

Oysters Star At Fall Festival

It's Oyster Festival time again, which means South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce members are gearing up to entertain guests at the increasingly popular event.

The sixth annual festival begins Saturday with foot races at Holden Beach at 8:30 a.m. and then moves to a new rain-or-shine covered location at the Ocean Isle Beach/Sunset Beach Market on N.C. 904 near Seaside. There the focus will be on the oyster—shucked against the clock in competition and served up raw, in cocktails, or steamed in all-you-can-eat quantities. This year's menu will also feature fried flounder, and for the first time, steamed clams, according to Chamber Director Anne Marie Schettini. For snackers, seafood samplers, hot-dogs, ice cream, snow cones, donuts and popcorn will be offered at various booths.

One event will be missing from this year's line-up. The queen's pageant will be rescheduled later in the year.

Added to the line-up is a second day of activity at the main festival sites. More than 60 arts and crafts and food booths set up Saturday will be open again on Sunday afternoon.

The chamber had anticipated offering gospel music Sunday afternoon. Ms. Schettini said, but has run into problems. The choirs and gospel groups need an in-tune piano, she said in a last-minute plea for help, but so far no one has agreed to loan one to the chamber for the afternoon.

Volunteers have stepped forward to help run booths and to clean up after the festival, though. Boy Scout Troop No. 287 will be back on the clean-up detail, joined by Girl Scout Troop No. 859. Students in Harriett Bellamy's tourism and marketing class at West Brunswick High School will staff food and beverage services.

"It's going to be a great festival," predicted Ms. Schettini, excited over the new location and its possibilities.

A program and complete schedule is included in a special festival tabloid supplement inside this issue.



At Oyster Roast Saturday

Raleigh Dixon, resident statesman for the Dixon's Chapel Oyster Roast, makes sure Nancy Wilson of Southport has all the oysters, fried bread and condiments she wants. Dixon says he has helped out at every roast held by the church over the past 20 to 25 years. His parents were instrumental in organizing the church, located at Varnantown. The story and more pictures are inside this issue.

Sunset Beach Restaurant Held Up By A Young Diner

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

A "funny-looking" young man who ordered a \$12 shrimp dinner at the Italian Fisherman restaurant in Sunset Beach Monday night never paid his check and didn't leave a tip.

Instead, after eating part of the meal, he approached restaurant owner Bonny Rotunda at the cash register, asked for his check, then pointed a small derringer at her.

She gave him the contents of the drawer, \$647.38, and he left, without attracting the attention of employees or the few diners in the restaurant.

Rotunda said Tuesday the man had a strange look on his face when he came in, and paused when she asked, "One for dinner?" Then he said "Yes," and she seated him at a table facing the window. "He asked me if he could go to the bathroom first, and when he came back he sat down facing me," she said.

Several waitresses were in the vicinity when the man entered, Rotunda recalled, but a little later,

she was alone in the room, with most other customers having left.

"He asked for his check, and I turned around to look for it. When I looked around he had this little gun pointed at me," she said. "I asked him, 'Are you sure you want to do this?' and he said, 'Yes, Ma'am,' so I gave him the money and he left."

She described him later to Sunset Beach police as a tall, white man in his early 20s, with shoulder-length blond hair, wearing blue jeans and an oxford shirt. He weighed between 185 and 200 pounds, she estimated.

"He didn't look crazy or anything, but he might have been on drugs, because his eyes looked dilated," she noted.

After fleeing the restaurant, police think he drove a pickup truck north on Hwy. 179 toward Seaside, according to officer Chuck Yeager. He has not yet been apprehended, and Sunset Beach police are asking for any information regarding someone answering the man's description.

IN SANITATION SWITCH

Shallotte To Negotiate Contract With Chambers

BY SUSAN USHER

Shallotte residents could begin quietly rolling 90-gallon plastic trash containers to the curb as early as November.

Town aldermen narrowed their choice of sanitation vendors to one last Wednesday night and began final negotiations with Chambers Development Inc.

Mayor Jerry Jones said if negotiations proceed smoothly, a contract could be signed this month. "I would hope we could switch over by Nov. 1st," he said. "I don't think it will be any later than December 1."

Timing of the switch-over will depend in part on when a contract is completed. Town officials estimate it will take about two weeks notice to prepare residents for the change.

Board members had been negotiating privately with two other firms as well, Waste Industries and Brunswick Refuse.

Wednesday, they voted unanimously to "begin contract negotiations" with Chambers on a motion by Alderman David Gause, contingent upon reaching a mutually acceptable contract. They'll be negotiating from a tentative contract price of \$55,067.40.

"Based on the services and bids received, I think we hardly have any choice except to go with Chambers," said Alderman Wilton Harrelson. "There was a substantial difference in bids with almost identical service."

Chambers, with its nearest office in Conway, S.C., serves Ocean Isle Beach and Holden Beach and recent-

"They're going to get better service than they've had."

—Mayor Jerry Jones

ly signed a contract with Columbus County.

Town Attorney Mark Lewis was to send suggested revisions to a proposed sample contract to Chambers, with the firm expected to meet with the board at its next session on Oct. 15.

According to Mayor Jerry Jones, Shallotte residents will get better service from a private vendor than they've received of late through the town.

"We haven't always lived up to our agreement during the past two years," he added. "We've not always provided twice a week pickup."

Lewis recommended the town adopt an ordinance requiring use of the 90-gallon roll-out containers and carts the vendor would provide to residences and small businesses as part of its contract. Larger businesses would be required to have dumpsters.

"I feel like it will work well if we can get the people educated," said Jones. "It's no big job to roll the cart."

The firm is to submit its proposed route schedule at least two weeks in advance, the board has suggested.

(See SHALLLOTTE, Page 2-A)

Russ, Edge Earn ATMC Directors' Seats

A slate of four candidates for two director's seats drew a large proxy vote at the Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp. annual meeting Saturday, where W.T. (Rusty) Russ Jr. and Jennings Edge were elected to three-year terms.

ATMC Member Relations Director Percy Woodard said 1,600 proxy votes were cast, along with votes by the 430 members who attended the event at West Brunswick High School at Shallotte.

While proxy votes were up by several hundred from a year ago, actual attendance was down slightly.

Russ, of Ocean Isle Beach, won the District 4 seat and was the top vote-getter of the race. He received 1,460 votes to Shallotte Point resident Rozell Hewitt's 546 votes. Both were nominated by petition for the seat and both are former county commissioners. The co-operative's candidate for the seat, incumbent Elbert Pigott, resigned shortly after his name was put in nomination. Russ is service director at Jones Ford in Shallotte. District 4 encompasses Sunset and Ocean Isle Beaches, Seaside, Gause Landing, Brick Landing and Shallotte Point communities.

In the District 2 race, Jennings Edge of Thomasboro received 1,323

votes to Linda Walters' 682. She is from Bonaparte's Retreat II. Edge was appointed in May to fill the unexpired term of J.C. Stanaland, who retired. Edge owns Edge Construction Co. District 2 includes Carolina Shores, Hickman's Crossroads, Thomasboro, Grissettown, Longwood and Regan communities.

Russ and Edge will each serve three-year terms.

Following the annual meeting, the directors re-elected Carol Danford as president and Douglas Hawes as secretary-treasurer. Charles Mills was elected to succeed Lester Babson as vice president. They will serve one-year terms.

Woodard said registration and vote-counting both flowed more smoothly than last year, with the meeting starting on time and ending at approximately 9:30 p.m. Votes had been tabulated by the close of the intermission that followed screening of a 45-minute multi-image slide program on North Carolina.

"It ran as smoothly as you could expect," said Woodard. Faster modems for the computers used to verify memberships sped up registration, as did advanced registration and receipt of proxies before the meeting.

Testimony Begins In Thomas Long Trial

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

After five and a half days spent selecting a jury in Brunswick County Superior Court, lawyers gave brief opening arguments and settled down Tuesday to testimony in the trial of Thomas Long for the March 25 shooting death of his estranged wife, Annette.

The 53-year-old Leland man has been charged with first degree murder of Mrs. Long and with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill on former Brunswick County Commission Chairman Cyril "Franky" Thomas.

The seven-woman, five-man jury heard testimony Tuesday from Thomas and from Pender Burke, a friend of Mrs. Long who was visiting her the night of the shooting. Dr. Darrell Tackett of Wilmington who treated Mrs. Long in New Hanover Memorial Hospital moments before her death, and Det. Richard Burgess of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

In early April, Thomas related the events of March 25 to The Beacon. He said he went to Mrs. Long's apartment at No. 2 Brunswick Place in Olde Towne, at her invitation. He explained that he had been seeing her socially for a few weeks, a circumstance known to Long.

When he arrived at her home that night, the woman who owned the house where Mrs. Long lived was giving her a permanent, Thomas said, and Pender Burke was also visiting.

About 11 p.m., Thomas said he and Mrs. Long decided to go to a nearby grocery store for snacks and got into his car.

As he started the car, he said, he heard someone coming from behind it and rolled down his window. Long appeared at his window with a gun, and Mrs. Long jumped out of the car and was thrown to the ground and shot, Thomas said.

Thomas quickly backed his car out of the drive, then was shot in the neck and shoulder, but kept driving. He proceeded to his home in Wilmington, where he tried telephoning Mrs. Long, but found her line out of order.

He said he then went to New Hanover Memorial Hospital, arriving moments before Mrs. Long was brought in. Shortly after 2 a.m. as a bullet from a .357 Magnum was being removed from his shoulder, he was told of Mrs. Long's death.

Det. Burgess testified that he found the gun in Long's Isuzu truck shortly after his arrival on the scene that night. He then transported Long to the Brunswick County jail in Bolivia.

The next day, Mar. 26, Burgess returned to the scene in Olde Towne, accompanied by Capt. Phil Perry, Lt. Sonny Padgett and Sheriff John Carr Davis, all of the Brunswick County Sheriff's department. He said they made a thorough search of the yard, driveway, nearby roads and Long's truck.

(See TESTIMONY, Page 2-A)

Judge Greer 'Critical' After Monday Accident

District Judge Lee J. "Bubba" Greer is in critical condition in the neurological intensive care unit at N.C. Memorial Hospital in Chapel Hill after undergoing surgery Monday following an accident in Bladen County.

Greer was on his way to the Bladen County courthouse in Elizabethtown, according to Trooper J.R. Raynor, when his 1986 Nissan Maxima collided with a pickup truck driven by Rocky Lee Watson, 18, of Elizabethtown, on secondary road 1700 just south of Elizabethtown.

The driver's side of Greer's car received the greatest impact, and Greer was rendered unconscious when the truck's fender crashed through the windshield. Efforts to remove him from the car with hydraulic equipment required a half hour. He was wearing a seatbelt.

The judge was taken to Bladen County Hospital and airlifted from there shortly after to Chapel Hill, where Cynthia Layton, a N.C. Memorial Hospital spokesperson said he suffered severe head and internal injuries.

Greer, who lives in Long Beach, is an unopposed candidate for reelection this Nov. 4, to the bench in the 13th Judicial District, which includes Brunswick, Columbus and Bladen counties. He was appointed in December, 1983.

Watson was charged with driving without caution and at a dangerous speed, Raynor said. He was treated at Bladen County Hospital for minor injuries.

Johnson Joins Southern National As Bank Branch Announced Here

The sixth largest bank in the state, Southern National Bank of North Carolina, has announced plans to establish an office in Shallotte and has appointed Leo Johnson Jr. Brunswick County executive.

Southern National has opened a business development office at Promenade Office Complex in Shallotte until its branch office opens in January. Plans call for the branch to be located at the corner of Hwy. 17 and Smith Avenue at Twin Creek Shopping Plaza.

Johnson, who is operating out of the business development office, said the Shallotte location "serves as a link between Southern National offices in Wilmington, Whiteville and the Grand Strand."

Johnson has been associated with United Carolina Bank since 1976. He was transferred last month to UCB's asset-based lending department in Whiteville.

A Brunswick County native, Johnson is a graduate of UNC-Wilmington and earned a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting. He also completed Louisiana State University Banking School in 1984.

He is active in many community organizations such as the Shallotte Lions Club, Wilmington Masonic Lodge 319, Brunswick County Shrine Club, Cape Fear Council of Boy Scouts of America where he serves as vice president and received the 1985 Silver Beaver award, and the

South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce where he is a board member and past president.

He serves as a board member and on the executive committee of both the Brunswick County Resources and Development Commission and the Brunswick County Economic Development Corporation.

Johnson has two children, James Leo III and Susanne. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Johnson Sr. of Leland.

Southern National, the bank he will head in Brunswick County, has 101 branch offices in 44 cities and towns in North Carolina and assets of \$1.5 billion. Headquartered in Lumberton, Southern National was founded in 1897.



LEO JOHNSON JR.