

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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When You See A Chance, Take It

One of my favorite songs, by Steve Winwood, has the line, "When you see a chance, take it." I was offered that "chance" in the form of an assistantship, and next semester I'll be returning to UNC-Greensboro to complete my master's degree in education. Since I've worked on the newspaper, I've done a lot of stories and photographs at local schools. Going back to Union, Shallotte Middle School and West Brunswick made me think many times about the teachers who challenged and encouraged me when I was in elementary and secondary school. Unfortunately, they were too few



Dawn Ellen Boyd

and far between. In the sixth through eighth grades, I had three especially good teachers: Pauline Hewett, Wallace Dunn and Suzie Bruton. All three encouraged my interest in literature, for which I am grateful. For them, teaching was more than rote memorization. Each

had their own style of teaching. Pauline Hewett's room was a bright and cheerful place in which to learn, and she always challenged her students to do the best they could. Wallace Dunn encouraged me to begin exploring many of the classics. And Suzie Bruton won my heart when she took our class into the woods "for inspiration" to write poetry. During the time I was at West Brunswick, I think the most outstanding teacher there by far was a math instructor, Gene Poe. When I found out he was going to be my geometry teacher in the 10th grade, I was so scared I almost cried. He had the reputation among students as being

an unreasonable ogre, but that wasn't true at all—he just wanted kids to learn. His honesty about academics and life was admirable. He actually made me enjoy math—quite a feat since English and history were always my favorite subjects! Another outstanding teacher at West Brunswick was Zeiphia Grissett, a social studies teacher. Her classes were such fun I couldn't forget anything I learned. Grace Keziah, my high school guidance counselor, really cared about education. She encouraged kids academically and emotionally, and I'm sure that more than one West Brunswick graduate owes their success to her guidance. I know I spent my share of time in her office, and she was always there ready to listen.

Gurganus Should Have Edge On Coroner Post

Whether or not Brunswick County really needs a coroner, the executive committee of the Democratic Party has the task of nominating someone to fill that slot vacated when Tommy Gilbert, a Southport Democrat, resigned. It will be interesting to see who is selected. There are three announced Democrat hopefuls. And Larry Andrews, a Republican who has served for some time as an assistant coroner, has expressed an interest in the post. While all four may be equally qualified, one should have an edge. That is Pam Gurganus of Shallotte who wanted the job bad enough to run for it in the 1984 primary. She trailed Gilbert by only 375 votes, getting 3,559 to his 3,934. That's certainly a strong enough showing at the polls to indicate she has popular support among Democratic voters. It stands to reason that the leadership of the Democratic Party ought to look first at Gurganus for the post to which she came so close to being elected last year, if all other factors affecting the choice are equal.

Thanksgiving— Giving Thanks!

BY BILL FAVER

Thanksgiving Day reminds us of many family reunions, traditions, and experiences. The festive meal always brings out the best in the way of food and shows the creativity and endurance of the cooks. The appreciative guests show their joy in sharing by eating too much as they praise those who prepared the meal! The times around the table are much more than a good meal as we usually give thanks for each other and for the reality the good things happening to us far outnumber the bad.



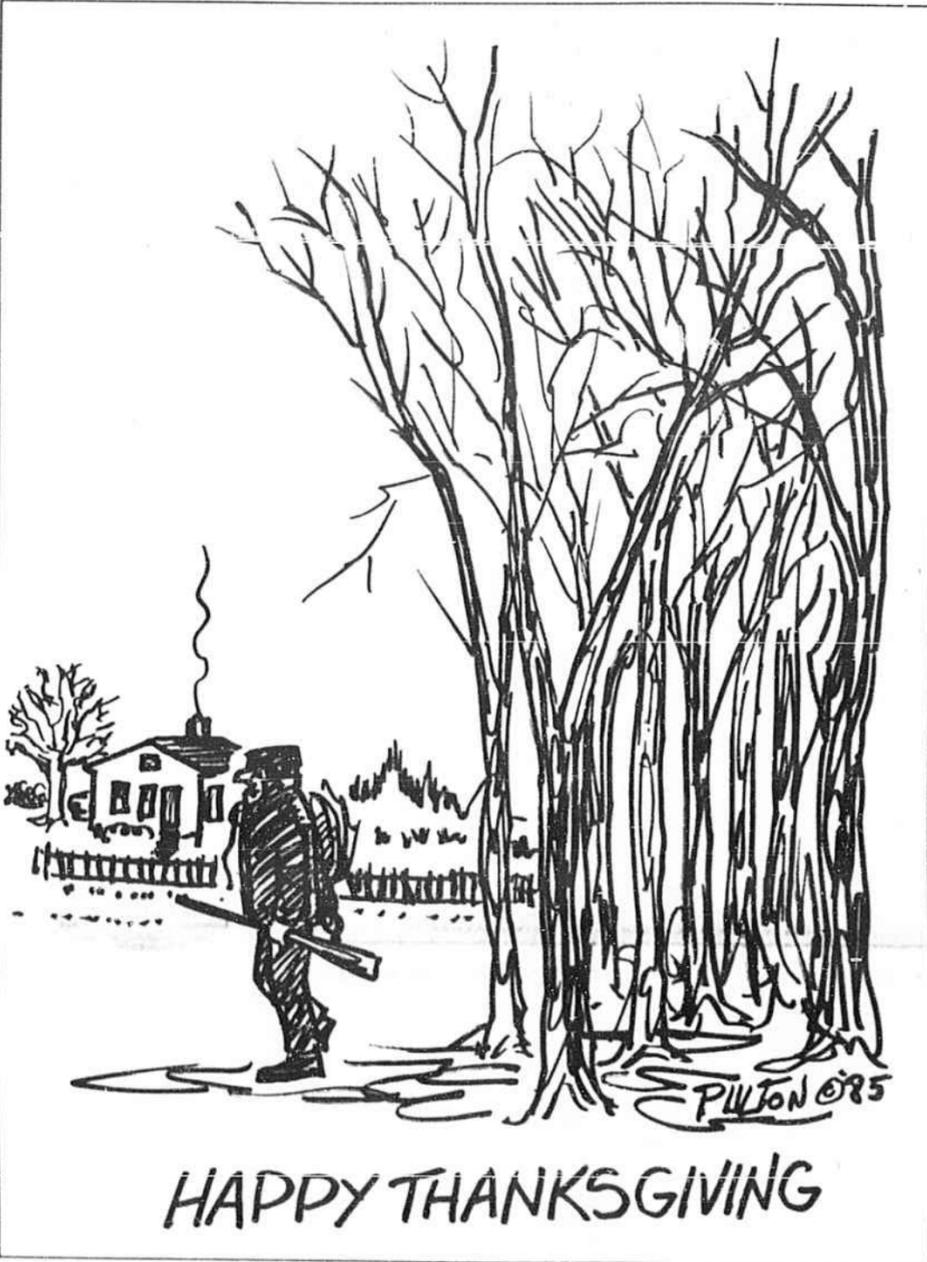
Faver

In pre-television-football days, many families would spend the afternoon after the big meal by walking in the woods to get some needed exercise and to enjoy the out-of-doors. In other families the kids and cousins would enjoy playing games or horseback riding while the older folks chatted with relatives and caught up on the news. And sometimes the men and boys would go hunting for rabbits or birds while the ladies planned what they would buy at the after-holiday sales.

Life may not have been simpler then for times were hard and there was little money for most folks. But most people enjoyed a daily experience of awareness of their dependence upon the land and nature as they dug the earth to farm or garden, gathered firewood from the forest for fuel, or hunted the fields for game for the table. They could appreciate the meaning of Thanksgiving in experiencing some of the same joys and frustrations as the Pilgrim Fathers.

As we pause this week to give thanks for the bounty of life, let us remember to include the beauties of our beaches, marshes, fields, woods, skies, rivers, and seas. Perhaps we can resolve as we give thanks to try to keep them beautiful and to overcome some of the problems that threaten to spoil them.

Happy reunions! Happy turkey feasts! Happy Thanksgiving for the beauty of the Earth!



Whatever Happened To That Other Season—Fall?

Isn't it time for fall yet? Not winter—we're not talking about another 1984 here, with a jump directly from summer to winter with only a weekend or two of autumn. No, sirree. Not again. Each year is supposed to have four seasons in North Carolina—even in its southernmost parts. We have a right to experience autumn. That's why we didn't move to Florida, remember? We're talking sweeter weather—crisp nights ideal for sleep-

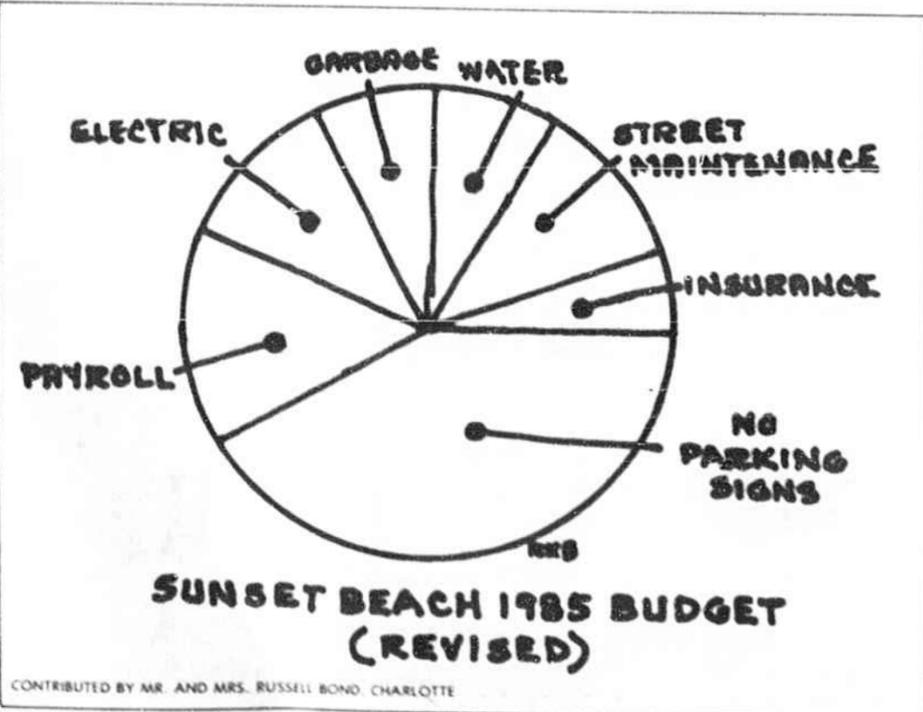


Susan Usher

ing: warm days of glowing sunshine that filters through trees still shedding their leaves in batches of yellow, orange and red. We're talking about the crunch of fallen leaves underfoot as we rake the front yard, wrapping up under stadium blankets at the homecoming game and eating lots of stewed

mullet, sweet potatoes and boiled peanuts with a few collard greens on the side. We're talking hog butchering time. And we're talking roasting oysters over a dying fire, with our breath visible on the air in front of us as we reach for the crackling cornbread and pickles. But no such luck. It's still summer. If the tourists haven't been listening to all that talk about extending the season, the weather maker has. I guess this is what we get for wishing so hard. Here we are still mowing the grass and still wearing summer weight clothes in cool colors. Wools and blends and heavy sweaters aren't

moving too well in the stores and those cute fur jackets are just hanging in closets. Most of my friends are like me—with all this heat, they're having trouble getting into the mood for Christmas shopping. It's been too hot also for knitting and crocheting, too hot to have big projects spread across the lap. While we humans may not like the weather, two equally populous groups seem to be faring very well: the house flies and the mosquitos. In fact, a team of giant, matched coastal mosquitos will probably pull Santa's sled next month. Just you wait and see.



Sex Life Of Clams Improves With Age

A rumor circulating among coastal fishermen had hard clams hiding shamefully in their beds. According to the rumor, hard clams became, how should we say, sexually inactive, or more delicately stated, reproductively senile, as they became older and bigger. No wonder these soft-bodied mollusks had withdrawn into their shells. Already large clams were called "chowders." Their large, aging bodies were tough, fit only for a pot of clam chowder, clammers said. But as the rumor of their other disabilities spread, fishermen lost even more respect for the larger mollusks. Clammers complained that the chowders occupied valuable bed space that would be better used by a younger, more productive set. But Sea Grant researcher Charles "Pete" Peterson made a discovery

that will gain the chowder clam new respect. He learned that older, larger hard clams aren't reproductively senile at all. In fact, the number of gametes, or reproductive cells, a clam produces is directly proportional to its size. Peterson collected live hard clams from North Carolina estuarine waters during the spring before gamete release. He measured the clams, then aged them by counting the annual bands in their sectioned shells. (During a previous study, Peterson had learned that North Carolina hard clams add an annual band to their shells late each summer much like a tree adds a ring.) He also dissected, dried and weighed the clam's gametes. "From these three pieces of information on each clam, we learned that gamete mass increased strictly as a

function of size of North Carolina's clams with no absolute or even partial reduction at increased age," Peterson says. In Peterson's first collection of clams, his oldest mollusk was 19 years old. But from Johnson Creek in Core Sound, Peterson dug out one large clam that turned out to be 47 years old. "It was the oldest Mercenaria ever recorded, and it had gametes to beat the band," Peterson says. "Not only does the hard clam continue to produce gametes as it ages, but also the number of gametes produced increases dramatically with size and age." As news of the older hard clam's fertility spreads, the value of this maligned mollusk may increase. After all, these clams may be parenting a sizable share of tomorrow's younger set.