

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Thursday, October 8, 1987

Don't Blow It Now

It's been a long time coming, but a potential long-term solution to the "Cawcaw" problem appears to be within Brunswick County's grasp.

All the main figures involved are suggesting the drainage district be re-established as the first step to a more permanent solution. That "final solution" could include county aid in initially restoring the canals, realignment of the district's boundaries and/or changes in how maintenance of the system is financed.

What happens next is up to residents of the area, who have said they desperately need the canals restored and maintained. They'll get to speak their piece Thursday, Nov. 5, at 6:30 p.m. during a public hearing at the Calabash Fire Station.

The Cawcaw Drainage District, designed to serve the southwestern agricultural area of the county, was dissolved nearly 12 years ago; for almost that long politicians have been feuding over who should be maintaining its 16 miles of neglected canals.

Even when the district existed, it had trouble caring for the canals because many residents wouldn't pay their annual assessments. The county paid off the more than \$5,000 in debt left behind by the now-defunct district.

County commissioners have said repeatedly that while some help might be available from county coffers, the main responsibility for maintaining the drainage district should lie with its residents, the people who directly benefit from the canals.

It is difficult to disagree with that logic. There are arguments that growth in the area contributes to the overall welfare of the county. However, these benefits are negligible when compared to those shared only by residents of the district.

Reforming the district has to be the first step in any cooperative effort to salvage what began as a worthwhile self-help project and has since become an embarrassment to all concerned.

Armchair Quarterback Bites The Dust

My wife must be a patient woman, because it isn't very often that she gets her way on Sunday afternoons in the fall.

Until two Sundays ago, she knew better than to suggest a leisurely stroll or friendly game of croquet. She knew I'd tell her to "leave me alone and go make me some more popcorn before halftime."

I've always denied that I'm a football junkie. It's just that I like to take in a game or two on Sunday... and on Monday night... and on any other day National Football League teams take the field.

Still, I thought I could give it up in a heartbeat—I really thought I could.

But on the afternoon of Sept. 27, my worst fears were realized: NFL players were on strike, my hot-air popper was on the fritz, and I had nothing better to do than go for a walk. Thank goodness, we'd already loaned out the croquet set.

Before I agreed to the stroll, though, I tried to remember how I'd coped with the football strike a few years ago and 52 straight days without a pro football fix.

But it must have been one of those traumatic experiences a person blocks from his memory, because I don't even remember Sunday afternoons existing that year—just church on Sunday morning, then work on Monday.

Two Sundays ago it was different. The prospect of an afternoon without pro football was staring me straight in the face—as was my gloating wife, who knew she had me backed into a corner.

"Okay, okay," I said. "We'll go for a quick walk down the street, but we have to stop by a newspaper rack. The players and owners might have worked something out last night, and they might have decided to play today after all."

Still confident she would have her way, my wife decided to humor me. Later, after I had shredded the sports section in frustration, she just laughed and pointed toward our intended destination farther down the street.

Even though I had the disposition of a grizzly bear at first, I gradually calmed down and began to take in the

Rahn Adams



sights and sounds of Sunday afternoon.

We walked and walked until we reached the waterfront. There, we saw weekend boaters zipping here and there, fishermen of all ages watching their floats bob on the surface, and all types of birds dipping into the water for Sunday lunch.

And as I took in those sights, I began to wonder what it was that makes people so crazy about watching 22 men in padding fight over an oblong leather ball. Right then, I couldn't come up with an answer.

But back at home about an hour later, the ghost of Vince Lombardi returned to haunt me.

"When the going gets tough," he whispered in my ear, with a glance at my wife across the room, "the tough get going."

That was all it took. Jumping off the couch, I dove for the videocassette box on the TV stand. And, sure enough, there it was: a complete copy of last year's Cowboys-Giants game, taped in living color.

Much to my wife's chagrin, I slapped the tape in the VCR, changed the channel away from the vintage 1940s movie she'd been watching, and ordered her to see if she could fix the corn popper.

And for the next couple hours, I thought I was content, as my adrenalin again flowed with the excitement of the game.

But it was only a temporary fix, because deep down I knew that the blue-green football field I'd been staring at really didn't compare with the other more beautiful, natural sights and sounds I'd enjoyed with my wife that day on the waterfront.

And who knows? This Sunday afternoon I may even take up croquet.

'Oysterphobia' Will Be Cured Saturday

There's been a lot of talk recently about some annual event down in these parts called the North Carolina Oyster Festival.

It seems folks come from all over the state for two days of eating, drinking and sleeping oysters. Some even come to shuck a few.

God only knows I've written and asked enough about the festival lately to tell you off the top of my head what will happen when and where with whom in charge.

But that's only part of the story. The real story happens this weekend when mountains of work by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce come together and the show gets rolling.

As a relatively new resident of Brunswick County, and one experiencing his first fall, I really don't know what to expect this weekend.

I've eaten exactly one oyster in my 21 years of living. It was fresh and raw, right from the Chesapeake Bay.

Doug Rutter



So I guess that makes it one of those Maryland oysters they use at the National Oyster Shucking Championship each year.

Whatever kind it was matters not to me, because it was a downright bad experience followed by a solemn vow never to eat another oyster as long as I lived.

I can still remember the experience vividly—like when I fell and broke my collar bone at age three.

Dad popped open the shell and I saw the oyster sitting there in a pool of its own body fluids, covered with

some unidentifiable black gritty substance you might expect to find clinging to the bottom of a trash dumpster.

I stepped back and said "NO WAY!"

I stood my ground for about 15 seconds. When everybody else started eating them (even my little three-year-old cousin) I had to try.

I stepped up bravely, coolly popped one open and let it slide down the back of my throat.

The queasy feeling remained in my stomach for about a month, but at least I wasn't a chicken about it.

At that time, I never thought I would be even remotely forced into a situation where I would have to look at, let alone consume, another oyster.

So 10 years later the family moves to an area which just happens to hold the state's annual oyster festival, and my back is immediately up against a wall.

I read "Oedipus Rex" in school. I know you cannot escape your own fate. But I never expected this to happen. I have to ask myself if I was not destined to become a fugitive—running from the wrath of oysters for the rest of my time on Earth.

Well, this man fears nothing. I am taking another vow right now, in fact, that I will eat at least one oyster this Saturday if it kills me. Hopefully I will enjoy it, but not necessarily.

I'm not saying it will be raw, but a fried oyster or oyster sandwich may do the trick.

An Oyster Festival T-shirt or visor may come next year, when I'm more at ease with the whole idea of oysters.

In a few year's time, I can even see myself buying oysters by the peck.

Anyway, I figure if I can get this out of the way, I may soon try eating zucchini again. On second thought, that may be rushing things a bit.



YEP, IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN "BEACHWEAR" BEGINS TO CHANGE.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Samplings Indicate Canal Waters Not Polluted

To the editor:

Apparently you know something we don't know about the Holden Beach wastewater analysis presented Sept. 14 to the town by McKim and Creed Engineers.

Last week's Beacon (page 11-C) reported my presentation at the monthly Community Watch meeting. In reviewing the data presented by the engineers, we discussed how surprised we were to learn that apparently the canals are not "polluted," as so many of us had assumed.

It is our understanding that an Escherichia coliform count (MPN/100ml) of 14 or less is characteristic of SA waters. SB waters are those with up to 100 E. coli. Such waters are suitable for swimming, but are posted by the N.C. Marine Fisheries to forbid shellfishing.

As reported in Table 3 of the engineers' draft presented to the town, a total of 22 samplings were taken on six test dates from eight

canals. Of those 22 samplings, 17 had an E. coli count of two or less; there were two 8's, one each of 14, 22 and 110. That is, 20 of the 22 samplings taken from May 26 to July 25 indicated that the canal waters were not polluted.

But you skipped over any reference to what we had in the lead paragraph of the Community Watch news release. We had been relieved to learn that the canals are presently in relatively good shape as far as E. coli are concerned. Apparently we have ample opportunity to define our problem areas and protect our canals from becoming polluted by E. coli.

Community Watch is now enlisting year-round Holden Beach residents to participate in monitoring the canals and test wells to provide a more detailed profile of pollution on this barrier island. Anyone willing to help is invited to "sign in" at the Town Hall (842-6080), or contact me.

Robert Rohde
Holden Beach, 842-9942

There Are Bigots In Each Race

To the editor:

I've had all I can take from Jesse Bryant and his attacks on any white he can find. I've attended many NAACP meetings for adults and youngsters. At every one I attended, Jesse gave the same essential speech, dragging out every sin in the history of Brunswick County that was committed against blacks.

For a man who pretends to be a Christian, he spends more time fomenting hatred of whites. The only way to develop mutual respect is for each race to dwell on the positive experiences and not on every little negative one can conjure up. There are bigots in each race.

I was shocked, when I first started

teaching black children in Peoria, Illinois, to discover when one got angry the other child was called a "nigger." But let a white use that word and Jesse would shout it from the rooftops.

When I was growing up in the South, the blacks were called "colored." That to me is a much more accurate term than black. I've seen very few people who were dark enough to be called black.

I've also heard many jokes told by black friends which, if told by a white person, would be considered worse than the one Jesse wrote about.

Teddi Neal
Bolvia

Former Editor Praises Beacon

To the editor:

Enclosed is my renewal application for another year's subscription.

As a retired newspaper editor (47 years), I naturally have been observant of your publication. I have found it a high-class, A-1 publication we all should be proud of.

Congratulations to a fine staff.
Douglas R. Wildev
Shallotte

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.

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That Special Season Is Here

Fall has arrived, stirring to new vigor blood slowed to a syrupy crawl by summer's heat.

It feels good, real good. And just maybe it will hang around more than a week or two.

Don't get me wrong—summer's great. But life in the South Brunswick Islands moves too fast these days for the level of our particular discomfort. In autumn, however, the pace and the weather are a perfect fit.

And face it, we don't get enough of autumn around here. The last several years we've gone directly from summer to winter, do not pass GO, do not collect \$200.

But right now it is definitely fall. People on the sidewalks seem to have more pep to their step. Shirts don't cling to their spines and their faces don't sag from the heat.

At the pier's fish bite: anglers smile as they ice their catch and head for home. Back in summer, it was mainly a good place to catch a lazy afternoon nap, warmed by the sun and perhaps with a breeze against your back.

Give me the fall of the year anytime. It's a season marked for me by special times spent with people I care about deeply. This time of year I tend to find—or make—more time for



Susan Usher

the people in my life. Perhaps it's instinct, a native urgency. Winter looms ahead, damp, chilling, distancing.

One of Don and mine's favorite moments together was a long walk on the beach last October as we played with miniature deltas and Mississippi Rivers in the shallows.

It was a day much like today. Crisp, fresh, though the sap no longer runs and the hummingbirds are on wing to South America. Even as the leaves start to fall from the trees, there's still a promise of spring. We can see it in the butterflies that linger on the morning glories and in the insistent colors of the wildflowers. They do not go gently.

It was on another day like today when Sweetpea and I visited the Grandfather Mountain Viaduct on the Blue Ridge Parkway.