

## Program Gets Chief

Brunswick Community College has hired Owen Weddle of N.C. State to head its College Transfer Program for college transfer students, filling a long-standing vacancy. This and other news from BCC can be found on Page 9-A.

## Five Are Rescued

Five people escaped injury when a 25-foot fishing boat capsized about 18 miles offshore Saturday. Two nearby boats came to the rescue, and the U.S. Coast Guard later retrieved the overturned boat. The story is on Page 3-A.

## Hook, Line And Sinker

From kings to sheepshead, the fish were biting along the Brunswick Coast last week—inshore and offshore. Check out the Fishing Report and news of upcoming tournaments on Pages 10-B and 11-B.

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## Brunswick Clammers Plan To Oppose Mechanical Tongs

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County clammers aren't likely to clam up when a proposal that could open the doors to mechanical tongs in local waters comes up for public comment next month.

"Everyone in the county is totally against it," Shallotte Point seafood dealer Larry Holden said of the proposal to allow the state fisheries director to designate areas where patent tongs can be used.

The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission has scheduled a public hearing on the proposal Wednesday, Aug. 8, at 7 p.m. in the Public Assembly Building at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia.

The patent tong proposal is one of four that will be discussed at the public hearing, one of four hearings planned along the coast in early August. It's the only proposal that will have an impact on local shellfishermen.

Patent tongs and other types of mechanical clam harvesting equipment are already permitted in the central part of North Carolina. Clammers in Brunswick County can only harvest by hand methods.

If the proposal is approved, N.C. Fisheries Director William Hogarth would have the authority to open other areas for patent tongs, including Brunswick County.

Patent tongs work like scissors, said Rich Carpenter, district manager with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries in Wilmington.

*"As long as we have hand tongs, there will always be clams. A few of these patent tongs will ruin the whole county."*

—Larry Holden, seafood dealer

The tongs are about four feet wide. They are raised and lowered out of the water by a rope that's attached to a winch. Tongs go down into the water in an open position, close when they hit the bottom and pull up clams.

"It's more efficient than a hand tong," Carpenter said. The patent tongs cover more area than hand tongs. They also are easier to use, since they work mechanically.

Carpenter said the proposal to open up more areas to patent tongs originated in the Morehead City area. Some fishermen there want to use the tongs to harvest clams in Pamlico Sound, he said.

Patent tongs are allowed in Carteret and Onslow counties. But Carpenter said most clamming operations there use other types of mechanical equipment. He said patent tongs are a "traditional piece of gear" in Virginia.

However, there is some question over whether patent tongs and other types of mechanical gear are harmful to the environment.

Fishermen have been using patent tongs more than 50 years in Virginia, said Roy Insley, chief of fisheries planning with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

"They've been using them here ever since they had power engines to pull them with," Insley said. "We haven't really found them to be destructive to the bottom."

Holes created by the four-inch teeth on the tongs fill in quickly, he said, and clams grow back consistently in areas where tongs have been used.

Insley said patent tongs aren't permitted to be used on oyster rocks, where they can cause damage. The North Carolina proposal would not allow the tongs in grass or oyster beds.

Holden, who has seen patent tongs used in Virginia, said they destroy the bottom of waters where clam grow. Patent tongs are almost as bad for clams as mechanical dredges, he said, which pump clams up onto escalators or use propellers to kick them into nets.

"As long as we have hand tongs, there will always be clams," Holden said. "A few of these patent tongs will ruin the whole county."

Holden said local fishermen are tired of fighting mechanical shellfish harvesting methods that have been

proposed repeatedly by the state. Hundreds of area clammers turned out for hearings in 1986 and 1987 to oppose mechanical clam dredging in county waters. The Marine Fisheries Commission rejected the proposal both times.

"We're getting tired of going to these state meetings when we don't want it in the first place," Holden said. "They should know that by now."

Area clammers shouldn't have to wait very long after the public hearing to find out whether the proposal will be approved or rejected.

The commission is scheduled to act on the proposal when it meets Friday, Aug. 9, at 9 a.m. in the Carolina Power & Light media center near Southport, according to a Marine Fisheries news release.

Other proposals to be discussed at the public hearing are as follows:

—Reducing the clam harvest limit in internal waters from 6,250 clams per fishing operation per day to 5,000 clams, and allowing limits on clam harvests in the ocean by proclamation.

—Allowing mechanical clam harvesting in the ocean at all times and deleting the 100-pound weight limit for clam harvests on dredge boats working in the ocean.

—Deleting size and harvest limits for clams produced in hatcheries and aquaculture operations.

## Two Charged In Break-Ins Of County, Area Churches

BY BOB HORNE

Officers from New Hanover and Brunswick County sheriff's departments Monday charged two men who are suspected of breaking into about 20 churches in the two counties in the past three weeks.

Thomas Elmor Wright, 30, and Ira Douglas Mathis, 18, have been charged by the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department with breaking and entering and larceny at 10 churches and the Wilmington Police Department has lodged the same charges against the pair for breaking into three churches.

Warrants were being prepared Tuesday and the two men were to be charged Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday on charges of breaking and entering and larceny at five Brunswick County churches, according to Brunswick County Sheriff's Det. Gary Shay.

The five Brunswick County churches that were broken into, according to Shay and Sheriff's Department reports, were Peace Memorial Baptist in Winnabow and New Hope Freewill Baptist, in the Snowfield section of Leland, the weekend of July 13-14; First Baptist of Woodburn in Leland July 18 or 19; and Letties Grove Pentecostal in Shallotte and Mt. Olive Baptist in Bolivia last weekend.

Thousands of dollars worth of property, most of it musical equipment such as cassette players, amplifiers, guitars, bass guitars, public-address systems and speakers, was reported stolen from each church.

Another county church that was reportedly broken into, Town Creek Baptist the weekend of July 6-7, is an entirely separate case, according to Shay. Nothing was taken in that break-in, but two drawers reportedly were left open and a door casing broken, for an estimated \$250 worth of damage.

The New Hanover County Sheriff's Department called the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department

about 4:15 to 4:30 a.m. Monday, saying that department had a possible suspect in the recent church break-ins, Shay said.

New Hanover deputies L.K. Miller and T.C. Robinson had found two men inside the Myrtle Grove Baptist Church during a second check of that church about 2 a.m. Both men ran. Deputies caught Wright but Mathis escaped, worked his way through a wooded area and got away in a taxi that he called from a pay phone in a Myrtle Grove area grocery store, officials said.

Shay said he met New Hanover Sheriff's Det. George Landry at the Town & Country Motel in Belleville after the call.

"He explained to me what was happening and so we went and knocked on the door of Apartment No. 8 and an individual named Donna Herrin answered," Shay said.

When asked, she said Mathis was in the apartment, so officers went in, found Mathis hiding under a bed and placed him under arrest, Shay said.

Both people signed consent-to-search forms, Shay said, and the officers searched the apartments of Mathis, Wright and Ms. Herrin and found "a large quantity of music equipment, all of it property of different churches."

Ms. Herrin was not charged, although some of the stolen property was in her apartment, Shay said. "She was an innocent party," he said. "She didn't know what was going on and she cooperated fully with us."

Shay said officers did not have an estimate on the value of the property that was recovered in the apartments, but said that officers were searching for still more property that they believe was sold through a fencing operation.

The men were initially held under \$65,000 bond each. Their first-appearance hearings were Tuesday, Shay said.



Picturesque

The scene is picturesque, as a boat slides through the Sunset Beach Bridge. The replacement of the pontoon bridge to the island with a high-rise bridge continues to be controversial, as some people say the beauty of scenes such as this one would be disturbed by replacement of the bridge.

STAFF PHOTO BY BOB HORNE

## ANNEXATION FREEZE LIFTED

### Shallotte Hikes Development Costs

BY DOUG RUTTER

People developing land in and around Shallotte will reach deeper into their pockets and pay the town more money than ever before they start building new structures or tap on to town water and sewer lines.

Shallotte officials have increased capital reserve fees, which are paid when tapping on to the town sewer system, and will start charging new acreage fees that must be paid before building permits are issued or town

water or sewer service is extended.

Despite opposition from local developers at a July 9 public hearing, Shallotte Aldermen adopted the new fees at their meeting last Wednesday. Town officials have said the fees are needed to help generate dollars that will be required for future sewer system expansion.

Capital reserve fees have been increased for the first time since the town started collecting them in 1985.

(See SHALLOTTE, Page 2-A)



HARVEY GANTT, (left) Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, shakes hands with county employee Linda Green at a "meet the voters" stop last Thursday at the county complex. In the background (from left) are Sheriff John Carr Davis, Board of Education member James Clemmons and John Marlow, chief of deputies of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

## EMPHASIS ON ENVIRONMENT, EDUCATION

### Gantt Brings Senate Campaign To Brunswick

BY SUSAN USHER

U.S. Senate candidate Harvey Gantt told a group of approximately 100 supporters in Bolivia July 19 that his campaign for incumbent Jesse Helms' seat won't be waged with dollars or fear-mongering, but with "a sensible agenda that relates to our quality of life."

Gantt's stop at the Public Assembly Building at the county government center was hosted by the Brunswick County Democratic Party. It was part of a two-day swing through southeastern North Carolina. Between interviews with two television reporters Gantt met one-on-one with voters, addressed the group as a whole and answered questions. It was his first visit to Brunswick County since winning the May primary against Michael Easley. His opponent, Helms, has held the office for 18 years.

Gantt is gearing his campaign toward issues that he says relate to the concerns of working families.

"I felt they were not getting a fair shake from their government," Gantt said of the working people. "It's time to pay attention to the people who pay their taxes and obey the laws."

Gantt called for a redesigning of America's agenda, "with less spending on the military and more spending on us." Specifically, he advocated developing a technologically efficient and "lean" defense budget and redirecting funds toward addressing the nation's environmental, health care and educational needs.

*"If you look at what the people of Lithuania threw off in less than a year, I know the people of North Carolina can throw off Jesse Helms,"*

—Harvey Gantt  
Democrat Candidate for U.S. Senate

With a reduced Cold War threat and emerging democracies, Gantt said his message is timely and Helms' message is "not relevant."

On the changing world scene, Gantt said America will be measured in the future by new standards: "How well we compete in the economic marketplace and how well we sell this idea of democracy."

Helms "is not a friend to the farmer," the former Charlotte mayor told the group. "He's more interested in foreign affairs—Jesse Helms' record is going to be an important part of this campaign."

Gantt did not discuss a recent letter by Helms aide James Meredith. The former civil

rights leader charged that most members of the NAACP's 3,000-member leadership are guilty of "criminal" activities and are "involved in the drug culture." Further, he asserted that most blacks in major political posts owe their positions to a group of about 15 whites.

Helms has defended Meredith's right to write the letter, but did say the aide should not have mailed it at government expense; he will be asked to reimburse the office.

Gantt told *The Brunswick Beacon* that he didn't think Helms' much-larger "war chest" would be the deciding factor in the election. "We know enough of his campaigns to know it's not the money that wins it," he said.

He elaborated on that theme later, telling the group, "He (Helms) would have you get caught up emotionally in things that make you fearful. But it is in our best interests to come together to deal with these issues."

Gantt said he doesn't intend to get involved in a divisive campaign, but intends to instead develop a positive, unifying campaign.

He urged those present to get involved in voter registration and to spread interest and support for the campaign before the fall election.

"If you look at what the people of Lithuania threw off in less than a year, I know the people of North Carolina can throw off Jesse Helms," he told the group, his remarks punctuated by enthusiastic rounds of an applause and at one point, a standing ovation.