

# Local Heroine Prepares For World Oyster Championship

BY DOUG RUTTER

Cathy Carlisle said it's "scary" to think she will be representing the United States of America in the upcoming World Oyster Opening Championship in Galway, Ireland.

But that doesn't mean the 24-year-old Boone's Neck woman doesn't have her mind set on winning. And her confidence wasn't hurt at all when the Irish national champion told her her chances were good after seeing her win the U.S. National Oyster Shucking Championship last October.

"He said I have a real good chance of winning in Ireland," she said. "We figured about six seconds an oyster should be a good time."

The trip to Ireland comes as a result of Ms. Carlisle's winning performance in last fall's National Oyster Shucking Championship in Leonardstown, Md.

She was victorious over Louisiana state champ Duke Landry by the narrowest of margins, .56 second.

Ms. Carlisle shucked and arranged her 24 oysters in 2:40:77, while Landry finished with a time of 2:41:33.

Expenses for the Ireland trip will be covered by the

Leonardstown Rotary Club, which sponsors the annual national championship.

Ms. Carlisle became eligible for the national championship after claiming the state title during the 1986 North Carolina Oyster Festival held annually in Brunswick County.

Her time of 3:28 in the N.C. Oyster Shucking Championship at Seaside was noticeably slower than her national championship form, but good enough to give her the state title.

Gov. James G. Martin and State Rep. E. David Redwine honored Ms. Carlisle in Raleigh May 20 for her accomplishments.

Martin presented her with a plaque in recognition of her national championship and she was also recognized for her achievement by state representatives at the capitol.

Ms. Carlisle will depart Wilmington next Monday for her first look at Ireland along with her mother, Norma, and Leonardstown Rotary representative Mike Marlay and his wife, Margaret.

While in Ireland, she will participate in a parade through Galway, an oyster-tasting luncheon, a formal

evening banquet and, of course, the competition against 12 other national champions.

The South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the annual N.C. Oyster Festival and state Oyster Shucking Championship, has provided Ms. Carlisle with a ball gown and pink running suit to wear for the contest. Individual chamber members have also donated items for her trip wardrobe.

Ms. Carlisle said she is very excited about the trip to Ireland and a three-day vacation she has planned in New York City following the competition. Ms. Carlisle will return to Brunswick County Oct. 1.

She will have her work cut out for her when she heads to Ireland, however, as the United States has not won a world title in eight years.

There may be some added pressure considering American competitors have never finished lower than fourth.

She said the pressure so far hasn't been too bad. "Most people are nice about it. Even if I don't win, they say I've gone far enough."

Ms. Carlisle said she hasn't been able to practice

much because the oysters are too large where she works and she needs to practice with smaller ones.

She started in the shucking business seven years ago at Lloyd Milliken's Oyster House at Shallotte Point and is still working there today. She said she has worked other restaurant jobs since then, but always came back to "pick oysters" at Milliken's.

"It started out as a summer job," she added "and it just sort of stuck with me."

Two weeks after returning from Ireland, Ms. Carlisle will have the opportunity to defend her state title at the N.C. Oyster Festival, Oct. 10-11.

She's looking forward to defending that title, she said, and has heard "rumors" of some other oyster houses entering competitors this year.

"It could be a lot harder to win this year," she admits.

She said there are three or four workers at Milliken's who are better shuckers than she is but who refuse to enter the competition.

"I don't know why they don't enter," she explained, "but they can beat me easily."

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## Arson Blamed In Doctors' Office Fires

BY SUSAN USHER

State and local law enforcement agencies say arson was the cause of similar early morning fires that destroyed two Shallotte doctor's offices Monday.

"They are arson, no doubt about it," said Shallotte Police Chief Don Stovall. "It's very plain."

Shallotte firefighters responded to a 2:15 a.m. call to a fire on Forest Drive at the former office of Dr. Karen Paine, a general practitioner. While at that fire on the north side of town, a second call came in, with the dispatcher directing Ocean Isle Beach firefighters to Brunswick Chiropractic Center, operated by Dr. Pat Hewett on U.S. 17 just south of the town limits.

"At first we thought they were giving Ocean Isle Beach directions to that (Paine) fire but had the wrong directions," said Shallotte Fire Chief Michael Arnold. But when he checked the second scene a few minutes later, Hewett's office was ablaze and some firefighters already at work. "It's been a busy night," he said.

Myriad flashing red and blue lights dotted the scene of the fire as Shallotte Point and Civietown firefighters, the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad and the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department also responded. Firefighters remained on the scenes until well after daylight, returning during the day to douse hot spots as they flared up.

Chief Stovall said investigators from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, Shallotte Police and the

SBI expected to start interviewing Wednesday.

"Both fires are very similar; I don't think it's coincidental," he continued. "We want answers to a lot of questions, to establish a relationship or connection, whatever we can come up with."

"Highly combustible" material was found on the scenes of both fires, he said. SBI arson investigator Jerry Webster took this and other physical evidence from the fires to the state lab Tuesday for analysis, with initial results expected Wednesday.

Paine, who no longer practices medicine, said she had been to the office almost every day to work on accounts payable, accounts that for the most part were lost in the fire. Gone also are medical equipment, supplies and patient treatment files. Portions of some files are left, she said. "Some have the center—not front to back but literally the geographic center." On many, the names can no longer be read.

They can't be reconstructed, she said, and in the future could hurt some former patients in seeking certain benefits.

On Monday morning Hewett, accompanied by her husband, Tom, was inspecting the ruins of her office and talking with patients. She said she would reopen her office at a temporary location in Shallotte and then rebuild on the same site as soon as possible once the insurance investigation is completed.

While equipment and files were (See FIRES, Page 2-A)



FIREFIGHTERS FROM THREE DEPARTMENTS battled the blaze that engulfed Brunswick Chiropractic Center on U.S. 17 south of Shallotte, one of

two medical offices destroyed Monday morning in fires that appear to have been set deliberately.

## Five More Plead Guilty To Drug Charges

Five more defendants indicted on cocaine trafficking charges earlier this year entered guilty pleas to trafficking and lesser charges last week in Brunswick County Superior Court in Bolivia.

None of the five was sentenced last week; all received prayers for judgment and will be sentenced during later terms of Superior Court.

According to court records, Judge Henry W. Hight Jr. heard guilty pleas from Elliott Wade Coleman, 38, of Holden Beach; Shallotte; Kenneth Dean Newsome, 36, Rt. 3, Whiteville;

Leslie Ronald Newsome, 44, Rt. 6, Ocean Isle Beach; and Grady Ford Long, 29, Rt. 3, Shallotte; all of whom were indicted by a special investigative grand jury in June, and Joseph Lee Sullivan, 26, Shallotte, who was indicted in July.

All except Long were initially charged with one count each of trafficking in cocaine and conspiracy to traffic in cocaine, involving amounts of between 28 grams and 200 grams of the controlled substance.

Long was indicted on two counts

each of trafficking in cocaine and conspiracy to traffic in cocaine, involving more than 400 grams.

Each defendant was released from the Brunswick County Jail on a \$10,000 secured bond following his arrest.

Court records indicate Coleman pleaded guilty last Wednesday to conspiracy to traffic; the possession charge against him was dismissed.

Sullivan pleaded guilty last Thursday to possession of cocaine and conspiracy to traffic.

Kenneth Newsome and Leslie

Newsome each entered guilty pleas last Thursday to possession of cocaine and conspiracy to possess cocaine.

Also on Thursday, Long pleaded guilty to one count each of trafficking in cocaine and conspiracy to traffic, involving more than 400 grams.

Of 33 people indicted on trafficking and possession charges in June, plea arrangements have resulted in 18 entering guilty pleas; four of the six indicted in July have also entered guilty pleas.



NEW COUNTY MANAGER John Thompson Smith Sr., center, talks with Planning Director John Harvey, left, and Water Superintendent Kenneth Hewett during an

introductory meeting with department heads Monday in Bolivia.

## Smith Takes County Manager Post

BY RAHN ADAMS

County officials are confident that new County Manager John Thompson Smith Sr. will have a smooth transition into Brunswick County's top administrative post.

Smith, 53, of Clinton, went to work Monday in Bolivia.

He was hired by commissioners Aug. 20, following a five-month search for a county manager to replace William Carter, who retired April 1 on medical disability. Smith's salary is \$42,000 a year.

Smith said his first objective will be to familiarize himself with the people who will be working for him.

"The transition will be slow as usual," Smith said Monday, "but I don't think there will be any real problems that nobody's aware of."

"I'll have to ask a lot of questions right now that I won't have to ask next year," he added. "We'll have a few months of 'head scratching.'"

Interim County Manager and County Attorney David Clegg agreed that the transition would be smooth, even though Clegg will be out of town during Smith's first week on the job. Clegg left Monday to serve for a week

as a N.C. delegate to the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, N.J.

"I think we've covered all the bases," Clegg said. "I don't think he should have any surprises. If he does, I'll only be a phone call away."

Added Clegg, "He's ready to go on his own right now."

Smith comes to Brunswick County from a position as manager of appraisal services for L. Robert Kimball and Associates, where he supervised approximately 120 employees of two companies, Automated Valuation Services and Hunnicutt Appraisal Co.

Previously, he served as county manager of Iredell County from 1974 to 1979, and worked in tax administration for 11 years in Iredell, Burke and Sampson counties.

In addition, he was formerly a public school teacher and coach, insurance agent and industrial engineer in textiles.

Smith holds a bachelor's degree in physical education and math from Erskine College in Due West, S.C., and a master's degree in political science and administration from Appalachian State University in Boone.

He also is certified in county administration from the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill.

Commissioners introduced Smith to county department heads at Monday morning's meeting.

Grace Beasley, chairman, told the department heads, "Mr. John Smith comes to us very highly recommended, and we're gratified to have him."

And she told Smith that "we have the best department heads—bar none."

In addressing the county staff, Smith said he knows where his loyalties lie.

"I have an allegiance to the county commissioners," Smith said. "When they hire me as county manager, I owe them my allegiance... and I expect your (the department heads') allegiance."

"I'm here to work with the commissioners and you to provide all the services that Brunswick County deserves and is paying for."

Smith also said he would observe an "open-door policy" during office hours, to allow him to work closely with department heads.