

under the sun

Oyster Queen Loves The Brunswick Islands



BY DAWN ELLEN BOYD

Natalyn Shipp's favorite way to eat oysters is fried. She also likes them cooked in the shell but explained, "Opening them gets to be kind of difficult because of my fingernails."

Natalyn is the 1985 N.C. Oyster Festival queen. Last year she was chosen from ten contestants. She has had a busy year representing the festival and the South Brunswick Islands, making many appearances including the Azalea Festival, the Sun Fun Festival, the N.C. Festival by the Sea at Holden Beach, the Miss Pender County and Miss Brunswick County pageants, the N.C. Strawberry Festival, and the N.C. Fourth of July parade in Southport.

The 19-year-old Wilmington resident isn't new to the pageant scene. She was the 1983 Tri-County Cinderella queen, as well as first runner-up in the 1984 Miss New Hanover County pageant and third runner-up in the 1983 Teenage Princess pageant.

On October 5 she plans to vie for the title of Spot Festival queen in Hampstead.

She hopes all this brings her closer to her goal of being a contestant in the Miss North Carolina Pageant.

Meanwhile, she has enjoyed her reign as Oyster Festival queen. "The South Brunswick Islands are beautiful. The people here are wonderful. They've done so much for me as far as support and effort. I've enjoyed representing them very much."

Natalyn is studying speech communications at UNC-Wilmington, and although she is undecided about a career, she is interested in fashion marketing. She occasionally models for La Chic Agency in Wilmington. Keeping up with her dancing and singing is a priority, along with traveling as Oyster Festival queen and going to school. In her spare time she enjoys playing sports.

Her most memorable experience as Oyster Festival queen was the four days she spent on the queen's court during the 1985 Azalea Festival. "We were up early in the morning and went to bed late at night," she said. "We

were on the Jim Burns show, we did an interview on WECT-TV, we went to garden parties and introduced ourselves and represented our titles, we went to the coronation pageant on Saturday night which featured Rich Little, and we also went to the Donny and Marie (Osmond) concert Thursday night. We were in the parade. It was just a lot of fun."

She also had the opportunity in Raleigh to have lunch with the state's director of travel and tourism, Charles Heatherly, during the week of the Miss North Carolina pageant.

The entire year has afforded Natalyn many opportunities to do her favorite thing: meet new people. "You can learn so much from other people!" she exclaimed.

The person responsible for helping Natalyn keep up with her busy schedule is her mother, Jane Shipp. Natalyn said, "I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for my mother. She has been with me throughout the whole year. She has been with me everywhere and helped me get dressed. She has done everything from making sure my face is on straight to making sure my dresses are right and my clothes are together. She's been the backbone behind it."

"My dad's been close to me, too. My parents say they're my biggest fans!"

Even though her days as Oyster Festival queen are drawing to a close, Natalyn says she is looking forward to this year's pageant Saturday, Oct. 12. "Not because I'm giving up the title," she said, "because I don't think I'll ever give up Brunswick County or the oyster festival. It will always hold a special place in my heart."

Natalyn says she is looking forward to giving another girl the chance to have as much fun as she had being queen.

She said, "I'm looking forward to it in the sense that I'll be able to give another girl the opportunity to do the things I have done and learn the things I have learned while traveling and meeting other people and entertaining in other cities."

OYSTER FESTIVAL QUEEN Natalyn Shipp shows off a festival sweatshirt, available along with T-shirts at the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce.

She will crown her successor on Oct. 12 at Shallotte Middle School.

STAFF PHOTO BY DAWN ELLEN BOYD

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