

Project Gives Students Occasion To Express Support To Military

BY SUSAN USHER
Future peace. Freedom. Fear. Pride. Dedication. Support.

Throughout Brunswick County Schools this week, students are receiving yellow ribbons to wear, if they choose, for the duration of the war in the Persian Gulf. And they are struggling to translate into words or art their feelings and ideas about those ribbons.

Their concerns, their fears, their support for American troops in the Persian Gulf reflect those of their greater community outside the classroom walls.

Tuesday at West Brunswick High School, Phyllis James' first-period English class pondered the assignment, *What This Ribbon Mean To Me*, an essay intended to be "a positive and supportive message regarding the American forces in the Middle East."

When completed, said English Department Chairman Hilda Smith, these essays and other writings and artwork by more than 8,000 students across the county will be collected by a regional home health care agency for judging and then relay to some of the 460,000-strong, all-volunteer military force serving in Operation Desert Storm. In a contest intended to stimulate excellence in the students' efforts, a winner at each grade level will receive a \$50 savings bond from Comprehensive Home Health Care.

Kim Smith, who is coordinating the project for Comprehensive, said the agency had first intended to sponsor the ribbon/essay project in one class at one county school. But, at the urging of enthused school officials including Superintendent P.R. Hankins, the agency decided to include all grades at all 11 schools. Younger students are drawing; middle and high school students, writing. Some will receive class grades for their efforts, others will not, at their teacher's option.

The project is just one of several

forming locally as churches, civic groups and individuals rally behind American troops through prayer, letters and support groups.

Of the 21 students in Mrs. James' class, only one had a family member or friend serving in the Middle East. Max Crawford said his uncle, David Salada of Fayetteville, a medic at Pope Air Force Base, was recently called up.

"I think it's for a good cause, but I think we shouldn't try to fight on the ground instead of in the air unless we have to because we would lose more people," said Crawford.

Others were also concerned that soldiers serving in Operation Desert Storm fight "smart" and make it home safely. Still, for most the events in the Middle East seemed distant, not entirely real, though the object of almost continuous news-casts since the outbreak of war almost a week earlier.

Ribbons pinned on and task assigned, at first the class stirred restlessly, ideas formed reluctantly. Then, as they shared their thoughts out loud, the words began flowing swiftly, decisively.

"I think it means that we're not going to treat them like we did the

Vietnam veterans," suggested one student.

Another spoke up. "I feel like it's bad that it takes this for us to support our military."

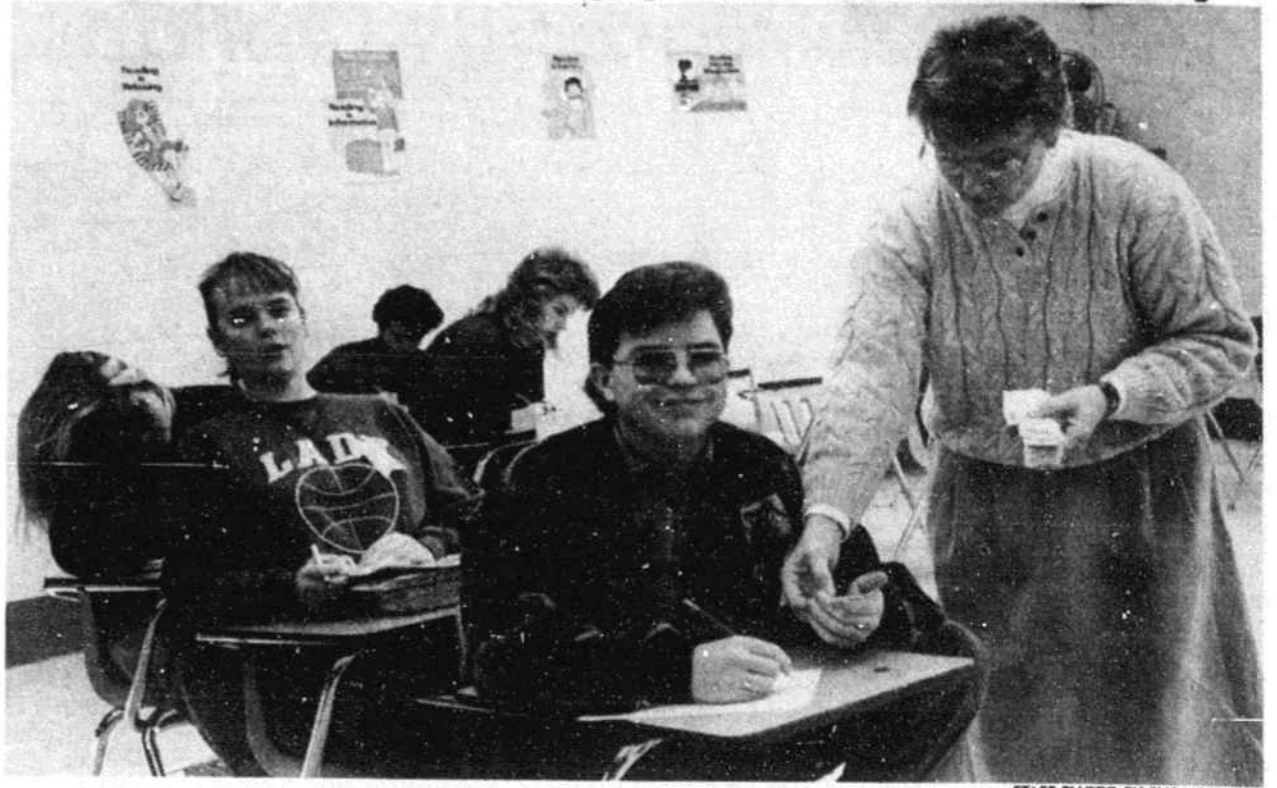
Matthew McDonald sees the fight as one not for oil, but for a people's freedom from oppression. He is convinced the United States is where it should be. "If we don't stop it there it will soon be at our back door," he said.

Paul Whitley, who wants to be a Navy pilot someday, said he would just as soon be one now so he could participate in an air war he expects will reduce casualties incurred by allied ground troops.

Leading the class discussion, the feelings and ideas expressed by students had special meaning for Mrs. James, whose son, 2nd Lt. Matthew Gore, is serving with the 24th Mechanized in Saudi Arabia.

Wearing the yellow ribbon, she suggested, is one way those here can feel less helpless and more involved in the war effort, a way they can support the troops involved in combat and their families stateside.

"I know if I was walking down the street and saw you wearing a ribbon, it would make me feel good," she said.



BRUNSWICK COUNTY STUDENTS are donning yellow ribbons in support of military personnel in Operation Desert Storm, with the help of a local business. Above, West Brunswick High School English instructor Phyllis James, who has a son serving in Saudi Arabia, distributes ribbons to (front to back) Mathew McDonald, Nicole Norris and Ashley Wooten.

Remembrance Of Past War

Many Brunswick County residents found work during World War II helping build Liberty ships at N.C. Shipbuilding Co. in Wilmington. The yard turned out approximately 280 of the steel-hulled ships before the end of the war, some of which were later "mothballed" along the Brunswick River. Bruce Hamilton Spencer of Brickland was among those shipyard workers and still has one paycheck to prove it. After a week out of work, Spencer said he returned to the job only to receive a check for one cent, a piece-rate bonus that apparently was due him from an earlier pay period. "I could have bought gum with it, but I decided to keep it," he said. It's the only check for such a small sum he's ever received.



Resident Asks Calabash Board To Put Expansion On Hold

BY DOUG RUTTER

A Calabash area resident appeared before town commissioners Tuesday night asking them to delay plans to bring him and his neighbors into the town limits.

Anthony Clemmons, a native of Calabash, requested that the town board postpone its efforts to annex through state legislation his land and property owned by his neighbors on Persimmon Road.

Town officials have asked State Rep. David Redwine of Ocean Isle Beach to introduce legislation this year that would expand the town boundaries and bring several unincorporated pockets into the town limits.

The pocket areas, including land on Persimmon Road, were created in 1989 when a state bill introduced by Redwine set the stage for the consolidation of the old Town of Calabash and the Carolina Shores golf course community.

While Redwine hasn't agreed to grant the town's request, Clemmons urged town officials to hold off on the proposal until they get a better handle on existing challenges and can offer more services.

Clemmons said he was representing 11 families who own land on the east end of Persimmon Road. He said the families support growth of Calabash and want to be part of the town in the future.

But the people want the chance to participate in the growth process and want to receive services for their tax dollars when they do become part of the town. Clemmons said he supports town expansion when adequate services are available.

"We don't want to come into the town on good intentions," he said. "You can't put good intentions in the bank, no matter how good they are."

Clemmons recently told the Beacon that his neighbors would like services such as water, police protection and street lights. The people also want sewer service or a commitment that sewer service will be provided in the future.

He said Tuesday that he would like to see a better mix on the town board so it better represents the people of the town. Most of the town commissioners are retired, and there is one woman on the seven-member board.

While he commended town officials for their work on various improvement projects, Clemmons said the town needs to work on human relations before it looks to expand.

Clemmons said he has talked with people in both districts who have told him they don't want anything to do with people who live in the other district. He said town officials should focus less energy on growth and more energy on creating a healthy community spirit.

Commissioners said they have

worked together in the best interests of the town. But they admitted that there are community residents who have fought against the two districts forming one town.

Commissioner Jon Sanborn said he thinks the town boards have set a good example for the community with representatives of both districts working together. But, he added, "You cannot legislate how some-

body feels."

Board member Ed Rice said the board has been able to work out its differences and vote together on almost everything. "I don't feel there's a split in this group. There's a split out there."

Getting Ready

Commissioners continued to gear up for a forthcoming change in san-

itation service, approving a lease that will allow town residents to use the Persimmon Road dump site through the end of 1991.

The commission approved a lease with the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association (CSPOA), which owns the dump site. The only cost to the town will be \$200 for legal fees incurred by the CSPOA.

The Brunswick County Landfill

Department has been disposing of trash dumped at the site. Chambers of South Carolina, an independent contractor, will start emptying the dumpsters Feb. 1.

Since the town will be paying for sanitation service, the dump site and recycling trailer will be off limits to people who don't live inside the town. Residents will be required to

display a town-issued sticker on their vehicle windshield to use the dump site. Stickers are available at town hall.

The dump site will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 a.m. until noon. The town plans to hire someone to supervise the dump site and recycling operation.

County May Attach Cash Assets In Effort To Collect Back Taxes

(Related Stories, 1-A, 2-A)
BY SUSAN USHER

Faced with a falling property tax collection rate, Brunswick County Commissioners authorized county officials to attach, or legally take property owners' cash assets to meet their tax obligations.

County Manager/Attorney David Clegg used the words "simpler," "cleaner" and "efficient" in comparing the process to the in rem and in personam foreclosures used by the county in previous years to collect back taxes.

The need to pursue collections was spurred by a significant drop in collections for 1990. After processing the "batch mail" received at or near deadline for tax payment, county tax officials had taken in 87.9 percent of the money due the county, compared to 89.67 a year earlier. "The net loss to us so far is \$470,000," said Clegg. That is equivalent to slightly more than one cent of the county tax rate.

He recommended that collections start with those taxes due now, working back. With foreclosures the county had started with the oldest tax-due accounts.

The county's budget is based on a collection rate of 95 percent; to meet it the funds must be collected, said Clegg.

The problem with using foreclosures, he told commissioners, is this: "We collected the taxes, but in effect have taken the property off the tax rolls."

Clegg later explained that much of the land on which the county has foreclosed in recent years is of "marginal" or negligible resale value, which means the county has not been able to sell the property.

Land Conveyed

Commissioners took fellow member Gene Pinkerton's advice to "give it to Southport" Monday night.

As a result of their action, the Brunswick County Board of Education will be free to convey, in exchange for \$1, a lot in Pine Needles Grove subdivision at Southport to the City of Southport. The city, which owns property adjoining the lot, is interested in using

the site for storage and as the location for its recycling center.

According to a letter to the county from Glen Peterson, the school board's attorney, the city is willing to assume liability for the old building foundation and for removal of underground storage tanks buried on the lot.

The site, owned by the school board since 1958, had been used as a school, for certain Chapter 1 classes and for storage.

Under state law, if the school board has real property it no longer wishes to retain, it must first offer it to the county. If the county doesn't want it then the school board may dispose of it in other ways.

Named To KAB Board

On the recommendation of Terry Munn, Clean County coordinator, commissioners reappointed Chance Scrantom, Volunteers for Recycling coordinator at Sunset Beach, to another one-year on the the Brunswick County Keep America Beautiful (KAB) Board and appointed to one-year terms on the board Gary Shoemaker, Oak Island Lions Club; Katherine Shawver, president of the South Brunswick Islands Interchurch Council; Elizabeth Harlee, Doshier Memorial Hospital; and Wendy Long, Brunswick County Health Department.

Laila Harris was appointed to a one-year term as the commissioners' representative.

Questions Raised

Arriving late to the meeting, State Port Pilot News Editor Richard Nubel asked to address the board.

After the agenda was amended to allow that, Nubel proceeded to question Commissioner Gene Pinkerton as to whether he is under investigation in connection with a 1989 shopping plaza fire the SBI has determined was arson. Pinkerton owned several of the businesses destroyed in the fire and has filed suit against his insurance company, which has refused to settle claims relating to the fire.

While refusing to answer other questions, saying the fire was a matter under litigation and investigation, Pinkerton told Nubel he did

not set fire to the building on Long Beach Road.

Chairman Kelly Holden cut off Nubel's interrogatory, saying, "I think this has gone to far, Mr. Nubel." Later he suggested the matter should have been discussed between Nubel and Pinkerton, elsewhere.

Nubel, however, said he thought Pinkerton had an obligation to the public to answer the questions and that the meeting was an appropriate place to question him.

Other Business

In other business commissioners: Approved the consent agenda, which included minutes of past meeting, tax releases, and forwarding of a petition to the N.C. Department of Transportation requesting that Waterview Drive and West Tanglewood Drive be added to the secondary road system for maintenance.

Heard from Clegg that March 27 is the date set for the annual event hosted by Brunswick, New Hanover, Pender and Columbus counties in Raleigh for members of the General Assembly. On March 28 the commissioners of the four counties will hold a joint breakfast. Amended the budget to reflect additional income and expense in the Clean County/KAB budget to reflect anticipated collections of \$900 from a new can recycling machine.

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