

Shop At Home

The Hometown Holidays promotion is in full swing. See Pages 3-A and 12-C.



Happy Thanksgiving

Trojans Keep Going

West Brunswick prepares to meet Farmville in the Eastern Semifinals. Page 9-B.



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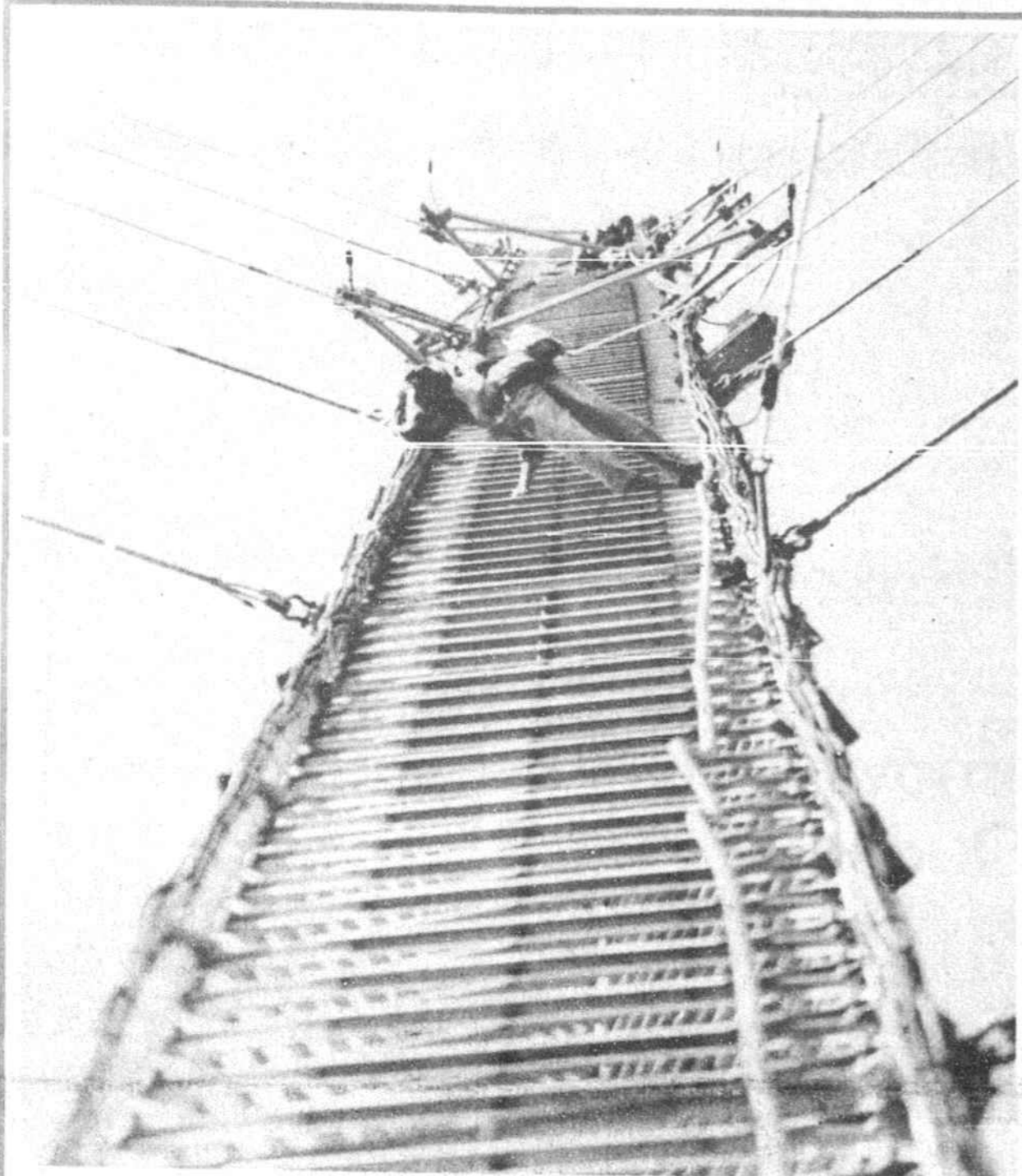
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High Wire Act

Workers from Towercom, Inc., of Raleigh spent two days last week dangling from the 490-foot central communications radio tower behind the Brunswick County Emergency Services building in Bolivia. They were replacing the main cable for the county's fire and rescue transmitter. The old half-inch line, which had been damaged by lightning, was replaced with a 1.25-inch diameter cable in hopes of eliminating "dead spots" in the transmitter's coverage.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

WIVES TRAPPED UNDER OVERTURNED HULL

Two Couples Rescued After Boat Capsizes

BY ERIC CARLSON

Two Lumberton women narrowly escaped drowning and one remained hospitalized with pneumonia Monday after spending more than an hour trapped under a boat that overturned in five-foot seas off Shallotte Inlet Saturday morning.

One of their husbands was thrown from the boat when it capsized. The other managed to escape moments before the craft settled upside-down on a sandbar about 300 yards off the west end of Holden Beach.

A small navy of rescuers on boats and in the water was able to flip the boat upright and free the women, who were huddled inside a small, partially flooded cuddy cabin on the 21-foot fiberglass fishing boat.

Wesley and Barbara Britt were aboard the boat belonging to his cousin, Alfred Britt and his wife Melba. The two couples had gone out the inlet at about 10 a.m. to fish for trout and Spanish mackerel, according to Boatswain's Mate Eric Floyd of the U.S. Coast Guard Oak Island Station.

A short way off Holden Beach they encountered heavy surf and decided to turn back. As the boat turned broadside to the sea it was hit by a wave that flipped the boat over, Floyd said.

Alfred Britt said he was thrown into the water. Wesley Britt told rescuers he was momentarily trapped under the aft end of the boat. As the craft settled onto

the bottom, he said he saw a sliver of light, dove for it and was able to swim out from under the boat before it went hard aground on the sandbar.

In a lucky coincidence, water rescue teams from the Coast Guard and Holden Beach Water Rescue had already been mobilized to answer a call at Lockwood Folly Inlet, where another small sportfishing boat had gone aground on a bar and was swamped. The teams arrived to find that the boat owner had been picked up by a local fisherman and was safe ashore.

Just then another radio call went out saying that a homeowner at the west end of Holden Beach had reported an overturned boat in the surf with two people on the hull. Rescuers on land and water immediately raced toward the other end of the island.

"It was pretty rough riding. We were in the air as much as we were on the water," said Danny Liebl of Holden Beach Water Rescue. He and Keith Sawyer and Ronnie Rabon headed for the west end aboard the unit's rigid-hull inflatable boat along with a similar Coast Guard craft.

They arrived to find only one person waving from the overturned boat. He was not wearing a life preserver.

"We got to within 20 feet of him and started hitting bottom, so we put one person off to wade toward him with a PFD (personal flotation device)," Liebl said.

(See LOCAL RESCUERS, Page 2-A)

More Shellfish Waters Closed

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County fishermen were dealt another serious blow last week when the state closed to shellfishing approximately 110 acres of waters at Bald Head Island.

Bald Head Creek, located on the northeast side of the island, was closed last Tuesday because of high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which make shellfish unsafe for human consumption.

The bacterial pollution was detected in a recent sanitary survey of the Bald Head Island area, according to an N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries proclamation.

The closure of Bald Head Creek is the second major shellfish closure this month in Brunswick County. On Nov. 6, state officials shut down 150 acres of oyster and clam waters in the Sunset Beach and Gause Landing area.

Carson Varnam, an oyster dealer in Varnamtown, said the Bald Head area is often harvested by local commercial fishermen, especially when the Lockwood Folly and Shallotte rivers are temporarily closed.

"It wouldn't be considered a hot spot, but that area is worked," Varnam said. "I would say it's about average as far as harvesting goes."

North Carolina's shellfish sanitation branch recommended that Marine Fisheries close Bald Head Creek due to recent bacteriological samples taken from the creek.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also had asked that the creek be closed to shellfishing. Until recently, the state did not have any sampling stations upstream of the creek's mouth.

"We didn't have any bacteriological data justifying that it should be open," said Bob Benton, head of shellfish sanitation. "You just can't have sampling stations everywhere. We had just never established a station there."

In 1980, 16,330 acres of shellfishing waters were closed in Brunswick County. The number currently stands at 12,723 acres. The state has shut down 306 acres in the past two years.

George Gilbert, assistant director of shellfish sanitation, said the creek would have been closed regardless of the FDA's request. Samples taken over a two-year period at the mouth indicated the creek was polluted.

"It was not arbitrarily closed just because the FDA objected because we didn't have sampling stations," he said.

Gilbert also said he thinks the biggest source of pollution in Bald Head Creek is stormwater runoff. "The whole island drains into that creek," he said.

Based on recent samples upstream of the mouth, Gilbert said it's unlikely the entire creek will ever reopen.

He said a portion of the creek could reopen near the mouth in extremely dry periods.

"There's always a possibility, but it doesn't look like it," Gilbert said. "Certainly we don't treat it as a lost cause. We'll continue looking at it."

Despite the two recent closures, Gilbert said local fishermen have more oyster and clam beds to work now than they did 12 years ago.

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Former Candidate Said Missing

Patricia "Patty" Quinn Young, 44, the Winnabow businesswoman who was recently defeated in a race for Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, has been reported missing by her husband, police said Monday.

"We have no reason to suspect foul play at this time," said Detective Lt. Donnell Marlowe, who is heading the investigation into Young's disappearance.

Her husband of 20 years, David Young, reported Mrs. Young missing shortly after noon Sunday. She was last seen at about 8:30 Saturday morning, when she left Winnabow to buy a turkey at a Shallotte supermarket, Marlowe said.



YOUNG

The Youngs are co-owners of an agricultural equipment dealership in Winnabow. She was last seen driving a white 1985 GMC Jimmy truck. With her in the vehicle was her bulldog and a pet parrot, Marlowe said.

Authorities have no evidence to suggest that Mrs. Young was abducted. They say she may have left the area voluntarily. She reportedly has friends in the Asheville area, Marlowe said.

A bulletin has been issued on the police computer network asking other law enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for Mrs. Young and her vehicle. Mrs. Young is 5 feet, 2 inches tall with a small build, brown hair and blue eyes.

Anyone with information regarding her whereabouts is urged to call Marlowe at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department by calling (919) 253-4321 or (800) 672-6379.

Hostile Crowd Voices Opposition To Sewer Authority Proposal

BY ERIC CARLSON

A vocal and at times hostile crowd of Carolina Shores residents packed a public hearing last week to tell the Calabash Board of Commissioners and its hired engineering consultants that they want no part of a plan to form a joint water and sewer authority with Sunset Beach.

Despite assurances that the proposed "management entity"

could not borrow or spend money unless the system is approved in a referendum, the crowd of more than 200 made it clear that they want the idea scrapped. Most of those who spoke said they feared that once formed, a water and sewer authority could become too powerful and could expand the system beyond the wishes of Calabash residents.

Only one person spoke in favor of the proposal. He was shouted at and booed by the audience and finally left the stage, unable to complete his remarks.

Most homes in Carolina Shores are served by a central sewage system owned by the Carolina Blythe company of Florence, S.C. But other areas of the town, notably the downtown restaurant district, rely on private septic systems.

Septic tank failures and overflows are blamed for pollution in the Calabash River, which remains closed to shellfishing. State inspectors recently issued new closure orders for waters near Sunset Beach.

The two towns have begun preliminary studies for creating a joint system to extend sewer service to new areas and prevent additional septic contamination. Forming the

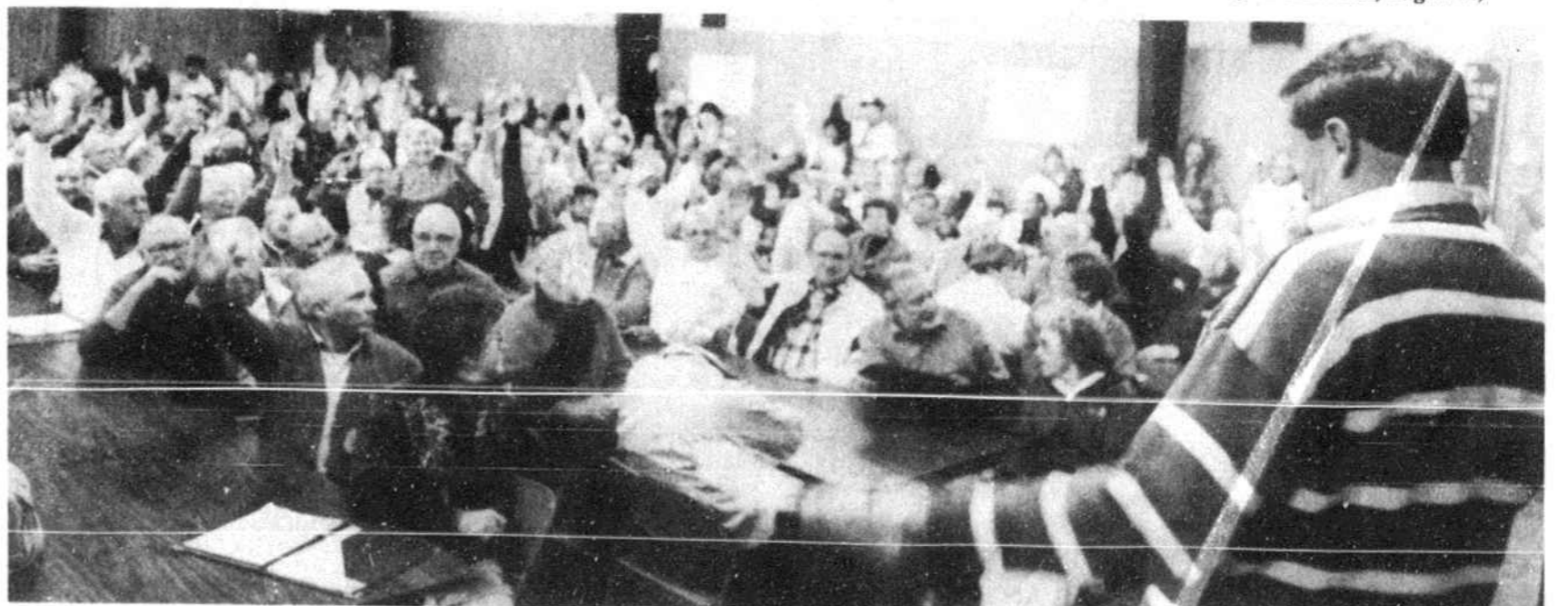
authority would make the towns more likely to qualify for state and federal grants and low-interest loans, said consulting engineer Jim Billups of Powell and Associates.

"The problem is that we have a few people who need sewer. But we don't need a water and sewer authority because we've already got one," said Jack Brady, president of

the Carolina Shore Property Owners Association. The POA had distributed leaflets urging its members to attend the Thursday night (Nov. 18) public hearing.

Brady cautioned that the authority would become "autonomous" and could enter into contracts, issue bonds and assess

(See SEWER, Page 2-A)



CALABASH COMMISSIONER John Sanborn polls the audience at a public hearing last week regarding a proposal to re-zone a six-acre tract near Carolina Shores from residential to commercial. The crowd of more than 200 people was overwhelmingly opposed to the change.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

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