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Judge dismisses suit over Town Hall bids

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A Circuit Court judge last week dismissed a suit claiming that the town of Pawleys Island violated the local, state and federal laws in seeking contractors to build a new Town Hall. It was the second win in court for the town in as many

months. The state Supreme Court said in February that it would not hear an appeal of a long-running challenge to the town's zoning ordinance in a case involving a beach walkway.

Judge Ben Culbertson ruled that a suit brought by a Murrells Inlet man who was denied the chance to bid on the Town Hall project was "a frivolous lawsuit." He

dismissed the claim and ordered Thomas G. Davis to pay the town's costs and attorney's fees.

BEC Construction is preparing to start work on the project to build a new Town Hall at the southwest corner of Myrtle Avenue and the North Causeway, across the street from the facility that was flooded
SEE "SUITS," PAGE 4



SCHOOLS

Reports rise with fears following Fla. shooting

BY EMILY TOPPER
COASTAL OBSERVER

A surge in reports of suspicious activity in the Georgetown County School District and schools across the state following last month's Parkland, Fla., shooting has led parents to question the district's safety and communication procedures.

Kelly Stuckey, the former director of safety and risk management for the district and current president of the Parent-Teacher Organization at Georgetown Middle, said she was alarmed when she heard that a gun was found at the school. The .38 caliber pistol was unloaded.

"You hear about school violence on the news, but you don't expect for it to happen in our town," Stuckey, who has two children in school, said. "I know the procedures that the district does have in place ... but then even I started questioning why these precautions weren't taken to ensure that there wasn't any additional threat either the day it was found or the next day. Parents found out through the media, which I believe is what infuriated many parents."

Alan Walters, the current director of safety and risk management, said parents are alerted when there is a credible threat. For situations that are unsubstantiated, notices may not be sent out.

"You'd get into doing that all the time if you tried to do that," Walters said. "If there is something that we think they need to know as a parent, if there is a safety concern, we are going to let them know. But we don't want to create anxiety where there shouldn't be, and we also don't want to give people ideas."

At Georgetown Middle, the student who brought the gun was recommended for expulsion. "Just because they are recommended, that doesn't mean that's the final outcome," Walters said. "They have a hearing and the facts of the case are reviewed, as well as the student's prior discipline history and the grades."

Besides expulsion, possible outcomes include suspension, placement in an alternative school, home-bound study or returning to school. Students who are recommended for expulsion
SEE "SAFETY," PAGE 3



Rob Lupine of C-Way Marine sets a piling for the Pawleys Island Chapel
Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

PAWLEYS ISLAND

Chapel heads home after 1 more delay

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Pawleys Island Chapel was due to move back home to its perch over the marsh after spending a week on dry land for the first time in 70 years. Jimmy McCants, a board member of the nonprofit that manages the island icon, wasn't surprised that

this move, like the one last week, was delayed.

Workers from C-Way Marine Construction of Murrells Inlet have worked every day since the chapel was moved off its deteriorating foundation to set rows of new pilings into the marsh that borders Pawleys Creek. "They haven't taken a day off," McCants said.

The repairs to the foundation were scheduled to start in January, but the project needed additional permits to shift out of the right of way on Myrtle Avenue and farther into the marsh. When cranes arrived to move the building across the street to a vacant lot, movers discovered they couldn't lift the 1,500-square-foot building.
SEE "CHAPEL," PAGE 4

OFFSHORE DRILLING

Thomas joins effort to lobby Congress over leases

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

County Council Member John Thomas is the only representative from South Carolina in an effort by local officials to lobby Congress to oppose opening portions of the Outer Continental Shelf to oil and gas exploration. He followed a path to the Capitol this week that is familiar to his wife, Peg Howell, one of the leaders of a local group that has fought leasing plans for the last three years.

The push comes on the eve of Friday's deadline for public comment on the leasing plan presented in January by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. If adopted, the plan would allow oil and gas exploration off the South Carolina coast to begin as early as 2020.

Thomas introduced a resolution that was adopted by Georgetown County Council last year opposing offshore drilling. He was among local officials from
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NONPROFITS | Baruch Foundation

She's Jayni Chase and he's not

BY EMILY TOPPER
COASTAL OBSERVER

As might have been said of Belle Baruch in her time, Jayni Chase is a force of nature.

That's what Ben Zeigler, chair of the Belle W. Baruch Foundation, said last week as he presented Chase with the inaugural Hugh C. Lane Jr. Award for Excellence in Education.

"After getting to know Jayni, I am amazed at all of the things she has going on," Zeigler said. "She is a very passionate and energetic lady. Like Belle, Jayni is fiercely independent with the same keen vision of environmental stewardship through education."

In 1988, Chase founded the Center for Environmental Education, a resource for teachers focused on environmentalism. Her book, "Blueprint for a Green School," offers suggestions for educators and students hoping to create a green footprint at their schools. She's also been involved in numerous organizations dedicated to environmental education and conservation, including Global Green

USA, Friends of the Earth and the Coalition for Clean Air.

The wife of comedian Chevy Chase, she said her environmental efforts can be found in their own home.

Her husband joined her at the award ceremony.

"My passion for environmental education is my life force," Jayni said. "When my adorable husband and I met many years ago, he talked to me so passionately about his childhood days spending time in the outdoors, especially in Woodstock, New York. Little did he know that marrying me meant that he can't leave a room without turning a light off. I get upset with him when he leaves the water running for too long."

Chase's award was named in honor of Hugh C. Lane Jr., who has served as a trustee for the foundation since 1996. He has served as both chairman and vice chairman.

"The finest and most noble way we interact with our environment is through the
SEE "HOBCAW," PAGE 5



Jayni Chase received an award last week for her work with environmental education. Her husband, Chevy Chase, has another tie to Hobcaw.
Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer