groups Lobby Against Bird Island Development

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

A flock of Brunswick County residents don't know it, but their homes may be threatened with extinction. In the face of plans to build a bridge right in their front yard, however, some of their friends have rallied to protect their interests. These friends swarmed the peaceful scene Tuesday, looking for signs of the hapless residents.

The scene is Bird Island, a barrier island joined to Sunset Beach by acres of wetlands, home to at least 20 bird species, the aforementioned residents whose habitat and the entire island are owned by Janie Pace Price of Greensboro.

Price earlier this year requested state permission to build a 2,300-foot bridge and a 3,140-foot causeway from Sunset Beach to the island, providing automobile access. She plans to divide the island into 15 parcels of land on which residences could be built, each with its own septic tank.

It is these plans that drew five or six boatloads of people Tuesday to cruise the waters surrounding the island, gather information about the area, then meet to discuss possible state actions and other ways to preserve this wildlife habitat.

Sponsored by the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association and the North Carolina Coastal Federation, the Bird Island field trip was open to about 35 invited guests, including representatives of those groups and the media, State Rep. David Redwine (D-Brunswick), Preston Pate of the state's coastal management division, and Walker Golder of the N.C. Audubon Society.

It gave participants a close-up look at the wetlands and their wildlife inhabitants, after which a gathering was held in the home of William Ducker on Sunset Beach. There, the group heard comments from Golder, Todd Miller of the Coastal Federation and Redwine. Golder spoke of the island's value to its bird population and said man's intrusion there could be destructive to wildlife. Miller pointed out what he called detri-

"There's not been any offer for the property, and I'm just interested now in getting the permits."

—Janie Pace Price

mental effects of Price's proposed plans. "There is even the general health hazard that could come from building a permanent structure across Mad Inlet," he said. "This could increase any storm surge in the event of hurricanes."

Other impact described included the loss of a quarter-acre of wetlands from the bridge construction alone, and contamination of nearby waters for shellfishing.

The N.C. General Assembly approved Redwine's recent resolution to order a feasibility study by the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR) regarding the state's possible purchase of Bird Island. A report on this study will be brought to the legislature in May, but support for state purchase was strongly promoted Tuesday among field trip participants.

Redwine said, "I would like to see the island preserved as it is, but I also respect the rights of a property owner. Whether or not Mrs. Price builds a causeway and bridge, I'd like to see the state buy the island. When I talked with her in 1986, there was no interest at all in that, but recently I spoke to her about it again and she seemed amenable to selling it. However, she wants to go through the permitting process."

Price said Tuesday afternoon, however, that she never spoke to Redwine about a sale. "There's not been any offer for the property, and I'm just interested now in getting the permits," she said, declining to comment further.

When property has been designated an Area of Environmental Concern, as is true of Bird Island, any development requires permits from the DEHNR, which must be completed within 75 days. However, the clock was stopped on Price's application process in order for her to provide further information to the state.

Issues that are addressed in reviewing a permit application include impact on wetlands, concerns about threats to endangered species, evaluation of alternatives to the proposed project, stormwater management and consistency with the local land use plan. Sunset Beach's land use plan has classified Bird Island for conservation, but, according to Town Manager Linda Fluegel, that would not prevent development there.

Ducker said the objective of Tuesday's meeting was to garner financial and other support for a purchase of the island, perhaps by a coalition of state, federal and local governments. Golder said that, should Price decide to sell, Bird Island might become the property of the Audubon Society or some other private conservation organization.

Among the species of wildlife seen on the field trip or known to nest on the island are the loggerhead sea turtle, piping plover, egrets, gulls, sandpipers, black skimmers and least terns. In addition, a rare plant, seabeach amaranth, is found on the western end of the island. Its value lies in its potential as a crop plant, as it has high nutritive content and can grow in saline environments. Scientists are researching its development as a crop and its use in Ethiopia.

Agencies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, submitted reports to the U.S. Corps of Engineers, regarding the value of this barrier island, one of two remaining undeveloped barrier islands in southeastern North Carolina. They urged that permits for the project not be given.

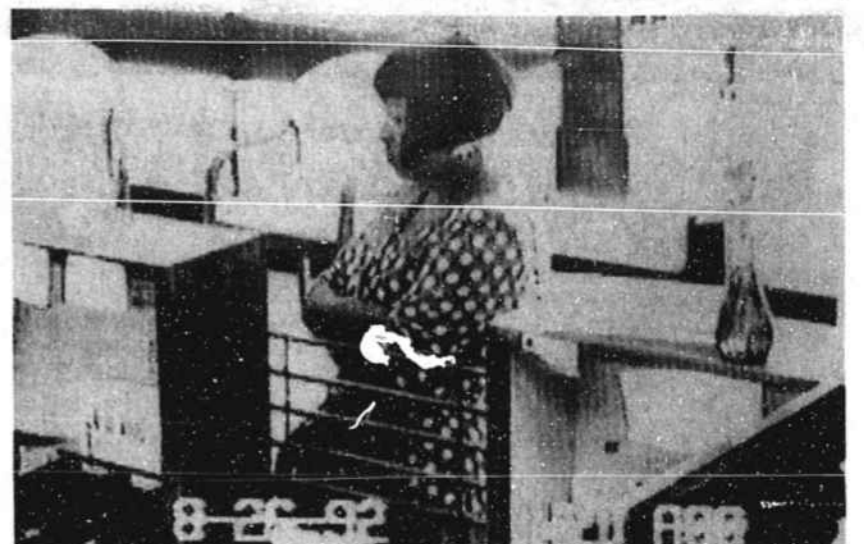


PHOTO COURTESY SHALLOTTE POLICE

THIS WOMAN is alleged to have been involved in a flimflam operation last Wednesday in Shallotte. The photo was captured on a security camera at NationsBank.

Flim-Flam May Have Cost Elderly Woman Her Savings

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shalotte Police Tuesday continued investigating a flim-flam operation that may have cost a local woman her life savings last week.

Chief Rodney Gause said police are looking for two young black women who they believe swindled an elderly lady out of all the money she had in the bank.

The 68-year-old woman told police she had just finished shopping at Wilson's last Wednesday when a young black woman approached her in the parking lot and asked if there were any apartments in the area.

Another young black woman walked up to the two and told them she had just found \$68,000. She offered to give them \$400 each if they didn't tell anyone, according to a report filed by Shalotte Det. Carey

Gaskins.

The elderly lady said she didn't want the money. However, the other black woman said she would take the cash to a nearby law office where she worked to see if it was real.

When she returned, the woman said the money was real and suggested it be divided. She said each woman should get \$20,000 and the attorney should receive \$8,000.

The elderly woman told police that she went to the downtown branch of NationsBank to withdraw all of her money for collateral, with the woman who allegedly found the money.

When they returned to the parking lot, the elderly woman said she decided not to take her share of the money. (See WOMEN, Page 2-A)

Orton Landowner Objects To Zoning Plans

BY ERIC CARLSON

One of the owners of environmentally sensitive Orton Pond Monday asked Brunswick County officials to include the property in a zoning district which prohibits private homes but allows mining, power plants, slaughterhouses, incinerators and hazardous waste dumps.

Laurence Sprunt of Wilmington, a member of the family that owns the Orton Plantation and surrounding lands, said at a joint workshop of the county commissioners and planning board that he was "shocked" to find that the proposed zoning ordinance had included the property in an agricultural zone. He complained that the designation "would severely limit the use of the land."

In an August 12 letter to County Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden, Sprunt said he "strongly opposed" the proposed land classification and asked that no zoning be established.

"If zoning is mandatory, we request that all of it be rural industrial (RU-1), including land and water. This is similar zoning as that adjoining us to the south (Sunny Point and others)," Sprunt said in the letter.

The draft zoning map includes the Orton lands

in a zone now termed "rural." Such zones are intended "to preserve and encourage the continued use of land for agricultural, forest and such open space purposes as swamps and other wetlands" and "to discourage scattered commercial and industrial uses."

County Planner John Harvey said he had included the area in the rural zone because of the environmentally sensitive nature of Orton Pond, the county's largest freshwater lake.

Harvey said his intent in creating a rural industrial (RU-1) zone was to create "the ugliest zone ever written," where "generally adverse uses" could be permitted. The zone specifically permits agricultural industry, mining and generating facilities and would allow animal slaughtering operations, hazardous materials treatment facilities and "incineration facilities including for human and animal life forms."

The zone prohibits "any form of residency or sleeping facility excepting one caretaker or guard or fireman housing unit" if the occupant can be shown "to be sufficiently protected from any adverse affects the principal use might generate or emit."

As designated on the zoning map, the proposed RU-1 zone is bordered on the south by the City of Southport's extraterritorial zone and on the north by the Orton lands. The zone encompasses the Brunswick Nuclear Plant and the Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point.

Sprunt gave no indication that he planned a use for the property that would require such a zoning designation. He left the meeting immediately after making his request and refused to comment further about it.

In his letter to Holden, Sprunt also noted that the proposed zoning map includes portions of the Orton lands in a residential zone. He referred specifically to an area just north of the Sunny Point main gate on N.C. 133 and N.C. 87.

Harvey said the designation reflects recent residential development that has occurred along the highways. "The current residential development of others arrived after our lands were designated industrial and I see no reason why our adjoining land should be downgraded to residential," the letter said.

(See ZONING, Page 2-A)

Some Local Town Halls To Be Open Labor Day

While most government offices will be closed Labor Day, Sept. 7, town halls at two local beaches will be open for the convenience of non-resident property owners.

Town halls in Shallotte, Calabash and Holden Beach will be closed Monday, while those at Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach will be open.

All offices at the Brunswick County Government Center will be closed Labor Day, as will local financial institutions.

The U.S. Postal Service will offer box service only for mail. Rural delivery and window service won't be available.

Neither the county nor local municipalities plan any change in trash collection schedules over the holiday. The Brunswick County Landfill and convenience stations will be open on the usual schedule.