

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Selection Should Boost Self-Improvement Efforts

Few visible results have been forthcoming since the N.C. Coastal Initiative program began approximately three years ago. It may even be that the aims of the program—promoting protection of ecologically-important waters while simultaneously promoting boating and waterfront development—are an incompatible mix.

Nevertheless, the communities of Calabash and Southport should be pleased with their inclusion in the latest round of coastal communities selected for the program. Southport was passed over for the 1988 pilot project, so it's especially good to see both Brunswick County communities chosen this time around.

What benefits will they see? Maybe not as much as they would like. But the towns will get priority assistance from six state agencies that they're probably already dealing with. They will command the attention of experts who are to be willing to listen, evaluate and help refine project goals and specifics. They also will point town leaders toward other resources.

But most of all selection is a pat on the back, a friendly, "Great idea! We're with you and good luck." sort of message from the State of North Carolina. The designation recognizes the merit of the visions held by leaders of the two towns. It lends credibility to their goals and objectives.

That special attention should encourage local residents to become more involved in the redevelopment projects, which include overall redevelopment of Southport and a maritime museum to rehabilitation of the Calabash waterfront and possibly dredging of the Calabash River.

Both communities are trying hard to improve year-round quality of life for their residents and to make their communities more amenable to visitors, blending an appreciation for their coastal heritage with the demands of modern life.

Those are ambitious and laudable objectives that deserve full community support.

How Important Is The Super Bowl?

The Persian Gulf War has raised some good questions about what really matters in America.

Among other things, the week-old war has forced us to ask ourselves about the importance of sports. It's raised the question of whether sporting events should be held while American men and women are fighting in the Middle East.

I don't mean to make light of the war itself. Nothing is more important than the safety of American lives. I certainly believe the United States is doing the right thing.

I'm looking at the war from this angle because I don't know of any friends serving in the Middle East, and it's difficult for me to imagine the anxiety of people who have relatives taking part in Operation Desert Storm.

And with my love of sports, it interests me that events taking place half a world away can affect something as seemingly trivial as a game.

As many of you probably know, one college basketball game was postponed last Wednesday due to the outbreak of war. It was the game between N.C. State and Carolina, which I imagine was a game of interest to a lot of local folks.

Since then, however, other professional, college and high school sporting events have gone on as scheduled. There have been anti-war demonstrations at some of these contests. But the vast majority of athletes and people attending these games have openly supported the efforts to drive Saddam out of Kuwait.

At the National Hockey League All-Star Game and the National Football League conference championship games last weekend, fans went crazy during the singing of the national anthem and waved flags and home-made banners to show their support for our troops.

Since the outbreak of war, there have been more questions raised about the playing of the Super Bowl than any other single game. People have asked if the Super Bowl really matters, given the circumstances overseas.

The fact is, the Super Bowl does matter. For better or worse, the Super Bowl means a great deal to a large segment of the American population. Even people who aren't big sports fans know about the Super Bowl. It's almost become a national holiday.

Barring any major developments this week, the biggest football game of the year will be played this Sunday as scheduled. I think the game should be played. Canceling the Super Bowl would be like canceling New Year's Eve.

Now more than ever, people need sports as an escape from the brutal reality of what is going on in the Middle East and what their loved ones may be experiencing.

And besides, the soldiers will probably be just as excited to see who wins the big game as the football fans back home. In fact, they may be even more interested than the folks in the states.

I imagine soldiers who have been stationed in the Saudi Arabian desert for the past four months would welcome anything American they could get their hands on. I'll bet the same men and women who have been begging for shipments of Twinkies and Pop Tarts would love a videotape of the Super Bowl.

Doug Rutter



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 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.

Welcome, Viewers, To America At War

Men and women are dying in the Middle East for reasons I'm not sure any of us truly understand, though we're trying.

It has something to do with freedom and honor and human rights and it's the right thing to do. I'm proud that one of my cousins is there, and that he believes in what the U.S. is doing. I hope he is soon able to rejoin his bride of only several months.

Still, as I watch a million-dollar Patriot missile fly through the air to intercept a Scud missile, a little voice in the recesses of my mind forces me to think not only of the lives protected in the Middle East, but also of the homeless, the hungry, the unemployed. How far would a million dollars go? Sixty million dollars? If we could choose what our country goes into multi-million debt for, how would most Americans rank war?

Like almost everyone else around, my attention has been riveted on the television, eyes glued to the tube watching CNN as the war plan "unfolds"—the general's word, not mine.

I've watched as the networks tout

Susan Usher



"America At War" and "War In The Gulf" much as they would a Civil War documentary series. In between I've cooked—a favorite outlet when frustrated, sad or happy. Some days lately I've had trouble telling one from the other.

There's been a lot of discussion within our network of friends regarding this whole idea of war delivered into our living rooms. That, perhaps, there are some things we would rather not know about war, at least while it's in progress. That, perhaps, we'd find war distasteful if we saw it up close, for real, and that would be an incentive for peace.

On the other hand, one friend argued, as we begin to feel comfortable at our "safe" distance from events on the screen, war might be-

come the world's next spectator sport, supplanting baseball, football or soccer. Mercenaries, signed on with one country now, another later, would engage at almost predictable intervals at hot spots around the world.

But then, when has war not been a spectator sport, at least in a limited way. Pennsylvania residents packed picnic lunches and watched from neighboring hillsides as men bloodied each other at Gettysburg. It's a scene that has repeated itself many times throughout history.

Artists and wordsmiths have also followed war, probably from the first pitched battle. Observation of famous clashes have helped make the reputations of figures such as Pyle, Murrow, White and Brady—a few names from just the period 1850-1950.

What is really different about this war is the limited role allowed these observers of war. To me it seems strange to have modern-day reporters and cameramen holed up in a hotel, rather than out with the troops in tents and foxholes a la earlier wars. I understand the concerns about possible leakage of informa-

tion valuable to the enemy and all that. But also I know that I would rather hear one man's personal view of this war and its effects than to see reshaped over and over again by the various networks the same incomplete, impersonal military data, supplemented by reports that have already cleared in some cases not one, but two types of censorship—that of a host government and that of the U.S. military. What are we not being told?

I watch these journalists trying to do their job and I can sense their anger, their frustration. I don't wish at all to be in their shoes. This is a disservice to them and to the American people.

Still, sitting before the television, wrapped in my blanket and nursing a bowl of popcorn, I absorb each and every word and picture. The television comes on the moment I awake, radio reports lull me to sleep. Never completely out of my mind or heart, Timmy White, Mathew Gore and the other Brunswick County service men and women in the Middle East, though I can't call their names.

Welcome to America at War.



How Will The Writers Remember This War?

There is an old limerick I remember from childhood. A limerick is a short and nonsensical verse that rhymes, though not to be confused with poetry.

It goes:
 There was a young lady of Niger,
 Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;

They returned from the ride,
 With the lady inside,
 And the smile on the face of the tiger.

Among the most difficult of things I've had to digest over the past couple of days concerning the United States' war strike on Iraq in the Persian Gulf was a limerick read over national television by an Ohio congressman on the House floor last Thursday morning.

It said something about Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's belief that the United States was bluffing about war and how after just a night's fighting the pilots had "kicked his butt." I won't note the congressman's name because I can't remember it, just as I can't remember his silly and juvenile limerick, the kind of thing we would write in the first or second grade and feel rather scholarly about having done so.

How will they write about this war? How will the writers remember these times? I hope not with a limerick, but the one above can probably be related to the Middle East situation in some way.

Protesters continue to stage anti-war marches. Sit-ins, one on the court during a Big Ten Conference basketball game last Thursday night, resulted in the arrest of several students who had obtained tickets to the game only to end up being dragged from the floor by uniformed police officers. Needless to say, the nationally televised contest continued after the court was cleared. Chants of, "USA! USA!" flowed from the stands.

How will they write about this war? Poet Denise Levertov once wrote a poem titled, "Making Peace," that begins:

*A voice from the dark called out,
 "The poets must give us
 imagination of peace, to oust the
 intense, familiar*

Terry Pope



imagination of disaster. Peace, not only the absence of war."

Levertov believes it's a job for a poet. In fact, it has become a job for the media.

When the actual bombing began last week I was getting ready to settle down at the dinner table to eat. ABC News anchor Peter Jennings was interviewing one of the network's correspondents on the telephone live from a hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, when the correspondent suddenly reported that there was a great ball of fire in the sky and a tremendous amount of tracer fire and anti-aircraft missiles lighting up the sky.

"The attack has begun," were the words that instantaneously entered millions of living rooms Wednesday evening during the network news show.

That night, I thought about Matthew Arnold (1822-88), an English poet that I admire. Arnold was kind of a working-class poet; he wanted the little guys involved in what the smug writers had to say about the life of a blue-collar worker. He wanted to spread literature to the lower classes, to educate them.

A main motif that runs throughout his work: Man doesn't really know himself; man is always a lonely character; we are all islands but we really want to have something to do with one another.

It is Arnold's poem, "Dover Beach," that I kept thinking about and I pulled it from the shelf and had to read over those lines. Arnold wrote it during a minor conflict, compared to the Middle East situation, when Rome was seized by the French in 1849.

F.R. Leavis once wrote that Arnold's works would survive many other writers on the subject of

war "because of the peculiar quality of his intelligence and the peculiar nature of his relation to his time." Arnold would survive in a way that no other writers would, he predicted, because of how he remembered the war.

"Dover Beach" is a sad poem that shows man's confusion with what is really going on when the sea is calm, the tide is full and the moon lies fair. It reveals two sides that don't know what they're fighting about, a total confusion of life as it is now depicted.

It concludes:
*And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.*

"Ignorant" here means confused,

not aware of what is going on instead of an indictment about the cause which they are fighting for. In a hundred years, expressions can take on different meanings. In the case against Iraq, the cause is clear. It shouldn't have come as a surprise to anyone. You just think about the soldiers and their families at home.

I hope writers don't take my approach to this war. The immediacy of information that comes flowing down the television tube I have found incredible. It's almost as quick as the attacks themselves.

"You don't have time to think that you're going to be the one shot down," said a British Tornado fighter pilot on television Friday. He had just returned from a bombing mission. May they all come back.

How will they remember this war?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let's Get Back To The Basics

To the editor:

We need to get back to the basics in education and we need our superintendent, Mr. Hankins, to back us!

It's easier sometimes to go from program to new program. Instead, we should be investing our money in good solid curriculums that are time-tested, and proven methods of teaching. A prime example is our reading program. I want my child to learn to spell correctly and know how to sound out his words. He has not been doing this for the past two years.

What has happened to phonics and learning to spell? "No more bad report cards" should be the slogan of every parent in this county. You have probably heard the phrase, "teachers can adapt to any program." I believe that a good teacher can teach the subject if allowed to use his own creativity and techniques to arouse and motivate the student. The trick?

First we identify the textbooks that teach the basics (English, writing and math) that have been used successfully in other school systems

(books that give the background our children need to prepare them for college entrance or industry). Then we order them whatever the cost.

Second, we must provide rewards for students who advance academically but do away with the image of "nerds" or "geeks." To do this, advanced students should not be separated from other students. Instead, they should head student groups within the class. This will utilize peer pressure in a positive way and raise class performances and maturity. Additionally, teachers will have more time to concentrate on lesson preparation and individual problems.

Third, the above will work if we have a strong, consistent leadership in our schools.

I would like to propose a challenge to the administration, school board and the community. Strive for total commitment of academic excellence in dealing with our most prized possessions—our children.

Julie Strickland
 Leland
 (Letters Continue Following Page)