

under the sun

Love Takes Fisherman's Approach

BY SUSAN USHER

While the five members of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners see alike on most issues, says District 2 Commissioner Herman Love, their ideas may differ on how to attain those goals.

Love, for instance, wants to avoid what he sees as a potential new sectionalism that could divide the county. He's seeking ways to help newcomers merge into the mainstream, to bring longtime and new county residents together.

On the board he tends to be a catalyst, someone who knows all parties sometimes need to "give a little" in order to change, to move forward together.

While not hesitant to express opinions in his own unassuming way, Love listens just as easily. He seems to have the patient, constant nature of those who fish and hunt regularly, two pastimes he enjoys.

When they can, Love and his wife of seven years, Geraldine, enjoy slipping away from their home at the corner of Whipoorwill Lane and Holmes Street in Shallotte and heading inland to where the fish are striking. Their camper may head for the Santee-Cooper or Lake Wylie area of Piedmont South Carolina or they may wander over to Town Creek or Lockwood Folly River for a day in pursuit of brim, crappies or bass.

Herman also deer hunts with the Long Bay Hunting Club, a hobby Geraldine doesn't share.

Over the past year Love's schedule has scarcely let up. He has little time these days to pursue special interests, but doesn't seem to mind.

"I'm willing to give up that much and more," he said. Working nearly full-time since joining the board in December, Love said it's a pace he's willing to keep for the duration of his term.

Love retired in 1981 from one full-time job. For most of the previous 26 years he had served as transportation supervisor for the Brunswick County Public Schools. When promoted to supervisor in 1956, Love recalled, "Brunswick County was a big, bare county. We had 48 buses to cover this entire county. When I left, there were 123."

In those early years only major transportation arteries were paved: U.S. 17, N.C. 74, N.C. 87, N.C. 211 to Southport and N.C. 130 to Whiteville.

Love worked under eight of the 10 people to serve as superintendent of schools.

In that time, he added, "I really witnessed the growth of the county."

Through miles of traveling back roads and years of getting to know hundreds of bus drivers, Love also came to know Brunswick County.

"I feel like my vast knowledge of the county helped," he said of the November general election in which he received 8,788 votes, more than any other candidates for the board of commissioners. At age 62, he is the oldest member of the board.

Love's goals as a commissioner are straightforward, though broad. He wants to see the county build on the programs it has, for work on the county water system to

speed along "but without waste," and to see all county departments "working together in harmony for the good of the county". Like most other commissioners he said he hoped a steadily increasing tax base would take care of the added demands growth is placing on government so as to avoid a tax rate increase.

A perhaps more challenging goal is that of bringing together longtime county residents and the area's steadily increasing number of newcomers in a cooperative spirit.

"We have to get them working together and to understand each other," he said. "The world is full of talent not being tapped. They're waiting to do something but just haven't been asked."

If some effort isn't made to bring the groups together, he continued, "we could get into sectionalism."

"It probably boils down to that we all have to give a little."

Newcomers are already having an impact in the county, he continued, referring to the election of Commissioner Jim Poole, who has lived on Oak Island only a few years.

"They've had an impact. They're going to have much more."

Love isn't a Brunswick County native, but has lived here so long most people probably assume he is. Born in 1922 in Mokane, Missouri, he graduated from high school in 1940. He soon left his job painting and repairing buildings and bridges on an "extra" gang with the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Co. for the war.

After training in Maryland and South Carolina, Love's first assignment was 16 months on coastal patrol at Ocean Isle Beach. There he met a girl named Hazel; in December 1943 they married.

While his bride remained stateside, Love reported to duty on an attack cargo ship in the South Pacific. Shuttling equipment and sometimes personnel for assaults, he recalled, "We made three D-Days—Luzon, Subic Bay and Okinawa."

He also shuttled Chinese troops to the port of Su-cou, where they were destined for the Manchurian line, gun fodder for the much larger Japanese occupation forces. "We knew it was a one-way trip for them," said Love.

At Nagasaki Bay, Japan, his ship escorted occupation troops into the city on Dec. 28, 1945, just months after it served as the target for the second atomic bomb ever detonated on a populated area.

"We were under instructions not to touch anything," Love recollected, "but we didn't know why."

World War II behind him, Love almost returned to Missouri, where his job with the railroad had been held for him.

Instead he and Hazel made their home in Brunswick County. For a while, Love recalled, he was like a lot of other soldiers suddenly readjusting to civilian life.

"I didn't do much. I had trouble deciding what to do."

In July 1947 he joined the school bus garage, but after two years quit to man the first dragline operated in

Brunswick County. He returned to the school garage, then located at Shallotte High School, in 1952 and there he stayed for almost 26 years. He and Hazel, who operated the school store, reared a family of three before her death—Andy, now a pharmacist in Chesterfield, S.C.; Christine, a finance office manager in Bladenboro; and Steve, who lives on Route 2, Shallotte, and works at Federal Paperboard Co.

They all chipped in to help during his campaign. As commissioner his duties include representing the county on the Brunswick Technical College Board of Trustees and the SENECA Community Action board of directors. He also serves on the board's own solid waste committee, with garbage disposal a strong concern of his. Fire and rescue financing and attention to the needs of senior citizens also rank high on his list.

District 2 divided over the issue of where a nursing home should be located in the county, one of the more controversial issues to come before the board. Love's phone rang insistently for several days as each side pressed its view.

Love said much of his time has been spent listening, talking, trying to explain to constituents that there are at least two sides to every issue.

"If you talk to them they can see the other side. Most people are fair-minded," he said.

Love wants to be fair to his constituents.

And, when the public hands out his report card two years from now, Love wants the board he is serving on to be remembered as having "addressed all our needs and kept up with our growth."

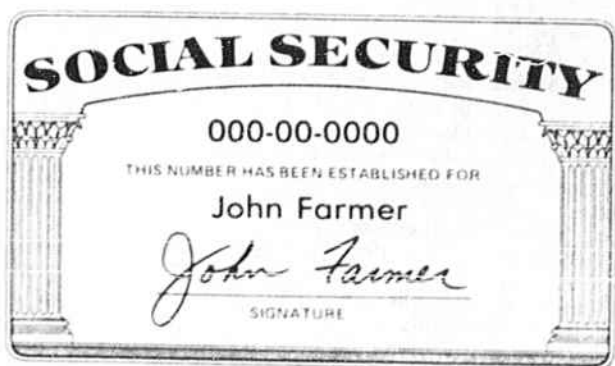


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THE FAMILY CAMPER helps District 2 Commissioner Herman Love and wife Geraldine, both avid freshwater fishermen, escape to the great outdoors.

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