

Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.

Proudly serving the Commercial Fishing Industry for over 50 years!



Hotlines Online Edition



August 2004

HURRICANE CHARLEY HITS FLORIDA HARD

Once again the power of nature proved it could rip the roofs off large buildings. Hurricane Charley was a killer and the most damaging hurricane since Andrew twelve years ago. Smaller homes manufactured on an assembly line basis are no match for winds reaching 145 mph. The roof at Fort Myers Beach Packers was destroyed as was the ice dock. Many of the shrimp boats were in Texas while others moved up into the river and stayed alert.



It was lucky for Fort Myers but unlucky for Punta Gorda that Charley took a northern curve before making landfall. Captain Eric Schmidt reported a swath was cut through the countryside between mile markers 158

and 178 on I-75. Telephone contact with members in the Fort Myers area was impossible for several days but from what SFA has learned there was no personal injury to any of our members in the area.

Ice is at a premium in many places along the path of Charley. Cox Seafood in Tampa is working with Publix to deliver in excess of 80,000 pounds of ice and will give more if needed. Sigma International is participating in relief work. The Aylesworth's are working with officials to send help from St. Petersburg. In Orlando, Lombardi Seafoods is distributing free ice at their retail fish market in Winter Park, which was also hard hit by Charley. Tony Lombardi said the lines were long but everyone was grateful for the provision of ice. SFA encourages its members who have excess ice to contact the Governor's Office or your local Emergency Relief person if you can donate ice for the folks without power in those areas where it is needed.

FLORIDA SEAFOOD IS SAFE

Inserted in this hotline is an analysis done by Bob Jones, Executive Director of SFA, of the seafood illnesses reported in Florida over the past ten years. Data from the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Community Environmental Health was used to



Aylesworth Scholarship presentation at Sarasota Convention. The Florida Seafood industry is fortunate to have the Aylesworth legacy that helps young students.

break down the information presented on the report. Of the hundreds of millions of seafood meals served in Florida at home and in restaurants, only 2191 individuals reported illnesses to hospitals and doctors from 1994 through 2003.

Examine the information in detail. It shows the state and federal agencies are doing an exemplary job in assuring citizens what they eat is safe and it also shows the Florida seafood industry needs to be recognized for complying with HACCP and other required seafood safety programs. Some information received after the report was written states the Center for Disease Control considers unreported cases as high as 32 times the reported amount

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This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

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for various pathogens. However, that information has not been made available to SFA so we can only go by what is reported. If you have any questions on the report please feel free to call the SFA office at 850.224.0612 and ask for Bob Jones.

A BAR CODE FOR SEAFOOD PRODUCTS?

Through the invention of a cell phone information system, consumers might soon be able to determine where and when the fish they are considering buying was caught. Experiments are underway in Japan in hopes of putting the new system in their market by 2005. If such a system comes to the United States the fishermen would be on the first line of information guaranteeing the origin of the catch and when it was harvested. SFA wonders how such a bar code could be placed on each shrimp?

FLORIDA IS GETTING INTO THE BLACK TIGER SHRIMP BUSINESS

According to the Palm Beach Post, the Indian River Aquaculture company has stocked over 100,000 black tiger shrimp larvae at their plant in Vero Beach, Florida. These shrimp will be sold fresh, not frozen and the company hopes to develop a niche market in finer restaurants. The company wants to sell the black tigers for \$8 per

pound. They currently sell 2,000 pounds of shrimp 52 weeks a year according to the story in the Post. The article also pointed out that Florida has 10 shrimp farms and 21 certified shrimp producers including several teaching institutions, which it is hoped do not sell their shrimp on the market. Total sales of the seven shrimp farms reporting were \$5.1 million dollars in 2003.

LOUISIANA SUSPICIOUS ABOUT MIS-LABELING OF IMPORTED SHRIMP

What South Carolina and Florida have been fighting about for years has now gotten the attention of the shrimping industry in Louisiana. The Louisiana shrimpers (along with their counterparts from all other shrimp producing states) suspect that imported shrimp is being repacked as domestic shrimp and then sold as fresh Gulf shrimp in many restaurants. It is against most state laws to mislabel seafood and federal law also comes into play. It is definitely consumer fraud to sell something labeled other than what it is. Many people ask, "How can red snapper be on every menu from New York to California when the total allowable catch can only provide several million pounds per year?" The answer is lots of stuff sold for genuine red snapper is not genuine red snapper.

DACS HAMMERS CLAM THIEVES IN CEDAR KEY, FLORIDA

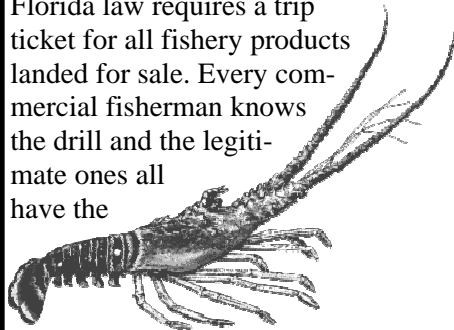
Two young men from Cedar Key were arrested and booked into the Levy County jail for stealing \$41,000 worth of farm-raised clams from legitimate clam growers in Cedar Key. An additional charge was levied against the two young men for tampering with a witness and trespassing.

Thievery of clams in Cedar Key has been an ongoing problem for years costing the honest clam growers hundreds of thousands of dollars and months of hard work. Cedar Key is a small town and everyone knows most everyone else so witnesses are not easy to come by. In this case, a witness did have the guts to stand up for the law and against the intimidation from the thieves. Commissioner Charles Bronson said, "I hope this arrest and the seriousness of the charges send a message that the Department will take every step necessary to put a stop to these crimes. The two thieves, if convicted, face up to 11 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

SFA applauds the good investigative work leading to the arrests. Unless thievery can be stopped, aquaculture businesses like the ones in Cedar Key will never survive.

LOBSTER SEASON OPENS SO WATCH OUT FOR CROOKS

Florida law requires a trip ticket for all fishery products landed for sale. Every commercial fisherman knows the drill and the legitimate ones all have the



requisite permits from state and federal agencies. All wholesale dealers are re-

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John Green, one of the original 17 members of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council passed away on Friday 13th, 2004. John Green was an honorable adversary of the commercial fishing industry. He was a former member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission and active in Texas politics all his life. John Green was a good man. His wit and hard-hitting debating skills will be missed by all of us who had the privilege to serve with him on the Gulf Council. SFA sends its prayers and best wishes to his wife Dorothy and his large family. Rest in Peace John Green; Rest in Peace.

- rpj

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quired to check licenses and to fill out trip tickets and forward to FWC on a monthly basis.

Unfortunately not everyone who is buying and selling lobster is legitimate. For instance, it is against the law for truckers to buy directly from fishermen without filling out and sending in trip tickets and checking to see that the purchase was from a legitimate fisherman. If rogue truck operators' show up in your area and buy seafood without sending in trip tickets please notify the SFA office with specific information and it will be relayed to the FWC law enforcement division. Fishermen who sell to these illegal dealers for cash and without filing a trip ticket are also guilty of violating Florida law. Because lobsters are also caught in federal waters, the Lacey Act might apply with substantial fines and prison sentences. Be aware of what you are doing.

WASHINGTON DC LOBBYING FUNDS DRIVE UNDERWAY

This coming session of the US Congress will be vital to the survival of the domestic seafood industry. There are bills that would totally change the management regime and give all decision making to state and federal employees without any input from industry.

It takes sufficient funds to lobby effectively in DC. *Steve Cox, President of Cox Wholesale Seafood*, Tampa, Florida has started the SFA Lobbying Fund by making a donation of \$2500 and asks all members and friends of SFA to contribute as well.

We need to be in Washington to articulate our position on issues and not have others do it for us. Please make your

Southeastern Fisheries Association will customize your company's HACCP Plan!

FDA trained consultant with over 40 years experience in all levels of the seafood industry.

Call today:
850/224-3180
or fax an inquiry to
850/222-FOOD



contribution to:

SFA FRIENDS OF THE FISHERMEN,

1118-B Thomasville Road,
Tallahassee, Florida 32303.

METHYLMERCURY ACTIVISTS SEEK TO SHUT DOWN DOMESTIC SEAFOOD HARVEST THROUGH EPA Hg GUIDELINES

Several environmental and advocacy groups are pushing to use the EPA standard of 0.19 ppm of methylmercury as the action level instead of the 0.5 ppm allowed by FDA. One group recently issued a lengthy news release on methylmercury using the EPA standard and was called to task by Southeastern Fisheries Association for not

being fully honest with the public. One of the latest scientific reports on methylmercury was the one done using the Seychelles Island population. This particular group of people eats as much as 12 ocean fish meals per week and it was not shown this level of consumption did any damage to anyone.

It is frustrating to keep having to fight the EPA guidelines which if implemented would totally destroy the USA fishing industry as we know it. It is impossible to get a dialogue going with those who want to shut us down because they have made up their minds then closed them.

At some point in time the Department of Commerce should weigh in and put an economic price tag on shutting down an entire food producing industry.

SFA member Pat Gosline recently passed away. Captain Pat was a paraplegic who could still run a grouper fishing boat. He took the HACCP training course last year in order to learn how to keep the fish he harvested in better condition. Pat was a good man who suffered a great deal in this life. SFA believes his homecoming will be peaceful and without pain. May his soul and the souls of all the faithfully departed rest in peace. Amen.— *rpj*

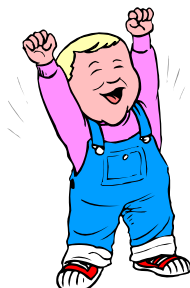
We invite anyone receiving this newsletter, who is not already a member of SFA to join us and become an activist for your business. We are here to respond to your business needs in the state capital and around the Southeast Region. We can help you only if we know you and correspond with you regularly.....We would look forward to serving you and your company!

Welcome to SFA New Members: SFA is proud to welcome the following new members into its growing family of successful seafood companies. We encourage each member to support one another for the overall good of maintaining an economic and cultural presence for commercial fishing in America as well as providing marine protein to the people.

Retail Market/Restaurant:

Walt's Fish Market & Restaurant,
Inc. Tom or Brett Wallin, Sarasota, FL.

F & S Seafood: Shannon Melvin, Allen
Phillips, Milton, FL



HACCP & HISTAMINE FISH

If your HACCP Plan does not include a Critical Control Point concerning histamine type fish that have been in transit for over 4 hours, then you are not in compliance with the HACCP regulations.

There must be ice or chemical coolant on and around histamine type fish when received and while they are in storage at your facility.

SFA members are encouraged to check their HACCP Plan and make sure you have transportation as a CCP if fish received was on the truck for more than four (4) hours and that you have a way to prove



Three of SFA's Board Members:
(Left to right) Gary Graves, Keys Fisheries; Tom Hill, Key Largo Fisheries
Joe Versaggi, Versaggi Shrimp Corp.
Thanks for all your hard work.

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