



I've been an "outsider" since last August, listening to the locals echo "Water Festival" in all its glory since I moved to Beaufort about a year ago. *Man, it's the best time of the year... Just wait 'til Water Festival... The sandbar is crazy!* etc
... Well the notorious Beaufort holiday has come and gone—live music was danced to, new friends were made, old friends embraced, and sandbar debauchery had. By the time Water Festival was over, in a way I would have never anticipated a year ago, I had a newfound understanding of sandbar summers and southern nights.

How I met more people during the past 10 days than in the last 11 months, I don't know. As someone pointed out to me, "That's Water Festival, baby!" Opening night of Water Festival, the downtown scene was boisterous, overflowing with people moving between the gated festival grounds and the six local bars. Beaufort bars suddenly had bouncers. Bar decks were crowded with music and full of dancing. Folks stood shoulder-to-shoulder at wooden bar tops, shouting drink orders before bee-lining to the dance floor or outside where their friends were smoking cigarettes. *Where the hell have these people been hiding*, I asked myself, realizing maybe the same rock I'd been hiding under. I cruised the nightlight

