

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## Any Delay County's Loss

To the dismay of some local residents and the delight of others, the State of North Carolina has decided that a Rocky Mount company, Autumn Corp., should be allowed to build a nursing home in Brunswick County.

Autumn was chosen over Beverly Enterprises, whose plan had been recommended by popular vote of a regional health planning agency's board. The health planning agency's staff had initially recommended Autumn, but a well-organized show of public support for Beverly and/or a Supply location apparently swayed the board and earlier, its review committee.

Beverly has vowed—as is absolutely within its rights—to appeal that decision, to "tie up" the case as long as is necessary for its cause to prevail.

That's too bad. Tying up this decision will only hurt the people who count most.

While these two companies are slugging it out in Raleigh, perhaps even in the state appeals court, the real losers will be back home in Brunswick County.

Why? Because the state estimates an appeal will take not 30 to 60 days, but one to two years to resolve—especially if the case winds up in the courts. In the meantime, no one will be allowed to build a nursing home in this county.

Brunswick County people will continue waiting for a nursing home to be built somewhere—most don't care exactly where—within the county. Some patients are in private residences in situations that are depleting family resources of time, energy and money; others have been forced to take space as it becomes available in nursing homes a good distance from family and friends, also a hardship.

Nursing home ownership and management apparently is a lucrative business—so lucrative companies are willing to make sizeable expenditures on community organizing, public relations and legal battles to secure the certificate of need necessary to build a nursing home. Lucrative enough to make a drawn-out fight worthwhile.

However, both Beverly and Autumn are professional health care providers, so it seems they would be concerned about the people they serve. If so, it should be obvious to Beverly that a speedy settlement is in Brunswick County's best interest.

So why not let the building begin?

## Write Us

The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. The Beacon reserves the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to The Brunswick Beacon, P.O. Box 470, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.

## The Answer May Be "Carrying Capacity"!

One of the important principles of ecology governing the interrelationships of plants and animals and the environment is that of "carrying capacity"—the ability of an environment to provide food and shelter to support a species.

Carrying capacity is easier to understand in relation to a forest community. The plants in the forest provide food for plant-eating insects which, in turn, provide food for birds. The number of birds in the forest will depend upon the availability of insects, trees and shrubs for nesting, and predators. When all is in "balance", each species of bird will usually find a territory and will fight off birds of the same species, but will be content to nest beside birds of a different species. Since they are not in competition, they pose no threat even though they may all eat insects and even feed on the same tree.

Some species specialize, such as the woodpeckers who dig into the bark of trees for insect larvae. They pose no threat to the warblers who are unable to probe the bark and must pick off insects from the leaves and branches of trees.

Carrying capacity also applies to oceans and marshes. We can expect only the number of fish or crabs or clams that the food supply and the conditions of the environment will support. Since all species, in order to insure survival, must reproduce more offspring than could ever survive in an environment, the role of the predator becomes increasingly



Bill Faver

important. Predators depend upon "surplus" individuals for their food and to establish their place in the food chain. When too many predators move in because of an abundance of food, the food supply is quickly diminished and the balance is broken. This causes the predators to either move on to another area where food is available or to become weak, susceptible to disease, and to perish.

This same concept can be applied to the Ethiopian hunger crisis in Africa. With the continued increases in population and the overuse of land, the environment there has exceeded its carrying capacity. In strictly non-humanitarian terms, nature's solution is harsh—starvation, disease, and death—until the balance is reached once again.

We do not need much imagination to apply this same idea of carrying capacity to our island beaches. Since we can only "take care" of so many people without affecting the health and quality of life of everyone, we need to determine the "carrying capacity" of this specialized environment—for birds, plants, mammals, and the everpresent humans.

# Playing With Fire's Not Cool, But Sick



Terry Pope

"Somebody is just stopping by the side of the road and lighting them," said Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan last Thursday afternoon. It had been Sunday since Logan had managed to get a full night's sleep, joining numerous county volunteers who have been fighting set woods fires for more than a week.

"Supply (Volunteer Fire Department) has been out every night since Sunday," he added. "They've had a hard week to go through."

Logan was back in his office monitoring the N.C. Forestry Service's radio that gave reports of spotting another wildfire near Maco. He looked tired, he even said he was tired and was planning to go home and get some rest. With luck, there would be no more fires to battle, no more homes to worry about, for at least eight hours of the warm, spring night.

Unfortunately, it appears that most of the fires that have been scorching Brunswick County's woodlands

for the past couple of weeks have been deliberately set. Two fires were deliberately set along N.C. 211 near Supply on Wednesday night and another one on Camp Branch Road was ruled deliberately set Thursday, Logan said.

Another fire was getting ready to blaze on Stone Chimney Road Thursday night while I was on my way to the county 4-H talent and fashion show in Bolivia. I stopped and put it out with a piece of cardboard I had in the trunk of my car and my size eight tennis shoes.

The strange thing about the whole incident is that I had just spent

Thursday evening in Logan's office talking about what kind of sick person would start a fire that would threaten lives or homes. Three hours later, I came within a minute of passing one deranged person who apparently had set the fire on Stone Chimney Road.

At first I couldn't believe I was actually seeing flames shooting up from the brush and straw across the ditchbank. I stopped, looked for someone who may have been burning off their property, saw no one, and figured I'd better put the flame out.

Even with a burning ban in effect, the first thing that crossed my mind was that somebody was out burning off their property. When a burning ban was issued during a previous rash of wildfires last month, residents continued burning off property, gardens or trash piles, taking no notice to the warnings.

The fire along Stone Chimney Road had apparently just started burning—it was only about a yard wide which makes me think I was just a

minute away from passing an arsonist. It had started across the ditch in a patch of heavy undergrowth and straw, about 15 yards from the roadside which makes me think it had been set rather than from a cigarette. Especially since it was in the same area where others had been set on Wednesday night.

It made me about five minutes late for the 4-H program, where I wandered in with smoky tennis shoes and still bearing a sweaty forehead. A fire about a yard wide had made me so nervous, so fearful that someone might confuse me for the arsonist as I was putting out the flames and yet so mad that someone had done such a thing.

I began thinking of what I should do, who should I call or report the incident to. Hopefully, Cecil Logan was by now at his home fast asleep, at last getting a break from all of the fires. The arsonist, I'm sure, had already learned of the outcome of his deed and had swallowed at least one defeat in the name of humanity.

## Those Little Things Add Up Fast

Brother-in-law Thorborne came and plowed the little patch of garden behind the house this week.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? But it wasn't. It's amazing how complicated little things can get.

He almost didn't do it. I'd promised to be home Thursday night. Understandably, he took that to mean "on time" as in 5:30 p.m.

I straggled in at closer to 6:30 p.m., driving the Beacon van because my car was at the shop and Eddie had given me a ride to the office and loaned me the van.

After waiting nearly an hour, Thorborne was ready to leave—the tiller clearly in view in the back of his truck. The garden was also clearly in view and it looked just like it had that morning—weedy and flat. He obviously had no plans to till unless I was there to appreciate it.

Jennifer and Kelly, my nieces, had scribbled a note and stuck it in the door: "We came to see you but you were not here so we went home. Mother was sick so we went home." Yep, the girls and their Dad had



Susan Usher

had to turn around and take Carol home because she was sick.

Well, these folks had been promised supper in exchange for the long-delayed tilling—either lasagne or pastiso, the only casseroles that didn't require another trip to the grocery store.

While the ingredients for pastiso are as simple as can be, it takes a while to assemble the casserole and then bake it. You have to boil noodles, brown meat and onions and make a custard sauce, layer the stuff and bake it 45 minutes. It should stand another 10 minutes before serving.

Well, before the noodles were cooked, Thorborne had finished the tilling.

By the time the sauce was done he had loaded the tiller. We sat in the living room for another 45 minutes, Kelly worrying all the while about the homework she'd left in Winnabow and Thorborne thinking about all the other things he had to do.

Jennifer, on the other hand, was having a great time. No homework, no responsibilities, she was enjoying TV. But like Kelly, she was worried about her Mom. So they called Carol (probably waking her up), only to be told she was "doing just fine". Would a mother ever fib to a child over the phone?

When the pastiso came out of the oven, there was no waiting for it to settle. We dug in like starving hoboes. And what with everything else, it figured: After that long wait, one of us didn't like it. Little Kelly sat there pushing her fork around and finally ate some jello and cottage cheese.

But the tilling was done—and in time for Easter weekend planting. Thanks, Thorborne.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Players Applaud Beacon Coverage

To the editor:  
 The Board of the Brunswick Players wishes to thank you for all the fine and complimentary coverage you gave "Annie Get Your Gun" in The Brunswick Beacon.

Because of your publicity we had large audiences both nights and your kind remarks following the play made the entire company know that they were appreciated by the community.

Tricia Foy, Secretary  
 Brunswick Players

#### Good Coverage

To the editor:  
 See enclosed check for annual subscription.  
 We enjoy your newspaper's good coverage of all concerns in your area.

Mrs. John M. Williams  
 Charlotte

**How to save. Jog.**

**Fix your car. Quit smoking.**

**Choose life insurance. Get a patent.**

**Select a home computer. Apply for credit.**

**Remove mildew. Shape up. Buy a telephone.**

**Write a resume. Reduce cholesterol.**

**Discover parks. Avoid drug reactions.**

**Buy surplus land. Control cockroaches.**

**Make a job change. Choose a house.**

**Pay for an education. Prevent sunburn.**

**Select a mortgage. Get a con job.**

**Choose a lawyer. Start a small business.**

**Check for breast cancer. Buy an IRA.**

**Cut down on sodium. Save energy.**

**Control your blood pressure.**

**Help your kids to study.**


**Protect your house.**

**Lose some weight.**

**Grow tomatoes.**


**Keep records.**

**Get benefits.**



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