

# Coast Guard Aids Nine People From Two Boats In Distress On The Cape Fear

Nine people were transported to safety by vessels from the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Oak Island last week in two incidents involving pleasure boats operating in the Cape Fear River.

According to a report from Station Chief BMCS J.D. Arndt, the first of the two calls came in at about 6:30 p.m. Feb. 20 from a boat reporting itself aground near river buoy number 37.

Determining that the situation was not immediately life-threatening, the station first issued a Marine Assistance Radio Broadcast (MARB) to determine if any commercial salvors or private vessels were available to help the boat.

The station also launched its 21-foot inflatable fast-response boat because there was a report of people on the bank of the river, Arndt said. When the boat arrived, the crew found the stricken vessel washed up on the beach with all eight passengers safe on shore.

Coast Guard personnel took six of the people on board and transported them to the nearest safe haven at Carolina Beach State Park marina, where they planned to get further assistance, said Arndt.

On Feb. 23 at about 5 p.m., the station was called by a private citizen reporting a vessel adrift in the Cape Fear River near Walden Creek. The caller said there were three people on board waving orange life jackets in apparent distress.

The station launched its 21-footer, which arrived a short time later to find a 24-foot pleasure boat disabled and adrift with three persons aboard. A MARB was not issued because the vessel had no radio, Arndt said.

Instead, the 21-footer towed the vessel to the Southport Boat Basin, the nearest safe haven, where all persons were safely put ashore.

On Feb. 25 at about 7:30 a.m. the station was notified by the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department that a 17-foot boat was adrift just south of the Wilmington State Ports with no one on board.

The boat was eventually found 1.5 miles north of Snows Cut, off the Cape Fear River. It appeared to have been hot-wired and stripped of all equipment, the sheriff's department reported.

## Winnabow VFD Serves Barbecue

Winnabow Volunteer Fire Department will serve barbecue on Saturday, March 5, from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Plates will consist of pork barbecue, potato salad, coleslaw and hush puppies. Cost will be \$3, or \$4.50 for a "super plate."

The department is on Governor's Road off U.S. 17 in Winnabow.

## Tutor Training Slated

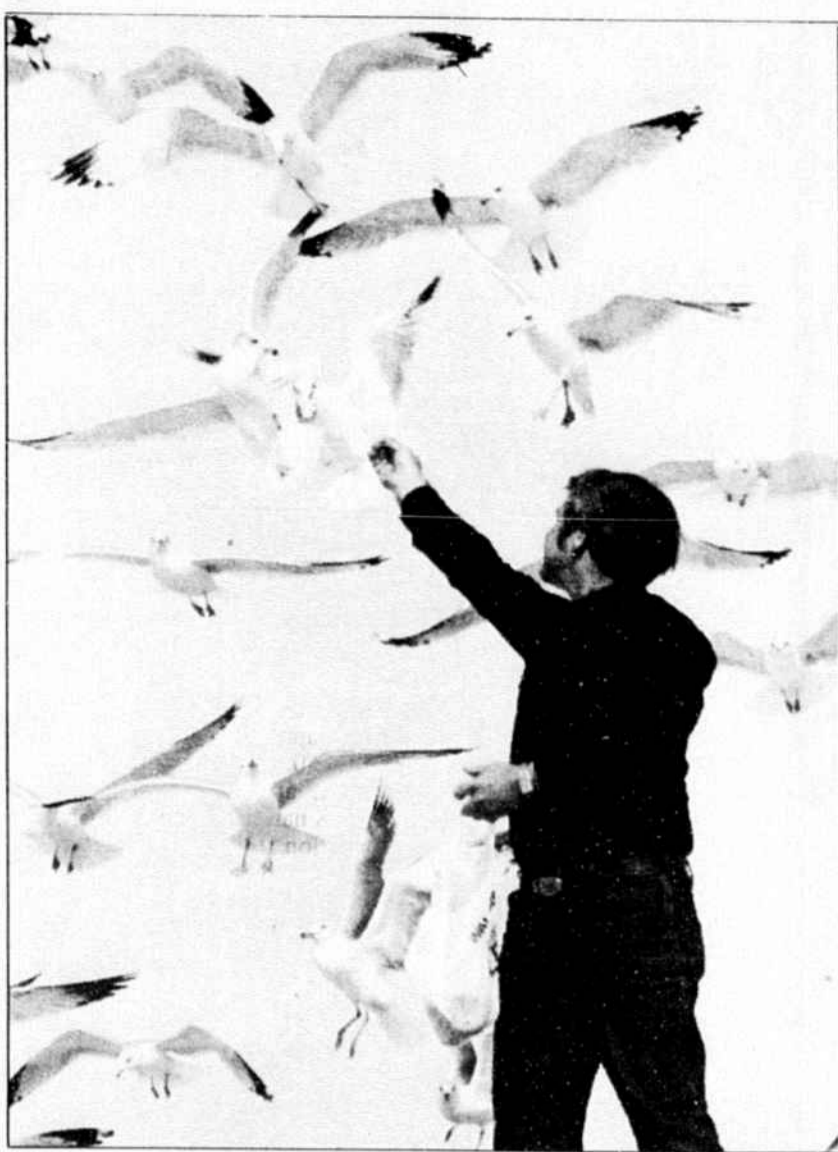
Soldier Bay Baptist Church in Ash will be the site of a free tutoring workshop March 18 and 19, sponsored by the Brunswick County Literacy Council.

The workshop will take place from 6-9:30 Friday, March 18, and from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Saturday, March 19. The church is on N.C. 130 at the caution light in Ash.

Participants will earn their Laubach tutor certification and will be able to work one-on-one with someone who wants to improve his or her reading and writing skills.

Workshop participants must pack a lunch for the Saturday session. Beverages and snacks will be provided by the Literacy Council.

To pre-register, call the Literacy Council office at 754-7323.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

## Attracting A Crowd

Mac Middleton of Moncks Corner, S.C., draws a flock of hungry gulls with the promise of some wintertime treats.

## BCSD Answers More Than 250 Domestic Calls During January

Brunswick County Sheriff's Department deputies answered 257 domestic disturbance calls in January, an average of more than eight per day, according to a monthly officers' activity report released by Sheriff John Carr Davis.

Deputies and detectives made 17 arrests as prosecuting witness last month. There were 345 investigations made. Deputies found nine doors or windows open while on patrol during the month, the report said.

Approximately \$15,089 worth of stolen property was recovered.

Deputies served 287 civil papers and summoned 283 witnesses. Ten mental and inebriate papers were served, along with 227 local warrants.

More than 87,250 miles were logged, including 14 trips out of the county. The department used 6,475 gallons of gasoline.

Sheriff's personnel spent two off-duty hours in court and 50 on-duty hours. There were 36 crime prevention meetings held in January.

No report was given for narcotics division activities, courtroom hours or the monthly jail population.

## RECEIVED \$4,000 FROM CLAIM

# Holden Beach Man Arrested On Insurance Fraud Charge

One man faces fraud charges and more arrests are possible in an insurance scam allegedly perpetrated by an Elizabethtown man currently living near Holden Beach, a Brunswick County sheriff's detective said Monday.

Rodney Dale Britt, 25, has been charged with one count each of forging a certificate of title, obtaining property by false pretense, possession of stolen goods and failure to appear in court. He is also likely to face a charge of resisting arrest, Detective Capt. Phil Perry said.

Britt allegedly used another man's birth certificate and Social Security card to obtain a driver's license bearing his picture and another name, Perry said. The false identification was then allegedly used to obtain financing to buy a 1987 Oldsmobile from a Wilmington car dealer.

Last October, Britt allegedly reported the car stolen from the parking lot of a Wilmington department store, Perry said. Six weeks later it was found burned to a total loss in Horry County, S.C. Britt is believed to have filed an insurance claim for which he was paid \$4,000.


"The National Insurance Crime Bureau was called in after some-

body smelled a rat," Perry said.

Meanwhile, Perry said he was investigating a complaint from a man who said Britt sold him a recreational vehicle that turned out to be stolen. That inquiry intersected with the insurance fraud investigation and eventually led to Britt's arrest.

An investigation is continuing into these cases and others from elsewhere in the state that may be related, Perry said. There is a possibility that other local people will be charged in the incidents, he said.

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# Man Who Abducted Daughter Surrenders Following Standoff

Sheriff's deputies were hiding in the woods within a few feet of a man who had reportedly kidnapped his baby daughter early Saturday morning when he finally agreed to surrender after a three-hour standoff.

"We were in position and waiting for the signal to jump him. But we wanted to make sure the little girl didn't get hurt," said Detective Mike Speck, head of the sheriff's department emergency response team.

The girl's mother called 911 at about 2:45 a.m. to report that the 21-month-old girl's father had taken the toddler and run into the woods outside her trailer in the Churchill Mobile Home Park at Village Point. The child was dressed in only a diaper and T-shirt, according to Deputy Randy Robinson's incident report.

"We determined that the father was having problems with the mother and took the child and ran into the woods," said Detective Capt. Phil Perry. "He was not armed and the

child did not appear to be in any danger, except for the cold."

Robinson said he could hear the father, Mark Berlin Koon, 28, yelling from the woods when he arrived at the scene.

Hostage negotiator Lt. David Crocker arrived a short time later and began trying to talk Koon out of the woods. Crocker kept up a conversation with Koon for more than two hours, allowing the other deputies to pinpoint his location and close in around him.

The team had been given the go-ahead to retrieve the child and subdue Koon when he agreed to come out voluntarily, Perry said. Neither Koon nor the child was hurt in the incident.

Koon could not be charged with kidnapping because the child is his daughter, Perry said. Instead he was arrested on one count of misdemeanor child abuse and later freed on a \$300 bond.

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