

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Place Names, 'Weeks' Back On Burner

Before this column appears, the Brunswick County Planning Board will have addressed its second batch of road names in an effort to make sure that every road, street, even cartway, has a moniker before the 911 system goes into operation sometime next year.

They've divided the county into four sections. You can have the same or a similar street or road name just once in each quadrant. You could have a Dogwood Lane near Southport, a Dogwood Circle at Sunset Beach, a Dogwood Drive in Leland and a Dogwood Avenue in downtown Longwood. Any more and it could get confusing.

For a group that's trying to eliminate confusion, though, I can't understand why they're keeping some of the road names we've already got.

I can think of at least five or six roads—you probably know of others—that are called one thing by the planning department and post office and another by almost everyone else. Some of the popular names are younger than the comparable county name, others older. The point is, at least to me, is that they're the names these roads are known as by your average Joe. Why shouldn't the signs match?

Here are just a few examples:
 S.R. 1426, Mt. Misery Road: Why not rename it Du Pont Road? That's what people in the Leland area have been calling it for years.

S.R. 1320, McMilly Road: Why not give up and go back to calling it Airport Road? It was renamed some years ago after the old flying field north of Shallotte had been abandoned. The new name reflects a legitimate geographic feature, McMilly Swamp. But it's been years, and local people still insist on calling S.R. 1320 Airport Road. The nearest other Airport Road is off Long Beach Road in another road name quadrant and far enough away there shouldn't be any more confusion than there is now. Give up and change it back.

S.R. 1154, Hale Swamp Road: Hale was a historic family name in Brunswick County history. At one time a portion of oceanfront was known as Hale Beach. But sheriff's deputies, rescue personnel and most locals still call this byway Blueberry Farm Road, dating back to the time when there was a berry farm on the site where a storage facility now operates. Why not make it official?

S.R. 1502, Benton Road: You'll never convince locals it isn't really named Grapevine Road, though the vineyard's gone. Besides, wouldn't something like 1001 Grapevine Road make a neater address for an elementary school?

My last and favorite example is S.R. 1153, Ocean Isle Beach Road. I've never heard anyone call it that. The real name? Four Mile Road, of course.

I'm sure there are others, but you get the idea. While they're adding names and changing others would be a good time to clear up these minor details.

.....
 I usually don't respond to letters to the editor about my column, because readers have a right to express their opinions and I usually learn from them. But when they don't understand or misconstrue something that affects people other than myself, I feel an obligation to try again.

The writer of a letter in last week's paper apparently missed the main points I had attempted to make in a previous column, and that means some other people may have missed them also. I may have said too much last time, but I'll try again anyway—and take my chances on getting buried in mud.

What I was trying to say is that 1) an overabundance of specially-designated weeks and months has lessened their individual significance and that designating such weeks isn't a very good use of lawmakers' energies;

2) there is a difference between news and publicity or self-promotion, and if an event or other activity is newsworthy it is newsworthy even if it isn't national whatzit week; and 3) our three-person news staff does its best to handle as much local news as possible either by "coverage," an advance story, and/or follow-up interview.

We like and appreciate getting story ideas from readers. However, we've yet to find a way to go everywhere and do everything. We must set priorities, and yes, that is generally my responsibility as news editor. (That's one reason you don't and won't see our staff taking many proclamation-signing pictures, for example, and why a reader's suggestion for a feature goes on a master list and may not show up as a story until some time later.)

While a 40-hour work week would be a short one for us, as it would be in many professions, we still don't "report" seven days a week, 24 hours a day. We need time to write copy, as well as to eat, sleep, clean house, go to church and do all the things other folks do.

Thank goodness there are a lot of readers and organizations out there who work with us and help us make the best use of our time. Otherwise the *Beacon* would be a lot less "newsy" than the packed-jam-full newspaper you now enjoy.



Susan Usher

Good Things Come To Those Who Wait

I just have one thing to say to you tourists. Bring it on!

Ready or not, the official start of the summer tourist season, also known as Memorial Day weekend, has arrived.

I don't know about you all, but I'm ready for it this year. I've been mentally preparing myself since Christmas.

I'm going into the 1991 tourist season with a positive attitude. I've dreaded the annual arrival of vacationers in previous years, but no more. I'm a new man.

If you don't believe me, check this out.

I'm ready for the heat and humidity. As far as I'm concerned, the hotter and stickier it gets, the more I like it. I'll be shivering if it doesn't hit 100 degrees every day.

I'm ready for the long lines at the

Doug Rutter



miniature golf course and ice cream stand. I'm ready to deal with those mean folks who sell me the ingredients for my tomato sandwiches.

I'm even ready to sit in traffic. I will not get frustrated when the cars start moving 10 feet per minute through downtown Shallotte. I'll keep a big smile on my face the whole time, even when my car shakes and overheats.

Speaking of my car, it seems my

windshield wiper switch has broken with the wipers locked in that certain position that you only use when it's raining so hard you think you've driven into Niagara Falls.

I think it's called the "warp speed" wiper position. Anyway, a new switch has been ordered. I think it's being shipped in from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, where they still use the Pony Express.

In the meantime, I drive around Shallotte with the feeling that I am being watched by every other driver that crosses my path.

Many of them have strange looks on their faces and they point at me as if to ask, "Why are driving around Shallotte with your windshield wipers going 975 mph? There isn't a cloud in the sky."

I have no answer for them. I just give them an even stranger look in

return and point back as if to say, "Gimme a break. I'm working on it."

Actually, this tourist season promises to be different than the last few in terms of traffic flow.

The newly-opened Shallotte bypass will be put to the ultimate test this Friday when families in hundreds of cars whiz down U.S. 17 toward their resort destinations.

Only time will tell if the bypass will relieve the traffic congestion it was designed to relieve. Personally, I've got my fingers and toes crossed.

I've only been through four Shallotte summers without a bypass. They were pretty bad, but some people have waited decades.

There's something to be said for perseverance. Good things come to those who wait.



Withholding Names Helps Protect Victims

A young woman telephoned *The Brunswick Beacon* office recently. She and her boyfriend had been parked in a wooded area south of Shallotte around 2 a.m. on a Sunday.

Three males approached their car and pulled them from the vehicle. The male was beaten and robbed of \$80. The female was beaten and repeatedly raped by the men.

She called the *Beacon* for assurance that we would not print her name or the name of her boyfriend. The woman told someone on the newspaper staff that during a police investigation she had signed a document that she thought would keep her name secret from the media.

There is no such document, not in North Carolina. But she can be assured that the *Beacon* does not and will not print rape victims' names.

As the reporter that covers the crime beat in Brunswick County, I have some very definite opinions as to why it's a good, humane and fair policy to leave the victim's name out of such stories. However, sometimes I wonder if, in fairness, we ought to also withhold the name of the accused.

In North Carolina, it is not against the law to publish the names of victims of rape or other crimes. I don't know of any newspaper that does print such names, but there may be some.

Generally, the local press acts in

Terry Pope



a responsible and professional manner when reporting on such incidents involving victims of sexual or violent crime or when the accused is a juvenile and is not being tried as an adult.

There are no laws about printing names of the accused either. If charges are filed, they are fair game to the media. Sometimes the accused are found innocent, after their names have been printed and they have been labeled in the community as a criminal.

In Florida, where a national rape case allegedly involving a Kennedy heir has grabbed the headlines, it is against the law for newspapers there to publish a rape victim's name. A national tabloid based in Florida did print the name of the woman involved and now it also faces criminal charges.

Since the accused is such a public figure in that particular case, some members of the press, including NBC News, made an ethical deci-

sion to release the name of the woman who says she was raped. One national daily paper even ran an investigative profile of the woman.

The information is there. It's not a question of releasing names to the press or of signing documents to have names withheld. Police reports and warrants filed are public record. Anyone asking to see such documents at the clerk of court's office must be allowed to see them.

In a sense, there's no way to keep the victim's name secret, but omitting it from newspaper accounts of rape incidents keeps victims from being victimized a second time within the community.

The incident recently reported in Palm Beach was given special status because the accused, William Kennedy Smith, is a member of the prominent Kennedy family and nephew of Sen. Ted Kennedy.

An article printed in *Newsweek* magazine two weeks ago prompted debate from both sides of the "naming names" issue regarding rape victims and the accused.

The magazine stated that only one in 10 rapes is reported by the victim. Naming names of victims might cause the number of unreported rapes to increase dramatically, one writer suggested.

Others argued that withholding the victim's name is unfair to the accused, who should be considered

innocent until the jury brings in its verdict.

Until that judgment is handed down, we should never be quite sure whether the woman is an actual victim of rape or if the man is a victim of false accusation.

Several weeks ago, I was ready to write a story about a young Leland woman who reported she was tied up, raped by two men and left unconscious in a wooded area near Belville for two days. The woman ran from the woods and onto N.C. 133 with her feet tied. She managed to flag down a passing motorist.

Under further investigation, the woman admitted to sheriff's detectives that she had made the whole story up. She had just left a drug rehabilitation center and couldn't account to her parents for her whereabouts.

She had given detectives descriptions of two men in a pickup that accosted her while she was walking along the highway near her home. She described the men, the length of their hair, their ages and what they had forced her to do. She described the pickup truck.

But it was all lies. She carried it to quite some length before pulling the plug on her story.

It's scary to think what might have happened had reasoning not stepped in. That's why I also raise the issue of protecting the accused.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

President Hurt Senior Citizens When He Lowered Interest Rates

To the editor:
 All we hear from President Bush is lower interest rates, lower interest rates. That's not the problem. He should study the law of diminishing returns.

I'm 72, and by lowering the rates our certificate of deposit income was slashed by him. Thus he really hurt the seniors in this country.

He said at one of the news sessions that he is not an economist. He has lowered interest rates by 30 percent, yet our depression is worse.

When a country—any country—taxes its people over 33 percent of their wages, that country goes downhill. According to the Tax Foundation we are around 40 percent or close to it.

We can't pay \$40,000 to postal employees who have only a high school education. We can't pay a worker at General Motors who puts on four bolts \$25 an hour and guarantee him 90 percent of his wages if he is laid off.

You just can't do these things. We are living in a fool's paradise. You can't buy a \$10,000-\$15,000 car and get \$4.25 an hour.

Charles Rajsky
 Calabash

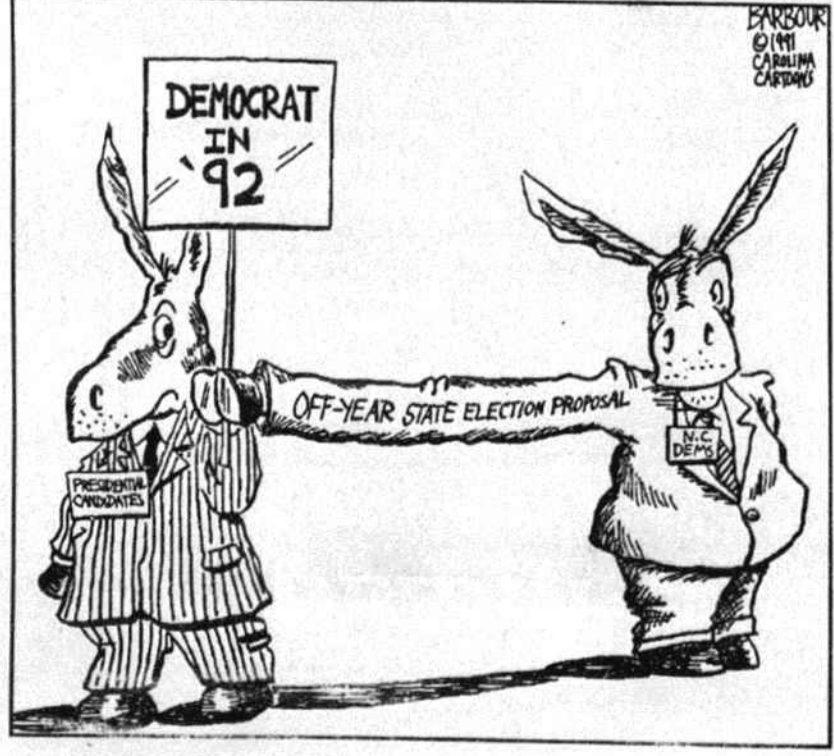
Above And Beyond The Call Of Duty

To the editor:
 Last week my telephone and cable line was cut by accident. I called the telephone office and reported it.

David Barnes came down and repaired it and it was pouring down rain at the time.

I'm sure the company is proud of such men as David, who are loyal to their job.

Clyde E. Yarborough Sr.
 Coastal Retreat



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