

Calabash? What's Wrong With Calabash?

After an editorial appeared in the Dec. 13 issue of The Brunswick Beacon titled, "Calabash Council Not Performing Its Duties," I received a telephone call from one council member who was angry.

The editorial was printed after the town council failed to reach a quorum for the fourth time out of five attempts, enough to give any newspaper or resident reason to be concerned. Concern seems to be the key word when talking about Calabash and its problems, which appear to be numerous, but none too large to easily tackle.

Having covered Calabash town council meetings now for more than a year, I had already heard some of the comments the council member expressed by phone on Dec. 13. If I remember correctly, among the concerns listed then was a) having to hold down a job as well as serve on the council; b) getting a full slate of candidates was difficult, no one would file for office; and c) a lot of



Terry Pope

the criticism was coming from people living outside the town limits.

Is the fact that council members are not able to attend their board meetings a sign that they are not concerned about the town? One sentence, the first one, in the Dec. 13 editorial stated the board should perform their responsibilities, or "else turn over those duties to others who are more concerned about the town."

There was no meeting of the town council again last Monday afternoon after just two of five board members, and Mayor Sonia Stevens, showed for the meeting. In January, the meeting time was delayed twice to suit those

working members on the board—once from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and again from 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

It appears the meeting time is still a burden to some council members, so why not change the day as well as the time whenever the next quorum is reached? That may help solve one of the minor problems that is producing more difficult headaches for this town council. Its biggest problem right now is getting everyone together.

To answer the question about whether or not this board is concerned about Calabash, I think the answer is yes. Whenever a quorum is reached this board, both, individually and as a whole, seems to act wisely, although it often finds itself retracing its own progress due to missed meetings.

That means the board must review such topics as dredging, water, sewer, trash disposal and annexation several times before it has a firm feeling for the subject. By then,

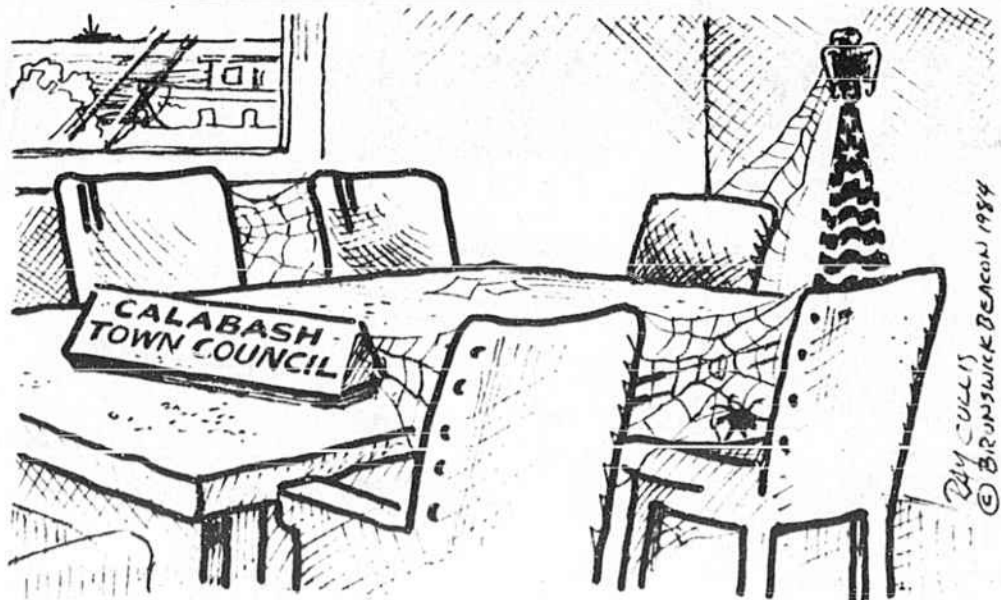
valuable time has been wasted.

This board should not be blamed for some of the town's problems, such as how to spread out its total anticipated 1984-85 revenues of \$82,234 when a simple dredging of Calabash River exceeds that cost alone. Having water lines installed throughout the town would cost \$25,000, and where would the money come from?

A contract signed with Peirson and Whitman Inc., the Raleigh engineering firm that began the town's quest for water ten years ago, included no clause for when the contract was to expire. This board has the task of ending the contract signed by the previous board, by paying anywhere from \$500 to \$2,000 to legally break the agreement.

If progress is to be made at Calabash, then the board needs to start tackling these minor problems. You can't make straight A's if you don't go to class.

After all, Calabash is no longer just a sleepy little "Seaford Capital of the World." The "working council members," most of whom are in the restaurant business, can vouch for that.



By CULLIS © BRUNSWICK BEACON 1984

Opinion Page

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Thursday, February 21, 1985

Hurrah (?) For The Brown Pelican

You may have read this week about the brown pelican's new status. As of March 6 the bird leaves the U.S. endangered species list in North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia and Florida, a remarkable feat.

It has the distinction of being the first species removed from the list because it has recovered rather than because of extinction or because it never should have been listed. The species is still considered endangered farther west.

Removal from the list symbolizes the bird's remarkable comeback since the ban of DDT pesticide in 1972, yet I have mixed feelings about it. Mixed feelings that were apparently shared by the Holden Beach commissioners at one time a few years back—when told the feds were considering removing the brown pelican from the endangered list—they passed a resolution asking that the bird be kept on the list.

Why worry about an apparent success story? I worry because it makes a favorite bird of mine a hunter's



Susan Usher

target once again during the migratory bird season. But not to worry, they tell me, killing limits are set.

The bird's new status may indirectly affect it in other ways. It may mean that we will not feel as strongly the need to protect its nesting areas, such as local dredge spoil islands and food sources. Not to worry, I'm told, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, UNC-Wilmington and National Audubon Society are working to survey and protect local nesting areas. Still, this worrier worries.

Growing up in Brunswick County I didn't see too much of the brown pelican in the 1960s. But, returning in

1981 after an 10-year absence, they seemed to be overhead every time I went to the beach—swooping along in formation low over the water, trailing behind my cousin's boat as he checks his crab traps and fish nets, and just the other day, cruising the main drag at Holden Beach. At any time, watching the brown pelican is a treat.

The big (about four feet) bird is an awkward, comical creature except in the air, where it is propelled by powerful wings, and when fishing. After a spiraling dive and plunge, it apparently does some kind of underwater somersault and comes up headed in another direction, a fish safely inside its handy pouch or already gobbled up. There's an entire family of pelicans that follow Billy King about each morning he goes out on the river; they fuss when he doesn't treat on occasion.

The eastern brown pelican was designated an endangered species in 1973, in response to evidence that DDT (banned in 1972) affected the birds' metabolism and caused them

to lay eggs with thin shells that broke before the baby birds could hatch.

Since then their breeding grounds have been protected from North Carolina to Florida and as far west as Texas and Mexico. And the eastern birds have done well. They're thought to be back up to the 50,000 population known in the 1940s along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. They're doing especially well in North Carolina—so much so, local youngsters take them far more for granted than I because they've seen the brown pelicans all their lives.

When UNC-Wilmington biologist James Parnell first began counting brown pelicans for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1976, he found 75 nests along the North Carolina coast, a figure that rose to 425 in 1980 and to an incredible 1,250 in 1983. It's hard to believe that banning a pesticide and providing some dredge spoil islands for homemaking could make such a difference.

I wonder how the alligator population is faring in comparison.

County Sees The Light

Motorists will soon have an easier time finding the main entrance to the Brunswick County Government Center on U.S. 17.

Since the complex was completed in the mid-70s, its two entrances have been shrouded in darkness. In the past several cars have missed the turn, ending up off the shoulder of the road. Other citizens planning to attend night meetings at the complex have driven their vehicles right past the entrance.

But those problems should disappear within the next several months. The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners saw the light recently. During their last round of meetings with department heads, they told Building and Grounds Superintendent R.C. Dixon to go ahead and erect lights at the entrance and "make it look pretty."

Turns out money for the lights and landscaping was in the 1984-85 budget, but there were problems coordinating the landscaping with another agency.

All we can say is, it's about time the county saw the light.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Power Generation By Ocean Waves Possible

To the editor:

In the common knowledge of diminishing fuel resources, it is certainly true that electric service will become more expensive in the near future.

It is also true that ownership and

control by municipalities show little improvement over privately-owned utilities.

Power generation and distribution is a difficult and expensive (capital intensive) task at any location and by any means. In North Carolina the task is made more difficult by the absence of fuel. Coal, gas, oil, uranium—all must be imported from other states or from abroad. Wood and peat are not concentrated fuels.

The remaining alternatives are water, wind, waves and possibly solar. Water or hydro, an established technique, already encompasses the most favorable sites. The remaining sites are costly to develop and of small potential capacity.

Wind power, up to two megawatts per unit, has been developed beyond the experimental stage. It is a proven source of generation ready for greater development.

An option in many areas along the coast is power generation by ocean waves.

Experiencing the vertical motion of heavy fishing trawlers as they are lifted to the crest of waves and swells and then dropped to the bottom of the trough, to be lifted again in a repetitive cycle, suggests that a transfer of this energy is feasible.

This vertical (up and down) motion using water-filled tanks sliding on a stationary guide, can be translated into pumping action of sea water. Through a system of valves and pipes, sea water can be forced into a pressurized collection tank. Large volumes of water under this high pressure, in turn, spin a water turbine.

An electrical generator, connected directly to the water turbine, produces the electrical output to be transmitted to the shore distribution system.

It sounds simple and easy. Upon analysis, it calls for the most exacting engineering; a tremendous effort for meager returns. A tremendous volume of water at high pressure must be forced through the turbine to yield even a meager megawatt output—and seas do have periods of calm.

Other benefits may be reduction of

shore erosion by absorbing wave energy near shore (an entirely new field of scientific inquiry). The structures also may provide a desirable fish habitat. All possible benefits must accrue to make the overall project economically viable.

The method of electrical generation itself is conventional and presents less problems than those of structures, seals and corrosion.

Whereas modern units for nuclear generation come in sizes up to 1,000 megawatts, wind and wave units may generate only two megawatts. It would take many units to meet present needs in any area; but neither are the oceans of limited expanse.

Elmer N. Iberg
Southport

Indeed, we Lower Cape Fear residents are fortunate to have such resources in the area when we may need help to cope with death and dying.

John M. Clarke
Holden Beach

Fortunate To Have Services

To the editor:

As a poet phrased it, "To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late." Yet, for whatever reason, we are reluctant to accept that truth.

At a recent meeting sponsored by the New Hanover Memorial Hospital psychiatric unit of the Cape Fear Psychological Association, Dr. Charles Vernon spoke on a panel discussing the problems in coping with the stress of death and dying.

Lower Cape Fear Hospice volunteers (5221 Wrightsville Ave., Wilmington) are prepared to help a family care for their loved one who wishes to remain home during his terminal illness.

Interment expenses can be eliminated for those who have arranged to donate their bodies to the East Carolina University School of Medicine, where they are needed for medical teaching. Or, there is a wide range of costs for such services as may be requested from one of the funeral directors in this area.

The non-profit Lower Cape Fear Memorial Society, P.O. Box 4262, Wilmington, N.C. 28406, will help plan and record individual preferences so their loved ones and next of kin may know their wishes regarding final arrangements.

Second Home Is in Brunswick

To the editor:

Since we have a place at Sunset Beach we decided to subscribe to your newspaper for a year. We had no idea that we would enjoy reading it as much as we have. We now look forward to receiving our copy each week.

Please renew our subscription so we can keep up with all the happenings in the county where our second home is located. Even though we don't get down as often as we would like, The Brunswick Beacon keeps us from feeling left out of things.

Grayson and Ann Smith
Winston-Salem

Readers Pleased, Not Surprised

To the editor:

As part-time Holden Beach residents, we have enjoyed The Brunswick Beacon for about 10 years. It is the first purchase we make on arrival and a neighbor saves copies we miss. We were pleased and not surprised at the recent press awards the Beacon and several staffers received. Well deserved!

Our favorite feature is Bill Faver's column, outstanding in its knowledge and appreciation of nature on our shores. Also, hats off to your clever cartoonist, Ray Cullis.

The Hortons of Lumber Bridge
and Sandy Shoals

Pian Vacation

To the editor:

We enjoyed our first issue of the Beacon and are planning our vacation to your area in June.

Kay Petty
Shelbyville, Tennessee

Angry Ocean And Beach Erosion

We seem to brace ourselves in expectation of severe erosion when hurricanes bear down on us. We expect an "angry ocean" to accompany the likes of David and Diana. We have been extremely fortunate that the last two hurricanes to come our way have not done more than a few pockets of serious damage.

What we don't expect is for a mid-February storm to form an angry ocean to eat away at the dunes. But last week we had such a storm bringing severe erosion along our beaches.

Usually we find sand moving off the beaches in the fall and winter to form a protective barrier offshore to help break up the rougher waves of



Bill Faver

winter. Then in spring and summer the sand moves back in to smooth out the beach. The "wave machine" at the Marine Resources Center at Fort Fisher dramatically illustrates how this happens and the effect it has on the contour of the beach.

When we give the ocean enough room to carry out this process we join the birds and crabs and other animals who are able to move right along with the changes taking place along the shoreline. The birds and animals make no attempts to stabilize the shore. Some of the plants try to gain a foothold but are no match for the angry sea.

In gentler times, plants such as sea oats and beach grass and others trap the sand and help build up the dunes. But when erosion occurs, the waves lap at the base of the dunes and wash sand away, causing the sand above to crumble. The next sand takes that away and more of the dune crumbles. Plants lose their footings and fall with the sand to be carried away as well.

When there were few people on our beaches there was little concern about what happened with high tides, storms and erosion. But now that man has tried to stabilize this constantly changing environment, erosion becomes a major concern because there is often a threat to life and property. It becomes a social concern because of the need for tax dollars to help curb erosion. And it fosters all sorts of debates about alternatives and solutions to the problem itself.

The "angry ocean" has once more had its voice heard! Those of us with enough space to let the changes happen can hope a friendlier ocean in spring and summer will return some of the dunes. And we can learn once more some respect for the sea and how futile are our efforts to control her.

