

# Holden Beach Seeks Possible Solutions To Septic Problem

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Commissioners hope to review an engineering proposal next month which will focus on possible solutions to the problem of sewage treatment on the island.

In response to numerous denials of septic tank permits for canal and marsh lots, town board members last week asked consulting engineers Lewis & Associates of Shallotte to provide some guidance.

Board members hope to receive the proposal, which will outline the scope of the work involved for each potential solution, in time for consideration during the April 11 town meeting.

Lewis & Associates representative Bill Daniel said the firm plans to research the extent of the canal pollution problem before submitting the proposal containing possible solutions and cost estimates.

He added that they will view the situation objectively and will not take a "textbook" approach to the problem.

"Right now, we view ourselves in a fact-gathering posture prior to submission of that proposal," explained Daniel.

In formulating their proposal, the engineering consultants plan to use town documents such as the land

*"It all comes down to cost."*

—William Williamson  
Holden Beach Commissioner

use plan as well as town officials and employees as informational resources.

Jay Houston of Lewis & Associates said the firm will not only address short-term solutions concerning the problem with canal and marsh lots, but will also take into consideration long-term needs for an island-wide wastewater treatment plant.

Problems obtaining approval for septic tank permits surfaced last year following the Brunswick County Health Department's reinterpretation of a state law which requires at least one foot of "naturally-occurring" or original soil above the water table.

Town board members said the most dramatic effects of the reinterpretation have been felt at the island's three canal subdivisions, Holden Beach Harbor, Heritage Harbor and Harbor Acres, and at marsh lots between Heritage Harbor and Harbor Acres.

Mayor John Tandy said the law is not specific enough in its reference to natural or original soil. "Even if you have the greatest type of soil for filtration," he explained, "it could still not be the original soil."

Houston said a group of local engineers, developers and soil scientists, Coastal Alliance, is currently examining the ramifications of the septic tank law and attempting to clearly define "natural" soil.

During a one-hour special meeting last Wednesday, town commissioners stressed that any system developed for the canal subdivisions must be designed in such a manner that it can later be adapted to a larger system which could serve the entire island.

Mayor Tandy said that while many people want to drop the issue of canal pollution, the town board has a responsibility to property owners who cannot receive septic tank permits and subsequently cannot build on their lots.

Referring to the board of commissioners, he said, "This crew and myself are totally responsible for the health and welfare of everybody on this beach."

Commissioner Bob Buck added that "the town has got to take the lead and respond to free up construction in the three canal subdivisions."

William Williamson, commissioner in charge of water and sewer, said a lack of available funds is the major factor preventing the town from solving the sewage treatment problem.

"It all comes down to cost," he said. "If we didn't have a cost involved, we could solve this problem very easily."

Buck said without state or federal grants, funding will have to come directly through the town, by way of a bond referendum or taxes, or through individual property owners.

Williamson added that he believes the canals are polluted and that, if left alone, the problem will only grow worse. He said polluted canals could jeopardize the health of Holden Beach residents as well as the economy of the entire area if the fishing industry is affected.

Mayor Tandy also said last week that blame for the current situation with septic tanks should be placed on everyone, not just developers, real estate agents or renters. "All of us are to blame. That's why we're in this boat and that's why we are looking into possible solutions."

Commissioners Gil Bass and Georgia Langley were absent last week.



EIGHTH-GRADER GINNY GRAY pins a nametag on U.S. Rep. Charles G. Rose Friday as he arrives at Shallotte Middle School to speak at a citizenship program.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

## Chamber Receives \$2,500 Gift

North Carolina National Bank recently completed the second installment of a two-year, \$5,000 pledge to the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Suzanne Sartelle and President Don

Evans is (right) NNCB County Executive Dennis Crocker. Evans said the check indicates the bank's strong commitment and support for the chamber's work.

## GETS WARM RECEPTION

# Rose Offers Lesson For Eighth Graders

BY SUSAN USHER

Two days after a House ethics committee found him guilty of violating House rules, U.S. Rep. Charles G. Rose III urged approximately 224 Shallotte Middle School eighth-graders to learn from his mistakes.

"I want you to learn something from me, from what you've seen in the papers lately about me," he said. "You could do everything your parents have taught you was right, you could be good all your life, and make them proud of you, then make a mistake sometime. And that could change people's opinion of you, the way they think of you."

"Because of some stupid errors I made in managing campaign funds people have given me, I've taken criticism from a lot of people," he continued, noting that the students in his audience all have a "role to play" in the future of the country.

"Remember that someone is always looking at you and watching you. You can be criticized if you do not do exactly what people expect from you."

Rose was the keynote speaker at a citizenship program organized as a class project by 60 students of Barbara Holcombe. Students greeted Rose with a standing ovation in the school gym and later class representatives Sonny Leggett and Jessica Robinson presented him with a plaque. Later he mingled at a reception in the school library with guests from the community, including Brunswick County Democratic Party Chairman W.A. Stanley.

Congressman Rose told the students, "Nowadays you have to be doubly careful: Not only don't inten-

tionally make mistakes, but don't do anything that appears to be wrong."

On Wednesday, after a 1½-year investigation, the House ethics committee had found Rose guilty of violating House rules by borrowing (and later replacing) \$63,995 from his campaign fund and failing to file complete financial reports.

In its lightest possible penalty, the committee issued a public letter of reproof.

The action had little, if any, impact on Rose's reception in Brunswick County, where he was also the keynote speaker for a Democratic rally Saturday that drew about 150 enthusiastic party members.

On Friday Rose also presented Shallotte Middle School Principal Mark Owens nine classroom flags which, he said, had flown over the Capitol "not for a long time, now, but for a few minutes."

Mrs. Holcombe, whose classes planned and executed the program, said last fall her students began studying the U.S. flag. "But our room didn't have a flag," she added. "We looked and there were others that didn't also."

What followed were lots of letters to Rose, he recalled, with "one central message: Bring us some flags."

The congressman was originally to present them in an October assembly, but a scheduling conflict delayed the big event until Friday.

Rose, who was first elected to represent the 7th Congressional District in 1972, also urged students to respect the memory of those who died for the country and to appreciate the freedom represented by the U.S. flag.

"The flag is a symbol," he continued, "of our country and all that has gone on for over two centuries."

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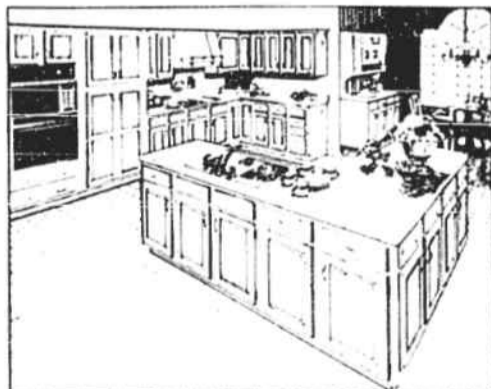
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