



They Look Like Ping-Pong Balls!

The discovery of a loggerhead turtle nest on Holden Beach Saturday morning attracted a crowd of eager young spectators. Eddie Wagoner, a volunteer with the Brunswick County Turtle Watch program, carefully removed the eggs so the nest could be relocated to a safer spot. Enjoying the process are (from left) Jillian Cosentino, 4, of Avon Lake, Ohio; Kirstin Smith, 5, of West Lake, Ohio; and Ashley Folan, 4, of Strongsville, Ohio. More about Turtle Watch on Page 3-A.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Towns, Health Board Work Together Against Septic Tank Pollution

BY LYNN CARLSON

Representatives of four local beach towns and the county health board seem to agree that action is needed to prohibit overcrowding of rental cottages and permanent homes which rely on septic tanks for waste disposal.

But they also agree that care must be taken to develop enforceable regulations which do not violate the privacy or other rights of property owners and vacationers.

Holden Beach, Sunset Beach, Calabash and Long Beach representatives spoke to the Brunswick County Board of Health Monday night, each outlining different needs and concerns regarding septic tank pollution in their communities. They also pledged to work together to develop guidelines and regulations to address each town's needs.

They were asked to do so without interfering with property owners' wishes to use rooms in their homes as dens, offices or libraries and without prohibiting such traditional beach activities as family reunions.

"I have an ugly vision of somebody out with a flashlight doing bed-checks, and that's not what we want," said David Sandifer, a Holden Beach commissioner appearing before the health board. Sandifer said that while 20 people may be visiting a house at a given time, they might not all be staying there or sleeping there.

Holden Beach Commissioner Gay Atkins said, "I'm not concerned about (regulating) misrepresenting advertising, but it is a major concern if people lose the right to have a room be what they want it to be." Atkins was referring to the statutory definitions of bedrooms. In different rulings, the state has defined a bedroom as any room that can be reasonably expected to function as a sleeping quarters, and as any room which contains a closet and is connected to a bathroom, even by a hallway.

A recent state ruling required a Holden Beach couple to make a number of changes to a home they built before a certificate of completion could be issued. Health officials had suspended the couple's septic tank permit for a four-bedroom house in May after a final inspection of the sewage disposal system. Inspectors said the two-story house had six bedrooms, two more than the septic

system was designed to handle. The couple had said the home, built as a rental cottage, would use two of those rooms as an office and den.

Marlene Thomas, a member of Holden Beach's wastewater management committee, said that group has developed a draft ordinance to prohibit property owners and real estate firms from advertising that a home will sleep more people than its septic tank can accommodate. The committee's plan would call for two written warning notifications before a warrant is obtained authorizing

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—David Sandifer

the town building inspector to inspect the property. Violations would be turned over to the health department. Thomas said the committee's approach relies on education and voluntary compliance. The group has been working with County Health Director Michael Rhodes to develop an ordinance that is compatible with state regulations, and that the health department will be able to enforce.

Engineering consultants employed by Sunset Beach and Calabash said regulations will work only if property owners are required to declare an occupancy capacity, based on the septic system's capacity, at the time of permitting. Joseph Tombro, civil engineer for Powell Associates, said his firm is testing to determine the frequency of septic tank failures and the contamination of groundwater and adjacent waters. He said the two towns probably will form a sanitary district to deal with the problem, whether or not a central sewer system is built.

Long Beach Mayor Joan Altman, whose town defeated a central sewer referendum, said she is "interested in all the assistance the health department can provide," since the town "will be relying on septic tanks for the foreseeable future." Altman said a glance through Long Beach cottage rental brochures revealed "very few, but a few, gross violations" of exceeding septic tank capacity.

H.J. "Skip" Davis, health board chairman, said statistics exist only for septic tank failures "that we know of," since breakdowns often occur on weekends and the repairs done without permits. Davis also said no information exists indicating the causes of those breakdowns.

However, Andrew Robinson, county environmental health supervisor, said septic tanks can pollute even

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REDWINE SEEKS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Could State Purchase Bird Island?

BY SUSAN USHER

As deadlines for public comment on plans to develop Bird Island approach, a local legislator has introduced a measure providing for study of the feasibility of its purchase by the state.

The measure is part of a package of special provisions recommended in a capital spending bill the General Assembly was expected to consider Tuesday or Wednesday of this week. It calls for the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources to study "the feasibility and appropriateness" of the state acquiring Bird Island for the purpose of conservation.

The agency's findings and recommendations are due to the General Assembly no later than May 1, 1993, but Redwine expects the study

would be completed sooner than that.

Redwine includes in a revised version of the bill a clause intended to reassure the island's owner, Janie Pace Price of Greensboro, that the study is not intended to influence decisions regarding development permits for which she has applied. He has talked with Price and her attorney regarding the bill and said they are not entirely for or against it, but understand why he is seeking the study.

"We need the information that will be provided by the study to be in a position to ask for state money if and when that opportunity arises," said Redwine. "We could potentially have money available through the state parks system or perhaps through The Nature Conservancy or both.

We need to know what our choices are."

At a Sunset Beach Town Council meeting earlier this year, Price indicated her willingness to consider an offer for all or part of the property, an island and marsh system of about 1,200 acres, of which the Attorney General's office says about 85 acres are considered high ground. The island is located between Mad Inlet and Little River Inlet in South Carolina. It is accessible by boat, or by crossing Mad Inlet on low tide on foot from the far west end of Sunset Beach.

She has applied for a series of permits required to develop the island for residential use.

In February Price applied to the N.C. Division of Coastal Management for a major CAMA permit. (See **FEASIBILITY**, Page 2-A)

Bacon Island Owners Will Seek Major CAMA Permit

BY DOUG RUTTER

Owners of Bacon Island have decided to apply for a major permit that would allow them to develop the island after building a bridge over the Holden Beach marsh.

Original plans to get a minor permit for the bridge have been scrapped, and Holden Beach Enterprises is moving ahead on plans to subdivide the island and sell lots for houses in what developers say will be an "exclusive," high-priced development.

Virgil Roberts, a partner in Holden Beach Enterprises, said the owners decided to go for the major permit partly due to increasing interest

from potential buyers. He said newspaper articles about the company's plans to build a bridge over wetlands and eventually sell lots on the small island have helped create interest among real estate buyers.

"We do have some interest that we didn't have before," Roberts said in a telephone interview Tuesday. "It's just allowed us to speed up our plans."

Roberts, secretary-treasurer of Holden Beach Enterprises, said it will take about eight weeks to complete an application for a CAMA major development permit.

The application will be given to the N.C.

Division of Coastal Management, which will invite comments from other state and federal agencies before deciding whether to issue the permit.

The head of the division, Roger Schecter, vowed last week to fight the issuance of a minor permit that would have allowed a bridge to the island.

In a July 6 letter to Holden Beach Building Inspector Dwight Carroll, Schecter said he wanted the owners to apply for a major permit, instead of a minor permit.

Due to plans for development of the island, the coastal management chief asked Carroll to return (See **MAJOR**, Page 2-A)

Holden Withdraws As GOP Candidate For State House

BY SUSAN USHER

Republican candidate Kelly Holden withdrew from the 14th District State House race last week, with no replacement candidate or candidates in sight as of Tuesday afternoon.

"Nope, not a word," said Lynda Britt, supervisor of the Brunswick County Board of Elections, echoing comments from other election board offices in the district.

GOP Executive Committees of the four counties in the district will choose a new Republican candidate. Prior to the primary Caletta Faulk of Columbus County had been discussed as a possible candidate; she could not be reached for comment last week.

Holden said he decided not to wait until later to withdraw in order to give more lead time to anyone else who might run. "I love politics. I wanted to run," he said. "I didn't want to pull out." But he said he did not have the time to take away from his family and his business interests to hold a legislative seat, or to campaign for one.

"I think just reality set in," he said Friday after giving his letter of resignation to the Brunswick County Board of Elections, which forwarded it to other elections offices. "I didn't think I could be gone the hours needed to go to Raleigh. I can't be away from the business for weeks at a time."

Holden is a partner in a family-owned farm, produce stand and pick-your-own operation and a tax preparation franchise office. Peak season coincides with spring and summer months when the General Assembly is generally in session.

He said the time comes to reassess priorities, noting, "My family and business come first."

He said he doesn't know what kind of people can afford to get involved in state-level politics, who can take the time away (from other (See **HOLDEN**, Page 2-A)



HOLDEN

Watch Your Bus Behavior! You May Be On Candid Camera

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

How would you like to watch a video of your child en route to school on the school bus? Would it be instructive to hear and see what goes on inside one of those big yellow buses during its morning or afternoon run?

This is a distinct possibility for Brunswick County school buses during the 1992-93 school year, according to William Turner, assistant superintendent. He described a new means of observing bus behavior to the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday.

"It's called the black box," he explained, "because you install a small black box at the front of every bus, with a mirror in front of it, reflecting a camera that might or might not be behind it."

The camera, he went on, is installed in one of the buses each day, without students or even the bus drivers knowing which one. It records on videotape the sights and sounds that go on during the bus ride.

Turner said the cost of a camera is \$1,300, and the box expense is minimal. "I think I can get the money from the state for our black box system this school year," he said.

"This idea has been developed because of discipline

problems on school buses," he said. "In one school system using this, the bus drivers soon forgot all about it, and their recorded language was not what it should be and they were reprimanded."

This tantalizing prospect might have been the highlight of a long, hot meeting, in which some 30 members of the public endured three hours in an un-air-conditioned room. Chairperson Donna Baxter told them midway through the meeting, "If we turn on the air-conditioning, you won't hear a thing we say, so you choose." Someone called out, "We'll suffer!"

Turner also gave a progress report on the new Supply Elementary School, due to open this fall. "I know some of you have seen it but, trust me, we will be in on time." He listed items being completed: tile work finished by July 20, paving by the Department of Transportation beginning August 15, and carpeting installed July 13. He said the extreme heat forced postponement of landscaping until fall.

"There are two shifts working now, almost around the clock," he said.

The School Advisory Council for Supply Elementary was approved with the following appointed: Wayne Roach, Eugene Hewitt, Cleveland Simmons,

Lynn Ellis, Teresa Fulford and Betty Sellers.

He announced that Brunswick County will not get 25 new buses as originally planned. "The state only appropriated money for 400 buses for all of North Carolina," he said, "so we hope for six."

Patricia Ward, Chapter 1 supervisor, got board approval for her program, in which she said a greater need for reading had been discovered. "We'll continue the program for grades two to six," she said, "with a first grade program at Supply, Union and South Brunswick Elementary."

A pilot pre-kindergarten program will be conducted at Union and Lincoln, with 16 students, one teacher and one assistant at each site. "Students will be chosen based on need, after we have sent flyers to all parents," Ward explained. Transportation will be provided for this all-day program.

Nelson Best, driver education coordinator, proposed a driver's education program this year with part of the instruction contracted to a private instructor. He said teachers already certified for the subject would be used for classroom work. Bids for the in-car contract will be opened August 24 and the program will begin September 10.

"It will be held after school, before school, during the summer, whenever a particular school wants to schedule it," Best said. "Driver education is not permitted any longer during the school day and our state driver's ed funds have been cut 22 percent. It costs \$100 per student for in-car instruction, and we have \$240 per student allocated by the state."

An enrollment of 183 and a membership of 168 in last year's extended day program were reported by Freeman Gause, director of extended day and community schools. "We had a dropout rate of eight percent," he said, "but thirty students graduated in the county because of this program." The enrollment breakdown was: North Brunswick, 75; South, 49; West, 59.

This program, also known as education for employment, is a program of the Job Partnership Training Act (JTPA). It provides economically disadvantaged youth ages 16-21 with the chance to continue their education while working full or part-time.

The community schools program involves volunteers in all schools, efforts to improve community-school relations and partnership with businesses, as well as the community use of school facilities.