

Bluffton Today

BLUFFTON'S ONLY DAILY HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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Would you like some chocolate with that chocolate?

Sue Ade showcases some recipes so good your sweet tooth won't know what hit it. **Page 8**

Volume 4, Number 166 • **COMING TOMORROW:** Reader Brian Cudahy takes us back 146 years to America's bloodiest single day.



From the Low Countries to the Lowcountry and back

A lost ring returns to its owners in The Netherlands thanks to a good American Samaritan.
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NEWS

County lowers boat taxes to raise money

BY LOLITA HUCKABY
BLUFFTON TODAY

Beaufort County Council members hope to collect more in taxes from boat owners by lowering their tax rates.

At the urging of county Auditor Sharon Burris, council members agreed earlier this month to reduce the assessment rates on boats. On Tuesday, the council's Finance Committee agreed to go a step further and expand the cumulative time larger yachts cruising the Intracoastal Waterway can tie up in Beaufort County waters without being taxed from 90 to 180 days.

"The way I see it, our hotel and restaurant owners could make a lot more money from these large boaters if they were allowed to stay longer," said Councilman Paul Somerville.

Councilman Stu Rodman said a recent conversation with an employee at the Harbour Town Marina on Hilton

Stephen Berend/Bluffton Today

SEE 'TAXES' ON PAGE 4

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Taxes

From the cover

Head Island indicated some transient boaters have been known to spend as much as \$10,000 a day during stops at the popular marina.

Burris brought up the tax policy changes more than a year ago when state tax laws changed, but the council voted just last month for the

first reading of an ordinance to change the tax structure.

The idea, as outlined by Burris and based on data collected by Horry County, which has already changed its policy, is to reduce the tax assessment on boats from the standard 10.5 percent to just 6 percent.

By decreasing the assessment, the thinking goes, more boat owners will opt to register their boats in Beaufort County rather than other South Carolina counties where the rates

might be higher.

According to Burris, Horry County saw its tax revenues from boats jump from \$600,000 to more than \$1 million in a year.

Beaufort County's high boat tax rate was mentioned recently in a Southern Boating magazine article, said Tom Wilson, the owner of Port Royal Landing Marina, who urged the council at its Oct. 8 meeting to change its assessment rates.

Silver Eagles return; Moss Creek vets will be there

BLUFFTON TODAY

More than 200 Marines and sailors will return to Beaufort today after serving seven months in Al Asad, Iraq.

There to meet them will be at least five members of the Moss Creek Marines, a Bluffton-based veterans group who "adopted" one of the returning squadrons, sending its members goodies like Xboxes and beef jerky as reminders of home.

Al Calderon, Monroe Boaz (an Iwo Jima veteran), Roger Garreau, Bob Morris and Bill Mott of the Moss Creek Marines plan to be there at 2 p.m. today when their active-duty comrades come home.

The returning Marines belong to the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115 "Silver Eagles" (which the Bluffton group adopted) and the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 31 "Stingers," both based at the Marine Corps

Air Station Beaufort.

The Marines' duties in Iraq included providing "close-air support for troops on the ground, including convoy security and armored reconnaissance," according to an MCAS Beaufort press release.

The Silver Eagles were the first "forward air-controller capable, single-seat F/A-18 Hornet squadron to deploy to Al Asad," the news release said.

Don't forget the Oyster Factory Park meeting

Bluffton officials will discuss plans for the Oyster Factory Park and the upcoming May River Road (S.C. 46) streetscape project Wednesday at 6 p.m.

The meeting will be in the Town Hall auditorium. Town officials will discuss both plans and then ask for feedback from the community.

The budget for the park project is \$2 million spread over four years. The park covers 6.8 acres stretching from the May River to Bridge Street. Wharf Street runs

through the park to a public boat landing near the park's namesake, the Bluffton Oyster Co.

For more information, call 706-4510.

USCB plans Constitution Day celebrations

What better way to celebrate Constitution Day than with a voter registration drive?

On Wednesday, America's official Constitution Day, the University of South Carolina Beaufort will register voters and serve hotdogs, hamburgers and ice cream

on a first-come, first-served basis.

The event begins at 6 p.m. in the Bluffton campus' Hargray Building's lobby.

Harold F. Gortner, a professor emeritus of government and politics at George Mason University, will speak beginning at 7. Gortner has taught courses in American government, state and local government, and public administration. His talk, titled "Your Voice," will "discuss how generation gaps, new technology and other surprising factors will play into this year's presidential election," according to a USCB press release.

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