

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Summer's Worries Have Started In Mid-Winter

When the Fourth of July holiday approaches, employees of the Brunswick County Water Department will be sweating again.

It won't be due to the summer heat but rather a fear that water lines in the South Brunswick Islands will go dry.

Last year, July 4th fell on a Wednesday. Engineers say had it fallen on a weekend, the peak usage for water might have emptied the elevated water tank at Sunset Beach, thus threatening the area with a disaster had a huge demand been placed on fire hydrants there.

Residents and tourists were using water almost as fast as it could be pumped to the most southern regions of the county. This year, July Fourth inches closer to a weekend, falling on a Thursday. Officials are already worried and it is still winter.

The present trunk line that serves the southern portion of Brunswick County has been described as a thin straw trapped between the lips of a giant. Water can only flow so fast, no matter how much pressure you place on one end of the straw.

The good news is that a capital improvement project to the water system set to begin this year will add an additional trunk line to the Seaside area. That will help pump more water to the densely-populated southern community. Presently, plenty of water reaches Shallotte, but from there it must feed Ocean Isle, Sunset Beach and Calabash off of one line down N.C. 179.

The new \$3.8 million-plus line will boost the water flow. It will route a new line down the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte and N.C. 904 to Seaside. That should ease a lot of headaches and worries come tourist season, but the county still has one long, hot summer to go before it can reap the benefits.

Under Phase III and III-A of the capital improvements project, residents of Shallotte Point will also receive county water—after years of pleading.

It's a game of catch-up for the water department, but 1991 is starting to look like a promising year.

Thanks, But No Thanks To An Incinerator

It sounded like an industry coup at first. The town of Navassa in northern Brunswick County had changed its zoning ordinance to allow a multimillion dollar facility to locate there.

The five businessmen who were partners in the project planned to purchase an 18-acre tract in an industrially zoned area adjacent to the CSX rail yard. The business would be physically small, but it would hire about 30 people and add to the town's tax base.

But talk turned to reason. Now Navassa officials are trying to shut the door on the project that would have brought the county its first medical waste incinerator. A welcome mat had been rolled out, but town officials are now hoping they can legally withdraw the invitation.

When Navassa residents learned what would actually be burned inside the plant, they started a petition that now has the names of about 150 residents who are begging the town to keep the incinerator away. Residents there fear that should something go wrong in the operation and maintenance of the medical waste incinerator, then their town and surrounding Leland area would live under the horror of a spreading cloud of infectious diseases.

Hospital medical waste incinerators

Terry Pope



burn anything from human anatomical wastes such as tissues, organs and body parts; human blood wastes and blood products; needles, swabs and absorbents contaminated by infectious blood; contaminated animal carcasses and bedding from research labs; dialysis wastes that were in contact with the blood of patients undergoing hemodialysis; discarded medical parts and equipment; biological wastes and discarded materials contaminated with blood, excretion or secretions from humans and animals; urine samples; and culture dishes.

The number of commercial incinerators is expected to rise across the United States. More stringent regulations on infectious waste disposal will affect what types of medical wastes can enter landfills, thus making the smaller hospital incinerators costly and unprofitable to operate. That's why businessmen with an

eye on the future are looking for out-of-the-way places to build larger, regional incinerators to handle larger volumes of medical wastes more efficiently. In the next decade, the demand for them will be great.

Medical wastes are burned at incinerators before the ash or debris is dumped into landfills. After incineration, the remaining debris should have no trace of the infectious diseases and the volume is 90 percent smaller than before incineration. At the proposed Navassa plant, an estimated six to eight trucks would deliver hospital wastes daily to the plant in sealed bags packed inside sealed cardboard boxes.

According to a handbook issued last month by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, the concern about how infectious wastes generated by hospitals is being disposed of has increased rapidly due to the fear of the spread of viruses such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and hepatitis B. Remember how contaminated medical wastes were found drifting ashore along some eastern seaboard beaches?

Hospital waste incinerators, it states, may emit a number of air pollutants depending on the waste

being incinerated. The pollutants include acid gases, toxic metals, toxic organic compounds, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides and pathogens and viruses.

The combustion gases that are produced by incineration are vented directly to the atmosphere or to the atmosphere after treatment in an air pollution device, the handbook states. But when operated properly and when air emission standards are held to acceptable levels, residents who live near the incinerator should not be in any danger. However, a lot is riding on the shoulders of the plant operator. I wouldn't want to live next to one.

In November 1989, the Navassa Planning Board amended the town's zoning ordinance to make way for the incinerator. Since then, town officials discovered that to make such changes to the zoning ordinance requires approval from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, a change the town now wants to stop.

At the town's request, Coastal Management has halted its review of the zoning change. The town vows it will not issue a building permit.

That multimillion dollar plant, although it would have been a fat source of tax revenues for the town, is looking less attractive every day.

A dark beach is an open invitation to loggerhead turtles during the nesting season...



...and thieves all the time!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Flap About Hankins' Credentials Is Slockett's Nonsense

To the editor:

I wonder what is really behind Bob Slockett's efforts to prevent P. R. Hankins from continuing as Brunswick County's school superintendent? He claims it's because Mr. Hankins didn't literally submit his superintendent's credentials to the school board at the meeting.

Since his credentials had been on file for some years, he assumed they had seen them, if desired.

P. R. first became a school principal in the middle 50s in Brunswick County. To get that position he had to present credentials. I'm certain they are placed in a file in the department designed for that purpose. I doubt whether any certificate is literally sent to the board for examination at their meetings.

For P. R. Hankins to even be acting or a temporary superintendent when the previous one was fired, his credentials had to be on record. I have verified that they were. Each certificate has been on file every time he earned one from principal to supervisor, to assistant superintendent and finally superintendent.

It was natural for P. R. to assume his credentials had been verified to the board and could literally be seen if desired.

Mr. Slockett and I are both Republicans. I can assure you that if he runs again I shall campaign against him. I even made an appointment to meet him at his home when I first heard about his nonsense, to discuss P. R.

P. R. was my boss for the last six years I taught here. I was in a position to see how he worked and his competence. Having taught in two other systems previously I have some background from which to judge.

I have been able to confirm that he is doing exactly as I suspected he would. He's a hands-on person, not one who just sits in his office and makes decisions. He goes out and observes what's going on in the schools.

Since I retired I have been in-

involved in several charity organizations. I think it was about five years ago that I organized the Brunswick County Animal Welfare League to raise donations to help people be able to afford to spay and neuter their animals instead of hundreds of unwanted animals having to be killed each year.

I've always been able to take a sample of our certificates, along with the paper needed to get them printed. After P. R. became superintendent, I discovered one has to fill out a form to be approved before getting printing done.

That just goes to verify that P. R. will know everything that is going on in the schools and that they will

be done right and with no waste.

Teddi Neal
Bolivia

Cats Are One Of Our Protectors

To the editor:

We hear much of protecting the environment for future generations and protecting wildlife.

Cats are one of our protectors. They need our protection. They catch rats and mice. What will our environment be like with an overflow of rats and mice?

Giving cats rabies shots is okay, but how many persons have you ev-

er known to be bitten by a cat and died? Only one in my 73 years.

How many children will be hurt when animal control officers pick up their pet cat?

Not everyone has the money to pay to have their cats given shots and some are not tame enough to be collared and tagged.

Cats can be useful in our everyday life as well as a lot of pleasure to children and grown-ups.

Let's not bite the hand that feeds us. I am not against animal control officers rounding up sick and unwanted animals. I think they do a fine job.

Evelyn M. Bell
Bolivia

Talk About Getting Lucky!

Do you ever get discouraged about not making the kind of progress you'd like on some pet project?

It's been that way with my family tree. It's one of those want to do, not have to do things, so it gets a less than top priority. Time for research, or to even plan research, seems to come in spurts. When opportunity appears! follow, without questioning.

So it was last Thursday night. Don was going to a meeting in Wilmington. I decided, on impulse, to skip some chores, drop him off, then run by the Mormon Church genealogy library. I would have less than an hour, but that's better than no time at all, I've come to realize. Trips into town come far and few between.

The Plan: To 1) begin checking to see if any known persons of my lines had been entered in the International Genealogical Index (IGI) so as to avoid duplicating research that has already been done and 2) through those listings, perhaps make contact with other individuals working on the same lines.

I was having surprisingly good luck with the Arnolds, kin on my mother's side, when behind me a

Susan Usher



woman entered and quietly asked for assistance.

"What lines are you working on?" the reply came.

"Usher and Love," she said, causing my ears to perk up and my head to spin around.

"That's MY line!" I interjected excitedly.

"Who are you?" the woman asked. And I told her. She saw the connection immediately—William Usher.

Who was she? A distant cousin on my father's side, who lives at Ogden and works at Belk's in Wilmington.

This was only my third visit to the Mormon Church library; it was her first. What an incredible coincidence.

You may recall the Thanksgiving weekend trip to Duplin County I

wrote about. It seems Mary Frances Usher Hobbs was born on that old Armand Usher homestead, and was there with her two children when it sustained severe damage during Hurricane Hazel. She had maintained the old cemetery until the poison ivy got too bad, she said.

Mary Frances knew stuff I didn't know, much of it oral history that had been pulled together by an aunt of hers many years ago and passed on, without formal documentation. Like me, she has been trying to work on the family history in bits and pieces.

We chatted like crazy, exchanging information until they ran us out of the library after closing time. We traded telephone numbers and mailing addresses, promising to trade more data and keep in touch.

I know now the name and birthplace—Stradbally, Queen's County, Ireland, of my great-great-grandparents, William and Ann Shields Usher, who came to North Carolina before the American Revolution. Even better, I've found another companion to share this trek back in time.

Once again, just when a nudge of encouragement was needed, something happened to keep me plugging.

Donating Blood Can Be Quite An Experience

Every once in a while, the newspaper runs announcements about upcoming blood drives sponsored by civic or church groups.

Every time I see one of these notices, it makes me think of the two times I donated blood.

I was in high school the first time. The Red Cross came to our school and set up shop in the gymnasium. Nurses lined up rows and rows of hospital beds.

When it was my turn to give blood, I laid down on one of these beds and a nurse stuck a needle in my arm. It was somewhat painful at first, but the pain went away when the blood started running out of my arm and into a plastic bag.

Before I knew it, the donating part was over. The bag was full of blood. A nurse pulled the needle out of my arm and put a bandage over the hole.

The real fun started when I tried to get up off the bed. I suddenly felt light-headed and dizzy.

I sat there on the edge of the bed for a while, before rising slowly and walking gingerly to the table where the nurses had doughnuts and orange juice.

I took a seat at the table and ate doughnuts and drank juice until most of the cobwebs worked their way out of my head. My arm hurt and I was tired. I had paid my dues. I vowed never to donate blood again.

A couple years later, the Red Cross came to Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, where I was a freshman. Those nurses had obviously followed me there.

I had no intention of donating blood again. Nothing was going to get me on that hospital bed. Nobody was going to draw blood out of my arm, or so I thought.

However, being a college freshman and living four hours from home is hard enough without alienating yourself from your new-found friends who just happen to be fired up about donating blood. So I reluctantly agreed to give blood. It was a classic case of peer pressure.

I donated that bag of blood, but this time I felt great. There was no pain, no dizziness, no lingering effects. I think I donated in record time.

The nurse pulled the needle out of my arm, and I hopped up from that table without missing a beat.

I was jumping around and eating cookies while my pals were lying there on the hospital beds with blood trickling out of their arms and their faces turning an odd shade of green.

I'm not the only one who has a story to tell about donating blood. You remember my old roommate, Mark. He's the one who talked me into buying his old surfboard and then skipped town and moved to Wilmington.

No, he doesn't wash his clothes at my place any more. He just comes down ever so often to eat my food and play my guitar.

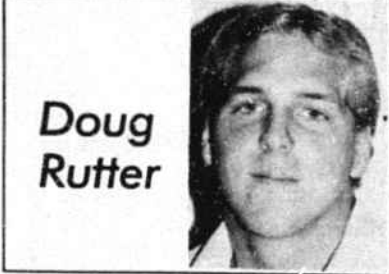
Anyway, Kevin and I found out through a very reliable source that Mark passed out after giving blood last year. Needless to say, Mark was the brunt of some good-natured ribbing after that escapade.

These stories shouldn't scare anyone out of donating blood. The fact is, giving blood is easy, and it's something that just about anybody can do.

The Calabash Elks Lodge, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, is holding a blood drive this Saturday from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the lodge. People ages 17 to 75 are welcome to donate.

There's no telling where this blood will go after it is collected. It might be used to help American troops overseas.

If you ask me, there's no better way to support the military than to give blood that might be needed to save a soldier's life.



Doug Rutter