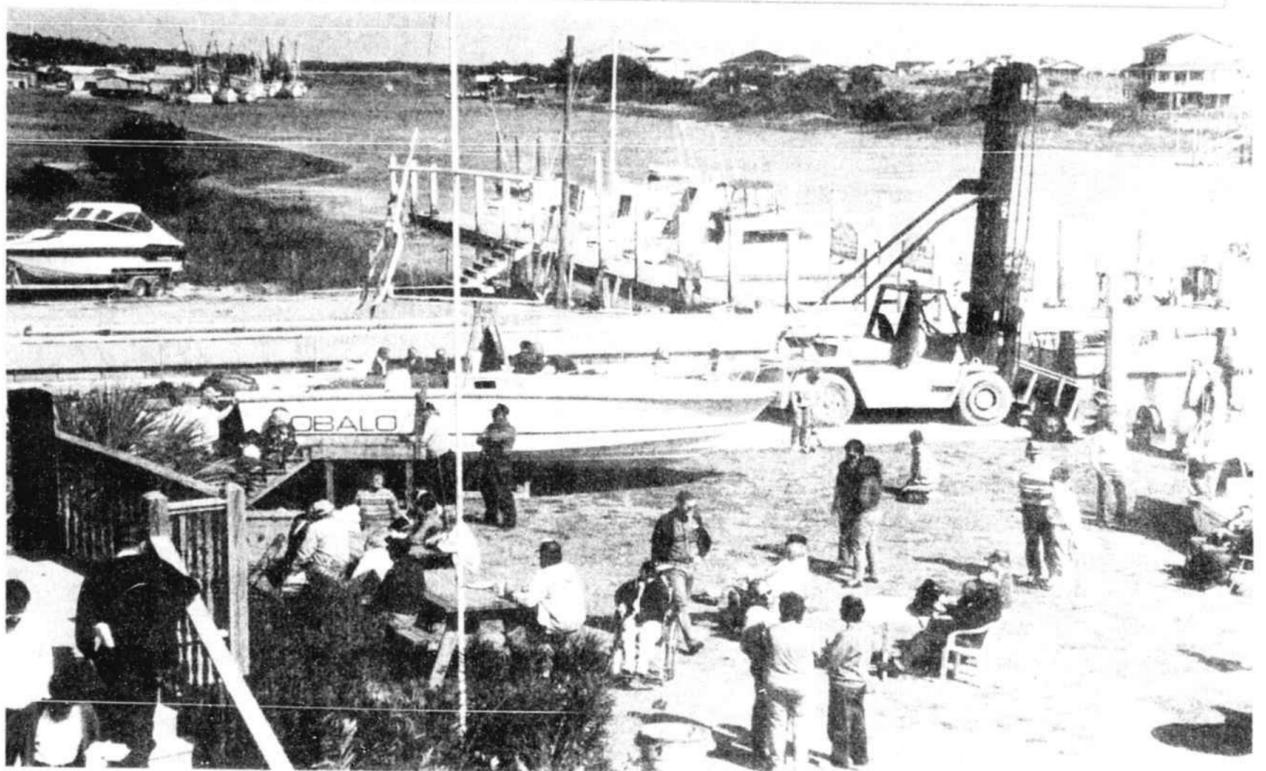


PHOTO BY JAMES DRIGGERS
CALVIN MEETZE takes his turn frying fish to benefit the water rescue team.



STAFF PHOTO BY EDDIE SWEATT
THE SCENIC DOCKS along the intracoastal waterway at Holden Beach attracted crowds for the fund-raiser for the Holden Beach Water Rescue Team.

A Day At The Holden Beach Docks Raises Money For Rescue Team

BY JAMES DRIGGERS
Special Correspondent

In what organizers hope will become an annual event, Holden Beach welcomed the spring and summer season with "A Day At The Docks" Saturday.

Sponsored by Holden Beach Marina, the Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association, WCCA-Radio and the Holden Beach fishing fleet, the day-long festival served as a fund-raiser for the Holden Beach Water Rescue Team.

While a "Day At The Docks" was a relaxing, fun-filled occasion, it also provided an opportunity to learn more about water safety in the hope of preventing water-related accidents and injuries during the upcoming tourist season.

The Shallotte Floulla of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary offered courtesy inspections for interested boat owners.

Under a crisp, clear spring sky, crowds were entertained by local musicians, treated to a exhibit by local artists and fed with fish caught locally by the fishing fleet, which includes the *Super Salty I*, the *Alice E.*, and the *Sea Wolfe*. Proceeds from the fish fry, which raised an estimated \$700 - \$1000, were donated to the rescue team.

On Friday evening, the merchants association hosted a reception for artists exhibiting their works at the festival. The following morning, Holden Beach Mayor Wally Ausley welcomed guests and opened the festivities.

While guests strolled among the information booths and displays around the marina lawn or upstairs to the art exhibit, the Brunswick County Concert Band performed in an outdoors pops concert. Afterward, the Sugar Loaf Ramblers of Taylorsville took the stage with some rousing down-home bluegrass music. Children were treated to free face painting and everyone was invited to take a narrated cruise aboard one of the fleet boats.

The cruise from the marina to Lockwood Folly Inlet gave a glimpse of a boat's inner workings and stressed the importance of boating safety for many who might never have had the chance to be on a seagoing vessel.

Crew members recounted some of the history surrounding the creation of the waterway as well as some of

the more colorful legends and folk lore regarding the Lockwood River and Inlet. At low tide, riders were even able to catch a glimpse of the *Ranger*, which ran aground and sank during the Civil War.

Back on land, Keith Sawyer, liaison between the rescue team and the town, explained the function of the volunteer unit. Begun last year, the team has been training to provide both shore and surf-based assistance to swimmers and/or boaters in need. The unit includes members of the Tri-Beach Fire Department and Holden Beach Police Department, and alerts the Coast Guard when an emergency arises.

This season, the unit will also have the benefit of a more centralized 911 emergency number as well as a new boat, which can be launched from either the waterway or the

beach as needed.

"The best attitude regarding water rescue is prevention," Sawyer said. "People need to know that they should always wear their life jacket whenever they set foot on a boat — not just know where it is located on board, but put it on."

He said most distress calls from swimmers come from those people who do not respect the water. "People should know their own limitations," said Sawyer. "It is rare for a swimmer to get in trouble if they are close to shore, not out over their head."

Those who were unable to attend the "Day At The Docks" may get a second chance to enjoy the fun. Paul Vernon, who hosts "Real Fishin' Videos," taped the event for broadcast soon on the Sports South Network.



PHOTO BY JAMES DRIGGERS
MOTHER AND DAUGHTER CLOWNS, Eunice Grainger and Victoria, brightened spirits of those who turned out for a day at the docks.



STAFF PHOTO BY EDDIE SWEATT
CROWDS GATHER to soak up sunshine and hear some rousing bluegrass music played by the Sugar Loaf Ramblers. Other musical entertainment was provided by the Brunswick County Concert Band.



PHOTO BY JAMES DRIGGERS
ARTISTS whose work was exhibited are, from left, Vic Gillespie, Ramona Bendin, Bryan Varnam, Ken Buckner and Terry Sellers. At right is Mary Didyoung, who displayed pottery from her gallery and shop.



PHOTO BY JAMES DRIGGERS
KEITH SAWYER explains the role of the Holden Beach Water Rescue Team and demonstrates equipment the team uses.