

Letters To The Editor

(Continued From Preceding Page)
 Had Mr. Pope made any bona fide attempt at verification, he would have learned as a minimum that no birds experts were dispatched to Sunny Point, nor did additional patrols, marked or unmarked, actually take place around here. These are but two examples of the numerous distortions contained throughout the article.

Another statement that concerns me very much is Mr. Pope's suggestion that families who live outside of Sunny Point are endangered and might have to leave their homes.

This simply is not true. During this prolonged period of heightened national and international tension, it behooves us all to be the best at whatever we may be doing. I trust that future coverage of Sunny Point activities in *The Brunswick Beacon* will reflect the facts, cooperation and understanding so that the public will be better served.

Michael S. Featherston
 Colonel,
 U.S. Army Commanding
 Military Ocean Terminal
 Sunny Point

The Winter Sea

BY BILL FAVER

Gray skies and winter seas give the illusion of lifelessness as the fall fishing subsidies and little activity is seen on the surface of the waters. Birds may gather on the water to rest or to feed on the few remaining offerings. Just as the bare limbs of a hardwood tree in the mountains is a symbol of winter on the land, the gray skies and bleak sea speak of winter.

Close examination of those bare tree branches will show a cluster of leaf buds every few inches, ready to burst forth into spring. And beneath the bark on the same tree may be insect eggs waiting to hatch into larvae which will feed on the new green leaves when they appear. Beneath the carpet of leaves on the ground are more insect eggs and more seed waiting to begin anew the cycle of the seasons as warmer temperatures approach.

So, too, in the winter sea. The illusion of lifelessness gives way as the temperature drops and the colder surface layers of the sea become so "top-heavy" that the deeper, warmer layers will begin their rise to the surface. This dramatic inversion near the beginning of spring will dislodge small creatures and life forms clinging to rocks and debris on the bottom and they will be brought upward by the overturn. Invisible diatoms live in the waters as a fine dust, waiting for the nutrients and the warming of spring to begin their renewal. Diatoms must have silica and phosphorus for their fragile shells but in winter these elements are reduced to such short



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

JUST AS LEAFLESS BRANCHES give the illusion of lifelessness, the winter sea hides the hordes of creatures waiting for the coming of spring.

supply that the growth stops. Diatoms must become almost dormant - like seeds of wheat covered with snow or ice.

The sea even has its snowfalls. Silt brought down rivers to the sea, dust falling on the water's surface, fragments of debris entering the atmosphere, and billions of tiny shells and fragments of skeletons of sea creatures are constantly drifting downward from the surface. Recent core sampling in the Atlantic Ocean

found sediment up to 12,000 feet thick, accumulated there from the "snowfalls" from the beginning of time. This snowfall is not limited to the winter sea, but continues all year.

We wait patiently for winter to move into spring. Waiting with us are familiar birds, and trees, and plants. But also waiting with us are less familiar diatoms, dinoflagellates, copepods, polyps, plankton, shrimps, fish, and millions of other creatures of the winter sea.

Report Card Damage Severe

To the editor:
 According to current information, a major factor used in calculating the "report card" is the ability of each county government to locally fund education. This factor is called an "advantage" if the ability to pay exists through the county government, or a "disadvantage" if it does not.

From a tax base standpoint, New Hanover, Mecklenburg, Guilford and Brunswick, to name a few, have been placed in the "advantaged" category due to their high tax bases.

The question arises as to whether the "advantaged" county government actually does make the predetermined efforts to locally fund education. Brunswick County is ranked dead last in the state in its educational funding effort; so when the report card was formulated, our school system's achievements were calculated with a negative factor since we are classified as an "advantaged" county.

How can Brunswick County Schools be classified as "advantaged" when the county government fails to allocate the predetermined percentage of funds into education?

Is it possible that the report card is a political effort by certain individuals in the Department of Public

Instruction to force wealthy county governments to drastically increase local funding for education using school systems like Brunswick as pawns?

Yes, Brunswick County government needs to increase the percentage of local funds it spends for education; but the damage of the report card has been severe to the self-esteem of students, educators, and citizens of Brunswick County.

Harry E. Lemon Jr.
 Shallotte

Officers Appreciative

To the editor:

Thanks to all the many businesses and residents of Brunswick County for their participation in Project Bluelight. As a law enforcement officer, it was heartening to see the large number of blue candles displayed in windows during the Christmas season.

We all appreciate the support shown to us during a particularly difficult time of year in which to be on duty and away from our families. It's nice to know we are appreciated.

Tom Vernon, Secretary
 Brunswick County Lodge 53
 Fraternal Order of Police

Stay Out Of Our Lights

To the editor:
 This is in reference to Doug Rutter's article about turtles and lights at Holden Beach in the Dec. 27 issue.

Bonfires on the beach were stopped, and I said nothing. Driving on the strand was stopped, and I held my tongue. Walking pets on the strand was stopped, and again I was quiet because there was some rationale behind it, although some fun has been taken out of beach life.

The foregoing are but some of the thou-shall-nots that transplanted bureaucrats have imposed upon the county and its beaches. Now they have topped even the most absurd that could come out of Washington, D. C. itself—the protection of turtles from lights.

I'm talking about the threat of the Holden Beach Commissioners to throw some mighty powerful regulations on how, when, and where property owners use lights of any kind. We may not be able to take a leisurely flashlight stroll on the stand at night next summer. I'd like to shed some light of my own on that.

Don't get me wrong. I love turtles. Some of my best friends are turtles. When I was growing up on Holden Beach in the 40s and 50s, we had turtle watches of sorts. We never saw one turn around because we were watching with flashlights (we didn't shine the light directly in their eyes). I guess it didn't stop them because their instinct to lay eggs is as strong as the instinct of bureaucrats to control and regulate all activities associated with humans.

We sometimes kept watch over nests near cottages, and if we happened to be there at hatching time we helped the little ones to the sea. So there, I am not anti-turtle in the least. I just believe there are other ways the commissioners and their allies can help the turtle population.

In the old days, nests were sometimes robbed. I saw the results a few days after a clutch was laid. I heard that the eggs were sold to menhaden boats to feed the crews, and I suppose some not-so-well-off families of the depression era were spared the pangs of hunger when dad brought home a dozen turtle eggs. But that was back then. What about now?

The threats are somewhat different today. Three of the biggest, but not the only, causes of turtle mortality are drift nets set at sea, trawler nets, and ocean debris such as floating plastic bags and the like which choke turtles.

Of these three, the drift net is probably the worst. They stretch for miles and are unattended and indiscriminate. They catch everything, and if there isn't a market for it, they make one. Trawlers do snag turtles, but because the crew is close at hand, some are saved, more if turtle escape devices (T.E.D.s) are used.

So, commissioners of Holden Beach, direct your attention to getting rid of drift nets, enforcing the use of T.E.D.s and controlling ocean pollution—and please stay out of our lights.

John Q. Holden
 Severn, Maryland

Obvious Answer Is To Reuse

To the editor:

In answer to Terry Pope's tongue-in-cheek dilemma as to the merits of plastic vs. paper bags (Jan. 10 column), the answer is obvious. Take along your own reusable canvas bag for short trips to the grocery, convenience, department stores, and save and reuse bags for the major weekly shopping chores.

It may seem insignificant on a single basis, but believe me, on a larger scale it can make quite a difference.

So, the next time Terry is too confused to know whether to worry about killing a tree or adding to petroleum pollution in his quest to recycle, he could take the simple way out—reuse.

L. Hiester
 BentTree Plantation
 Ocean Isle Beach

Town Needs Street Lights

(The following letter, written to the Town of Holden Beach, is printed here at the request of the writer. Editor's note.)

Please be advised that one of the floodlights at the miniature golf course located beside the fishing pier is directed in such a manner as to shine into my bedroom window.

According to the recently adopted ordinance depriving residents of Holden Beach the right to protect themselves and their property with security lights, light shining in a person's window constitutes a nuisance.

If this applies to full time residents as well as tourists and picky part time inhabitants, I would like this situation corrected.

Just as a matter of information, the alternative lighting arrangements touted by members of town boards at the meeting Monday night are probably illegal under the new ordinance. If the wattage does not exceed the allowable limit, then direct lighting certainly extends outside the owners' property. If a light can be seen, then the light rays have traveled to the point at which they are seen. I assume that these lights will come down along with all the other citizens' efforts to supply a service that should be provided by the town. Even Bolivia has street lights.

J. A. Fournier
 Holden Beach

Same Old Song And Dance For Holden Beach

If you've been a *Brunswick Beacon* reader for more than eight months, you just may want to skip my column this week.

You might consider it a waste of time. It's going to seem a lot like a column I wrote last May regarding the town manager position at Holden Beach.

To refresh your memory, Gus Ulrich had just handed in his resignation as town manager. He said he was leaving because the job required too much of him.

That was understandable. He had a tough job with six bosses who had six different opinions on just about everything.

At the time, I wrote about the apparent unwillingness on the part of the town board to let the manager do his job. I claimed that the board got too involved in the daily operations of the town.

Instead of just setting the policies, I presented the opinion that the town board took an active role in implementing the policies. That's the town manager's job.

Just last week, Holden Beach lost another town manager. Blake Proc-



Doug Rutter

tor resigned after five months on the job. Proctor was given the option to resign in dignity or be fired. What a choice.

Proctor said poor communication and personality differences were two of the reasons behind his dismissal, 'er resignation. He also said the town board didn't give him the authority he needed to do the job right, particularly when it came to the police department.

The specific reasons behind his resignation really don't concern me. What concerns me is the behavior of some of the town board members.

Some of them remind me of the kids I knew in grade school. Some of them behave like selfish brats and bullies. They act as if they

might hold their breath and turn blue in the face if they don't get what they want. If they don't get to call the shots, they might even take their ball and run home to mama.

Please keep in mind, these people were elected to office to act in the best interests of Holden Beach, not in their own best interest. Heck, I voted for some of them. That makes me feel cheated.

Several changes were made on the town board since Ulrich resigned. There are three new faces, but the problem remains the same. Certain members of the town board take more than a policy-making role in the town government.

Many residents were upset about Blake's resignation. He's a likable man, and he accomplished a lot during his brief stay at the beach. Unfortunately, this resignation will not help his career.

Before the board hires another manager, it has to make a decision. The board has to decide if it wants a professional who is capable of running the town or someone with no backbone who will play politics and let the elected officials do all of the

work. If the commissioners want a jellyfish, they don't have to look far. If the board wants a professional in the town hall, they need to hire him, give him the authority needed to get the job done and get out of his way.

One way or the other, commissioners need to decide. The town board cannot continue to hire and disrupt the careers of professional managers. These people have families just like everybody else.

Until the commissioners make up their minds, I've been thinking about where this whole mess leaves the town.

First of all, it leaves the town without a manager at a time when a lot of things are going on at Holden Beach.

But worse than that, it leaves the town with a bad reputation. Who in municipal government circles would come to a place with a revolving door on the town manager's office?

Maybe someone looking for a summer job at the beach would be interested. On second thought, it probably wouldn't be much of a vacation.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

For Girl Scout Leaders, Feminism Is Easy Way Out

To the editor:

In a recent publication, *Eagle Forum* founder Phyllis Schlafly writes: "Time magazine buried the women's liberation movement... America has evolved from the 'post-feminist' era to the anti-feminist decade of the '90s.'"

Yeah. Sure. Confirmed by Vickie Poole, spokesman (sic) for Brunswick County Girl Scouts whose account of the sales campaign (cookies, natch) the *Beacon* dutifully recorded last week.

The fabulous by-product of the girls' efforts, Poole says, is that the girls "may explore possible careers in sales, production, advertising,

marketing, public relations and other areas."

Wow! And compete with their married classmates' husbands who are trying to support their families in the same pursuits.

Girl Scout programs no longer envision possible careers as homemakers and mothers...that would be "sexist!" And they seek today to sell something which is manufactured elsewhere and is not produced by the girls.

Now indeed if sales should be an important part of feminine training, one wonders why the ambitious lassies wouldn't be directed into selling large quantities of fruit in ad-

vance orders, delivered fresh from the orchards at harvest time. Some of the scouts might even participate in the canning or freezing of the goodies at home and learn something valuable about home economics!

Now this would develop some real skills in logistics and salesmanship instead of "Would you like to buy some Girl Scout cookies?"

And the fruit farmers of the nation who are now almost totally dependent upon the whims of the supermarket chains, would have a new type of outlet and promotion to distribute the fruits of their efforts among more people...a bit of substitute for the hamburger, chicken and

French-fry diet.

I have proposed this kind of selling in times past, but of course, nobody listens to a salesman who knows what can be done and what families need today.

I have to think back 25 years to the week in which one of my customers used my purchasing facilities to help her De Molay troop sell 500 pounds of fresh sour cherries.

The leaders of the girl scouts don't have guts enough to lead their fledglings into really meaningful pursuits today. Feminism is the easy way out.

Karl E. Brandt
 Shallotte

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