

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Let Common Sense Prevail Over Clout

It was encouraging to learn that an old application for funding for a bicycle path at Holden Beach has been dusted off by the bureaucrats in Raleigh after other bureaucrats in Washington determined a portion of the federal highway funds have to be spent in the state for this purpose.

It was discouraging to learn from Mayor Kenner Amos that Holden Beach may not have enough political clout statewide to stay on the top priority list for funding of a bike path since the larger, more influential cities across the state have gotten the scent of available federal dollars. As a matter of fact, he has doubts that Holden Beach can stay on the list at all.

While one might question Holden Beach's political muscle, there can be no doubt that bike paths are needed worse on beaches in the South Brunswick Islands than anywhere else in the state.

Not only should Holden Beach's bike path be funded, they should also be developed in Ocean Isle and Sunset. All three beaches have little or no public parking, very narrow boulevards and hordes of people during the peak tourist months.

One may not see many bikers along the beaches now because riding on the side of the road during the season is tantamount to living dangerously. If bike paths were available, no doubt they would be used by many who now cruise the boulevard looking for a place to park a car.

Bike paths could also be used for pedestrian traffic as well as the growing number of joggers who frequent the roadsides at the beaches.

There were a number of accidents involving pedestrians and vehicles last year at the beaches. At Holden Beach there was a fatality. The problem will worsen as development on and near the beaches continue.

Residents of the beaches, as well as property owners across the state and nation, should muster whatever political clout they can and campaign for bike paths.

Remind the bureaucrats that beach towns with no sidewalks should have priority on the bike path list over cities which are already better equipped to handle their traffic problems.

Perhaps common sense can prevail over political clout this one time?

The Art Of Shedding

In "Gift From The Sea," Anne Morrow Lindbergh suggests as one means of finding the simplified life in her visits to the sea "the art of shedding." She uses this phrase to emphasize "how little one can get along with, not how much." Her examples are the need for less clothes at the beach, less in the way of shelter and furnishings, and less complexity in human relationships.

A recent experience of dividing belongings of my wife's parents has once again put me in the dilemma of "saving vs. discarding." Each time I think I've overcome the urge to save, certain treasures appear that just cannot be sold or discarded. Like old family pictures or a favorite glass bowl or a small wooden box crammed with memories! I learned long ago I shouldn't clean out a closet or go through old magazines when I was in a saving mood.

Perhaps we all accumulate too many things, too many creature comforts, too many gadgets! Things we don't really need or really want, but things given to us or bought on impulse or left to us by family members. The appeal of homesteading to many younger people today is the challenge of living the



Bill Faver

simple life without many of these things. They give up much of what most of us feel we must have in order to survive. Such a lifestyle is supposed to help us get more in touch with our feelings and more honest in our relationships.

Living along the shore gives us all the opportunity to practice "the art of shedding." Whether we're here for a week or a lifetime, we have a choice, as Mrs. Lindbergh reminds us,

"I remember... that today most of us in America, more than anywhere else in the world, have the luxury of choice between simplicity and complication of life. And, for the most part, we, who could choose simplicity, choose complication... But if one accidentally finds it, as I have for a few days, one also finds the serenity it brings."

It Really Peeves Me When . . .

Lots of people express their pet peeves in calls or letters to the editor. Well, this week I'm writing my column to you grouching about two of my pet peeves: telephone receptionists who lack basic courtesy and readers who don't understand and don't want to understand the opinion page.

Both peeves deal with basic communication skills I thought people learned in high school. But apparently not.

As a newswoman, I spend a lot of time on the telephone initiating, receiving and returning calls. My telephone manners are by no means perfect—sometimes, for instance, I assume people know it's me calling because of my voice or information given the secretary. That can be embarrassing!

But some of the folks who handle switchboards and telephones—and believe me, I'm not just talking about in Brunswick County—ought to have their phone privileges revoked.

How do you feel when:
 • You call long distance for someone and are 1) greeted with a breathless "Will you hold please?" before having a chance to say it's long distance; and/or 2) the person you're calling is on another line or out of the office and the receptionist suggests, "Why don't you call back in about 10 minutes?" instead of suggesting the party in question return your call.



Susan Usher

• A receptionist tells you very politely that so-and-so is out, but will return your call—and then doesn't bother to ask your name and/or telephone number or the nature or urgency of the call. If they do get your name, half the time they don't ask how to spell it. Later you may get a letter with your name misspelled on the address because the boss thought his secretary or receptionist knew enough to get the spelling right.

The telephone abusers are bad enough. But reporters and their editors get flack on the streets on another sort of basic communication: the newspaper's opinion page.

As you may have noticed while skimming the Beacon, our paper has a predictable organization that makes specific kinds of information easy to find even though most pages are not specifically labeled "sports" or "fishing" or "community" news.

One page is deliberately labeled to set it apart from the rest of the paper—that's Page 4-A, dubbed in

easy-to-read black and white in the upper left hand corner as the "Opinion Page." Note that doesn't read "Editorial Page."

Most news stories are collections of others' views or interpretations of fact, presented in as unbiased a fashion as the news staff can manage with the resources available to it.

But on Page 4-A all opinions are freely expressed without direct concern for the "side." We all get to give our side of the story.

Generally this paper includes the views of three groups: the Beacon as an entity, staff and guest columnists and the public at large.

The newspaper itself is represented with unsigned "editorials." These items may praise, criticize or simply comment on something. They are opinions, subject to modification or even reversal, and certainly to disagreement by others. They resemble breakfast table talk made public to set readers thinking, to generate discussion, possibly action.

Nearby, Dawn and I write "personal columns." In these we have the liberty of saying essentially what we want. It doesn't have to be uplifting, persuasive or entertaining, just ours. The third columnist is Bill Faver, an amateur naturalist and photographer. We also have contributing cartoonists.

Anytime an item appears in our column we're willing to stand by it.

I've been cussed at and fussed at by readers who didn't like or didn't understand something I wrote. With other readers I've laughed and cried in empathy. In any case, I knew each reader cared enough to share his or her feelings with me. What more can any writer ask?

But sometimes it's frustrating to write a column only to be accused of writing an "editorial" because the column appears on the same page.

That happened this week to one staffer, who was confronted in a public place by someone who thought her recent "editorial" (column) was the pits, but never actually explained what he didn't like about the column.

He was invited to write a letter to the editor, which brings us to the third type of opinion shared on Page 4-A: yours. While edited for slanderous or libelous content and sometimes for length or clarity, these letters are not "rewritten" into news articles. And they must be signed with your name.

People use the letters column for everything from seeking owners for animals at the county shelter to venting righteous anger at some perceived injustice—perhaps reaching readers of a similar mind.

I guess you could say Page 4-A is "our page." Like the telephone, another valuable communication tool, I don't like to see the "Opinion Page" abused.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some Changes Are Needed In Parking Situation

To the editor:

I am writing concerning the No Parking signs recently put up at Sunset Beach. We are property owners in the Seaside-Sunset Beach area and have been spending our vacations and many weekends there for the past several years.

We are upset about the No Parking signs, especially on the east end. There is no way to look for shells or to go fishing at this end unless you want to walk all the way down the beach

from the parking lot. Also, all along Main St., close to the public beach access signs, there are No Parking signs. I would like to know how the public is to have access to the beach if they cannot park close to the access signs?

Our family really does like the Brunswick County beaches and think Sunset Beach is a very beautiful place. But we do feel that property owners on the mainland and other visitors to the beach have a right to enjoy any part of the shoreline.

We certainly hope some changes will be made in the near future.

Richard and Ann Ballard
Greensboro

They Will Be Sorely Missed

To the editor:

It is with great regret we say goodbye to Toney and Richard Edwards and their family of Sunset Beach who

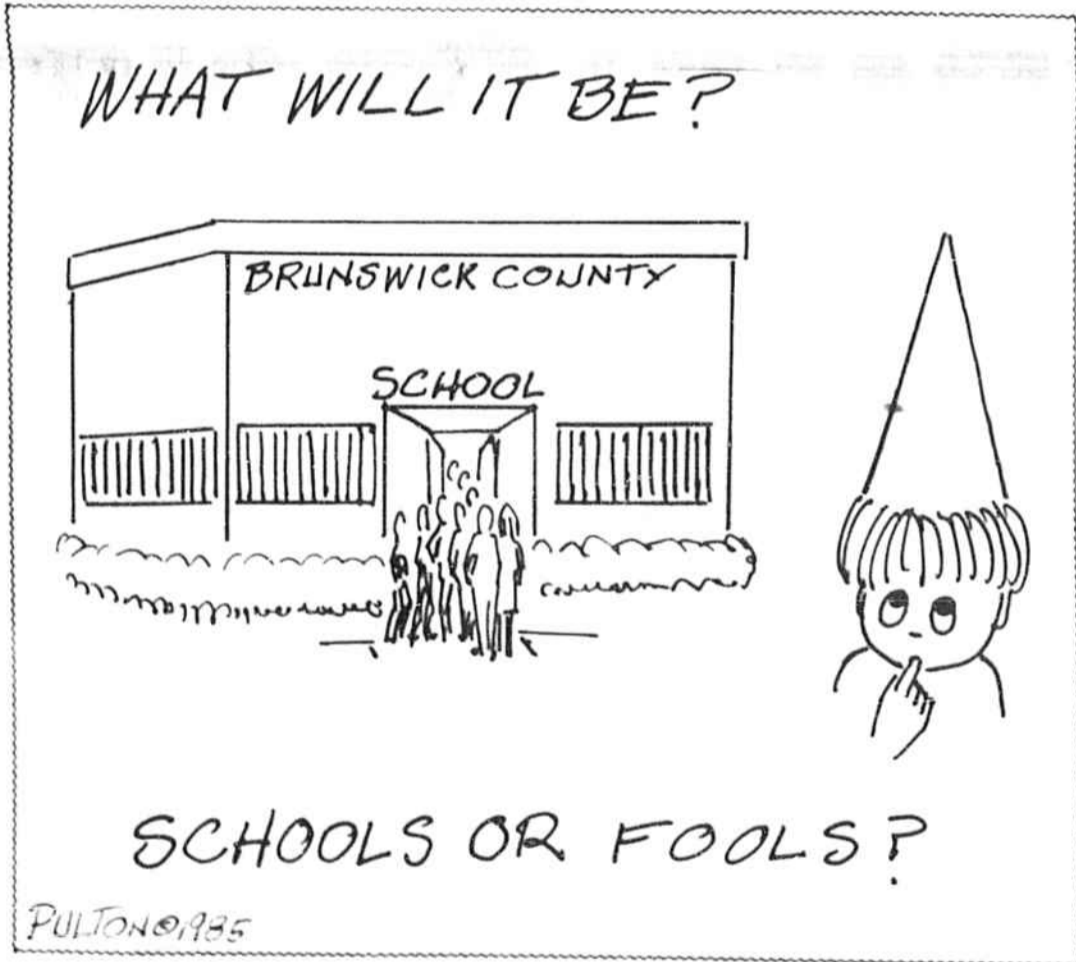
are moving to Georgia.

Toney has given many hours of her time to the Scouts, her church, school and the teaching of aerobic exercise. She served a long term on the Sunset Beach Town Council.

For 17 years Toney and Richard have given devoted service to the Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department in many capacities.

We wish the Edwards family every happiness and success in their new home. They will be sorely missed.

Jean Mearns
Sunset Beach



Brief Notes

From Subscribers

To the editor:

We have really enjoyed being subscribers to the Beacon the past three or four years. Our brother-in-law recently acquired property at Ocean Isle and is always reading our paper a week later. So, for his birthday, we decided to have his own paper delivered directly to him.

We really appreciate receiving our paper so promptly every week.

Carroll E. Frye
Hildebran

Enclosed is our check for renewal of The Brunswick Beacon for another year. Can't tell you how much we enjoy reading about our "home away from home—Holden Beach" and the surrounding area. Keep up the good work.

We especially enjoy Bill Faver's column since we are true nature lovers ourselves. Congrats to him on a job well done.

Looking forward to next summer.
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard K. Adkins
Wayne, West Virginia

We enjoy the Beacon very much, this being our 15th renewal. Receive the paper in Winston-Salem no later than Friday each week. Keep the good work going.

J. L. Bell
Winston-Salem

The Day Democracy Died At West Brunswick High

A couple of weeks ago seniors at West Brunswick High School chose their class motto.

It is, like most class mottos, a little bland and sappy, but the sentiment is real.

The motto reads, "In our hands we hold the keys to unlock what we hope will be a brighter tomorrow."

As far as I know, though, that may not have been the students' first choice.

There was a day when I was a senior at West Brunswick in 1979-80 that I refer to as "the day democracy died."

My class voted on a motto, just as students do every year.

The one they chose was short, sweet and to the point: "Go for it!"

Of course, no one was ever sure what the "it" was, but students generally agreed it was a good multipurpose word.

When I was a senior, if you were trying out for a scholarship or an athletic team or anything coun-



Dawn Ellen Boyd

petitive, your friends would urge you on with the phrase, "Go for it!"

It was as natural a thing for us to say as "totally awesome" was to kids a couple of years ago.

Granted, it may not have been the most ideal motto, but it was the one the majority of the senior class wanted to use to remember their final year in high school.

To be perfectly honest, I didn't vote for the motto they chose. In fact, I don't remember what I voted for. I had recently returned from a summer at Governor's School and was disillusioned with regular high school.

At the time my personal motto was "Graduate and escape."

One teacher thought the motto the class had chosen was an embarrassment to the school and to the seniors, whether they realized it or not. She started a campaign to rid the class of their "irresponsible choice."

One morning in homeroom, new ballots for a class motto were passed out. "Go for it!" did not appear on the ballot. All there was to choose from were a few worn out platitudes.

That afternoon an announcement was made over the intercom that the senior class had a new motto.

I don't remember what the motto was, and it wasn't even printed in our yearbook. Probably it included something about the sands of time or the doors to tomorrow or some other cliché.

I do remember wondering why the administration even let the students vote if they were just going to turn around and throw out the choice of the majority. Why did they let "Go

for it!" appear on the ballot the first time?

Why didn't they just pick a motto out of a hat if they were going to make a mockery of the democratic process?

Another high school mystery, never to be solved.

The same teacher that led the fight against "Go for it!" told me I was apathetic because I wouldn't buy a class ring.

Explanations fell on deaf ears. I told her again and again it wasn't worth it to spend \$100 on a piece of jewelry that I would wear for one year.

"Apathetic!" she'd chide.

Well, five years has passed and I don't remember my class motto nor do I have a high school ring.

I think I'll survive.

At least I have a motivation technique to use when life gets rough.

Maybe it would work for you too.

Just grit your teeth and say "Go for it!"

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