

Coast Guard Investigates Ship Aground In Cape Fear

The U.S. Coast Guard station at Oak Island was called to check for an oil spill when a 720-foot ship ran aground in the Cape Fear River last week, station chief BMC'S J.D. Arndt said in his weekly activity report Tuesday.

Wednesday morning (March 30) at about 6:30, the station received a call from the captain of the "Clorinda" stating that the ship was aground about a mile southeast of river buoy number two.

The station launched its 21-foot fast-response inflatable boat to investigate and to make sure that no pollution had been released, Arndt said. The Marine Safety Office in Wilmington also was notified.

The 21-footer arrived on the scene a short time later and found no evidence of pollution being released. The ship was re-floated on the tide and proceeded under way without incident, Arndt said.

Later that morning, at about 11 o'clock, the station was called by a

citizen reporting the 40-foot fishing boat "Amy Marie" 24 hours overdue from a trip off Charleston, S.C.

The station conducted a communications check with all area marinas, but was unable to learn the boat's whereabouts.

A short time later, the Amy Marie was successfully contacted by the Coast Guard Group Office in Atlantic Beach. The fishing boat's captain reported that he was returning to port that evening.

Friday evening at about 5:30, the Brunswick County Emergency Services (911) Center contacted the station to report a 16-foot fishing boat disabled and adrift off Holden Beach Fishing Pier with three people on board.

The station launched its 21-foot boat to assist. It was recalled after learning that the disabled boat had drifted ashore with all those on board safe and accounted for, Arndt said.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Union Students Visit Beacon

Susan Brown's fourth-grade class from Union Elementary School toured The Brunswick Beacon office last week, getting a first-hand look at the people and the technology involved in publishing the county's largest newspaper. That's Pressman William Manning standing at right rear above with a student.

Shallotte Aldermen Approve \$89,000 Contract With Sewer Engineers

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shallotte Aldermen, despite a somewhat reluctant mayor, approved an \$89,000 contract Tuesday night with the Wilmington engineering firm that is designing expansion of the sewer plant.

The contract with McKim & Creed Engineers covers the required 201 facilities plan update and environmental assessment as well as plans to expand the 12-year-old system.

"Let's get this show on the road!" Alderman Bill Allen declared enthusiastically in moving to accept the contract pending a review by Town Attorney Mark

Aldermen approved the document without the full support of Mayor Sarah Tripp, who said she wanted to wait until both the contract and town budget could be studied.

"I feel like we have to know everything before we sign a contract," she said. "I'm not asking you to delay it. I'm saying before we sign the contract we know we have the money in the bank to cover the contract."

However, several aldermen said the board couldn't afford to wait any longer. Town officials and engineers are rushing to meet a Sept. 30 deadline for applying for state bond funds.

"If we don't get this going and don't get this money we're going to shut this town down next year," Allen said.

The sewer system is presently treating about 70 percent of its maximum capacity of 206,000 gallons per day.

Alderman Carson Durham said there are landowners in the Shallotte area who are waiting for expansion of the facility so they can develop.

"I sure would hate for somebody to come in to our little town here and we have to tell them to wait two or three years because we won't get off our duffs," Durham said.

In addition to the \$89,000 contract, McKim & Creed project manager Street Lee said Shallotte also will be billed for a boundary survey of the land that will be needed for additional spray fields.

Pressed for a cost estimate, Lee said the survey would cost about \$6,000 based on 400 acres of land. But the engineers don't know yet how much land will be needed.

Shallotte has approximately \$98,000 in its sewer reserve fund to pay for the engineering work, which could cost around \$95,000 if Lee's estimate is on the money.

Lee said McKim & Creed will be contacting Federal Paper and International Paper about acquiring land near the sewer plant for additional spray fields, either through a lease or purchase.

Finley Boney of Raleigh, who has been retained as the town's consulting sewer system engineer, was previously negotiating a long-term, low-cost lease with Federal Paper.

Boney said Tuesday that he dropped negotiations when McKim & Creed was hired to design the expansion. "I feel very strongly I shouldn't step on their toes," he said.

In an effort to determine how much wastewater treatment capacity will be needed over the next 10 to 20

years, aldermen will hold a special meeting next Wednesday, April 13, at 7:30 p.m. in town hall.

Anyone who owns property in the town or within one mile of the town who plans to develop in the future and will need sewer service is asked to attend the meeting.

New Billing Cycle

Effective July 1, Shallotte water customers will receive bills every two months instead of every month.

Aldermen voted Tuesday to go to bi-monthly billing to save money on meter reading, computer data entry and postage.

People who do not pay on time will continue to be charged a 10-percent late fee, and water service will be cut off if the bill is more than 45 days overdue.

"If people understand their water's going to be cut off in 45 days, they're going to pay their bill. I promise you," Durham said.

In other business Tuesday, aldermen voted to purchase four hand-held radios from Kanoy Communications for the Shallotte Volunteer Fire Department. The radios will cost \$1,516.

Moms Want Others To Heed Lessons Of Sons' Personal Watercraft Accident

BY LYNN CARLSON

The mothers of a rescued boy and his rescuer want others to learn some things from their near-tragedy Saturday on Holden Beach.

"Learn lifesaving skills, never go out alone, and know that when a life jacket says 'Coast Guard approved,' that doesn't necessarily mean it will keep your head out of the water if you're unconscious," said Sybil Siddon of Winston-Salem on Tuesday.

Her teenage son Shaun was the first to reach his friend Rodney Cole Saturday afternoon when Rodney lost control of his personal water-

craft and was unconscious in the Intracoastal Waterway off High Point Street.

Rodney, who lives at Holden Beach and attends Cape Fear Academy, and Shaun, whose family owns a cottage several doors down, were on the waterway Saturday when something—no one's really certain what—went wrong.

"Shaun looked back and didn't see Rodney," said Rodney's mom, Myrna McSwain. "Then he came up, but he was face-down, he wasn't breathing, and he was unconscious."

Shaun went into action with the skills he learned when training as a

lifeguard in Winston-Salem. He turned Rodney over and gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and kept both of them afloat until neighbors Dean Draughn Sr. and Jr. and Shaun's brother Christopher reached them by boat.

Shaun's father had been looking out over the waterway through binoculars when he saw his son yelling for help. The Draughns and Christopher helped Shaun get Rodney ashore; meanwhile, Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad was called to meet them on the mainland side.

Residents of Sea Aire Estates came to Rodney's aid with bed-

spreads and towels until the ambulance arrived. Rodney was taken to The Brunswick Hospital where he was kept overnight for observation, then sent home to spend Easter Sunday with his family and friends.

Myrna McSwain said Tuesday she's a lucky mom and a new believer in the kindness of strangers. "One woman in Sea Aire Estates brought the comforter off her own bed to wrap Rodney up in," she said. "I've got towels here I've washed and dried, and I don't even know who they belong to."

She also had kind words for Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad,

who reached her son quickly and treated him efficiently and gently in the middle of the hectic holiday weekend.

Apparently, it was a bump on the head that made Rodney lose consciousness, but he doesn't remember it happening, Rodney said Tuesday he feels "pretty good" and "pretty lucky" to have had Shaun with him when the accident occurred.

Rodney's forehead is swollen

from the blow, and his mother speculates the watercraft—and Rodney—may have been struck by something floating in the waterway.

"They weren't horsing around," she said, "and the Jet Ski had some scratches on the bottom that weren't there before."

It has taken a couple of days for Rodney to fully realize he nearly drowned, she said. "Shaun saved my son's life."

Fishermen Land Meeting With State Legislators

After beating the bushes for three months to organize Brunswick County's commercial fishermen, Lloyd Ward has arranged a meeting he hopes will do them some good.

State Sen. R.C. Soles and State Reps. David Redwine and Dewey Hill will answer questions from fishermen at the Carolinas Commercial Fishermen's Association meeting Wednesday, April 13.

"Those three are in a better position to help commercial fishermen than any of the local government officials," Ward said Monday. "We the commercial fishermen are catching the brunt of everything they pass."

The public meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Oceanway Auto Sales, which is located on N.C. 904 between Seaside and Grissetown. Soles, Redwine and Hill are the county's three representatives in the N.C. General Assembly.

Ward, a Calabash fisherman who

serves as president of the association, said the group has attracted more than 100 members from North and South Carolina since forming in late January.

"They're coming in from all over the place," he said. "They're angry and they're afraid. They're about to lose everything they got."

Ward said license fees, water pollution and imported seafood are among the chief concerns of association members.

"Politicians generally work for those who ask them to. That's why this organization is so necessary," Ward said. "The Bible says you don't get if you don't ask. We're gonna start asking."

Ward also said commercial fishermen are worried about sportfishing groups that he says are trying to stop commercial fishing.

"I tell you. We're fighting for our

lives here...From everything I've seen they are trying to abolish commercial fishing in North Carolina. We got a battle on our hands."

Ward emphasized that next week's meeting is not a political rally for Soles, Redwine and Hill. All three are Democrats who are seeking re-election this year to the General Assembly.

"We just hope to get some really

good answers and see where they stand," Ward said.

The Carolinas Commercial Fishermen's Association usually meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at Oceanway Auto Sales. All meetings are open to the public.

For more information, contact Ward at 579-6817 or secretary Alice Floyd at 579-8319.

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