

# OWWA brings fish cakes to seafood festival

By **SUNDAE HORN**

The Ocracoker Staff Writer

The North Carolina Seafood Festival, held each October in Morehead City, featured Ocracoke fishermen in their new "Cooking with the Chefs" tent that debuted this year to promote this year's theme: "Learn it. Taste it. Love it."

"This year the Seafood Festival committee focused on getting the public face-to-face with the people who bring fresh local seafood to their door," said Ocracoke Working Watermen's Association spokesperson Robin Payne. "And also to connect with people preparing local specialties."

During the festival's main events on Saturday and Sunday, local chefs and/or fishermen worked in the "Cooking with the Chefs" tent, featuring a different seafood or recipe each hour. After listening to the chefs explain about the seafood and watching them cook, festival attendees got to

taste samples and take home copies of the recipes.

OWWA Served up Ocracoke drum cakes on Saturday evening. While Pat Austin did behind-the-scenes prep work, James Barrie Gaskill, Jette Carr, Rudy Austin and Gene Balance talked about the history of drum fishing on Ocracoke, and shared vintage recipes with the crowd.

They also talked about the importance of buying local — not imported — seafood, and supporting the local fishermen.

"We were told to prepare enough to serve about 50 people," said Payne. "But we ended up cooking about 150 drum cakes — people were lined and waiting. Pam Morris of Carteret Catch jumped in with her fry pan to help get the line moving!"

Payne reported that several film crews were at the "Cooking with the Chefs" tent, and the Seafood Festival will keep a copy of the video.

Ocracoke Working Watermen's Association had an exhibit in the main information tent, which hosted about 1,500 people over the weekend. OWWA ran out of bumper stickers, brochures and rack cards halfway through Saturday, Payne said.

Festival attendees stopped by the OWWA booth for copies of recipes and to take a closer look at the pound net model provided by Edward Carlson O'Neal.

"The success of OWWA has shown the importance of Ocracoke's fishing heritage, and that fresh local seafood combined with hands-on, traditional fishing methods is a winning combination that can make a difference with the buying public," said Payne.

OWWA also cooked and delivered steamed shrimp to the festival's opening ceremony Friday night.



Ocracokers (from left) James Barrie Gaskill, Rudy Austin, Jette Carr and Gene Balance serve up fish cakes during the North Carolina Seafood Festival.