

**WELCOME!**

Special Supplement Inside!

# Oyster Season Opens, With The Usual Limits, On Saturday

**BY DOUG RUTTER**

If nothing else, you can usually count on hopeful fishermen and hefty harvests on the first day of oyster season.

The hope might be there, but there definitely won't be any large hauls when the season opens Saturday along the North Carolina coast.

Because oyster season begins on a Saturday this year, shellfishermen will be limited to one bushel apiece. Two bushels will be the most allowed on any boat, regardless of the number of harvesters. Those limits will be enforced on weekends this season, while commercial fishermen will be permitted to harvest up to five bushels per person and 10 per vessel Monday through Friday.

"The limits are the same as they were the last couple years. There are no rule changes," said Rich Carpenter, southern district manager with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

For the first time since March, Brunswick County fishermen will guide their flat-bottom skiffs to oyster beds in local creeks and rivers on Saturday morning.

Low tide Saturday is 11:35 a.m. at Lockwood Folly Inlet and 12:15 p.m. at Shallotte Inlet.

The outlook, as has become customary in recent years, is not so good. "From what I've heard it's just like normal. Some spots look half decent and some look poor," Carpenter said. "Depending on where you are it should be average to below average."

Varnamtown oyster dealer Ernie Galloway said Tuesday he's not sure what to expect this season out of Lockwood Folly River.

"I haven't been on the gardens, but I've been on the clam rocks and they look like they've grown out a little better than they usually do. I won't really know until we get down there and work them some," he said.

"I noticed the oysters up the river have grown out bigger than they usually do," Galloway added. "That might be a good sign."

(See OYSTER, Page 2-A)

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## Monday Is Final Registration Day To Vote Nov. 8

Monday is the last day to register to vote in the Nov. 8 general election, according to the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

In local contested races, voters will choose a sheriff, fill all five seats on both the board of education and the board of commissioners, and elect two soil and water conservation district directors.

Voters may register at the board of election office at the Brunswick County Government Center until 5 p.m. Monday, and at the Division of Motor Vehicles license office at Supply, all branches of the Brunswick County Public Library or with registrars throughout the county.

One-stop voting begins Tuesday, Oct. 18, and ends Friday, Nov. 4, at the elections office.

All absentee ballots must be returned to the board of elections office no later than 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 7.

Profiles of local candidates, a list of polling places and sample ballots will appear in the Nov. 3 issue of *The Brunswick Beacon*.

## Meet Candidates At Oct. 20 Forum

Candidates for Brunswick County board of education, board of commissioners and sheriff have been invited to participate in a forum Oct. 20 at Brunswick Community College.

Candidates will answer questions submitted by the public. To suggest a question, bring it to the Brunswick County Literacy Council office in Supply, or send it to Bobbi Anderson, SGA president, Brunswick Community College, P.O. Box 30, Supply NC 28462. Anyone may submit questions, but they must be received by Oct. 17.

The forum will begin at 7 p.m. in the BCC Student Center. Johnnie Simpson, vice president for instruction, will serve as moderator. The forum is sponsored by the BCC Student Government Association and the Brunswick County Literacy Council.

For more information, call 754-7323 or 1-800-694-7323.

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**Two O'Clock Feeding**

A daring sea gull snatches a crumb of bread from a traveler on the Southport-Fort Fisher Ferry one recent sunny afternoon. The crossing is a popular day trip for local residents and tourists and regularly draws a following of ravenous gulls.

## Police Chief Goes Undercover To Break Up Pyramid Scheme

**BY ERIC CARLSON**

Then she saw a television news item about several people being arrested in the Lumberton pyramid scheme, Gray said. The woman thought the operation looked familiar and notified the mayor about the invitation.

Dressed in civilian clothes, Gray said he went to the meeting. There he heard a sales pitch from the man and woman about how he could earn \$4,000 by signing up for "The Cruise" and enlisting others to join.

"Believe me. What they were promoting had nothing to do with taking a ship to the Bahamas," Gray said. "It was your basic pyramid scheme designed around the theme of a cruise ship."

To participate, you were encouraged to contribute \$500, for which you would be designated as a "crew" member, Gray said. If you enlisted two others, you would become a "first mate." If those members brought in two more, you would be a "co-captain." Those who reached the top of the pyramid would become a "captain" and earn the \$4,000 prize, he said.

"There were 15 squares in the pyramid," Gray said. "Now I'm not (See POLICE, Page 2-A)

## 116 INCIDENTS, 127 STUDENTS

# Violence On Brunswick Campuses Reflects U.S. Trend: Schools Official

**BY SUSAN USHER**

Sixty-four incidents involving possession of a weapon, 28 at middle schools.

Thirty-two instances in which students were caught with controlled substances such as drugs or alcohol, two at middle schools.

Three minor assaults on school staff or volunteers.

One hundred twenty three students punished with out-of-school suspensions, one with in-school suspension, three with long-term suspension.

Fifty-five students arrested at school, 22 for possession of drugs or alcohol, 22 for possession of weapons or firearms.

Crimes on campus. The numbers don't lie. Last year 127 students in the Brunswick County Schools were involved in 119 violent incidents at school. Eight students and three staff members were victims. Most of the incidents, 66, occurred at the county's three high schools. Another 38 occurred at middle schools and 15 occurred at elementary schools. Fourteen of the elementary school incidents involved possession of weapons.

Another 286 students were involved in 264 non-reportable minor fights or affrays—two-thirds occurring at middle schools—in which 38 students were victims.

The numbers are real, reflections of societal problems. "We have children in trouble. We need to respond to that, and we are responding," said Linda Shaddix, Safe Schools coordinator for the Brunswick County Schools. "I think we are already turning kids around with the things that are already in place and in five years we will be turning a lot of kids around."

"While I truly believe our children are trouble, I also believe that our hope lies in our schools."

Last year, for the first time, schools across North Carolina were required to compile and report incidents of violence occurring on school campuses. The numbers include only incidents principals are now required by law to report to law enforcement officials. They don't include vandalism or affrays, more traditional student fights that don't result in serious injury.

"The statistics tell us that Brunswick County, like school systems across the United States, has a problem with young people acting out angry feelings in violent ways," Shaddix said. "We have to address it; kids can't learn if they come to school with fear or with weapons."

The violence reflects society at large, with problems spilling over into the school yard and classrooms, she said. "Our task is to get at that mind set."

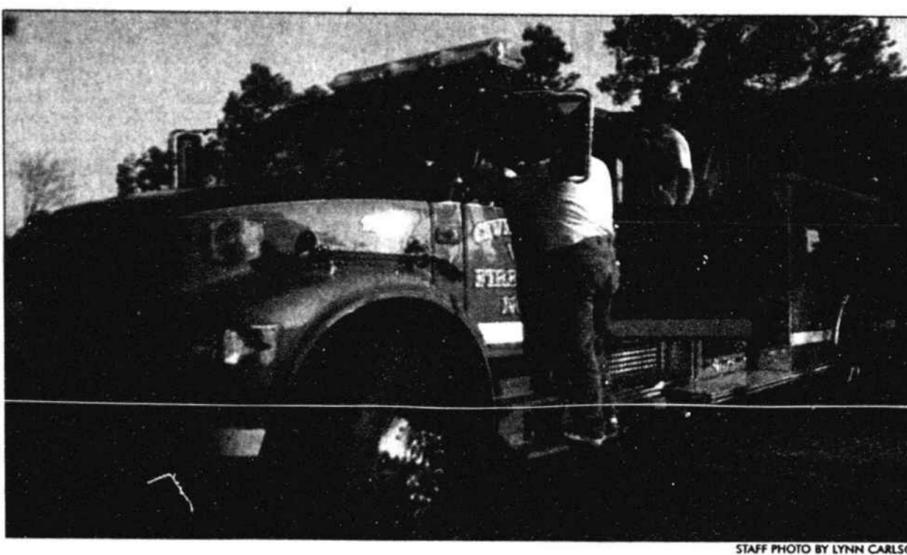
"For example, gangs. We can debate whether we may or may not have formalized gangs. But we have areas where kids look after each other." The behaviors are the same.

Last year's statistics helped the schools get money this year for both the Safe Schools program and the Brunswick Learning Center, which offers students smaller classes and more personal attention and support.

The new school and other steps aim at establishing zero tolerance of violence in the schools through prevention and intervention. Many of them focus on teaching kids how to talk with each other, to solve problems without resorting to violence.

In addition to the Learning Center opening,

- Teachers are being encouraged to enroll in crisis prevention training, to learn techniques that can be used to identify potentially violent situations, defuse the situation, or when necessary, physically intervene to stop it.
- "We have a responsibility to stop them from hurting themselves or others," said Shaddix, even if it means physically restraining a student.
- By the end of this school year every school in the county will have in place a peer mediation program, in (See SCHOOL, Page 2-A)



**Shiny And New**

It takes a lot of bucket shakes and fish fries to pay for a \$113,500 fire truck. After five years of planning, Civietown Volunteer Fire Department took delivery of its new 1995 International 1,250 gallon-per-minute pumper/tanker Oct. 6 to the delight of Chief Richard Evans and an assembly of volunteer firefighters and community residents. They'll be paying for the truck over the next 10 years unless fundraising efforts make an earlier payoff possible, the chief said. The truck has a 1,000-gallon tank, diesel engine with automatic transmission, 4-door cab and air conditioning. The department's next newest vehicle is a 1977 Ford pumper.

### PERMITS HALTED AGAIN

# Health Director Asks State To Allow Bed-In-Fill Septic Systems

**BY ERIC CARLSON**

The Brunswick County Health Department, continuing an on-again, off-again dispute with state regulators, has decided to stop issuing permits for a type of septic system popular on small coastal lots.

Health Director Michael Rhodes told members of the Brunswick County Board of Health that he would spend Tuesday in Raleigh trying to convince officials at the N.C. Office of Environmental Health that "bed" type septic fields work just as well on artificially filled lots as they do on undisturbed land.

Until he gets state approval, the county will not authorize the use of such systems, Rhodes told the board at its regular meeting Monday.

No bed-in-fill systems have been permitted since the health board voted to lift a three-month moratorium on the process last month, Rhodes said. That decision came after the health director presented findings from an in-house study showing that bed systems installed in fill material don't fail any more often than those on undisturbed land.

Rhodes said he plans to go over the details of the study with state health officials in hopes that they will re-examine their interpretation of regulations currently used to prohibit the use of bed systems in fill material.

If that doesn't work, Rhodes said he plans to take his findings to the N.C. Commission for Health Services and ask them to change the state regulations.

Strict enforcement of the rules would effectively prevent construction on hundreds of undeveloped coastal housing sites in Brunswick County, especially those smaller lots platted in the 1970s. It would also require many land owners to install more complicated and expensive septic systems on their property before building a house or siting mobile home.

Most home septic systems use a holding tank to break down household waste products. From their the treated effluent flows into "drain field," where it can seep into the ground through a series of perforated pipes laid in gravel. On lots with enough surface area, the pipes are laid in individual trenches fanning out from the septic tank.

In the "bed" system commonly used on smaller lots, the pipes are buried under a rectangular bed of gravel, without using individual trenches.

Both designs are considered "conventional systems" under state sewage treatment regulations. But a recent revision of the rules apparently prohibits the use of bed systems on any property where fill has been added to the natural soil surface.

In June, one of the state's district soil scientists told Brunswick County environmental health officials that they should stop issuing septic tank permits for bed systems in filled land.

Much of the usable land along the county's beach and waterway communities was built up with fill material. Due to setback requirements, many of those lots, especially along the island canals, are too small to allow the use of trench-type drainage systems.

(See COUNTY SEEKING, Page 2-A)