

DA Vows No Plea Bargains As 13 Indicted On Drug Charges

BY RAHN ADAMS

Thirteen defendants—including seven local men—who were indicted on cocaine trafficking charges Monday by a Brunswick County investigative grand jury will not be allowed to plea bargain for reduced charges, according to 13th District Attorney Michael Easley.

Easley announced the indictments Monday afternoon at a news conference in Bolivia. He said the 48 cocaine indictments involving the 13 defendants stemmed from a 12-month special grand jury investigation—the third such drug trafficking probe to occur in Brunswick County in the past three years. The two earlier investigations yielded 579 indictments involving 85 defendants.

Easley said only 13 defendants



EASLEY

were indicted Monday because "we're pacing them a little better... It doesn't blow a fuse on the system." He added that the special grand jury investigation remains underway.

Local defendants named this week are: Kenneth Leon Thorne, 29, of Calabash; Christopher Verlie Parham, 27, Seaside; James W. Robinson Jr., 37, Supply; Johnnie Robert Corbett, 44, Boones Neck; Dewey Earl Rhodes, 38, Holden Beach; Perry Dean Moore, Hickman's Crossroads; and Allison Leland Reaves, 30, Shallotte.

Other defendants are Jerry L. High, 38, North Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Robert Fowler Hewett, 25, California; Ellis C. Bordeaux, 55, Delco; Edward D. Wigner Jr., 25, Wilmington; and two Florida residents who Easley would not identify Monday, saying authorities currently are attempting to locate the pair.

According to the district attorney, the defendants

who have been located have agreed to surrender themselves to authorities Wednesday morning at the sheriff's department. High, who also faces federal drug charges in South Carolina, was arrested June 1 in North Myrtle Beach, and was being held Monday on a \$50,000 cash bond.

Familiar Faces In Crowd

Easley said the latest investigation was conducted by his office in conjunction with the SBI and Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. The special grand jury heard approximately 50 hours of testimony from 18 witnesses during the year-long inquiry, which the district attorney said was a "spin-off" of the April 1988 investigation.

The probe expanded into Florida and South Carolina, as well as into three other North Carolina counties where indictments are expected later this month, Easley said. He added that one of the counties is Columbus, which also

is in the 13th District. Easley would not identify the other two counties; however, he indicated that they are not located in southeastern North Carolina.

Monday's indictments named the "higher ups" in three separate alleged conspiracies that occurred between February 1987 and July 1988, Easley explained. He said other "less culpable" suspects involved in the same cases will be indicted over the next several months, along with persons allegedly involved in other conspiracies. One of the other rings reaches into the northeastern United States, he added.

Easley noted that three of the current defendants—Corbett, Rhodes and High—were involved in marijuana smuggling cases here in the early 1980s. "I'm a little frustrated because... all three of them have been convicted of drug trafficking in the past and were sent to prison," Easley said.

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STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY of Alpha Ward's two lots in the dunes near the eastern end of Sunset Beach is located near this Brunswick County Health Department site evaluation marker (foreground). The undeveloped area pictured on the right is part of four vacant lots owned by the development firm, Sunset Beach & Twin Lakes Inc. Main Street runs between the two lines of houses in the background.

Sunset Beach Property Owner Seeks Access To Formerly Submerged Lots

BY RAHN ADAMS

Durham attorney Jim Maxwell is getting to be an old hand at representing Sunset Beach property owners in lawsuits against the development firm, Sunset Beach & Twin Lakes Inc.

Maxwell—counsel for the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association—and the company's lawyers are waiting to present oral arguments this summer before the N.C. Court of Appeals, in a case involving beach access through a prime oceanfront lot at Sunset Beach.

In the meantime, Maxwell is representing a local woman, Alpha Ward, who filed a lawsuit last month in Brunswick County Superior Civil Court in an attempt to gain access to landlocked oceanfront property that at one time was submerged under Tubbs Inlet.

Defendants in the case are Sunset Beach & Twin Lakes Inc., A.L. Morrison Construction Co., Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Kruppenbach of Scotland County, and Carol Ann Moore of Bladen County. The four defendants own seven lots that are located east

of the plaintiff's property, on the abandoned right-of-way of the island's former Main Street, according to Mrs. Ward's complaint.

Records on file at the Brunswick County Land Records Management office in Bolivia show that five of the seven lots are vacant, with four of the vacant lots owned by Sunset Beach & Twin Lakes Inc. Houses are built on the lots owned by the Kruppenbachs and Ms. Moore.

According to Land Records Management and the Brunswick County Tax Department, the combined tax value of the defendants' property is more than \$1 million. The tax value of Mrs. Ward's property is \$75,000.

Court documents state that Mrs. Ward and her late husband, George B. Ward Jr., bought two oceanfront lots in 1955, when the old Main Street existed. But from 1955 to 1967, Tubbs Inlet—which divides Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach—shifted westward and completely submerged the entire eastern end of Sunset Beach, including the Wards' property.

In 1968, the late M.C. Gore—father of Sunset Beach & Twin Lakes' president, Ed Gore—reconstructed the eastern end of the island by dredging sand from the waterway behind the island and depositing the fill into Tubbs Inlet, the documents say. The new land included the former site of the Ward lots.

Eight years later, Sunset Beach & Twin Lakes resurveyed and remapped the east end, whose configuration had changed in the reconstruction, and moved Main Street to its present location. The defendants' lots in the current lawsuit lie between the Ward property and the second Main Street. The only legal access to the Ward lots is from the ocean.

Mrs. Ward won a 1980 lawsuit that re-established her ownership of the two lots. However, a Brunswick County District Civil Court judge and later the N.C. Court of Appeals ruled that Mrs. Ward was not entitled to an easement to her property from the present Main Street. Instead, the courts found that her easement was over the old Main Street right-of-way (See SUNSET, Page 2-A)

SECOND VOTE REQUIRED

Holden Commission Votes 3-2 For Annexation

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Commissioners will have to vote a second time before annexation of its first mainland territory is official.

Members Monday night voted 3-2 in favor of annexing the town's first mainland territory, one vote short of the four-fifths majority required for adoption of the ordinance on a single balloting.

Before an anxious crowd of some 40 island and mainland residents, Commissioners William Williamson, Gil Bass and Gay Atkins voted in favor of the controversial annexation proposal, while Bob Buck and Georgia Langley cast opposing votes.

Town Manager Gus Ulrich said a margin of at least 4-1 is required on a first vote, but that a simple majority

"I don't want to see shops and businesses up and down Ocean Boulevard."

—William Williamson
Holden Beach Commissioner

of 3-2 will be enough the second time around.

The deciding vote will likely take place at a special meeting set for Monday, June 26, at 7 p.m. in town hall.

Commissioner Williamson made the motion Monday to annex approximately 67 acres of property bordering the mainland causeway, and it was immediately seconded by Bass.

Williamson prefaced his motion with comments that he would like to see Holden Beach maintain its family atmosphere and its residential nature on the island.

"But the town also has to grow," he continued, adding that the town needs to provide an area for commercial growth and that the causeway is the best place for that type of development. "I don't want to see

shops and businesses up and down Ocean Boulevard."

Commissioners Bass and Atkins did not comment on the proposal before this week's vote, but the two opponents both made lengthy public statements.

Reading from a prepared statement, Buck said, "This may well be the most important vote I will cast as a commissioner. For years I have supported the idea of annexing the causeway. I no longer do so."

As reasons for his vote against the proposal, he cited public opposition to the plan from both the mainland and island and the fact that there would likely be future annexations which could change the present character of Holden Beach.

(See VOTE, Page 2-A)

CORLEY, LEMON SWITCHED

'Need For Change' At West Said Reason For Transfers

BY SUSAN USHER

A need for change. That's the reason Brunswick County school board members gave Monday for switching principals of two county schools.

Effective July 1, the switch returns Harry E. (Ed) Lemon to West Brunswick High School after a five-year absence and sends David R. Corley to Bolivia Elementary School after three years at West Brunswick.

"We think a change is in order," said school board member Robert Slockett following Monday's meeting. "I think it's going to do both schools good."

However, West Brunswick booster Terry Barbee of Ocean Isle Beach told Slockett, "I think we're taking a big step backward."

From February 1977, Lemon served 2½ years as West Brunswick's assistant principal and five years as its principal. In fall 1984 he joined the central office staff as assistant superintendent. He kept that title during the first of his three years as principal of Bolivia Elementary School.

Board of education members met for approximately two hours behind closed doors on several matters before voting on the switch. The vote on the motion by Dorothy Worth was unanimous.

Corley, accompanied by his wife, Doris, sat in shock as Superintendent John Kauffhold recommended his transfer. The Corleys left the meeting without comment.

On Tuesday Corley told the Beacon that last Friday the superintendent had advised that, "based on the facts," he planned to recommend to the board that Corley continue at West.

"When I heard it from his mouth then (Monday)," said Corley, "that was when I knew (otherwise)."

Tuesday he said he hadn't asked Kauffhold about the change. "We just haven't talked at all today," said Corley.

On-the-street discussion of the possible transfer of the principals began last month when the school system administration received a petition seeking Lemon's return to West Brunswick, saying he would benefit the school through its curriculum and staff. School system officials have not identified the individuals who signed the petition.



CORLEY

LEMON

Two Are Ready For New Starts

While neither David Corley nor Ed Lemon may be entirely comfortable with how they came to have new school assignments for the coming year, both said Tuesday they're ready to begin their new jobs on July 1.

Citing five years of elementary school experience in his 20-plus years in education, Corley said, "I can do an outstanding job at that level also. That's my new assignment and that's the job I'm going to do."

"Elementary education is extremely important to the destiny of middle and senior high schools. It doesn't have to be an easier job—just different."

In turn, Lemon said Tuesday he thinks his experiences at the central office and elementary school level will add to his understanding of how young people learn. "I think it will help me deal better with the learning process of the students than I did three years ago," he said.

Petitions Didn't Count?

Monday night, Superintendent John Kauffhold and several board members said the transfer decision was made without regard to petitions received in support of both Lemon and Corley serving as principal of West Brunswick.

"The board felt we needed a change and so that's what we did," he said after the meeting. "We based it on what we consider to be the facts and what we thought was best for the school."

"We didn't base our decision on the people who supported Ed or David."

Kauffhold did say that after receiving the first petition he had told Corley that the board needed to hear from his supporters as well.

Speaks In Own Behalf

At the start of Monday's meeting, Corley spoke in his own behalf in time that had been requested by spokespersons for various groups supporting his work. Corley outlined progress at the school in the areas of academics, athletics and community support. More students are taking the the Scholastic Aptitude Test, required for college admission; competency test scores are up; and this year's graduation was orderly and dignified.

The school's Quiz Bowl and business teams placed first in county competitions; athletic teams won nine county championships and two conference championships this year. The PTA has been reactivated and the advisory board is united, he said.

'Problems' Cited

While the school continues to have an internal problem, he noted, it also has a way to—and is dealing with—that problem.

Following Monday's meeting, board member Bob Slockett referred to those internal problems at the school as a factor in the decision.

"We understand there has been a lot of turmoil in West Brunswick High School, a lot of dissatisfaction among teachers and students," said

(See CORLEY, Page 2-A)

Outstanding Resource Waters Hearing Scheduled Tonight

Brunswick County shellfishermen and others concerned about the local environment will have their chance to speak out tonight (Thursday) concerning special protection for Lockwood Folly River.

The N.C. Environmental Management Commission (EMC) will hold a public hearing on the classification of coastal Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) at 7 p.m. in Bryan Auditorium on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Lower Lockwood Folly River is one of eight coastal waters that have been nominated for designation as an ORW, which would be eligible for special protection from pollution and increased development.

However, a state Division of Environmental Management report released in March recommended against the designation for the local river. Although the report recognized the river's valuable resources such as oysters and clams, it pointed out that the river does not meet the standards for excellent water quality for the designation. It said the river's pollution problem needed to be addressed before it is considered.

The report recommended ORW classification for six other bodies of water in North Carolina. The Topsail and Middle sounds area in Pender and New Hanover counties is the only other area nominated that was not recommended for special protection.

Tonight's meeting is the last in a series of three public hearings concerning Outstanding Resource Waters. The EMC is not expected to take action on the special designation until at least September.

Persons unable to attend the public hearing can mail written comments to Greg Thorpe, N.C. Division of Environmental Management, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.