

Time and Tide

65 years ago

It was November 24, 1943, and it was announced that week that farmers' income tax was due December 15. A marauding bear had been ambushed and killed by a group of Exum farmers and dogs; the rails of the late Southport railroad were being taken up and scrapped; and Leroy Mintz was the acting principal of Waccamaw High School.

A war bond sale at Bolivia High School featuring a local musical group and free-for-all cakewalk had netted almost \$3,000 for the war effort. Our editorial writer had delivered the traditional Thanksgiving message and was supporting the Cut-a-Cord pulpwood program.

55 years ago

It was November 18, 1953, and it was learned that week that the Air Force was planning to deactivate the crash rescue unit located on the Fort Johnson grounds. Residents in the new development east of the Southport business district were to get telephone service shortly; and cadet Edward Hanson of the N.C. State College Army ROTC unit had recently been promoted to sergeant first class.

Capt. J.B. Church, one of the automotive pioneers in Southport, had recently purchased a new car; and Harmon Smith had scored 52 points for Waccamaw in a recent basketball game.

45 years ago

One of our all-time favorite news photos was on the front-page of the *Pilot* for November 20, 1963. It showed Mrs. Sue King, librarian, obviously overjoyed by announcement that the Southport-Brunswick County Library was recipient of the "Book of the Month Award" of \$1,000 as first-place winner among small libraries in North Carolina. The shot may have been staged, but there was something naively innocent about the portion of the Thanksgiving poster in the background of the picture. It read, "Now Thank We All God."

The county board of commissioners was asking the Brunswick County Board of Elections to establish a voting precinct for Long Beach; and the feature that week showed G.E. Hubbard with a Stradivarius violin that was a family heirloom.

35 years ago

It was Thanksgiving week, 1973, and the *Pilot* for November 21 had an editorial about the pilgrims who started observance of this holiday. The main front-page photo was of the Oak Island bridge, under construction.

Virginia Walton had won the fall handicap tournament for women at Oak Island Golf Club; Ira Chadwick had been elected president of the Brunswick County Farm Bureau for the 15th consecutive year; and Mason Thomas of Chapel Hill had won third place in the 1973 Smithwick Award program for published historical feature stories with an article that appeared a few weeks before in the *Pilot*. It was about the Stuart House and Miss Kate.

30 years ago

Melody Diane Rabon had been crowned Miss Brunswick County at the Charlotte Jaycees' pageant on the Saturday before our publication for November 22, 1978, and we had her photo on the front page. The "Shop-at-Home" campaign for area merchants had been launched with appropriate promotion as the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce sought to keep Christmas shoppers close to home.

Announcement had been made that the Coastal Resources Commission was holding its November meeting on Oak Island; and Joe Best was getting set for the season as coach of the South Brunswick basketball team.

25 years ago

A spectacular blaze had been filmed at Orton Plantation before our edition of November 23, 1983, when a mock mansion had been burned for a sequence in the movie "Firestarter." The Southport Volunteer Fire Department was there in a stand-by capacity and one of our reporters, Karen Kornegay, was there with a camera, hence our big front-page photo.

JoJo White, former South Brunswick football star, had been voted the outstanding back of the year at Livingstone College; the high school basketball season was about to open, and a headline on our sports page announced "North Season 'Centers' Around 6-foot-7 Brown." That was Chucky Brown, future N.C. State and NBA performer.

20 years ago

A helicopter from WTVD-TV in Durham had flown staff members to Southport for an interview with Sue King about her World War II experiences with the American Red Cross in the Southwest Pacific and we had a photo and story in the *Pilot* for November 23, 1988. Chucky Brown Night had been celebrated at the North Brunswick High School gym when coach Jim Valvano brought his N.C. State basketball squad to Leland for a scrimmage.

Bill Brooks, in charge of The Nature Conservancy program at Bald Head Island, reported 112 loggerhead turtle nests had been located and protected during the summer season, producing 8,931 baby turtles; and the reopening of the king mackerel season in offshore waters had resulted in three pictures of big catches made here that week.

15 years ago

It was November 24, 1993, and changes were being proposed for county zoning, which wouldn't prevent rock mining by Martin Marietta near Southport but might forestall other such developments. Bald Head Island governors were considering asking for state help in requiring sprinklers in new construction — this in the wake of the Swansquarter holocaust of September; the schooner *Bill of Rights* had moored at the city pier over the weekend; and plans were being made to construct a bulkhead, stairs and observation platform in front of the Southport Community Building.

Brunswick Community College had named another contractor in hopes of getting the Odell Williamson Auditorium completed; Bald Head Creek had been closed to shellfishing for a year because of pollution; and the fourth annual Robert Ruark Festival was upcoming that weekend in Franklin Square Park.

10 years ago

It was November 25, 1998, and Security Savings Bank, Southport's homegrown financial institution, had reached out to Randleman in an upstate expansion move. No changes were expected in operations here. A revised statewide road plan had possibly postponed new construction, including a second bridge access to Oak Island, for five years; and county planners were worried that commercial development might be forestalling construction of a connector road westward from Southport to Long Beach Road.

The former county school headquarters (and former county home) had been razed for an expansion of Smithville Township District Park; and groundbreaking for the new community center was expected before Christmas.

5 years ago

It was November 26, 2003, and we had front-page coverage that week of young pilgrims enjoying a Thanksgiving feast at Southport Christian School — a regular treat for the pre-K class. A judge had ordered Schuster Park removed from the end of West Oak Island Drive, but said a public fishing pier could remain there; and the Boiling Spring Lakes nature trail had opened, though construction of a critical bridge was not complete.

Brunswick Community College's first edition of the campus newspaper — "The Tide" — had hit the stands; Caswell Beach had received state funds for parking and a beach access ramp at the newly acquired lighthouse site; and 90 youngsters had been airborne for the first time Saturday in a Young Eagles introductory flight program at Brunswick County Airport.



Photo by Jonathan Spiers
Sisters Jen Iapalucci (left) and Elie Erickson of grassroots group Where We Live, accompanied by Iapalucci's son Max and their niece Becca, are making one final push to raise money for new playground equipment at Muse Park near Boiling Spring Lakes City Hall.

BOILING SPRING LAKES

Playground gets one more push

Anonymous \$4,000 pledge helps, but more funds are needed

By Jonathan Spiers
Staff Writer

Ingratulated by a recent anonymous pledge for a matching grant worth \$4,000, a community advocacy group in Boiling Spring Lakes is making one final fundraising push for enough money to renovate the city's most visible yet under-utilized playground.

It's been more than a year since sisters and city residents Jen Iapalucci and Eleanor Erickson formed Where We Live, intended to promote community activism and participation in improving the quality of life of the area. Since then, the group has undertaken several projects, from raising money for equipment for the police department's K9 unit to hosting monthly social events tailored around varying topics and guest speakers.

But the goal that started it all — a fundraising drive to provide updated playground equipment for Muse Park — has yet to be realized. To date, Where We Live has raised just over \$10,000 through local donations, grants, special events and the Buy-A-Brick campaign, which invites people and businesses to purchase a brick that will be engraved with their name and assembled as a walkway leading to the park.

With the recent anonymous pledge for the \$4,000 matching grant, Where We Live is more than halfway to its fundraising goal, which remains about \$8,000 away. The group is once more asking the community at-large to donate what it can to not only help improve a playground, but also to add something more to the area as a whole.

"We're asking everyone to donate one dollar," Erickson said, noting that, with nearly 10,000 copies of *The State Port Pilot* distributed each week, if each person who reads the newspaper donated that amount, the year-plus-long effort would prove a success.

'We're sticking to the goals we set out when we started — recognizing needs in the community and helping people get the things they want.'

Elie Erickson
Project organizer

"We're in the last stages of our fundraising effort, and we have a nice offer for playground equipment that'll meet our needs," she said. "We want to put this thing to bed so we can move on to the next big thing for our community."

Despite the effort the campaign has taken, Iapalucci said the point all along was to involve the community without causing any financial burden, even in tough economic times.

"We never wanted to go the route of trying to make all that money in one fell swoop, because we want to make it fun. You don't want to preclude the community you're trying to help," she said. "We've had a lot of support from the community, a lot of vocal support."

"I think this community is really in transition. Different factions of the community want different things," she said. "We're not trying to tell everyone what Boiling Spring Lakes should be like. We're just trying to have a playground, so we're not all driving out to Dutchman Creek."

That park, off Fish Factory Road toward Oak Island, is an example of what Where We Live would like to see available to families in Boiling Spring Lakes, as well as any other areas that are without such amenities. A rendering on display at the Boiling Spring Lakes Community Center shows what the group has in mind for Muse Park, which currently features a wooden, outdated jungle gym

that is inaccessible to toddlers.

"A lot of people don't realize that a two-year-old can't climb a ladder," said Mary Green, parks and recreation director for the city, who has been collaborating with Where We Live on the project.

"The new structure will have steps," Iapalucci said.

"And it's going to be great looking with the proximity to City Hall," Erickson added. "This could really be a focal point in Boiling Spring Lakes. The existing structure will come down, and the goal is to create a larger playground that could accommodate toddlers, eight- to ten-year-olds, and more shade built into the structure."

Green said the playground has served the community reasonably well in the past but is certainly due for an upgrade.

"The structures were built by volunteers. It was a good start for the city. But a lot of things have changed," she said, noting safety requirements such as compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

"Luckily we're blessed enough that Muse is big enough — there's a lot to work with. It is a focal point," she said, noting the park's proximity to City Hall. "This is certainly a priority for the parks and rec department, and we're trying to educate the city about the importance of play."

Green applauds the efforts of Where We Live and encourages the public's participation, noting

that quality-of-life amenities such as parks and recreation facilities are often placed lower on a municipality's needs list. Other municipal needs typically take precedent, but Green maintains that recreational opportunities are no less important.

"It's important to have the grassroots effort that has been lacking in this area," she said. "The demographics are changing. People are coming here and realizing they don't have things here they want. That input is so important. Where We Live I really thought would be just about the playground, and they've done so much more than that."

"We're sticking to the goals we set out when we started — recognizing needs in the community and helping people get the things they want," Erickson said. Among those things are preschool classes, morning social outings for mothers, monthly gatherings featuring guest speakers and presenters, and the popular Murder Mystery fundraising events. Earlier this year, the group also organized a fun run and walk in Boiling Spring Lakes that attracted 88 participants from throughout Brunswick County.

"There's definitely a community within a community developing, and we hope to see that grow. The stronger we are, the more far-reaching we can be," Erickson said, adding that Where We Live is meant to help neighboring communities beyond Boiling Spring Lakes as well.

"We will help with anything that goes with our main goal," Iapalucci said. That goal, and the group's motto, her sister added: "Building better communities."

■ *More information about Where We Live and opportunities to contribute are available online at www.wherewelivenc.com.*



This rendering, on display at the Boiling Spring Lakes Community Center, shows what the playground at Muse Park would look like. After more than a year of fundraising, local grassroots group Where We Live is \$8,000 away from purchasing the equipment.