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## VOLUNTEER FIREMAN INJURED

# Shrimp Trawler Burns In The Shallotte River

BY DOUG RUTTER

Fuel tanks and rigging were removed from the Shallotte River Monday and more salvage work was planned this week following a fire Saturday that destroyed a large shrimp boat and left a volunteer firefighter injured.

The fire that burned the 61-foot *Windjammer* Saturday morning apparently was related to welding work that had just been completed below deck, said Senior Chief J.D. Arndt with the U.S. Coast Guard at Oak Island.

The shrimp trawler was docked at Holden's Seafood at Shallotte Point when the fire started at 11:30 a.m. Saturday. Coast Guard personnel and Shallotte Point Volunteer Fire Department members were among those to respond to the blaze.

Shallotte Point VFD Assistant Chief Johnny Wilson was injured when he fell into the river and got pinned between a johnboat being used to fight the fire and the burning trawler.

Wilson was taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply and transferred to New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, where he was treated and released. In a telephone interview Monday, Wilson said he bruised his spleen and kidney and seriously injured his shoulder.

Arndt said a crew aboard a 41-foot Coast Guard patrol boat responded to the fire, along with the Shallotte Point VFD, after receiving a call from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

The boat, which is owned by Holden's Seafood, had been pushed away from the docks and into the Shallotte River to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby

buildings and other boats.

Firefighters used water and foam to contain the blaze, which was fed by a supply of diesel fuel aboard the trawler. Arndt said the boat's fuel tanks were full when the fire started, and the hundreds of gallons of fuel kept the fire going.

Arndt said the Coast Guard was on the scene for about three hours trying to control the fire. "Every time we had the fire out, it reflash from the heat," he said. Bill Grancsay, public affairs officer for Flotilla 10-08 of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, said an auxiliary boat on routine patrol Saturday also responded to the scene of the fire.

The vessel, which was manned by Jack Ziefel, Tom McConaghie and owner Stu South, assisted firefighters by transporting equipment and personnel from the nearby docks to the Coast Guard boat and keeping spectators and pleasure boats out of the way.

"I saw the flames from Hughes' Marina which is a half mile away and it was 20 to 30 feet in the air," Grancsay said. "It looked like the Fourth of July."

In addition to the other emergency personnel, Grancsay said two wildlife enforcement master officers, Fred Taylor and Perry Smith, responded to the fire.

Larry Holden of Holden's Seafood said salvage work began Monday and would be finished by Friday. Holden said the one-year-old shrimp boat was partially insured. It will cost about \$250,000 to replace it, he said.

Arndt said a representative from the Coast Guard's marine safety office in Wilmington was called to the scene Saturday to see if any fuel spilled. However, all of the diesel fuel burned in the fire, he said.



PHOTO BY BILL GRANCSEY

THE *WINDJAMMER*, a 61-foot shrimp trawler, is destroyed by fire in the Shallotte River Saturday. Pictured in the foreground is a patrol boat from Flotilla 10-08 of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

## Coastal Residents Are Advised Not To Panic About Dec. 2 High Tide

BY BOB HORNE

"I don't think much about it." That was the reaction of Tom Jarrett, chief of the Coastal Engineering Branch of the United States Corps of Engineers, when asked what he thought of some scientists' claim that an abnormally high tide on Dec. 2 could cause widespread flooding.

Jarrett offers two reasons coastal residents should not panic about a *National Geographic* News Service article that says tides will be astronomically high and earthquakes are possible that day.

First, Jarrett says, Dec. 2 will be the day of the second highest tide of the year, not the highest. He notes that the Dec. 2 high tide is predicted to be 6.5 feet higher than the average low tide at Brunswick County beaches. However, he says, the Nov. 4 high tide is forecast to be 6.6 feet higher than the average low tide.

Second, Jarrett says, last year, the Oct. 16 high tide was forecast to be higher than either of those this year, 6.8 feet higher than the average low tide, and county residents did not derive any serious ill effects from it. And, he pointed out, some of the county's beaches at that time were bare because of Hurricane Hugo less than a month before.

However, Jarrett does not advise throwing caution to the wind on either of those days or on Nov. 3, another day that an abnormally high

tide is predicted. It all depends on the weather, he said.

"I guess the bottom line is that the tides are going to be fairly high all three of those days," he said, "higher than any predicted tide for 1987 or 1988. Just keep an eye on the weather."

If a storm should hit the area during either of those high tides, and the tide is wind-driven, there could be a storm surge and coastal areas could experience serious flooding, he says. But if there is no storm, he sees no problem.

The *National Geographic* article quoted scientists who predicted the astronomically high tide of Dec. 2 because of an unusual lineup of heavenly bodies around that date. Five tide-producing forces—three involving the moon and two involving the sun—will be peaking about the same time.

"It's true that there will be a full moon on Dec. 2, the moon will be the closest to the Earth that it will be for the month on Dec. 2 and it will be the farthest north on Dec. 3," Jarrett said. "And those are all factors."

In November, he said, a full moon comes Nov. 2; the perigee, when the moon is closest to Earth, comes Nov. 3 and the moon will be closest to the equator, "another factor," Nov. 5.

"But if we get a 15- to 20-knot (See RESIDENTS, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

CHIEF AL NORD and Secretary Clay Gregory of Civietown Volunteer Fire Department display equipment donated to the department by volunteer fire departments in Frederick County, Md.

## Civietown VFD Celebrates Christmas In August

BY SUSAN USHER

Civietown volunteer firefighters are celebrating Christmas in August.

Earlier this month a volunteer firefighter from Frederick, Md., Rodney Masser, came south, saw a need, and set about meeting it.

Members of his department, the 98-year-old Independent Hose Co. No. 1, and several others, rummaged through storage areas and came up

with armfuls of equipment that is still serviceable but has been upgraded.

"They're better than Santa Claus," Civietown Chief Al Nord said, gesturing toward the pile of equipment and turn-out gear he and Secretary Clay Gregory picked up earlier this month in Maryland. "This stuff they're discarding is better than the stuff we've got now. And they're going to bring us another pick-up load

in a week or two."

Several months ago, Masser was visiting his parents in the Holden Beach area. He stopped by Civietown VFD, which is located off Holden Beach Road, to check out the trucks and equipment.

"He was surprised at how little we were operating with," Nord said. "He said he was going (See CIVIETOWN, Page 2-A)

## Clam Waters Remain Clear Of Mechanical Gear For Now

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County waters will remain clear of mechanical clam harvesting gear for the time being, much to the delight of local fishermen.

The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission delayed a decision last week on a proposal that could have opened the doors for the use of mechanical clamming gear known as patent tongs in local waters.

The vote came one day after clambers from Brunswick and New Hanover counties spoke out against mechanical clam harvesting at a public hearing in Bolivia.

Patent tongs presently are permitted four months a year in Carteret and Onslow counties, where other mechanical harvesting gear is allowed.

The mechanical tongs, which are more efficient than the hand tongs used locally, are raised and lowered out of the water on a rope that's attached to a winch.

The commission, meeting last Thursday in Southport, delayed until February further consideration of a proposal to give the state fisheries director power to designate new areas where patent tongs can be used.

Under a motion from Commissioner Michael Orbach, board members will receive a report on the status of the clam resource in North Carolina and a plan to manage that resource in February.

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries also was asked last week to begin experimental use of patent tongs in deep waters of Pamlico Sound. The state will monitor catch rates with the tongs and impacts on estuarine resources, as well as gather data that will show

whether patent tongs are an economical method of harvesting clams.

Prior to last week's vote, N.C. Fisheries Director William Hogarth had recommended against the patent tong proposal. He said use of the tongs would put even

## Carson Varnam Resigns From State Board

Varnamtown shellfish dealer Carson Varnam resigned from the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission last week, citing health reasons.

"It's a good panel and they're doing a good job with our fisheries," said Varnam, who announced his resignation at last Thursday's commission meeting in Southport.

Varnam, who has served on the commission since October 1988, said, "They're facing a lot of issues right now that are important to fishermen, and I think they've done a good job since I've been on the commission."

The resignation comes amid questions concerning the eligibility of three commission members, including Varnam, to serve on the 15-member state board, said David Prather, a spokesman in the governor's office.



VARNAM

more pressure on a valuable resource that's already in trouble.

The state has been criticized extensively for poor management of clams, Hogarth said, and will be criticized more if it allows patent tongs, which he said dam-

State statute requires that the four commission members appointed to represent commercial fishermen on the panel must derive at least 50 percent of their income from commercial fishing at the time of their appointment.

Prather said some individuals and groups have raised questions about the eligibility of commission members Jule Wheatley, Tillman Gray and Varnam. He refused to disclose who has raised the questions, saying the information is confidential.

The governor's office received financial disclosure statements from the three members last Friday, Prather said. Gov. Jim Martin will review the statements when he returns from vacation Aug. 20.

Wheatley operates a menhaden processing company in Beaufort, and Gray is a commercial fisherman from Avon.

Prather said there have been no questions raised about the eligibility of the fourth commission member who represents commercial fishermen, Gordon Meekins of Englehard.

age shellfish areas.

"My bottom line is that I see no reason, with the clam resource in the shape it is, to add pressure to it," Hogarth said.

The proposal to open new areas to patent tongs was initiated by fishermen from Carteret County interested in using the tools in Pamlico Sound, where they say deep water clams are going unharvested.

Last week's decision to postpone a decision on the proposal followed a 25-minute executive session in which commissioners met with their attorney, Allen Jernigan, to get his legal advice.

Jernigan said in open session that the patent tong issue may involve a consent order the Division of Marine Fisheries entered into several years ago with mechanical clam harvesters.

The division had agreed not to discriminate between different types of mechanical harvesting equipment. The proposal before the commission last week would have placed patent tongs in a different category than other mechanical gear.

### Hearing Turnout Light

Despite a small turnout, area clambers left no doubt during a public hearing last Wednesday at the Public Assembly Building in Bolivia that they opposed the use of patent tongs.

Fewer than 100 people attended the one-hour hearing, which was a sharp contrast to other recent hearings on mechanical clam harvesting in Brunswick County (See CLAM, Page 2-A)