

Clubs given second wind

Benefactors help with preservation, maintenance of boats

By **ERIKA CAPEK**

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With the Glynn County public schools' budget squeezed by the reduced tax collections of a weak economy, individuals and groups are stepping in to keep some student programs afloat.

In the case of sailing programs at Brunswick High School and Glynn Academy, benefactors like Pam and David Heine and Bob Torras Sr. are giving time and resources to keep programs going, said Cmdr. Bob Spencer, Navy Junior ROTC instructor at Brunswick High School, who also manages the sailing program.

The Heines began working with Spencer about 10 years ago, when the program was beginning. Pam Heine said her children were involved with the program when they were in school and she has stayed on to help out.

"Mainly what I do with the program is help out at the practices and at the regattas," she said. "I'm just an extra pair of hands."

Support and assistance from the community is more important than ever this year, Spencer said.

The Glynn Academy and Brunswick High sailing programs had their \$21,200 budgets cut to about

\$8,000 this school year. Although the fleet of more than a dozen sailboats is paid for, maintenance for the boats that are about 10 years old is a significant expense.

"Although we have a fleet that's doing just great, we have to look to the future and build a kitty for the preservation and maintenance of the boats," said Mike Harris, past commodore of the Golden Isles Sailing Club, a community sailing club that is separate from the high school program.

Torras has been instrumental in the continuance of the Glynn Academy and Brunswick High sailing program, Harris said. "If this organization has an angel, he is it," Harris said.

For years, Torras has not charged the high school sailing program dockage fees at the **Brunswick Landing Marina**. Fees could potentially be about \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year.

"We want to do everything we can do to support young people to use the waters of this area," Torras said.

"As a result, when we found out they wanted to establish a sailing club, we gave them a dock to use. We feel like it's really an important thing in this

Please see **SAILING, 5A**

Sailing: Programs took big budget cuts

11/29/10

Continued from 1A

community.”

About 50 students participate in the program at the two high schools. They practice Mondays and Wednesdays and sometimes Saturdays during the competition season that runs from September through April.

Supporters of the high school sailing program say this is something they hope to see continue. One way they plan on doing that is by asking corporations for sponsorships.

If they can raise and maintain a reserve of from \$15,000 to \$20,000 in 2011, from then on it would simply be about replenishing the fund

of about \$2,000 to \$5,000 year, Harris said.

“We don’t want to see this sailing program to go belly-up because it would be (difficult) to start it over again,” he said.

Another program that received a boost from community support this year is the Brunswick High and Glynn Academy marching

bands.

At the beginning of the school year, the bands were allowed one out-of-town trip because of budget reductions.

However, sponsor Mark Stambaugh of Stambaugh Aviation agreed to cover all costs for a trip to Richmond Hill for both student bands.