

TOWN CLERK RETIRING AFTER 15 YEARS

Alberta Tatum Has Seen A Lot Of Change At Ocean Isle

BY DOUG RUTTER
Staff Writer

Alberta Tatum means business when she says she's seen a lot of change. As town clerk at Ocean Isle Beach for the past 15 years, she's watched the resort community blossom before her eyes.

Homes and businesses have multiplied, the old draw-bridge connecting the island and mainland has been replaced with a modern high-rise span and a sewer system serving most of the town has gone into operation since she was hired as the town's first full-time clerk in 1974.

"It's been growing every year since I got here and it hasn't stopped," said Ms. Tatum, who will retire March 31. "I don't think it will stop any time soon."

She said the biggest change she's witnessed at Ocean Isle Beach was the addition of a sewer system that went into operation in 1987 after 10 years of planning. "That sewer system has done more for the island than anything else," she said. "It's been a real boost."

Over the years, Ms. Tatum has been through eight town elections and served under three mayors—Odell Williamson, LaDane Rullington and Betty Williamson, the current mayor.

"Alberta has been a dedicated employee," said Mrs. Williamson. "We're certainly going to miss her as an employee of the town and a friend."

The Shallotte resident started working at Ocean Isle in July 1974 shortly after the town put its water system into operation. Before that, she said, the town paid part-time clerks who worked out of the office of whoever was mayor at the time.

But once the water system became operational, town officials hired a full-time clerk to handle billing and other matters. Ms. Tatum said she started out with 400 water system accounts and had to generate each bill on a typewriter.

"We were growing fast back then," she said. "After the water came in, the building took off." Years later, a computer system simplified billing, but the work load never dropped off as the town continued to develop.

"Getting to know the people has been the best part for me. I feel like I have a lot of friends here."

—Alberta Tatum
Ocean Isle Town Clerk

ALBERTA TATUM will retire March 31 after more than 15 years as town clerk at Ocean Isle Beach.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

"The computer lightened my work a lot," she said. "I still have plenty to do though. There's always something coming up. You don't ever get caught up."

As clerk, Ms. Tatum handles all financial matters for the town, from collecting bills and making bank deposits to complet-

ing payroll reports and keeping the budget in line. She also serves as clerk to the board of commissioners and has sat through more than 200 town meetings in her career.

Ms. Tatum admits things sometimes get hectic around town hall, but says she still enjoys her job. The best part, she said, is

dealing with people and staying active. "Getting to know the people has been the best part for me," she said. "I feel like I have a lot of friends here."

With an amiable demeanor, Ms. Tatum goes out of her way to serve people by working at the town hall every Saturday, a

practice that began when she started work more than 15 years ago.

The clerk said she doesn't know of any other town halls that stay open Saturday, but that non-resident property owners in particular appreciate the special treatment. "We have a lot of property owners who come down on the weekend," she said. "It's nice to be here when they need you."

One of the most notable recent changes on the island—at least as far as the town clerk is concerned—was the opening of the new town hall in 1988.

Perhaps nobody enjoyed the move from the old gray building on the causeway to the spacious new town hall on West Third Street more than Ms. Tatum. She worked in the old hall for 14 years, putting up with noisy space heaters in the winter and window air-conditioning units in the summer that never quite made the building comfortable.

"I always said I wanted a new town hall," said Ms. Tatum. "And I promised myself I'd work for a while after we got it so I could enjoy it." Looking around, she adds, "I'll probably miss this office as much as anything."

Even after she retires, however, Ms. Tatum won't be leaving the town hall for good. As a member of the Ocean Isle Museum Foundation Board of Directors, she said she'll be back for occasional visits.

Before leaving, she'll be training the new town clerk, Emma Ross of Ash.

Ms. Tatum said she expects current development trends at Ocean Isle Beach to continue in the years to come. "I think we're going to stay basically the same as we are now with mostly residences and a few businesses."

A 65-year-old native of Loris, S. C., Ms. Tatum lived in Wilmington for nine years and moved to Shallotte in 1951 following the death of her husband, Hamilton Todd. Ms. Tatum reared three children on her own and managed R.D. White & Sons of Shallotte for 20 years before taking her position at Ocean Isle Beach.

Her retirement plans include traveling to places like Mexico. "I've been working so long," she said. "I just think I'll enjoy doing some of the things that I want to do."

Adult Day Center To Offer Elderly And Their Caregivers More Options

BY SUSAN USHER

Another option in long-term care will soon be available to area residents who tend an aging relative.

By August, the South Brunswick Interchurch Council plans to open the county's first adult day-care center in Southport. One of two such facilities proposed for the county, the center will be operated under a new non-profit organization, Brunswick Adult Day Care, Inc., formed by the council. Once the Southport center is open, the group will pursue opening of a second site, in the Shallotte-Supply area, said Don Pringle of Holden Beach, board chairman.

After more than a year and a half of research and development, Pringle noted with just a hint of excitement in his eyes and voice, "I can see it happening now."

The center will provide social companionship and personal care for clients age 60 and older, as well

as respite for the people responsible for their round-the-clock care. "It's really stressful to provide 24-hour-a-day care," said Pringle. "It will help the caregiver as much as the person who is sick."

Located in a house at 1207 E. Moore Street, Southport, with a fenced-in back yard and fireplace, the center will initially serve approximately eight people. It will provide its clientele with snacks, games, crafts, day trips and fellowship, said Don Pringle, chairman of the center's governing board. "We're trying to help them keep their social skills, to help them keep thinking," he said. "If you can get them involved with people in some way it helps revitalize them, it helps bring them back to life."

The board is also exploring ways to provide transportation for those who need it, as well as a hot noon meal.

Pringle said the local program is

"It will help the caregiver as much as the person who is sick."

—Don Pringle, Chairman
Brunswick Adult Day Care, Inc.

aimed at helping participants maintain self-identification and self-worth, and to enhance the quality of their lives.

Families will be able to bring participants to the center as needed—on their way to work, shop, or while simply taking some time for themselves. The center will open at 7:30 p.m. and close at 5:30 p.m.

Between now and the targeted Aug. 15 opening, Pringle said the volunteers responsible for the center also have much more to get done, specifically identifying clients, securing additional operating funds and obtaining furnishings, as well as hiring staff.

for that," said Pringle.

Meanwhile, the board of directors is waiting to hear the results of a series of applications for \$57,000 in grants to cover at least some of the center's operating costs. It may then approach the county and the United Way for additional support to maintain and expand the program.

Pringle said the board is also seeking support from the community—churches, individuals, businesses, civic groups. "And we'll need almost that amount again to open the Shallotte site," he added.

The centers are expected to help meet an identified need in Brunswick County, with its growing elderly population. According to Don Eggert, a planner with the Brunswick County Planning Department and staff to the Brunswick Interagency Transportation System, the proportion of county residents age 60 and older is increasing steadily.

The 1980 U.S. Census showed that

those age 63 and older made up 15.7 percent of all county residents, or 5,517 people. By 1987, according to estimates prepared by the N.C. Office of Management and Budget, they accounted for 17.3 percent of the population, or 8,601 people. By 1994 the age bracket is expected to represent 11,830 individuals, 17.3 percent or nearly one out of every five persons in the county.

According to the National Institute on Adult Day Care, the average age of day-care participants is 85, with a majority suffering from Alzheimer's disease, stroke and other cognitive disorders.

To refer an elderly person to the centers, contact Pringle at 842-3122, or write Brunswick Adult Day Care Center, P.O. Box 310, Supply, NC 28462.

The Primary Source For Fine Home Furnishings and Expert Interior Design

From floor to ceiling...
We do it all!

ARE YOU AN OUT-OF-TOWN OWNER? If you can't be around, don't worry. We'll put everything together for you—whether it's reworking a room or two, refurbishing an older home or villa, or handling an entire new project. We've done it for literally thousands of happy homeowners and developers.

Blinds 50% off
with customer's own measurements.

More people come to us—with good reason. We carry a large selection of home furnishings in stock in our salesroom/warehouse. You'll find by far the largest variety of trusted names in carpets, home furnishings, wallcoverings, window treatments and bedding. The services of our thoroughly professional interior designers are yours for the asking.



Creative Décors

803-249-5225

—MasterCard—VISA—Discover Accepted—

HOURS
MONDAY-FRIDAY
8:00 - 5:00
SATURDAY
10:00 - 5:00

94 HWY. 17 S / OD SECTION • N. MYRTLE BEACH, SC • 29582

A DAY AT THE HOLDEN BEACH DOCKS

SATURDAY • MARCH 24 • 1-5 PM

FREE FISH FRY

FREE BOAT RIDES ON SALTY I & SALTY II

FREE VIEWING VIDEO OF A SALTY FISHING TRIP

FREE DEMONSTRATIONS OF FISHING EQUIPMENT, RIG TYING

FREE BOAT SAFETY INSPECTIONS BY U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Live radio broadcast by WPGO 106.3
Come meet POGO the Rabbit. All the fun takes place at Holden Beach Marina.

—SPONSORED BY—

SALTY FISHING CHARTERS • HOLDEN BEACH MARINA
CAPT. PETE'S SEAFOOD • COAST GUARD AUXILIARY • WPGO

