

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Despite Tax Hike, Budget Is Politically Safe One

The \$22.6 million proposed county budget for the coming year comes as no big surprise. The four-cent tax hike necessary to finance it is not apt to draw a lot of criticism when the new budget is the topic at a public hearing tonight (Thursday).

The budget appears to be politically safe. It eliminates nothing, continues to fund most activity at a slightly higher level, and a few departments will fare far better than in the past.

Although it is the first hike in ad valorem taxes in a few years, one would think the growth in the tax base would have provided enough additional income to finance parallel growth of the county government. Apparently that is not the case.

What makes any tax rate hike disconcerting at this time is the property revaluation now in progress, which goes into effect in 1986. Hopefully, as the tax base goes up as property is adjusted on the books to reflect true market value, the tax rate will drop. The higher the rate is at that time, the less it is apt to drop after revaluation.

An encouraging aspect of the proposed budget is no rate increase is required in the water budget. As slowly—and as cumbersomely—as the water system has developed over the years, one would have thought a couple of years ago that either taxes or the cost of buying county water would have gone out of sight.

On balance, the budget is one the county can probably live comfortably with for the coming year.

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, Charlotte, N.C. 28459.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Major Developers Are To Blame

To the editor:

In recent issues of The Brunswick Beacon you have made the people of Sunset Beach sound very unfriendly with your editorial and cartoon concerning parking at the beach.

The property (individual) owners (taxpayers) of Sunset Beach have not caused this dilemma, but the major developers of the beach and area have. They should have foreseen the

parking problems and provided for it as they planned developments.

It isn't too late. The answer lies with the major developers to furnish property and maintain parking facilities; not the town of Sunset Beach.

Sea Trail Links will add to the problem and does not need to be annexed by Sunset Beach.

Loretta McKeithen
Laurinburg

Student Recognition Cheered

To the editor:

The Brunswick County school system has initiated a program that deserves many words of praise. That program is the Superintendent's Award for Excellence. It recognizes high achievement by our high school students in areas that demonstrate initiative, ability and dedication in a

variety of interest areas.

It was refreshing to hear of the positive accomplishments of the 100 Brunswick County students who received the award this year. It was encouraging to see the crowd of 300-plus people at the award ceremony June 5. We need to continue this recognition of students who work hard. We also need to remember that there are a great many students who did not receive recognition, but who hold just as much promise as those who did.

Three cheers for the school system. Four cheers for the honorees. More cheers for the promise our children have for the future.

Rex Gore
Charlotte

Keep Memory From Fading

To the editor:

The Carolina Chapter of Destroyer Escort Sailors Association (DESA) is sponsoring a DE museum at Patriots Point, Charleston, S.C. The museum committee is looking for artifacts, pictures, stories or any type of memorabilia of the WW II DE.

For a DE sailor it may be hard to believe that there is only one of our ships left, and unfortunately it is stuck in the mud, rusting away in Houston, Texas. The museum is the only way to insure that the legacy of the DE does not soon fade from our memory. Only the ones of us who served on them can really understand the saying, "It was a small ship in a big war, but it proved its ability to perform a large task."

As a member of the Carolinas-DESA museum committee, I will be glad to accept items for display or arrange for transport to Patriots Point. Call Brunswick County Veteran Service, 253-4307.

Jess Parker
Veteran Service Officer
Bolivia

Bridge No. 198 Faces Another Hearing

What's 507 feet long, 18 feet wide and can be found floating in the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway at Sunset Beach 24 hours a day? Answer: the Sunset Beach bridge.

It's been three years, May 27, 1982, since a public hearing was last held at Sunset Beach to give insight into either, 1) the need for a new high rise replacement bridge, or 2) the need to keep access to the island just the way it is.

The N.C. Department of Transportation's No. 198 pontoon-style barge bridge is the last of its kind in the state. With the construction of high rise replacement bridges in process at both Holden and Ocean Isle beaches, the pressure appears to be building for Sunset Beach officials to follow the lead. It's interesting to go back five years, to one of the first public hearings on the replacement of the bridge, and see what the reactions were then.

"Often during the tourist season, long lines of vehicles back up on the mainland as well as the island, while one lane of traffic clears the bridge," the town's 1980 Land Use Plan states. There were some brave statements incorporated into the land use plan five years ago, particularly in deal-



Terry Pope

ing with the bridge and the town's "most apparent serious need," a sewer system.

"The North Carolina Department of Transportation is planning a replacement of the present structure crossing the waterway," the 1980 version states. Not much has changed there.

"Early discussion pointed toward a high rise bridge that would destroy access to the present mainland business section as explained by DOT representatives." Destroying the business section may be an extinct argument against the bridge today. Most residents and property owners are more afraid of what the new bridge would create, the problems of unlimited growth and development, not what it would destroy.

"Nostalgic property owners joined with those who opposed a six million

dollar outlay of funds for such a structure and presented arguments (sic) against such a bridge," the old version states. It appears the "nostalgic" following has grown, with more on their minds than just the good ole days.

Everyone will get a chance to present their side to the story again Tuesday, June 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department building at a public hearing held by the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Representatives will present the location and design of five alternatives and right-of-way requirements for a new bridge. The choices consist of two high rise replacement bridges or three designs of drawbridges, all in the same vicinity of the present bridge.

"Following a lengthy public meeting with the planning department and engineers for Department of Transportation," the old version states, "the citizens of Sunset Beach had a much better understanding of the bridge proposals." So it's not a bad idea after all to hold another hearing.

"The Brunswick County Emergency Management Department com-

mented that a fixed high level bridge at Sunset Beach would greatly reduce the evacuation time from the island and make coordination of an orderly pattern of mobilization to the shelter areas much easier in the event of a hurricane," the old version states. Hurricane Diana tested the system last September.

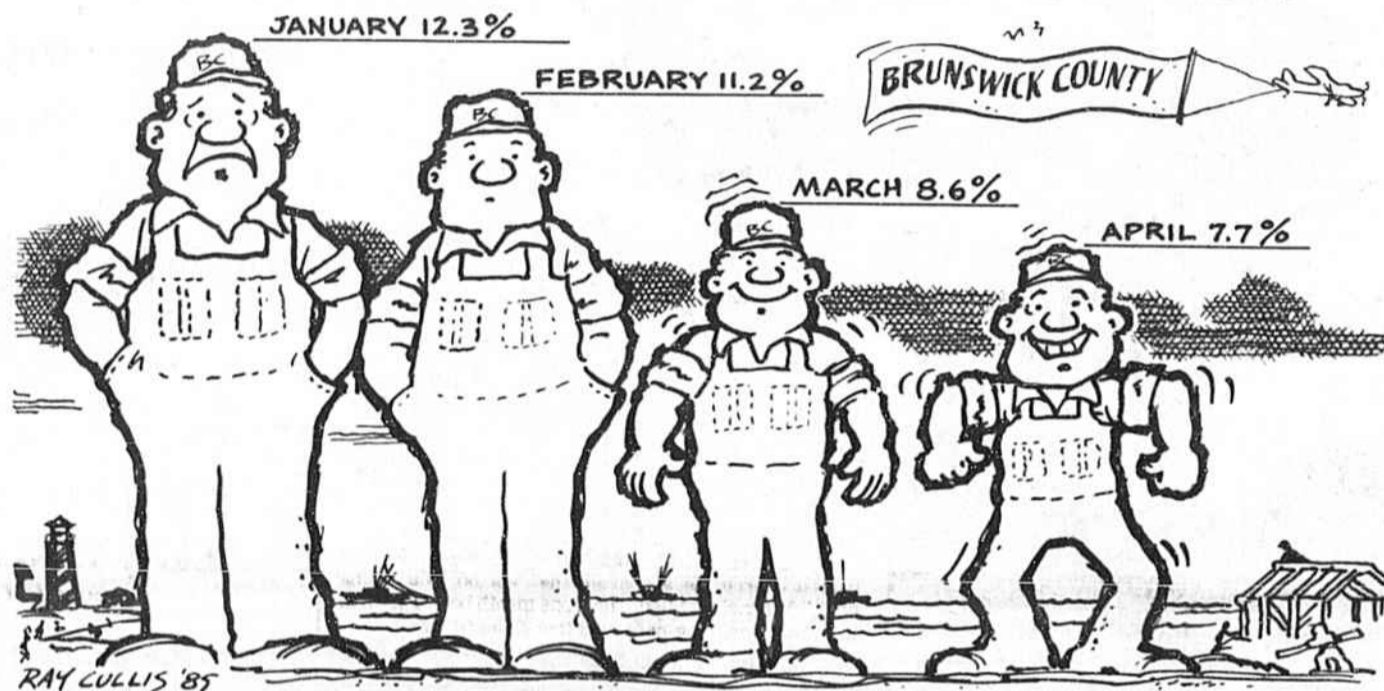
"The beginning date for replacement of the existing bridge was targeted for 1982," the old version states. Remember, in 1982 there was another public hearing.

"Mr. Lee, an engineer (sic) for the department pointed out that a more realistic date was 1984." Now 1984 has passed.

A survey taken by the town earlier this year showed property owners against a replacement bridge 34 to 33. However, a survey taken by the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association on Easter weekend showed an "audience of 120 lacked only one vote from being unanimous in opposition to any bridge replacement," a SBTA news release on the upcoming bridge hearing states.

Five years later, the only thing that may have changed is the time and date. It's a tough, tough subject for both sides.

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



How To Build Castles In The Sand



Bill Faver

One of the interesting findings along the beach this time of year is the sandcastle about to be inundated by the incoming tide. Such elaborate work is often washed away, wasting the precious sculpture that has taken perhaps hours of effort! But to watch a group of kids and adults involved in the process shows why it's all so worthwhile! It's something everyone can do and everybody's contribution can be helpful. And, best of all, it's fun!

You don't have to be an artist to sculpt in the sand. All you need is sand, some friends to give a helping hand, and a desire to create some object. Tools are easy to find in the trash line along the beach or in the kitchen. Paper cups, shells, sticks, sand pails, flower pots, plastic containers, trowels, shovels and putty knives may be helpful. Most important are the tools you have with you—hands and fingers!

Sand sculpting is a good family activity on the beach. Each family member can take part in designing, modeling, shoveling sand, sprinkling water, or adding features. Best time for sculpting is on the outgoing tide to give maximum time for your

creative efforts. Choose an area where sand is wet so that it can be shaped like clay. As you progress, you may need to sprinkle the sand with water occasionally to keep it just the right consistency for good modeling.

In Sand Creatures and Castles, Bob and Pat Reed suggest several steps in sculpturing in the sand:

1. Lay out the length.
2. Make the outline.
3. Mound sand into the general shape of the object.
4. Pat the sand smooth and firm.
5. Add the features—the fine details.
6. Cut away the sand around the base to separate your object from the sand.

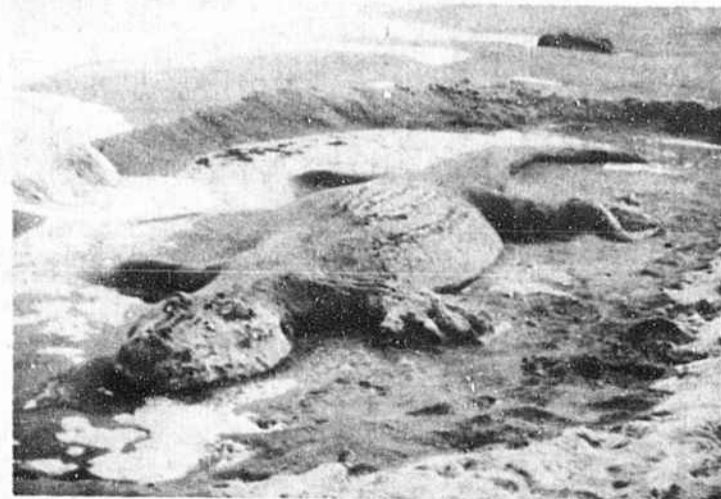
They also suggest features can be

made using seaweed or grass for hair, shells for eyes, shells for scales, and broken pieces of shell or stones for teeth. Sculpturing is in three-dimension—width, height, and depth.

Since it is expected that sandcastles and sand sculptures will be washed away, why not record your creations on film? You may also want to record the family activity as

well.

Sand sculpturing is a fun experience for folk who enjoy being on the beach. It's non-polluting and the cost is free! It uses a natural resource that is not used up in the process! It can be a family experience to be long remembered. It can help make new friends on the beach. Why not try it this summer on the Brunswick County Beaches?



Rumor Mill Works Well, But What Happened To The Facts?



Susan Usher

Unless you work for the health department or school system, you probably wouldn't believe the number and type of calls we received at The Brunswick Beacon relating to last week's spinal meningitis scare. They were prompted, I suspect, by a combination of genuine parental concern and misguided fear—fear based on misunderstandings, ignorance, lack of available information and a willingness to believe the worst in any given situation.

Whatever their basis, the rumors spread like wildfire, more rapidly it seemed than those surrounding the 1983 Gateway drug conspiracy cases and nearly as damaging in their effect.

The first call that came in to The Beacon was the most reasonable—a

parent who wanted someone to check out the facts in the case because she said she had been told different stories by various persons in positions of authority. Those that followed were based on hearsay and were dramatic and—like the rumor that you're likely to contract AIDS when giving blood at the American Red Cross

bloodmobile—quite false. Here's a sample:

•Have you heard about the kindergartner at Union Primary who has spinal meningitis? (One caller said a second child had died.)

•Did you know there is a man in Bolivia who is dying of spinal meningitis?

•There's an epidemic of that meningitis stuff at Union.

•Dr. has already diagnosed two (another caller said five) cases of meningitis and has them and their families under treatment.

•Cases have also been diagnosed and confirmed in Horry, Columbus and New Hanover counties. It's turning into a regional epidemic.

•Another case of meningitis has been reported at the hospital (Which

one? Certainly not either of the county hospitals.)

•They're (the health authorities and school authorities) not telling us the truth. The situation is a lot worse than they're letting on. Our kids are in immediate danger. So-and-so said so (So-and-so, of course, being someone who knows a whole lot more about a potential public health threat than the public health people.)

Only one call came in after the article appeared in the paper last week. That lady asked, with genuine concern, it seemed, "Where did you get your information?"

"It's wrong."

The caller said she had checked with the Brunswick County Health Department on Tuesday also, but was told something a lot different

from what was in the paper. Health authorities told her 10 people had been diagnosed as having the disease, she said.

I suspect, if the number 10 was mentioned at all, it may have been in reference to the number of family members and others who had been in direct contact with the deceased child who were referred to private physicians or the hospital for follow-up and possibly preventive treatment.

Meanwhile I stand in awe of an all-powerful rumor mill that, in a single weekend, spreads misinformation so rapidly that it prompts parents to keep more than half the Union School students out of class.

If only good news occasionally spread that rapidly.