

Shell Point Clammers Angered By State Action To Close Waters

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County waters re-opened to clam harvesting last Thursday—not a moment too soon for a group of Shell Point fishermen who say state officials kept them out of business too long.

Waters from Southport to the South Carolina state line were closed to shellfishermen Aug. 15 following several days of steady rain. Local clammers were out of work until the state re-opened the area Aug. 26.

Simon Payne, a fisherman for seven years, is one of about 50 clammers who regularly sell shellfish at Chadwick Seafood at Shell Point. Payne and other clammers couldn't earn a living during the 10-day closure.

Payne said last week having fishermen unemployed is bad for the economy. "There's thousands of people in this area that depend on that river. When these people are hurting for money, everybody else is hurting for money."

George Gilbert, assistant director of the N.C. Division of Shellfish Sanitation, said the state didn't keep local shellfish beds closed any longer than necessary.

"I know people don't understand, but things can't always open up as fast as you'd like them to," Gilbert said last week. "It's best to err on the side of safety."

The state often closes local waters to oyster and clam harvesting when it rains. Stormwater carries bacterial pollution into rivers and streams, and that makes shellfish unsafe to eat.

However, Payne and other clammers who work the Shallotte River think the shellfish beds were closed too long this time around.

They said last week there was no significant rainfall between the time the waters were closed until they re-



CLAM HARVESTING was recently stopped for 10 days in Brunswick County, which was too long according to these Shell Point fishermen. Pictured (from left) are Elmo Covil, Joe Comuzie, John Henry Ward, R.H. Lennard, Simon Payne, Luree Chadwick and Toni Chadwick.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

opened last Thursday.

John Henry Ward, who has harvested clams and oysters in Shallotte River for 20 years, said he had never seen waters stay closed so long without rain.

"It's really dry now because some of the stuff in our garden's trying to die," Ward said last Wednesday.

But Gilbert said state officials received reports of rain, heavy in some places, after the Aug. 15 closure.

"Maybe not everybody got it, but some people reported heavy showers down there after it closed," Gilbert said. "It's very hard to pinpoint where those areas were at and who was getting the rain."

Clammers say the state doesn't take local showers into consideration. At Shell Point Landing, residents measured just three inches of rain in August.

"Anybody that's worked here can tell by looking at it

if the water's clean or dirty," Payne said. "That water right now's as clear as I ever saw it. It isn't justified as dry as it's been."

Gilbert said several areas outside Brunswick County were closed following the mid-August showers and the state didn't have the resources to sample everywhere at the same time.

"We try to get areas open as quickly as we can because we know that people make their living this way," he said. "We don't want them to hurt any more than they have to."

Toni Chadwick of Chadwick Seafood said she has averaged buying between 30 and 40 bags of clams per day this summer. Clammers earn about \$22.50 for each bag of 250 clams.

Ishmael Chadwick, who ran the seafood house for 30 years before his daughter took over, said the state officials who control shellfishing aren't looking out for the people who pay their salaries.

"They get paid and paid good and these people that's digging these clams is paying their salaries," he said.

Gilbert said shellfish sanitation officials don't want the clammers out of business. "If it wasn't for the clammers there wouldn't be any need for our division," he said.

Ishmael Chadwick said the state should tell fishermen why it needs to close the waters. "They don't tell us what's caused the closure or nothing. If they told us we might could help them clean it up."

Chadwick said he thinks golf courses near Shallotte River are contributing to the pollution problem.

"Those golf courses use a lot of fertilizers and a lot of insecticides. They should be made to control it somehow," he said. "I think they should be made to clean up their act."

DRIVE SET FOR WHOLE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

Focus To Be On Type O In Upcoming Blood Drives

The American Red Cross, Cape Fear Chapter, will be making a special plea for Type O blood donors during four drives scheduled in Brunswick County during September.

- Sept. 9, Brunswick County Government Complex, Bolivia, 11 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 29, ADM, Southport, 9:30 a.m. until noon.
- Sept. 29, Doshier Hospital, Southport, 2-4 p.m.; and
- Sept. 30, Brunswick Community College, Supply, 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Overall blood donations have continued to improve, Red Cross officials said in a Monday media alert. Red Cross must register 1,350 donors each weekday to meet the projected transfusion needs of patients.

Two days of last week, the num-

ber of donors who registered was below the 1,350 goal—last Monday, only 865 people registered and on Wednesday, 1,212 registered.

When donations are down, supplies of Type O blood can become dangerously low. About 42 percent of the population has Type O, so it is the blood type that is transfused most often. It is also the universal blood type, meaning that it is used when a patient needs to be transfused immediately, and there isn't time to type the patient's blood.

"It's critical that we make sure enough blood is available to meet all emergencies that might take place," said Dr. Jerry Squires, principal officer for Carolinas Blood Services Region.

"Just this past week, an automobile accident victim needed more than 30 units of O-negative blood. We also provided O-positive blood for two liver transplant patients."

Liver transplants can use up to 30 or 40 units of blood. Each blood donation is a unit.

Blood donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh more than 110 pounds and be in good general

health. Blood donations can be made every 56 days.

Carolinas Blood Services Region serves 119 hospitals in 80 counties in North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Tax Bills Go Out

Ronnie Young, assistant Brunswick County tax supervisor, displays some of the 94,000 tax bills being mailed to property owners this week along with a brochure explaining the 1994 tax revaluation, which is currently underway. The brochure attempts to reassure taxpayers "that everyone (will) be assessed fairly and everyone (will) be given an opportunity to review and discuss their assessment with the appraisers and Board of Equalization and Review." Revaluations are performed in all North Carolina counties at least every eight years by law. The last Brunswick County revaluation took place in 1986.

Agency To Operate With New Name

Cape Fear Substance Abuse Center postponed a Monday press conference to announce its name change to Coastal Horizons Center, Inc.

A spokesman for the agency said the threat of Hurricane Emily offshore prompted the postponement.

According to a news release, the agency—which serves Brunswick, Pender and New Hanover counties—is changing its name to better reflect its variety of services.

Programs offered by the United Way agency include:

- outpatient substance abuse services for adults and adolescents;
- crisis intervention including crisis telephone, walk-in services and an adolescent emergency shelter through Crisis Line/Open House;
- Rape crisis services through the Rape Crisis Center;
- bridging the treatment and criminal justice systems through Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime;
- HIV/AIDS education and risk reduction through community outreach;
- alcohol and drug education and prevention services through prevention and education and New Horizons Ropes Court.

The center employs about 50 people and operates on a \$1.5 million budget. It is funded through United Way, the City of Wilmington, the counties, community-based alternatives, the Council on the Status of Women and state and federal grants.

County Health Department Offers Sickle Cell Services

The Brunswick County Health Department is calling attention this month to services available it offers through the North Carolina Sickle Cell Syndrome Program.

The department offers education, testing, screening and counseling, and financial reimbursement, said Jan Reichenbach, public health educator.

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that causes pain, infection, disability and economic strain among affected African-American families. Where the disease exists, blood cells assume a sickle shape, causing chronic anemia and progressive debilitation.

Prostate Cancer Screening Slated At Grand Strand General Hospital

Grand Strand General Hospital of Myrtle Beach, S.C., will begin taking appointments Tuesday, Sept. 7, for its fifth annual prostate cancer screening to be held Sept. 20 and 21.

Staff urologists will perform free digital rectal exams (DRE) in which pressure is placed on the prostate gland to feel for hard lumps or growths which are the initial indica-

tions of prostate cancer.

Certificates for a reduced-fee blood test will also be available for men whose DRE results are abnormal and for those who simply choose to have the extra test.

Appointments must be made by calling the hospital's marketing department, 803-497-2128.

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