

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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It's Worth The Price To Build The College

How do you plan to vote Tuesday? Do you favor the \$8 million bond referendum to pay for construction of classrooms and other facilities to consolidate Brunswick Technical College at one permanent campus? Are you opposed because it might make your taxes go up? Between now and Tuesday when voters answer this question, one is apt to hear arguments on both sides. College officials and other supporters of the referendum have made their case in a calm, logical manner, explaining the need that justifies this investment in Brunswick County's educational future.

Those opposed to borrowing \$8 million to improve the college have made a weak case, sometimes raising a smokescreen of criticism of the college's performance or placing the college lower on their list of financial priorities. The opposition boils down, however, to a fear that taxes will go up if the bond referendum passes.

County officials who steered the college in the direction of a bond referendum for construction funding, have predicted it may be possible to pay off the bonds without raising taxes. Supporters of the referendum have, naturally, used this prediction to bolster their position.

This may be the weakest point supporters of the college can make. If the county can retire the bonds without a tax hike, it stands to reason taxes could be reduced if the bonds were not sold. One doesn't have to go to college to figure this out.

Supporters of the college ought to emphasize that it is worth a few bucks on the tax bill to take this big step to develop Brunswick Technical College so it can meet the educational needs of this county which is growing by leaps and bounds. To date, development of the college has been accomplished with very little local money since the state has paid about \$9 for every dollar spent by the county.

Another factor which has a direct effect on the referendum question is the tax revaluation now in progress in the county. There will be so many changes that it will be difficult to determine if the tax rate is up or down—except on ones individual tax bill. Taxes will go up for some and may go down for others regardless of the outcome of Tuesday's vote.

In any event, if the referendum passes the bonds will be paid off by Brunswick County taxpayers. The payments, spread over a number of years, should not hit anyone too hard in the pocketbook. Development of a first-rate technical college here is surely worth the price.

Go for it!

In The Seeds Of Today

There is an ancient Chinese proverb which states: "All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today." An interesting thought to consider when we think about cycles and life in the fall season.

This can help us think about the interrelatedness of all things; how the future is dependent upon good soil, adequate water, abundant sunshine, and enough harvest to assure seed for later years, as well as food for the creatures who are dependent upon it today.

Such a statement can help us appreciate the miracles of photosynthesis and the transfer of food materials and energy from plant to animal in the food chain. It helps us understand the cycles of plants as producers, animals as consumers and fungus, bacteria and other animals as decomposers who reduce the dead plant and animal materials to nourishment in the soil, to be used again to sustain new life in the future.

Realization of the necessity of the plant and animal community in suitable habitat areas can come from thoughts about this Chinese proverb. Such a community provides variety of life necessary for living.

When one plant or animal fails to survive, another usually moves in to fill its place. Or, the community ex-



Bill Faver

periences the process of succession where it grows toward maturity with one plant or animal species replacing another as the community develops.

Sometimes this succession brings recovery to an area where erosion has scarred the landscape or old buildings have crumbled and have been taken over by the trees and shrubs.

But probably the most obvious thought this statement brings is that each seed is a storehouse—a reservoir—of life waiting, often by chance, for the right combination of elements to release the life it contains.

Each year we see the miracles in flowers and plants. Each year we overlook the achievement with accustomed familiarity.

Maybe we need to remind ourselves each day that "all the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today."

Reflecting On 'Southern Dreams, Trojan Women'

In the spring of 1983 I was thrilled. A friend of mine, Leo Snow, had published his first book, *Southern Dreams and Trojan Women*—a novel based on the experiences of several generations of his own family—including a Christmas Eve tragedy with emotional offshoots that linger through the years that follow.

Leo describes it his tale as about "people who work for everything they have" as well as a story "of love found in unlikely places, of a spiritual battle we all must fight between hope and despair."

I see more a story of survivors—people who "got it tough and still they keep on fightin' and hopin' for somethin' better."

The pivotal moment comes on Christmas Day 1947, Greensboro: a "maniacal killer," reported *The Greensboro Daily News*, on Christmas Eve shot himself after slaying three persons and injuring three others with no apparent provocation.

Leo's grandparents and aunt were among the victims. Of the three, only his grandmother survived.

In time the story moves from cotton fields to strikes in the Greensboro textile mills, the poverty of the Great Depression and the effects of two



Susan Usher

World Wars. With each generation the characters' burden of memory and understanding increases.

But the thing about the book that impresses me most are the women, whom Leo has shaped with obvious sympathy and great respect: Lora, her daughter Ila Elizabeth Mitchell Tolbert and the black woman, Mayzelle, who became a central figure in Lora's life and that of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In the book one character tells Mayzelle: "You're almost like a ghost, wanderin' in an' out of our lives, touchin' us quickly for healing and then movin' on... All these years of livin' together, or nearly together, and everybody knows everybody else like the back of their hand, and nobody knows you."

These are strong women, loving

women, southern women who sacrifice and fight to keep the clan together. Through the hardest of times they retain both their dignity and a hope for a better future—at least for the children of another generation.

When I read their story, I can't help but think of my own mother, who shared similar trials and certainly shared that same inner strength.

In Arthur, the man responsible for the Christmas Eve massacre-suicide, I see some of the best and worst of my own father.

Near the book's close, the boy Todd comes to understand... and accept... the passions and fears that ultimately led to Arthur's self-destruction.

Cousin Robert tells the boy, "You know, Todd, everyone has degrees of mental health. He loved your mom excessively. He wasn't a harmful man. But something in him snapped and it could happen to anyone. He... had a real joy for people, or most people; but the pressures were just too much: making a living for four young'uns, the memory of the mental hospital, and the pressure of a jealous mind that was more afraid of losing love than sanity, and in the end he lost both."

Leo and I met through my work as education writer and later feature editor at *The News Herald* in Morganton. He taught history and philosophy and coached the debate team at the local high school, Freedom. He was an excellent teacher, the kind that inspires students to learn and never is short on time for them before or after the school day begins. I considered him my friend.

And I was busting out proud of him that summer; now I'm even prouder. The book took off, thanks both to Leo's skill and to the devotion and support of his friends at *The Muses*, a local bookstore owned by Shirley Sprinkle with a reputation that stretches from New York to Atlanta—the kind of place that thought nothing of inviting a Bob Timberlake or a John Jakes to an event in their honor.

A reputable publishing firm in Winston-Salem, John F. Blair, when offered reprint rights, chose instead to release a completely revised, expanded hardcover edition (\$16.50) of Leo's book as the lead title on their fall 1985 list.

It's said we all have at least one novel in us.

I suspect Leo has many more; I look forward to savoring them all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Punishment And Learning Are Not Compatible

To the editor:

This is a reply to "Tardy Students Will Practice Multiplication—After School," published in the Oct. 31 issue.

Although I believe that the intentions were noble, I cannot agree with the new disciplinary policy at West Brunswick High School.

The new disciplinary measure is designed to deal with the problem of tardiness at the school. Punishment for being tardy is two-fold. First, the student must stay after school on a designated day. Second, on this designated day the student is "punished" by doing multiplication.

Many students at West Brunswick rely on the school bus as a means of going to and from school. Implementation of the new disciplinary policy would result in the parents or someone having to come to the school to pick up the student. In many

families such access to transportation is not always readily available. Also, anyone would agree that picking up one person is not at all economically sound.

If this is supposed to make the parents aware of the students conduct then I may see an understanding of the policy. But I do not see this type of punishment being conducive to less tardiness. If anything this is more of a punishment to the parents.

However, this is not the basis of my disapproval to the disciplinary measure. The reason I object to it is because the students are being "punished" by being given assignments.

Again I must state that this policy was intended for the good. Perhaps the students will learn multiplication (although I must question why the student who is in high school has not

mastered the skill of multiplication).

But the problem comes from using learning as a form of punishment. By this system the student associates "learning" with "punishment." Punishment and learning are not psychologically compatible.

Clearly, another system of punishment should be devised and the learning of the multiplication table should be dealt with in the classroom.

Curtis D. Holder
Clark University
Worcester, Massachusetts

Looking For Jobs, Not Charity

To the editor:

We have lived down here since June. At first my husband and I had a job, but we got laid off. We worked very hard looking for a brighter future.

We can't draw unemployment. We can't get a job. Now we will soon have to be moving for we can't pay our rent.

Christmas is on the way and how do I tell my three kids they can't get a thing for Christmas? Do I tell them they were bad or that Santa Claus just forgot them? Each day they keep saying what they want for Christmas and I have to turn away to cry for I know they will not receive a thing nor will we have a place to stay.

I am not asking for charity; all we want is a job. Will someone please help us to find a job? My husband has had 14 years experience driving truck, and I will do any kind of work. Could you please put this in your paper for maybe someone might have a job opening somewhere?

Becky Gullickson
Shallotte

Please Continue Variety Reporting

To the editor:

As a landowner in Brunswick County I look forward each week with great anticipation to receiving your fine newspaper. It keeps me current and up to date on numerous items which otherwise I would not find out until my next visit.

Please continue your variety reporting using "seasoned" and new reporters, as it provides variety viewpoints to your publication. Besides, where else can you subscribe to a publication for less than 15 cents per week?

Please renew my subscription and begin a new gift subscription for a friend who is always asking to borrow my *Beacon*.

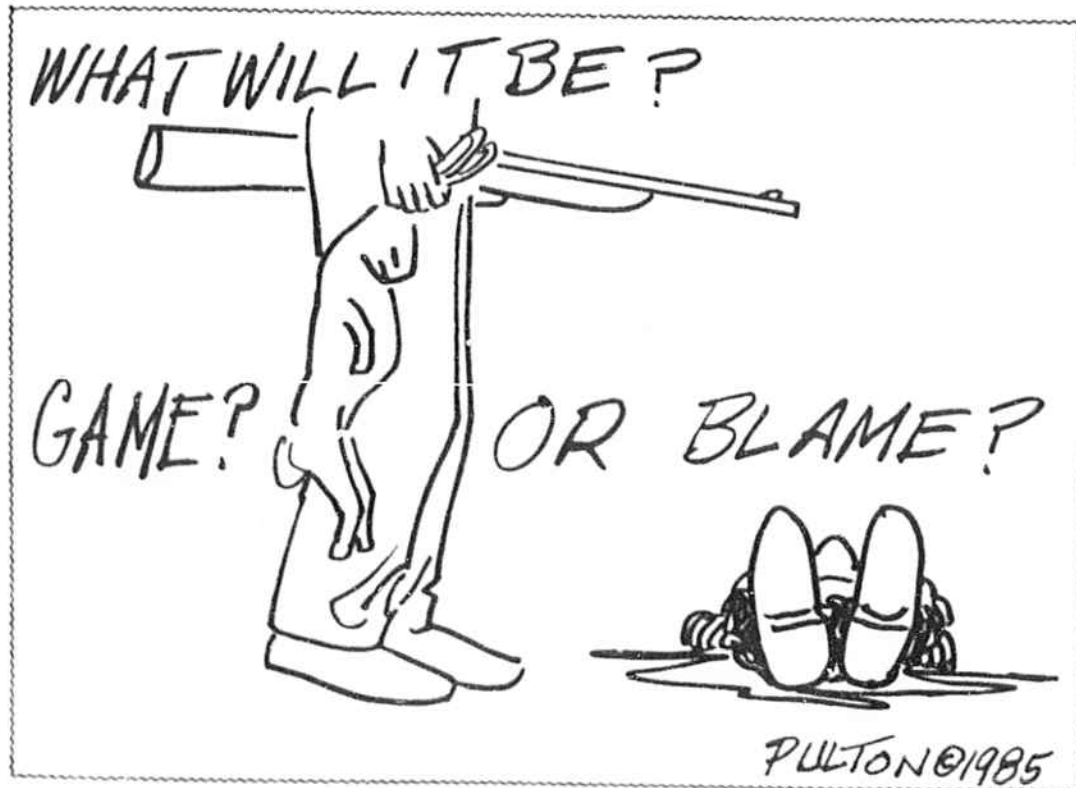
F. Warren Sing
Belmont

Keep It Up

To the editor:

We own a condo at Ocean Isle and look forward to receiving this informative newspaper every week. Keep up the terrific job.

Bea Schoolfield
Greensboro



Mom, You've Got To See This Dog

As youngsters, my brother Sandy and I were very close.

My fist was close to his nose, and his foot was close to my knee.

As we got older, our relationship improved. We began to collaborate on building treehouses and rafts, and playing practical jokes.

Our favorite person to play these jokes on was our mother. She had a good sense of humor, and she didn't get too upset at our childish pranks.

In 1980, I left for college, and by the time I graduated, my brother left for the Navy. We didn't see each other very much during those years, and our joke-playing pretty much came to a halt.

Two weekends ago, I was working in the office when someone knocked on the door. From where I was sitting, all I could see was a pair of brightly polished black shoes. To my surprise, it was Sandy, all dressed up in his crackerjack suit and jaunty sailor's cap. It was the first time he'd been home since he left for the Navy.

After a hugging session, I asked,



Dawn Ellen Boyd

"Does Mom know you've flown home for the weekend?"

"No," he answered.

I started laughing. He looked at me for a moment, then started laughing too. We didn't have to say anything. We had the same idea.

We drove to my father's house and admonished everyone to be quiet. Sandy muffled the telephone receiver and dialed Mom's number.

"Hi mom," he said. "...yes, it is cold here in Chicago... I have guard duty tonight too... it hasn't snowed yet... my classes are getting easier... someone is knocking on the phone booth, I've got to go... love you too... bye."

He put down the phone, and we collapsed in laughter.

Next, we drove home. I hid him under a blanket in my car. When we arrived, he got out and sat beside the car, and I went in to talk to mother.

She was surprised to see me. "I thought you were at work," she said. "Sandy just called from Chicago."

"Oh, how is he?" I asked. "Well, you can tell me later. Mom, I know you'll be mad, but someone gave me the cutest little spaniel puppy, and when you see it you'll have to let me keep it."

Her response was exactly what I had anticipated: "NO MORE DOGS!"

"But, mom," I pleaded, "just come look at it. You'll like it once you see it."

"Well I'll look at it, but then you take it back," she ordered.

She fussed at me for bringing another animal home the whole way to the car. In the middle of one of her sentences, my brother stood up and said, "Woof!"

She opened her mouth, but no words would come out.

She laughed and cried, then looked at the two of us and demanded, "How could you do that to me?"

We shrugged and stood there looking innocent.

Finally, she started laughing. When we had played tricks like that before, I was 15 and he was 11. He barely came up to my shoulder. We looked like two ragamuffins who liked to play in mud (which we did). Now, he was six feet, one inch tall and studying to become a sonar technician on a nuclear submarine, and I was on my way towards finishing a master's degree in education. No wonder she laughed so hard.

During the evening, Mom kept saying, "I don't believe you two pulled that on me."

Of course, the next time we're together and the opportunity arises, we'll play another trick on her. She won't mind.

That's the good thing about families: some things never change.

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