

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Why Delay Any Longer?

The bids were in, their terms explained, no one had any more questions to ask—at least not in public. It looked like a fairly simple decision to make.

Yet last Monday the Brunswick County Board of Education delayed, for the second consecutive month, award of a contract to service school fire extinguishers. Members unwillingness to act was reminiscent of the delays in setting up a school energy program.

Meanwhile, the school year is well underway, but the extinguishers still have not been inspected and, according to the bidders, many need servicing to work properly. That's a threat to children's safety in the event of a fire.

Two companies want the contract: Brunswick Fire and Safety of Leland, which has had the contract for a number of years; and Safety Equipment Co. of Wilmington, soon to be of Belville. Safety Equipment's bid was substantially lower than the bid submitted by Brunswick Fire and Safety. Furthermore, the firm has twice as much insurance coverage to back its work. And it's also a reputable firm.

So why is this such a difficult decision for the school board? The board's job isn't to shield local business from competition, but to get the best deal for the school system it can get.

So why not award the contract to the low bidder and get on to something else, something more important?

Carolina Lowlands

BY BILL FAVER

It is strange how most of us become so familiar with an area that we often fail to notice what is really happening there. I've noticed this when traveling in another state; I would notice a wildflower or see a beautiful tree only to be reminded that they also exist in my county. I guess familiarity with our surroundings makes us overlook some important characteristics many others travel miles to experience.



When we think of the variety of habitat in the Carolina lowlands we probably fall into that same trap. We read about the uniqueness of the Green Swamp or the Carolina bays or other features and acknowledge that we "know about them". Yet most of us pass through the swamp at high speeds and overlook the birds, animals, insects and plant life found there.

Ann and Myron Sutton are a traveling and writing team who enjoy going around the country observing what is found in our back yards. In *The Wild Places*, they have these words about the Carolina lowlands,

There is infinitely more than human eyes can absorb, and one feels almost compelled to build a small discreet houseboat that could drift along the waterways and permit uninterrupted observations of the wild lives that few men know about. Nature, as always, is unhurried. The opossum has no schedules. The terrapin is timeless. The eagle flies without a deadline. Only when hurricanes roll across the marshes and forests do Carolina lowlands change very rapidly. And even then, the natural grandeur and primeval beauty persist.

Perhaps we need to take the time necessary to observe and experience our immediate surroundings. We need to sit along a stream bank with some binoculars and quiet and see what happens. Or we need to hike in the woods on a beautiful October day and smell the air and experience the color. We might gain a new perspective on our County, our surroundings and even our lives.

The Amazing Legend Of The Blooming Conch Tree

When I was younger, my cousins from New Jersey came to Ocean Isle every summer. Their visit always meant two things.

One, they were going to make fun of me for being a Southerner.

Two, I was going to get even.

When you are 12 years old and someone with an accent that reeks of New Jersey makes fun of how you talk, it only means that the battle between the North and the South is about to be rekindled.

They wouldn't believe it.

"Oh, Ya'll," one cousin addressed me, "you know those were real sharks."

They were going to go back to New Jersey and tell everyone that they had stayed at Ocean Isle while Jaws and family lurked close to shore. I was disgusted.

So much for revenge.

The next time I played a trick on them it would have to be something I could prove was a joke.

I got the opportunity sooner than I anticipated.

An older cousin and I were walking down the road near my house. My cousin was informing me how



Dawn Ellen Boyd

superior New Jersey public schools were to their North Carolina counterparts.

As we walked along, I spied a common local sight—a conch tree. Someone had stuck conch shells on the limbs of a small dead tree. The sun had bleached the shells white, and the tree limbs had become as smooth and grayed as driftwood.

It was genuine Brunswick County folk art.

A small, evil idea popped into my head.

Pointing to the tree, I asked my cousin, "Do you know what that is?"

"Duuuh," he replied. (Duuuh, I had learned, in preteen New Jersey vernacular meant "no.")

"Well," I said, "that's a conch tree in bloom."

He took the bait. "In bloom?"

"Of course," I told him. (The little devil on my shoulder was jumping up and down with glee.) "Conchs don't come from the ocean like other shells. They grow on trees near the water and fall in. That's why you find them washed up on the beach."

Hunting Restriction A Call For Respect

The matter had lain to the side quietly, for all we knew, since spring. Yet it came as little surprise to me Monday when the Brunswick County commissioners voted to ban hunting from the sides of all roads in the county.

A group from the Town Creek area had asked in the spring for the county to ban hunting along only specific roads in their neighborhood. It seems hunters were establishing themselves along the roadside, but then shooting across private property on which they didn't have permission to hunt.

The commissioners and county attorney decided that any regulation would have to be county wide to be enforceable.

Their action was merely a sign of the times, I think, a call for some changes.

Hunting has always been "a poor man's sport," as one local enforcement officer says, but it may not be for long if a few hunters keep making it hard on all the rest.

I have a lot of friends who hunt and I personally don't have any objections to hunting. I look at it in the same way as fishing or any other harvest of living things: use what you harvest to good purpose, such as eating; don't kill for the sake of killing or simply for the "sport" of it.

What I do object to—as do many folks across the county—is the lack of consideration for others demonstrated by some hunters. Unfortunately, the behavior of this



Susan Usher

minority is enough to give the entire group a bad name with property owners.

Like any other privilege, hunting bears its responsibilities. Failure of a few to live up to those, in turn, can lead to a loss of privileges for all.

Anti-hunting sentiment is growing in Brunswick County and I, for one, understand why.

Some of the reasons emerged last spring at the meeting on roadside hunting attended by about 100 hunters, some of them polite, some of them very rude.

A Goodman Road resident, and residents of other areas, told county commissioners they had been verbally abused by hunters and even had the physical safety of their families and property threatened. Several families told me privately they were afraid to speak up against the hunters for fear their property would be torched.

Back in the fall of 1978, I had reason of my own to resent the uninvited presence of hunters. Shortly after dawn one fall morning, I had let my year-old part labrador out on my own property near Glen Alpine, N.C.

He stood about waist-high and his tail turned sharply upward in a plume, black on the upper side, snowy white underneath.

In the gray morning light with a light drizzle falling, a hunter apparently mistook the dog's upturned white tail for that of a deer. He killed my pet.

The hunter was so close to the house I heard the firing of the shot from inside the front bedroom, but didn't learn until later what had happened. A neighbor found the dog's body and buried it for me.

Shades of Rodney Dangerfield, what ever happened to courtesy and respect? That hunter had not asked if he could shoot on my land. He had not even had the courtesy to announce his presence before he started shooting.

In its hunter safety program, the N.C. Wildlife Commission devotes sections to ethics and getting along with landowners.

The commission sums up hunting ethics in one word, "respect: respect for your companions, the land, the wildlife you hunt, and for yourself."

"This respect almost borders on reverence, and, lacking it, a person cannot hope to become more than half a hunter," it continues. "Show respect and your hunting trip will long be treasured."

It reminds its young hunters that every square foot of property in the United States belongs to someone, over half of it to private parties.

That means hunters need to get along with individual landowners if

they want continued access to some mighty fine hunting acres without paying for it.

The day is rapidly disappearing when a group of hunters and their dogs can just show up on someone's field and hunt as they please in Brunswick County.

To that end, the commission recommends that hunters look at the situation from the landowner's view—he may be tired of having carelessly extinguished camp fires set his timber afire, of having his property damaged or destroyed and his family members threatened and shot at.

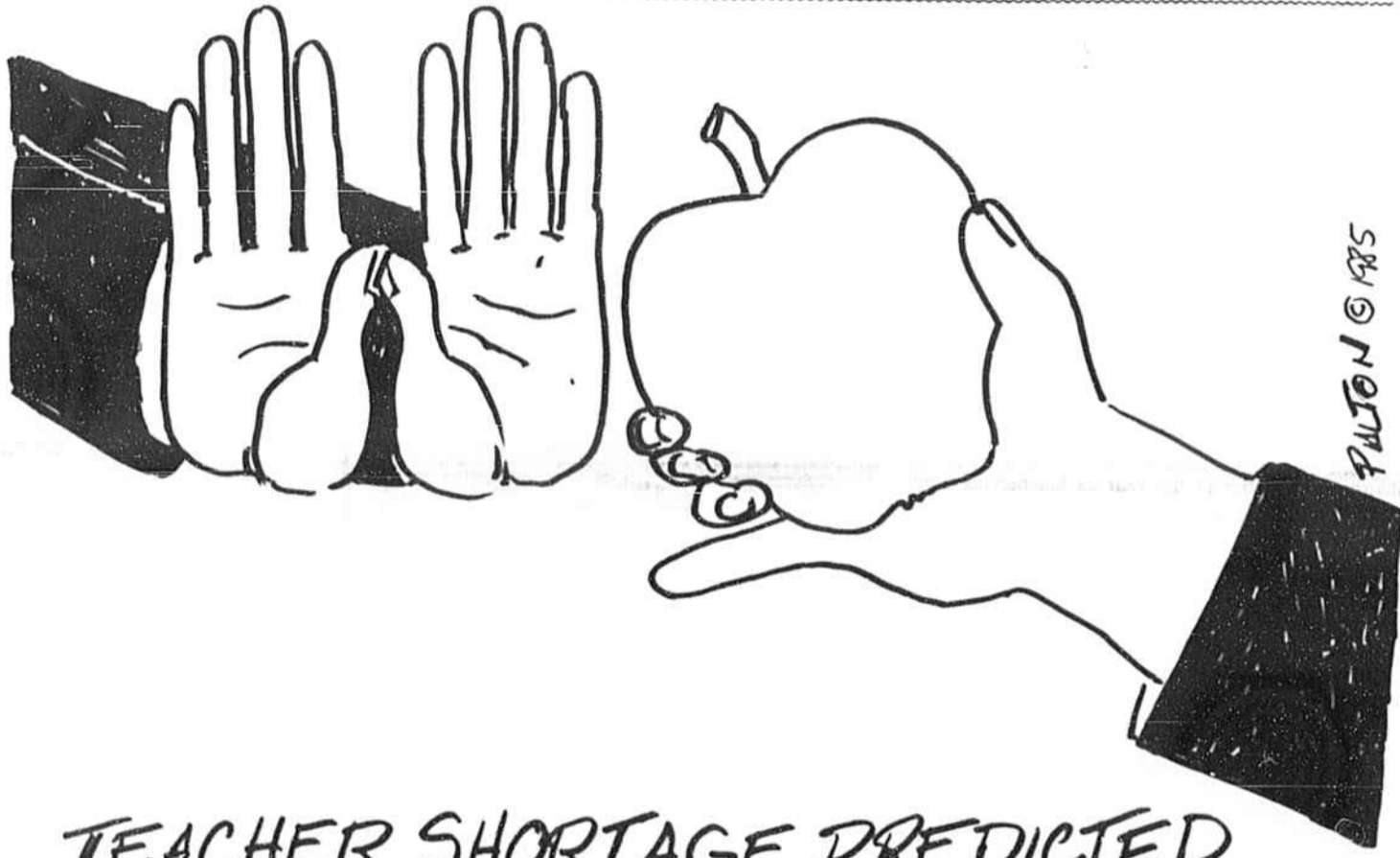
Who could blame him?

What the commission proposes is a common-sense solution: Introduce yourself to the landowner, ask permission to hunt on the property, then treat the property as if it were your own and you were proud of it. Be a true sportsman.

That means leaving no trash behind, cutting down no fences, breaking no gates. It means staying out of the way of houses and buildings and people—and remembering bullets go a long way. It means not driving your new four-wheel-drive vehicle through somebody's pasture or soybean field.

And it means taking care of the dogs, not letting them chase livestock or become a nuisance.

Then, when it's time to go, says the Commission, thank the landowner and maybe offer to share with him some of the game you've bagged.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Put The Blame Where It Belongs

To the Board of Education, Superintendent of Brunswick County Schools, Principal of West Brunswick High School, and to the editor:

We have children who attend West Brunswick High School and we are tired of our children being punished for something that is not their fault

but the teachers.

It is a shame and disgrace that the principal, assistant principals and teachers never believe a student. All young people are not juvenile delinquents; there are a lot of young people who are dependable, outstanding citizens.

It is an awful example for a teacher to lie to save his or her face and a stu-

dent to be punished for this. If a teacher or student is in the wrong, either should be adult enough to admit their wrong.

We think it is time for the board of education to take a long look at their principals and teachers. These are people who we, the taxpayers, pay to

supervise and proper examples for our children.

With supervision like this, no wonder we have such a high number of dropouts and social outcasts.

Martha Register Shallotte

Owner Should Be Able To Use Property As He Sees Fit

To the editor:

Enclosed is our subscription for another year of The Brunswick Beacon.

We have been following with interest the controversy over the west end of Holden Beach. As property owners on Holden Beach we have made extensive use of the west end

over the years. Instead of being bitter about its closing, we are grateful for the years we have been able to use it.

Although we will miss the use of this section of the beach, it is private property and the owner should be able to use it as he sees fit.

Lee and Freeman Prior
Vienna, Virginia

'No Parking' Signs Upset Property Owner

To the editor:

As property owners in the Seaside-Sunset Beach area, we were very upset to find all the No Parking signs that had been erected on Sunset Beach. We spend five to six weeks a year here and have always enjoyed the fishing and beach at Sunset Beach.

We have supported the merchants of Sunset Beach, however, we will not continue to do so if we are not welcome on the island. It seems pointless to have a sign saying, "Welcome to Sunset Beach," when

only property owners on the island are welcome.

We feel the realtors and merchants of this area would find this situation detrimental. After all, who would want to buy property here and then not be able to use the beach?

We certainly hope that the mayor and city council will give further consideration to this serious matter.

In the meantime, we're sure that Ocean Isle and Holden Beach will gladly welcome the tourists and their business.

Jim and Debbie Lowry
Charleston, West Virginia