

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Page 4-A Thursday, December 18, 1988

Utility Board Makes Promising Beginning

It is heartening to see a vigorous, courageous utility board in Brunswick County, one that is willing to make difficult decisions, even those potentially unpopular.

With pockets of people all over the county eager to participate in the county water system, this board must bite the bullet and say to some, "Wait," while others get the go-ahead.

The system used by this board to make such decisions is logical and fair. It first deleted those farthest from the trunk lines, for obvious reasons of economy.

Then consideration was given to the highest number of platted lots and densest populations. Presently this does not take seasonal versus non-seasonal residents into consideration, and if selling water is the object, that might be a mistake.

Still another screening device has been to ignore petitions for water, circulated and signed by people who may or may not purchase it.

These are all reasonable criteria by which water recipients can be chosen in a common-sense fashion.

Politics appears not to enter into the selection process, for which the board deserves a second bouquet.

In addition, it has taken the courageous step of recommending mandatory hook-ups.

This point is a difficult political pill for Brunswick County commissioners to swallow. Many of their constituents oppose this requirement as an unfair expense, but it seems essential if the system is to be self-supporting. An investment in the water system today by everyone insures its solvency, which in turn attracts businesses, homeowners and a generally better quality of life for everyone.

If the commissioners can follow the progressive lead of the utility board, Brunswick County can take giant steps into the future.

Creations Of A Gentle Man

The Brunswick Beacon is proud to have a columnist of the stature of Bill Faver, and that has nothing to do with his height or his fame.

Along with his writing gifts, Bill is also an artist with a camera, and his nature photography now on view at the Blue Dolphin Gallery in Southport displays this fact.

Just as he writes lovingly of birds, shells and seagrasses, his camera captures them with special flair as creatures with whom we share a fragile environment.

Particularly noticeable in this exhibit are the eyes of creatures he has photographed. A screech owl fixes the viewer with a fierce glare, and Bill has a story to tell about his encounter with this bird. He also relates the saga of a lame little horned owl whose eyes are mournful. The heron pictured in the Dec. 4 issue of the Beacon is part of the gallery exhibit, too, his one visible eye trained intently on some prey.

There is wide variety in Bill's nature excursions. Holden Beach sunsets, with their incredible colors, make up one category; blossoms, such as jack-in-the-pulpit, another; and trees and landscapes still another.

A leisurely look at all his "borrowed images" causes us to reflect on the fascinating sights that typically go unnoticed every day. The pictures are not of exotic or even unusual creatures and scenes, but those that unfold continually along the coast as the seasons go by, and yet they are new to most of us.

The problem is our focus on other things: our destinations, as we whiz by in cars, windows closed, eyes ahead; our problems, as we plod the beach, head down, kicking sand and heaving life; immediate wants that drive us, whether a new dress or a better job.

And in ignoring nature, we not only miss refreshment and beauty, but the healing that nature has to offer.

Thank goodness there are people like Bill Faver who treasure what is important and take its picture for us to enjoy secondhand.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Home Bound Meal Help Appreciated

To the editor:
 We at Brunswick County Department of Social Services/Older Adults Unit would like to thank businesses in Shallotte for donating home bound meals to our participants during the Christmas holidays.

Also, we would like to thank Jennies Branch Church of Shallotte for being a continuous support to the program.

Ronnie Robinson, Supervisor

Older Adults Unit
 Bolivia

Likes To Keep Up

To the editor:
 Enjoy the paper very much. We are part owner of condo on Holden Beach, so I like to keep up on what's going on in that area.

W. R. Struchen
 Sharon, Pa.

Glass Grapes, Anyone?



Marjorie Megivern

I'm a pretty traditional sort of person most of the year, with conservative tastes and habits in food, clothing, recreation and lifestyle.

But when it comes to gift-giving, especially at Christmas, a loony side emerges.

Now, while I am certainly not extravagant in Christmas gift buying, I don't consider myself a tightwad either, but my methods do appear to have a penny-pinching quality about them.

You see, gifts I select come from three sources: sales, impulse, and my own year-round gift department.

The latter is derived from a thrifty notion that nothing should be wasted, so when I receive a gift at birthday or Christmas, or Mother's Day, that is inappropriate or unwanted, I recycle it. Rather than go through the hassle of exchange, I quietly shove the item in my closet, ear-marking it for later giving.

Sometimes there are items so

strange I cannot in good conscience unload them on anyone. A cluster of glass grapes gathered dust in my "gift department" for two years before I found someone peculiar enough to appreciate it.

Mostly these gifts are quite acceptable, some valuable or lovely, like the set of kitchen towels and napkin rings in shell motif that I just sent off to a friend in Oklahoma. The problem with that gift (and this is a hazard of recycling) is that I have the envious suspicion she's the one who gave it to me last year.

Sales, at any time of year, are an

irresistible source of gifts to me. However, in the glowing moment of purchase, things often look better than they do later. That's why I now have a stack of lucite salt and pepper mills, filled with salt chunks and peppercorns, that I just can't find homes for. Looking at them in a calmer moment, I realize why these rather ordinary-looking objects were on sale.

Finally, I make too many purchases based on a fanciful notion that a product is an unusual, therefore great idea. This concept led me to order a metal workbox full of tiny compartments where all manner of nails, screws, bolts, etc., are nestled. Here at the 11th hour of Christmas, I can't convince myself any one of my sons will be thrilled with it, and my husband has already laughed in my face when I offered it to him.

Actually, I do sometimes buy gifts that are carefully chosen for particular persons and their preferences. In fact, it's a thrill to

discover someone is longing for a specific something. But those discoveries are rare, and I just don't have the imagination to fit the right gift to the right person.

For very special people there is one contingency plan I pursue every year, with consistent failure. I try to "give of myself" in a gift, i.e., make something. The results have included a luscious orange sweater for my husband that was in progress three years (never completed), and dry, lumpy coffee cakes that even our scavenger cats refused to eat.

Given all this information, you might be a little apprehensive about being on my gift list. Susan, for instance, can begin right now worrying about her wedding present. It all depends, Susan, on what the January sales have to offer, and on what's under my Christmas tree that will be rejected.

Or couldn't a newlywed use a metal workbox full of nails?



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Cancer Victim Says Mammograms Painless

To the editor:

I received a copy of The Brunswick Beacon today and was absolutely appalled at the account of what was in the Wilmington Morning Star above Ann Landers column.

You see I am a victim of breast cancer and it makes me sick to my stomach to think that such a thing could cause someone not to have a mammogram test and possibly not discover their problem until it is too late.

I was 35 years old when I first had breast cancer. I had never had a mammogram. After all, I thought my doctor knows all about my family

history. He'll know what is best for me and when I should have tests run. But he didn't.

I found the growth which turned out to be malignant and which had already spread to the lymph nodes. I was the one who went through six weeks of radiation and two years of intense chemotherapy. I was the one who spent two years absolutely so sick I thought many times I might well die from the disease as the treatment.

The moral to that story is get more than one doctor's opinion. After my first surgery I had mammograms done on the remaining breast every

six months. It was painless. Consequently, when a spot was found four years later in the second breast, it was removed and no extra treatment was necessary.

I thank God every day for modern science.

It's a cruel thing for the family. They never know if you're going to make it through another treatment or not. It's especially hard on the children in the family. When you were small, did you ever have to wonder if mom was going to be around for next Christmas or for that wedding or graduation?

To all women, regardless of age, I

can't stress strongly enough how important these tests are. Mammograms and self-examination.

I have had around eight mammograms and all of them were painless. Believe me, the alternative is devastating even if you're lucky enough to live through it like I did.

If my story and what I've been through will help just one person, it will have been worth it.

I was born and raised in Brunswick County and hope to go back there to retire next year.

Frances Hugdon Bozeman
 Orange Park, Florida

It Could Have Been Headache No. 66



Susan Usher

It was a first visit—but probably not the last. And, we must remember, it was Don's idea in the first place.

"It" was an outing to a popular pizza palace in a nearby urban center. You'd have to see—and hear—this place to appreciate it. If someone simply described it, you'd accuse them of overexaggeration.

But the place WAS bigger and louder than life. After two hours within its confines, take my word for it.

Don and I tramped in from the cold with my two nieces, Jennifer and Kelly, smiling, fresh from the big-screen delights of "A Great American Tail." It had been Don's thoughtful idea to take the girls out

for a movie and pizza, a chance for their soon-to-be "Uncle Don" to get to know them better.

Though a little tired after what had been a long day for all four of us, we were in generally good humor. That was fortunate, because we needed all the high spirits we could muster.

The place was warm—no, make that hot and stuffy, as well as crowded and noisy. Like most of the other grown-ups in the place Don and I could hardly hear ourselves think. But we were there to HAVE-A-GOOD-TIME, so we did.

No one had warned us of what to expect—least of all the computerized floor show that featured an animated

counterfied bear and a hip gorilla singing fractured Christmas carols and beach music. I clapped and hummed and sang along on the birthday song, generally making a minor fool of myself. Isn't that what you're supposed to do in a place like that?

Suddenly it was clear why my sister Carol had grinned so hard when the outing was first suggested—and why she helped the girls round up the game token coupons earned by their good grades in school. She wanted us to use them all up, delaying her next visit to this place as long as possible. No one has ever called my sister a dummy.

As we hummed along with the computerized critters while waiting for our order number to pop up, a group of birthday party stragglers one table over divided up balloons delivered after most of the partygoers had gone home.

Pizza devoured in a matter of minutes, we headed energetically for the game room, where Jennifer and Kelly scored neck and neck on skee-

ball. Don and I even tossed a few rounds of nine balls each, scoring miserably alongside the girls.

As we sweated near the escape hatch, the nieces traded their skee-ball prize tickets for junk jewelry, an eraser and a folding oriental fan.

We were safely on our way home, humor intact and feeling pretty pleased with ourselves, when a small voice piped from the rear seat that her pocketbook had been left behind.

Actually, it was a purse she'd borrowed from her sister and left hanging on a chair in the pizza parlor. In relocating to the game room, the purse somehow landed on the humidifier.

It was still there when, some minutes and several big-sisterly scoldings later, we retrieved it, cash and other valuables intact.

Disaster avoided, we were on our way toward Winnabow when the overall experience began to sink in.

As Dan explained later, that's the kind of place everyone should go to—once a year.