

Sneads Ferry documentary film gets warm reception

By Harvey Bradshaw

SNEADS FERRY – When Matt Barr’s film “Wild Caught: The Life and Struggles of an American Fishing Town (Sneads Ferry)” was over the audience of over 300 stood and applauded. Tears streamed down the cheeks of those moved by the story of local fishing families, their way of life and long tradition now critically threatened.

“I went into the ladies’ room and three women in there were just crying their hearts out,” said Betty Edens, who met her husband, John, in a fish house. “Maybe now people who see this film will listen to us.”

Professor Barr, who teaches film-making at UNC Greensboro, and his wife Cornelia, a writer, attended the showing, hosted by the Sneads Ferry Community Council, headed by John Uhrick.

Dixon High School loaned the screen, and many other community leaders worked to make the event a success.

Admission to the film was free, but contributions were welcomed. Copies of the DVD were available afterward, and will also be on sale at the Shrimp Festival.

Barr, whose earlier documentary, “The Last Carnival Train,” won awards and was shown on PBS, shot over 100 hours of film over seven years before editing it down to less than 120 minutes.

Lockwood Phillips, *Topsail Voice* publisher, interviewed

Professor Barr on his radio station to help publicize the event and inform the public.

The Community Council put out flyers, made phone calls, and led a word of mouth campaign. Efforts are under way to show the film again during the shrimp festival.

The Sneads Ferry Incorporation Committee, a group of seven local citizens working to promote incorporation, made saving fish houses, commercial fishing dockage, and permanent water access the top two items on their agenda in a pamphlet distributed at their regular meeting last Tuesday night, two days after the film was shown.

The committee, led by spokesperson Don Beasley, has reserved the Community Building for a third public meeting on incorporation Aug. 15, but may decide to cancel it. They are accepting applications from persons interested in serving on the interim village council until Aug. 17. The committee will select the seven-member council Aug. 22, with the media being invited to that meeting.

The law requires that a minimum of 15-percent of the registered voters must petition for incorporation. This equates to 420 signatures from Sneads Ferry citizens registered to vote. Committeeman Don Howell reported that 220 signatures were on record, with an unknown number of signatures on petition forms in local businesses and being circulated by individuals.