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'Red Tide' Drifts Into Brunswick County Waters

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County waters got their first taste of the four-month old "red tide" last week when the mysterious algae crept into the Cape Fear River and began working its way south.

Since that time, hundreds of oystermen and clambers have been put out of work, while restaurateurs and seafood dealers have had to battle the effects of no local shellfish and fearful customers.

Since last Tuesday, the shellfishing ban has been extended another 45 miles to the south, including all of Brunswick County. About 210 miles have been closed to shellfishing since the algae bloom first appeared in October.

The southern limit of the shellfish ban was extended to Cherry Grove Inlet, S.C., over the weekend, following the detection of the "red tide" algae as far south as Tubbs Inlet near Sunset Beach.

Within the past week, the ban has been extended through major shellfishing areas near the lower Cape Fear River and Southport as well as the Lockwood Folly and Shallotte rivers.

The tide, which originally came into state waters from the Gulf Stream, has persisted despite ocean temperatures in the 40s.

Biologists had originally predicted the algae would die when the water temperature dropped below 50 degrees because it had never been known to survive in cold water.

But according to Jim Tyler, spokesman for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, "That was lab tests and this is the real thing. Sometimes the two don't go together."

The "red tide" is the first ever recorded in North Carolina waters. The algae, known as *ptychodiscus*

brevis, is usually confined to more tropical waters such as those found off the coast of Florida.

Because of the presence of the algae, which contaminates filter-feeding organisms such as oysters, clams and mussels, harvesting of these shellfish has been

banned.

Although consumption of infested shellfish such as clams or oysters can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, finfish, shrimp and crabs are not affected by the algae.



DESPITE this sign promoting "non-local seafood," Reaves Fish Camp owner Norman Gunther said business has been slow all winter, possibly because of the so-called red tide. He said the sign fronts his Holden Beach business and the fact that his seafood

comes from the Gulf Coast have put customers at ease. However, some of their concerns may be unwarranted: the red tide doesn't affect shrimp, crabs or finfish.

Besides contaminating shellfish, human contact with *ptychodiscus brevis* can result in skin rashes or burning sensations in the eyes and throat.

Although the northern limit of the "red tide" has remained near Ocracoke, Tyler said algae counts have recently dropped in some areas north of Morehead City. However, they are not yet low enough to lift the shellfish ban.

The "red tide" has closed about half of the state's oyster beds and virtually all areas previously opened for clamming. Tyler would not estimate when the beds could be reopened.

Even if the tide dissipates, however, the state will not lift the ban on shellfishing until oysters, clams and mussels have cleansed themselves of any algae. This would probably take at least two weeks.

Although clambers can operate year round, oyster season will end in March unless the state decides to extend it because of the tide. Tyler would not speculate on any such plans.

He said harvesters of oysters, clams and scallops in North Carolina have lost an estimated \$3.5 million because of the tide.

Nearly 2,000 shellfishing licenses were issued to Brunswick County residents this year. However, Tyler said there is no way of knowing how many of these people depend on shellfishing for a living.

Tide Hurting Business

While the "red tide" infestation has been felt hardest by shellfishermen, it has also cost many restaurant owners and seafood dealers along the coast thousands of dollars each week.

Tyler said the "ripple effect" has brought financial (See RED TIDE, Page 2-A)

DEMOS FACE PRIMARIES

Bipartisan Races Set For Most County Races

With the filing deadline for local candidates less than a week away, bipartisan races are emerging for most Brunswick County public offices up for election.

As of Tuesday afternoon, only the Democratic candidates for District 4 commissioner, District 1 school board and register of deeds races lacked Republican opponents. At the state level, Republicans have not filed for the State House, State Senate or 13th District judiciary.

According to the Brunswick County Board of Elections office, among those filing for election were incumbents Frankie Rabon, District 4 commissioner, and Robert J. Robinson, register of deeds.

Candidates filing during the past week, with primary opposition as noted, are as follows:

- District 1 Commissioner—Robert Davis Smith, 57, of Ash, Republican.
- District 3 Commissioner—Wayland Vereen, 51, Yaupon Beach, Democrat and past county commissioner, challenging incumbent James Poole in the primary.
- District 3 Commissioner—Gene Pinkerton, 50, Yaupon Beach, Republican.
- District 4 Commis-

sioner—Frankie Rabon, 40, Leland (Town Creek), Republican, incumbent.

• District 3 Board of Education—Robert (Bob) Slockett, 64, Yaupon Beach, Republican.

• District 4 Board of Education—John Watkins, 31, Leland (Town Creek), Republican, former member of the county planning board and elections board.

• Register of Deeds—incumbent Robert J. Robinson, 34, Democrat, who faces primary opposition from Frank Galloway, 26, Bolivia.

• Coroner—Larry Andrews, 40, Supply, Republican, former county elections board member.

• State House, 14th District—R. Glen Peterson, 33, Leland, Democrat, challenging incumbent E. David Redwine, 40, Ocean Isle Beach, in the primary.

Those filing earlier and not mentioned above include:

• District 1 Commissioner—incumbent Chris Chappell, 37, Calabash Acres; Major White, 47, Ash; Harold E. Hickman, 62, Route 4, Shallotte; and Parker Stanaland, 55, Ash, all Democrats.

• District 1 Board of Education—Douglas W. Baxley, 41,



E. David Redwine

Shallotte, Democrat.

• District 3 Board of Education—Marvin McKeithan, 45, Route 2, Bolivia, Democrat.

• Clerk of Court—appointed incumbent Diana Morgan, 35, Long Beach, and Joe Stanley, 36, Shallotte, both Democrats; and John R. Ramsey, 44, Long Beach, Republican.

• 13th Judiciary District—Jerry A. Jolly, Tabor City; D. Jack Hooks and William C. Gore, Whiteville, all Democrats.

• State Senate, 18th District—incumbent R.C. Soles Jr., Tabor City, Democrat.

• Coroner—incumbent Greg White, 26, Supply, Democrat.

Candidates for local office have until noon Monday, Feb. 1 to file with the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

Two Sentenced in Cocaine Cases

BY RAHN ADAMS

Two more defendants who were indicted on cocaine trafficking charges last June in Brunswick County were sentenced to active prison terms last week. Both men were recommended for work release.

Scott Dale Brown, 23, of Supply, and James Sinclair Cromartie, 42, of Oxen Hill, Md., were sentenced Jan. 19 in Brunswick County Superior Court, according to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office.

Judge Samuel T. Curran sentenced Brown to two years in prison and recommended immediate work release.

Cromartie received a 20-year split sentence, 10 years active and 10 years suspended, with work release recommended.

On Aug. 13, 1987, Brown pleaded guilty to two counts of felonious possession of more than one gram of cocaine.

He had been indicted last June on two counts each of conspiracy to traffic in more than 28 grams of cocaine and trafficking by possession of more than 28 grams of cocaine.

According to Special Assistant District Attorney Bill Wolak, Brown faced a possible maximum sentence of 60 years on the original indictments. The maximum sentence for the charges to which he pleaded guilty was 10 years.

Cromartie was given the active

term on five counts each of conspiracy to traffic in more than 400 grams of cocaine and trafficking by possession of more than 400 grams of cocaine. The suspended term was based on two counts each of conspiracy to traffic and trafficking by possession, with the charges involving more than 28 grams of cocaine.

Cromartie pleaded guilty Aug. 31, 1987, as indicted.

Wolak said the Maryland man faced a possible mandatory minimum sentence of 378 years in prison on the 14 trafficking counts.

Following brief sentencing hearings last week, with testimony from a State Bureau of Investigation agent, Curran determined that both Brown and Cromartie had provided "substantial assistance" to the state in its drug trafficking investigation—findings which permitted the judge to give the defendants lighter sentences, Wolak said.

Wolak noted that Curran's recommendations of work release for both men came following requests by the defendants' attorneys, with no objections from the district attorney's office.

"The state does not ask for work release (for defendants)," Wolak said, emphasizing that the decision whether or not to recommend work release is the judge's "prerogative" after the request has been made by the defendant. However, the prosecution can object to the request.

"I base my objections (to work

release requests) initially on the perceived threat the defendant poses to the community," he said, adding that the defendant's cooperation with the state is another factor.

Wolak added that the final decision whether or not to grant work release is made by the N.C. Department of Corrections, not the judge.

When work release is granted, a defendant is imprisoned but is released during the day to work at an approved job.

The next session of Brunswick County Superior Court will begin Feb. 8 in Bolivia. Wolak said the remaining defendants from last summer's indictments are slated for that session.

"It seems like a long time, but we had over 300 indictments," he said of the investigation. "I think we've moved fairly rapidly without clouding the court system up."

A total of 37 persons were indicted in Brunswick County last June and July as a result of work done by the state's first investigative grand jury.

According to court records, 21 of the defendants pleaded guilty and were sentenced. Eleven others who have pleaded guilty are awaiting sentencing.

Three defendants—Fotis Kamtsiklis of Greenville, Dale Varnam of Supply and Richard Woods of Calabash—are awaiting trial.

And two others—Alan Dale Brooks of Shallotte and Francisco Navarro of Ft. Myers, Fla.—are fugitives.

Peterson Files, Challenges Redwine To Forum Series

BY RAHN ADAMS

Southport attorney Glen Peterson last week announced his bid to unseat State Rep. E. David Redwine and called for the incumbent to meet him in "issue forums" across the 14th State House District.

Thursday in Bolivia, Peterson, 33, of Leland, filed for the Democratic primary race and held a press conference to kick off what he pledged would be a "positive campaign."

"I will provide the kind of aggressive leadership that is consistent with our area's growing importance here and throughout the state," Peterson told about 30 supporters gathered in the lobby of the Brunswick County Courthouse. "I want to carry your message, your concerns, your hopes to Raleigh."

The 14th District is composed of Brunswick County, Cape Fear Township in New Hanover County and Topsail Township in Pender County.

"I challenge my opponent to meet with me and with you in issue forums throughout the district to hear us discuss our positions," Peterson continued. "I hope he'll respond to this challenge."

Peterson has tentatively scheduled eight forums to be held between Feb.

11 and April 21. The primary election is May 3.

On Friday, Redwine told The Brunswick Beacon that he had not yet been contacted about the forums. However, he said he was willing to participate, as long as "procedural questions" could be worked out between the two candidates.

"Personally, I don't have a bit of problem with talking with anybody about the issues at any time," Redwine said. "If and when they can get it worked out, I'd be glad to talk anytime."

Redwine, 40, of Ocean Isle Beach, is serving his second full two-year term in the N.C. House of Representatives. He initially was appointed to the 14th District seat in December 1983, following the resignation of State Rep. Tom Rabon.

In the 1985 general election, Redwine ran unopposed after defeating Shallotte attorney Davey Stanley in the Democratic primary. He was unopposed in the 1986 primary, then handily defeated Republican Malcolm Grissett of Grissettown, for a second elected term.

In response to Peterson's announcement last week, Redwine commented, "I can't control who's going to run and who doesn't run. But

it (Peterson's candidacy) has seemed to galvanize a lot of people I haven't heard from lately to volunteer their time (to Redwine's campaign). Maybe we need a challenge to keep us lean, mean and in good working order."

Although both candidates mentioned economic and environmental concerns as issues, both said "experience" will be a key factor in the campaign.

"I think experience—effectiveness in representing the district in Raleigh—that is the central point of it all," Redwine said. "If you're going to be effective, you've got to have experience."

"We're not going to be that far apart on the issues," he added. "What it boils down to is who can give the best representation in Raleigh."

During last year's session of the General Assembly, Redwine served as chairman of the ABC Committee and vice chairman of the Marine Fisheries Committee and Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural and Economic Resources.

He was a member of other committees including appropriations, banking, insurance, manufacturing and labor, Judiciary III and agriculture.

Also, he has served on committees dealing with property taxes, the movie industry, seafood production and marketing, and septic tanks and small public watersheds.

Redwine said he was ranked 40th in effectiveness among the state's 120 representatives last year.

Last week during his press conference, Peterson steered clear of directly attacking Redwine's performance.

"I think David has done the best job that could be done by him in representing the district," Peterson said. "I think that our campaign, though, is going to be a positive campaign. We're not going to address any particular areas that we might feel are deficient in what he has done."

"When there are differences (in important issues), we will point them out," he said. "We will not shirk in identifying where we think we can do a better job and where he may have fallen down in the past."

"Obviously, if we're going to get into the campaign, we need to feel that we can do a better job and provide better leadership for the area."

Peterson, who was chairman of the Brunswick County Democratic Party from 1983 to 1985, added that his ex-



DEMOCRAT GLEN PETERSON last Thursday files at the Brunswick County Board of Elections office for the 14th District State House race against incumbent E. David Redwine. Looking on are Peterson's wife, Deedl, and 17-month-old son, Jack.