

More King Mackerel Fishermen Expected

Look out, you Kings in the waters off Little River, and Shallotte and Lockwood Folly inlets, they're out to get you! Come Labor Day weekend, that South Brunswick Islands King Classic will send out boats in record numbers to hunt you down.

The popular tournament has now been sanctioned by the Southern King Fish Association, so people fishing in that circuit are apt to head for Brunswick waters now, according to South Brunswick Islands Chamber executive Holly Richards.

"We're delighted to get this designation," she said. "It's something like being part of the PGA in golf."

The event is sponsored by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce and the Saltwater Sportsman's Classics.

Anglers participating in the competition of Sept. 1 and 2 have a chance at a top prize of \$12,500,

second prize of \$5,000, third, \$2,500, fourth, \$1,000, and 20 additional prizes ranging from \$500 to \$250.

There is also the exciting grand prize of \$50,000, offered to the angler catching a certified state record king mackerel in these offshore waters.

Entry fee is \$200 per boat before August 20 and \$250 thereafter.

Weigh-in stations will be located at marinas in Holden Beach, Marsh Hourbour and M & J Marine Services, between Ocean Isle and Sunset beaches.

A Captain's meeting will be held August 31 at the Shallotte National Guard Armory, with at least one member from each boat required to receive the boat entry identification number and updated information.

Awards will be given at the armory on Sept. 2.



HERE'S WHAT A WINNING KING MACKEREL LOOKS LIKE! Gary Gray, right, of Hampstead, pulled in this 40.5-pound king in the tournament of 1989, and needed the help of John Gymtruk to display it.

BEACON FILE PHOTO

Can Southport Be Improved?

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Three formerly "sleepy little villages" in North Carolina are being awakened by a new state program. It's a pilot, developed by the Department of Economic and Community Development and one of its beneficiaries is Southport, Brunswick County's artist colony, fishing and boating center and all-round beauty spot.

The town was recently chosen to participate in the Main Street Small Towns program with Joanne Wesson, director of Southport 2000, administering it.

"There's no money coming to us through this program," she said, "but lots of technical advice and help."

This outreach to small towns has been in existence since 1980, particularly aimed at historic renovation and formerly offered only to towns with populations of at least 5,000. This year, the population requirement was lowered and Southport got under the wire with its 3,000 residents.

Southport 2000 applied in April, Wesson said, along with 11 other towns and three were chosen to participate. The other two are Mocksville and Spruce Pine.

"Criteria for eligibility included a commitment by city officials and the community to economic revitalization," Wesson explained. "Our board of aldermen is certainly pro-business and the fact that both the private and public sector were willing to fund my salary with Southport 2000 indicated a real commitment."

Focusing on organization, promotion, architectural design and economic redesign, the three-year program will begin with a three-day training session for Wesson in Raleigh.

"Then, architects on their staff will come here to look at our town and make recommendations for improvement," Wesson said. "We had a 15-year master plan drawn up in February that includes some of our own suggestions, such as getting new small businesses on some vacant lots, putting in new plants and signs, that sort of thing."

Wesson said the concept of improvement was to build on the existing character of the town and improve what is already there. "We're a fishing village," she noted, "and we don't want to change that; we want to build on it."

She expects program representatives will look at such problems as why a movie theater has not succeeded in Southport and how existing buildings can be improved.

"They want to teach us how to make downtown a fun place to go," she said, "and to bring back the concept of downtown, where people like to go and see each other, have interesting things to do and a mix of stores. That's why people like to go to malls; they are what small town downtowns used to be."

And how do Southport residents take to this new opportunity? Stuart Callari, a theatrical director and business owner, said, "Anytime anyone can give you ideas, it's good. Of course, growth should be suitable for this area, but growth is coming, whether we like it or not."

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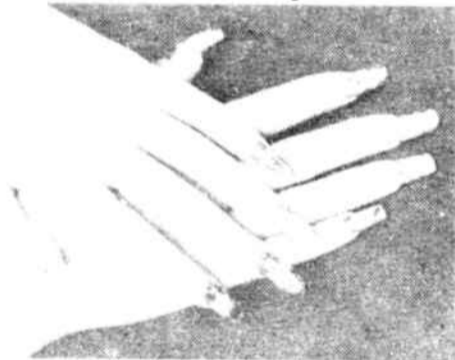
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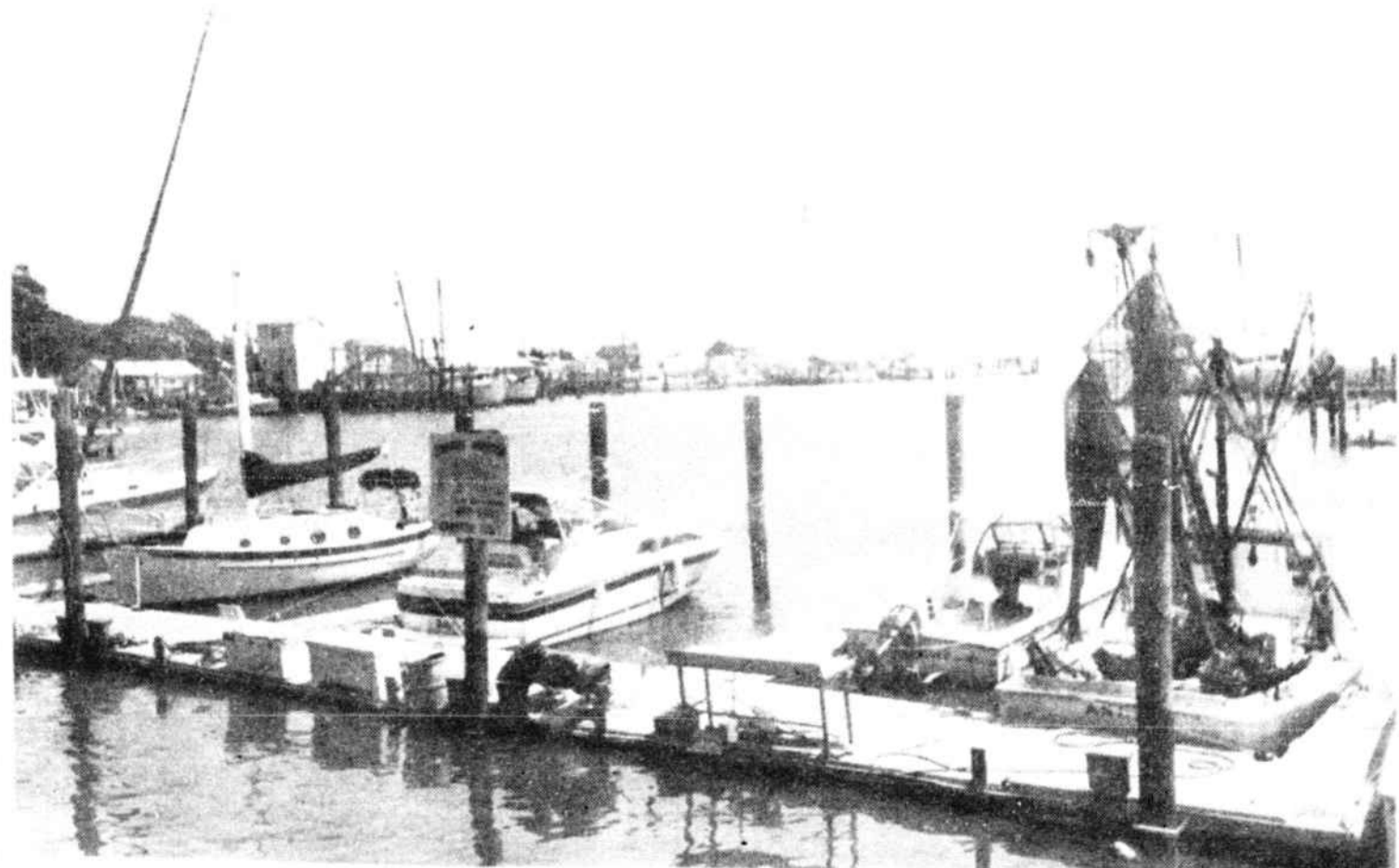
MY HEROES

HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COWBOYS

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CAN THIS TOWN BE IMPROVED? The small boat harbor at Southport is among the beautiful spots in one of Brunswick County's most picturesque towns.

STAFF PHOTO BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN