

Cause To Celebrate

Jack Wood, shown with his son, Christopher, was half of the two-man fishing team that won the U.S. Open King Mackerel Tournament. For the details, see Page 11-C.



Got The Spirit

It's Spirit Week at West Brunswick High School as Trojan supporters get psyched for Friday's Homecoming game against rival West Columbus. A round-up of activities and pictures of the Homecoming court are on Page 9-B.



Animals 'N Art

Animals figure prominently in the work of Brunswick Community College's new Visiting Artist, partly because she likes them and also because they help bring people and art together. Meet Emily Weinstein and her work on Page 6-A.

THE B

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY
P.O. BOX 12731/39
SPRINGPORT, MI 49284

WEEK BEACON

Twenty-eighth Year, Number 47

©1990 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, October 11, 1990

25¢ Per Copy

38 Pages, 3 Sections



Slipping Away

The sun slips over the horizon at Holden Beach Saturday as people surf fish and walk along the strand. Some of the best sunsets in the South Brunswick Islands can be seen during the fall and winter, when the sun sets over the ocean.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Sunset Bridge Contract Award Hinges On Hearing Outcome

BY SUSAN USHER

State Transportation Secretary Tommy Harrelson will award or not award a contract for construction of a new Sunset Beach bridge, depending on the outcome of a court hearing.

Meeting Friday in Cherokee, the state transportation board delayed award of the contract, DOT spokesman Bill Jones said Tuesday. To avoid further delays in the project the board gave Harrelson the authority to award or reject the bid, depending on the outcome of the hearing.

A group of property owners and the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association filed suit last month in district federal court seeking to block construction of the bridge. The proposed fixed span bridge would have a 65-foot clearance and would replace a one-lane swinging pontoon

bridge across the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Plaintiffs in the suit assert the bridge will harm endangered species in the community and disrupt the nature of the community by increasing development pressures, tourism and traffic.

If Britt rules in favor of the state, work on the bridge could begin in late October, with a target finish date of June 1993.

Judge Earl Britt heard six hours of testimony on Oct. 1 in Fayetteville. The hearing was to continue Wednesday, Oct. 10, at 1 p.m. in Raleigh, according to SBTA member Warren "Bud" Knapp. If necessary, the hearing will resume again at 11 a.m. Thursday.

In announcing the suit Labor Day weekend, SBTA attorney Jim Maxwell of Durham said the success of the suit depended on the hearing. If construction of the bridge is al-

lowed to begin, he said, even if the plaintiffs were to eventually win, their cause would be lost.

Last month the state Board of Transportation received bids for the project ranging from a low of \$8.4 million to a high of \$12.2 million. Overall cost of the bridge, including engineering and right-of-way acquisition, is expected to exceed \$10 million, according to DOT estimates.

Bid Opening Set

In other DOT action relating to Brunswick County, the state Department of Transportation will open bids Tuesday, Oct. 16, for construction of a regional welcome center along the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte.

The letting begins at 10 a.m. in the Highway Building in Raleigh, said Jones. Once tabulated and reviewed, the bids will be presented to the state board at its November meeting for action.

State Oyster Shucking Champ Bound For U.S. Competition

BY SUSAN USHER

Karen McNeil, the 1989 N.C. Oyster Shucking Champion, won't be around to defend her title Oct. 20 at the N.C. Oyster Festival, leaving the field wide open for the naming of a new state champion.

Wielding a new knife, Ms. McNeil will be competing for a loftier title at the National Oyster Shucking Championship Contest, held in conjunction with the St. Mary's County Seafood Festival in Leonardtown, Md.

The state and national shucking contests are held the same time each year, the third weekend of October, rain or shine.

Describing herself as both "happy and nervous," Ms. McNeil said she's looking forward to the national competition. Her trip is sponsored by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, sponsor of the N.C. Oyster Festival and state shucking contest. A friend will accompany Ms. McNeil to Leonardtown, while her mother keeps Ms. McNeil's five-year-old son, Tristan.

A year ago Ms. McNeil won the state championship by shucking 24 raw oysters in an adjusted time of 2:43.24. It was her third try for the title. The previous year she finished first runner-up to Cathy Carlisle of Supply, three-time state champion and former national grand champion. Ms. Carlisle still holds the state record time of 2:21.40.

Entrants shuck 24 raw oysters against each other and the clock, with judging based on speed and attractiveness of presentation. Penalty seconds are added for partial severance, broken shells, grit, blood or other foreign matter or a missing oyster. Judges have the option of deducting a 10-second bonus for an exceptional tray.

Last week Ms. McNeil started practicing for the nationals, opening raw oysters from the Potomac River. But she didn't check her time, not yet, she said.

In Maryland she will be competing to qualify first for the women's

championship. The winner of that event advances to the national championship showdown and the chance to represent the United States in international competition in Galway, Ireland.

A 1981 graduate of West Brunswick High School, she's been shucking oysters for Lloyd's Oyster House at Shallotte Point since September of that year, alongside her mother, Clara McNeil.

"She's very good — when she

wants to be," house owner Lloyd Milliken said, as Ms. McNeil admitted to having "a lazy streak, sometimes".

But she says she's a steady worker. "I mostly stay at the table. I might break now and then," she said.

In her stead, she's been encouraging co-workers to enter the state championship, including Shirley Simmons, second runner-up last year with an adjusted time of 2:59.99; and

(See OYSTER, Page 2-A)



KAREN MCNEIL shucks against the clock to win the 1989 N.C. Oyster Shucking Championship. The next champion will be decided Oct. 20, during the N.C. Oyster Festival.

Clerk Says Annual Banquet Not Intended As Political

BY TERRY POPE

An appreciation banquet for Brunswick County boards, commissions and committee members will become a biannual event, with the first scheduled for Saturday night at the county government complex in Bolivia.

Clerk to the Board of Commissioners Regina Alexander planned the dinner last month, she said, after hearing of similar events held in Orange and Forsyth counties. It is being held in October, a month prior to elections, because the biannual employee appreciation dinner is usually held this month.

"We don't do the employee appreciation dinner this year, so we decided to work this in during October on an off year," Ms. Alexander said.

Of the more than 20 boards and committees invited to the banquet, only about five receive stipends or travel expenses for their meetings, she said.

"I think the volunteers who give their time should get a pat on the back," she said. "It's something new to Brunswick County, but other counties are doing this sort of thing."

Interim County Manager David Clegg said Tuesday that although a quorum of the county commissioners is expected to attend, it is not a business meeting. The Brunswick Beacon questioned if the meeting

"I think the volunteers who give their time should get a pat on the back."

—Regina Alexander
Clerk, County Commission

was subject to the N.C. Open Meetings Law and why the press had not been notified in advance. The Beacon received a faxed notification of the banquet Tuesday.

"It's an unique event in that a quorum of the board will be present," Clegg said, "but it's not a meeting because no business will take place."

Money to fund the banquet will come from the contingency fund and from vending machine collections at the complex. Less than \$1,000 will be used to pay for the banquet, Clegg said.

Those funds are also used every other year to pay for an employee appreciation banquet at the complex, Ms. Alexander said. She estimates the banquet and invitations will cost close to \$500. County employees will cook the food, which will consist of chicken or roast beef and green beans.

Commission Chairman Gene Pinkerton also called the banquet a

social occasion and stated that no business would be conducted by the board.

"This event is an appreciation type banquet for board members and their wives," Pinkerton said. "If someone has a problem with that, then I suggest they contact our county attorney."

The N.C. Open Meetings Law does permit social gatherings for public bodies without it being considered an official meeting of the board unless called or held to evade the spirit of the Open Meetings Law.

About 150 people are expected to attend. Invitations were printed and mailed last month. Persons were asked to telephone if they planned to attend.

Two seats for the county commission are up for election next month, one held by Grace Beasley and one being vacated by Benny Ludlum, who chose not to run for re-election.

"I just think it's a positive thing," Ms. Alexander said. "I hadn't thought about it as being a political thing. Of everybody who has called here, only one person has raised that issue."

Guest speaker will be W.K. Hobbs of Wilmington, who will give a 15-minute speech on the spirit of volunteering at the 7 p.m. banquet, she said. Entertainment will be provided by Miss Brunswick County Wendy Williams.

Seafood Ordinance Would Make Vendors Undergo Inspections

BY TERRY POPE

Seafood vendors in Brunswick County are being asked if they want an ordinance requiring that their catch be inspected by the health department.

The Brunswick County Board of Health is considering a seafood ordinance that would require fishermen and seafood retailers, both roadside stands and established markets, to undergo inspections.

"Some of them will not want to be regulated, I'm sure," said John Crowder, county environmental health supervisor. "Some may feel that it's something that we need to look at. That's what I'm hoping for anyway."

Crowder said the idea evolved from an increased health risk to the consumer regarding safe seafood and safe seafood handling practices. Forsyth, Cumberland and New Hanover counties have seafood ordinances that are enforced, he said, which can serve as a model for one in Brunswick County.

Brunswick County Commissioner Frankie Rabon, a member of the county health board, said he appreciates

what the health department is trying to do to protect consumers. However, he is against imposing regulations on persons who sell seafood.

"I'm opposed to all of it," Rabon said. "We put so many restrictions on people out there. We're going to shut the little man down. All of them don't have the oyster houses that the bigger guys have."

A letter and questionnaire will be mailed to county seafood markets and distributed to roadside vendors. The health board Monday gave its approval to distribute the questionnaire, which is to be returned by Oct. 31. Rabon voted against the move.

"This is just our attempt to get feedback," said Health Director Michael Rhodes, "to see what type of response we will get."

The questionnaire asks, "Do you think a unified seafood market regulation for all seafood retailers would be beneficial?" and "Would you be willing to give input or be involved in a working committee to develop rules and regulations on a local basis?"

It asks retailers if they operate from a permanent building, roadside stand or truck and to list the type of seafood they sell. Crowder has addresses for about 26 seafood vendors operating in the county and will hand deliver questionnaires to other roadside vendors.

Board of Health Chairman Ricky Parker said his main concern regards seafood that is sold in Brunswick County but isn't caught here.

"I'm concerned about the stuff that's being brought in from out-of-state," Parker said.

Shellfish, such as oysters and clams, are regulated by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. Persons selling oysters must own a commercial license and must tag their oysters stating where the shellfish was harvested. Roadside vendors must operate from a covered stand or vehicle. Shellfish processing plants are also inspected.

In other action Monday, the health board:

•Agreed to close kennel visiting hours at the animal control shelter to the public from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and

from 4 to 4:30 p.m. effective Dec. 1. Shelter attendants need the time to clean kennels and to prepare animals for viewing, Crowder said. Wet floors are a hazard to the public, he added. The shelter will remain open during those hours to persons picking up animals impounded or bringing animals in.

•Met in executive session for 30 minutes, at the request of board member Bill Rabon, to discuss personnel, but no action was taken.

•Agreed to send a letter to commissioners endorsing their plan to add fluoride to the county's drinking water supply as a way of reducing dental cavities in children. Last week, commissioners voted to begin seeking federal grants to help fund the fluoridation program.

•Heard from Rhodes regarding plans to form a Brunswick County Public Health Foundation with the cooperation of the health department. The foundation could possibly receive state grant money to help get started. It would operate under a board of trustees to decide which programs to fund at the health department.