

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweatt and Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Publishers
 Edward M. Sweatt.....Editor
 Susan Usher.....News Editor
 Dawn Ellen Boyd.....Staff Writer
 Johnny Craig.....Sports Editor
 Mary Potts.....Office Manager
 Cecelia Gore.....Advertising Representative
 Tammie Galloway.....Typesetter
 Steve Anderson.....Pressman
 Bill McGowan.....Photo Technician
 Clyde and Mattie Stout, Jim Ballou.....Circulation

Page 4-A

Thursday, December 12, 1985

Maybe It's Time To Buck Tradition

Perhaps Sunset Beach Mayor Jim Gordon wasn't as tactful as he could have been last week when he announced his intention to eliminate public comments which have been allowed as part of the agenda at the conclusion of meetings of the town's governing body.

Instead, he wanted to require anyone wishing to speak at the meetings to write him a letter a week in advance and tell the subject on which they wish to speak.

When council members and some in the audience balked at this idea, the matter was dropped. The practice of allowing anyone to make impromptu remarks and often meaningless speeches will remain on the agenda.

Mayor Gordon's proposal had merit and should not have been dismissed so quickly. It was no doubt interpreted by some as an attempt to stifle freedom of speech. Closer examination might prove otherwise.

Citizens who wish to ask the council to do—or not to do—something, have a right to be heard. It is not unreasonable to require some advance notice in order to prepare a meeting agenda. Perhaps a week in advance is asking too much; two or three days might be enough notice. The council has the power to make an exception in cases where circumstances prevent advance notice.

In trying to change the way council meetings are conducted, Mayor Gordon was bucking a Brunswick County tradition. Most public board meetings, including the county commission, allow anyone to broach any subject and hear random comments from the audience as board members try to conduct business.

While this town-meeting approach to board meetings might be an ego trip for those who like to hear the sound of their own voices from their soap-boxes, it often disrupts and lengthens the sessions while accomplishing nothing constructively.

Before a town council or the county commission votes on matters of vital importance to the public, hearings are conducted at which citizens are invited and urged to speak for or against. These public hearings are well advertised. No advance notice is necessary to speak. Anyone can get up and say whatever is on their mind.

Later, when it is time for elected officials to vote, the time for public input has passed. It is ridiculous for board members and the public to have to listen again to the arguments mouthed earlier at the public hearing.

Running a town the size of Sunset Beach or a county as big as Brunswick, is big business. It is reasonable to expect meetings of governing boards to be run in a businesslike manner.

Bringing more organization to the agenda of regular meetings should give elected officials more time and a more proper atmosphere in which to explore and discuss proposals without interruption from the audience. Properly administered, organization of the agenda need not deprive citizens of an opportunity to participate, constructively, in the process.

Beautification Efforts Should Make Folks Proud

It's good to see civic and professional organizations taking more of an interest in downtown Shallotte, particularly during the holiday shopping season when businesses encourage area residents to "shop at home."

Last week, the town hung its new Christmas decorations and the Pilot Club of the South Brunswick Islands dedicated its "Love Light" tree at the north end of town.

Next Wednesday evening, a variety of organizations will join the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce in a caroling and tree-lighting party at the south end of town, at the old Sunnyside School building.

Organizers hope to generate new interest in restoration of the building. Sunnyside served at least three generations of Shallotte schoolchildren before its rescue from the wrecking crew and relocation to Shallotte Park in the early 1970s.

All these efforts—from the decorated trees to the restoration project—beautify downtown Shallotte, more of a place to be proud of, to come home to.

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, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.

Nothing Unusual Or Unreasonable About Conditions

To the editor:

Much has been said and written recently about the parking dilemma at Sunset Beach, a problem which increases in intensity particularly during the tourist season when parking space is often at a premium.

To help solve this problem, developer Edward Gore has deeded to the town 35.4 acres of land at the west end of the beach, subject to the stipulations that it be developed for parking within three years and that the town continue to maintain it for that purpose. If these conditions are not met, ownership of the land is to revert to Mr. Gore.

In my judgement, Mr. Gore is to be commended for his generosity and the Town Council is to be commended for its action in accepting the land.

Unfortunately, a group of well-meaning but misguided residents, acting as the Sunset Beach Taxpayers' Association (SBTA), would like to see the council rescind its acceptance of the land unless Mr. Gore removes the so-called "strings" attached to his offer.

The SBTA should recognize that it is common practice for donors of land and other property to stipulate specific conditions under which a donation is made. In the current instance, there is nothing unusual or unreasonable about the conditions attached to Mr. Gore's offer. On the contrary, it would be unusual if there were no such "strings attached."

While it is true that Mr. Gore might

conceivably derive some benefit from the land reversion, especially if this were to occur after public funds had been used to construct a vehicular access to the tract in question, the town need only use the land for its intended purpose to preclude this from happening. That shouldn't be too difficult to accomplish.

The SBTA has the potential to be a force for good in our community. Its principal deterrent to date has been its anti-Gore bias, which has clouded its objectivity.

It's time to declare a truce and to join forces, recognizing that what's good for the Gores might be good for Sunset Beach and vice versa. It's a formula which has done more good than harm for the past 30 years or so. Let's give it a fair chance to continue.

This writer is a resident of the extraterritorial jurisdiction area of Sunset Beach and hence is not eligible for membership in the SBTA. Furthermore, I am not a member of the so-called "Gore camp" and have only a nodding acquaintanceship with Mr. Gore.

Perry B. Bray
Sunset Beach

Wants To Read More On Weather

To the editor:

Since you don't have anything on the weather in your paper, may I suggest that as an absentee landlord, I

would find a post-mortem on the highs and lows for the week very interesting. This is on the beach. Any one of the closeby beaches would do.

For instance, it would have been nice to know the highs and lows for the deep freeze last December when the deep freeze hit. Also, in the spring, the highs for the day may surprise some inland people and encourage more trips to the beach.

Since you're fast becoming a more significant resort community, others no doubt would appreciate your info.

Paul E. Weber
Greensboro

(Editor's note: A summary of the past week's weather is published in the Beacon, usually on page 2-3 each week, and includes the forecast furnished by Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady. Once a month a summary of area weather provided by the U.S. Weather Service at Wilmington is published.)

Enjoys Beacon In Netherlands

To the editor:

We have really enjoyed being subscribers to the Beacon and we look forward to many more in the future.

We can't tell you how much it makes our day to read our "home away from home" newspaper. Although we get it a little later over here, we still enjoy reading the news of Brunswick County.

Sherry Brooks
Hickory

We look forward to many more in the years to come. Keep up the good work.

Mr. and Mrs. Kevin M. Sylvester
The Netherlands

Next Best Thing To Being Here

To the editor:

My husband and I have been receiving your newspaper in our hometown, Hickory, since this past August. It is always a pleasure to come home from work at the end of each week and find the Beacon in our mailbox.

We have a summer home in Sunset Beach and since my husband and I both teach school we really do make it our summer home. That's why we appreciate your sending us a bit of our "other home" each week. It makes us feel close to the wonderful folks in Brunswick County.

Apparently our love of Brunswick County and Sunset beach rubbed off on our mom and dad because they recently purchased a vacation home near ours. Our dad's birthday is Dec. 17, so I thought what more wonderful gift could we give him than a subscription to the Beacon! Enclosed you will find my check. Could you please mail him his first copy of your Dec. 19 edition?



I Hear The Chimes From Across The Road

One writer talks about hearing the bells on Christmas Day.

I hear chimes—every day—as old, familiar hymns they play.

Maybe you haven't even heard them. Or perhaps, like me, you're enjoying the "bells" of Camp United Methodist Church as they ring out across downtown Shallotte each day.

Isn't it funny how the absence of something can go unnoticed for long periods of time?

The chimes were donated to the church a good while ago, when I was in junior high school, but had been out of order for a number of years. Just how long no one I've talked to lately seems to know. But a while.

Camp's new minister, Rev. Stan Smith, was plundering about in the attic during the summer when he ran



Susan Usher

across this tangle of equipment and naturally curious, asked what it was.

What is meant to be is meant to be, I suppose, because soon after a representative of the original installers came by. For an incredibly small sum of money, the chimes were back in business again.

It seems the equipment requires adjusting after power failures, time changes and the like, and that no one

at the church is trained to do that. It could get expensive over a year's time, I suppose.

But that's not my worry. I'm simply enjoying the music.

Living about a half-block from the church, the chimes help mark the start of each workday. Heard at the end of the day, they have a definite soothing effect.

Some folks would get tired of hearing the same songs everyday. But while the tapes obviously aren't the best available, so far I've enjoyed hearing the old hymns of the church.

(For a while there, the chimes were competing with a nearby store that set stereo equipment outside. Sorting out the two was tough on the ears, though each was fine on its own.)

Admittedly, the church will sooner or later have to invest in some new tapes if it continues using the chimes. Otherwise, I might turn into a grouch like some folks did back when the chimes were first installed. Several individuals in the downtown business district got tired of hearing them—probably because they played the same songs over and over again!

Sundays break the weekly pace nicely. That's when live broadcasts of the church's organ are heard through the chimes—usually at the start and close of each service.

If you haven't heard the chimes before—or didn't notice when they faded away years ago—listen up next time you're downtown. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

Christmas Tress! By Bill Faver

A sign along highway 87 between Fayetteville and Elizabethtown advertised "Christmas Tress" for sale. I assume the idea was to offer Christmas trees to those who would stop. I didn't take the time to inquire, but I've enjoyed the play on words this Christmas.



If the sign was accurate, the vendor may have been selling Christmas braids, or plaited hair, of the long flowing hair of a girl. This is what the dictionary gives for "tress", and it probably has little to do with Christmas!

Maybe the sign was meant to read "Christmas Stress"—a state with which most of us can associate at this time of year! The pace of the season seems to bring about stress at a time when we would like to be relaxed

and joyful. Stress because of decisions about gift giving. Or stress caused by traffic and shopping. Or stress because of Christmas memories of years past with loved ones now gone. And, of course, there may be money worries, office parties, travel plans, overcommercialization, disappointments, missed opportunities, and many more things to cause worry and stress during the holiday season.

Christmas ought to be more than this. Perhaps we need to relax right now, take a walk on the beach or in the woods, and decide to overcome this stress at Christmas. We can vow to make it a relaxed, meaningful, and joyful celebration with family and friends without the stress so many of us face. Then misspelled signs along the roads will be interpreted with ease: we'll know the "Christmas tresses" are really Christmas trees.