



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

SEAHORSES get their names from the resemblance to horses as they swim with head upright.

The Fabulous Sea Monster

BY BILL FAVER

When we usually think about a fish, we envision the typical shape of the mackerel, trout, or tuna. But there are some very unusual creatures in the fish family, like the seahorse. Its scientific name, in the Greek, means "fabulous sea monster," and this unique creature lives up to at least a portion of that name.



FAVER

Seahorses get their name from having heads bent at an angle to the body so that they resemble a horse as they swim upright in water. Their tails are similar to those of monkeys and are used to hold fast to some object underwater.

Scales on the seahorse are modified into plates that fit closely together forming a flexible kind of armor for protection. These bony plates also break up the contours of the body and help camouflage the seahorses.

Locomotion is accomplished by the dorsal fin in the middle of the back and the small pectoral fins attached just behind the gills, resembling small ears. Fins may flutter as much as 35 times a second, but seahorses still move very slowly. The small, tubular mouth is adapted for feeding on small organisms, such as animal planktons.

Seahorses are usually found in grassy bays, near

shore in shallow water. Preferring places where there is a current, they anchor themselves to some object and wait for the current to bring food to them. Since they are too slow to pursue live prey, they must rely on their ability to match their surroundings and wait for tiny crustacea to come by to fill their hearty appetites.

One of the unique characteristics of the seahorse is that the male broods and gives birth to the young. The female inserts her ovipositor into the specially constructed "brood pouch" on the belly of the male. She deposits several hundred eggs which are fertilized inside the male and undergo incubation for several weeks.

When time for birth comes, the male often will rub against some object on the bottom of the sea and go into violent convulsions as the young are popped out one or several at a time.

The young are tiny replicas of their parents and about one-half inch in size at birth. They are immediately thrust into the world on their own and must begin to find food and escape predation.

Several years ago, someone watching a seahorse in our aquarium remarked they didn't realize seahorses were real—they thought seahorses were like unicorns and the product of someone's imagination.

These "fabulous sea monsters" are very real and are found in our estuaries hiding among the grasses and living out their lives along the edge of the sea.

GUEST COLUMN

Lottery: The People Already Voted

BY COY C. PRIVETTE

At practically every turn in the road, you will hear some voice echoing: "When are we going to vote on the lottery?"

The people made that decision on Nov. 3 when they elected the members of the 1993 session of the General Assembly. I learned in my 9th grade civics class that the role of the legislative branch is to establish public policy.

If a proposal is good policy, then the legislature ought to pass it. If it is bad public policy, then the legislature ought to kill it. That is what they have been elected to do rather than to seek some "cop out" such as "put it on the ballot."

Harry Truman hit the nail on the head: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." If our current legislators are not willing to deal with the "hot" issues, then elect someone else to do it.

It is my contention that a lottery is bad public policy, and the legislature should refuse to pass such legislation regardless of how many lobbyists the gambling industry employs to roam the halls of our legislature seeking passage for its gambling proposal.

Briefly, I maintain that a lottery is bad public policy for the following reasons:

1. A lottery is bad policy socially. A lottery "picks the pockets of the poor." A California study showed that four out of every ten players were unemployed. Another California study showed that 24 percent of the heavy players came from the 16.3 percent of the population which made under \$15,000 per year.

In Delaware, a study found that there were no lottery outlets in an upper-income neighborhood in which 17,630 persons lived, "but one lottery outlet per 1,981 persons in the poorest neighborhoods." In Maryland, the poorest third of the population bought 60 percent of the daily lottery tickets.

Yet, proponents say, "It is a voluntary tax." Ask Pete Rose or any of the other 4 to 6 million who are addictive gamblers if gambling is a voluntary tax. The role of government is to appeal to the strengths of its citizens rather than to exploit their weaknesses.

2. A lottery is bad public policy governmentally. A lottery puts the government into the gambling business...the promotion of gambling...the marketing of gambling...The Louisville Courier-Journal was right when it wrote on its editorial page: "When states hustle

sweepstakes tickets, when they shamelessly tell poor and rich alike to blow their money in lotteries, governments are no longer neutral about morals...Rather than promoting the best interests of their citizens, they are encouraging the worst."

3. A lottery is bad public policy economically. University of Minnesota economists have explained that the money spent on forms of gambling previously unknown in a state (such as a lottery) will be money that would have been spent (and taxed) or saved (and invested) in other segments of the economy.

The Holiday Food Store chain in California learned this lesson the hard way. In the first six months of the California lottery, their food chain sold \$1.8 million in lottery tickets. During that same period of time, their food sales were off \$1.8 million. They ceased selling lottery tickets stating, "It is a moral issue when people use money for lottery tickets rather than buy food to feed their families." The Winn-Dixie stores in Florida stopped selling lottery tickets for the same reason.

4. A lottery is bad public policy criminally. One of the arguments that proponents give for the lottery is that it will eliminate criminal activity. That idea cannot be substantiated. Evidence from a number of states shows that the presence of legalized gambling actually increases rather than decreases illegal gambling.

Connecticut started a state lottery to cut into illegal gambling and organized crime. Austin J. McGuigan, former Chief State's Attorney for Connecticut, observed: "Rather than cut into the revenue of organized crime, the state has been swept by a gambling mania, which has more than doubled the level of illegal wagering in the last eight years."

Former Director of the FBI William Webster said: "I really don't see how one can expect to run legalized gambling anywhere without serious problems—fraudulent tickets, counterfeit lottery processes. Any time organized crime sees an opportunity to put a fix on something, to get an edge on something, it'll be there. And gambling is still the largest source of revenue for organized crime."

In light of this, I hope that the legislature will adhere to its real purpose of establishing public policy and reject any overtures to put its seal of approval upon any form of gambling.

The writer is executive director of the Raleigh-based Christian Action League of North Carolina.

Newspapers—Daggy Diaries?

A reader who took umbrage at one of the recent opinion pieces in these pages wrote a letter criticizing with much enthusiasm the column, the columnist ("the Usher woman") and "your daggy little newspaper."

Another, a public servant and self-described "country boy," constructed an intricate triple barnyard analogy likening us, in a single sentence, to serpents, swine and horse doodie.

Because I have, as the latter complainant phrased it, "had the opportunity to go to a school of journalism and learned to tell half-truths and twist the facts to my own advantage," these spirited letters warmed my heart. No foolin'.

After all, this is no occupation for pantywaists. In the news game, if everybody loves you, then you're not doing your job.

If people on both sides of any given issue think you're on the other side, you can rest assured you've been objective, the rule goes.

But if, week after week, you keep giving out what you hope to be a lively journal of news and opinion, and you get nothing in return resembling feedback, you'd better know something's amiss.

There's a rich, time-honored tradition of knocking the local fish-wrappers. We expect it and would probably become insufferably pompous if nobody did it.

I grew up in a town whose weekly newspaper was "The Critical" (Chronicle), and the last place I lived was covered by the daily "Time to Snooze" (Times-News). We've all done it.

Besides, there's a lot to poke fun



Lynn Carlson

at in a small-town newspaper. We can be so Mayberryesque. Glancing through some weekly papers, you'll unearth an endless supply of those little nuggets of rural journalism, such as these I found after 10 whole minutes of searching.

■'Entrance to 'The Hole' has been sealed, and partygoers in the Lickskillet community will have to find another place to gather."

■A weekly school lunch menu that included "fish shapes with tartar sauce and cornbread" on one day, "pork chopette with roll" on another and "tater tots" on no less than three days.

■From the social news: "Dr. James Little Jr. and his daughter, Sally, vacationed in the Bahama Islands last week. Each child gets a trip when she is a senior in high school." Well, la-de-da!

■Item under the "Food for the Body and for the Soul" column: "Ladies, before you put on nail polish, rinse your nails with vinegar. This will clean them completely and help the nail polish stay on longer."

■Headline on a story contributed by the local agriculture extension agent: "Goats make good kudzu killers."

■And, of course, the Farm Market Report: "Egg prices were

higher on medium and large and steady on smalls compared to those of the previous week. Supplies were adequate. Demand was moderate."

Much of that material is what you bring to us to share with your neighbors. And it's often what makes you pick up a paper and read it—not because you're expecting to unravel the great conundrum of life, but because it might contain some tasty little surprises that relate to you.

Like a picture of your kid's scout troop.

Or a write-up about your bowling team.

Or your mother-in-law's name in the court docket.

We make a special place for our opinions, too, not just because we have so much pontificating to do, but because it's part of our responsibility to the community to try to give you something to think about.

We have our reporters write columns because we like for you to think of them as people (even if they don't always behave accordingly).

We don't expect, or even necessarily want, you to agree. Opinions are like glass bowls. Everybody's got one and they're not all alike. So keep those cards and letters coming, even the slings and arrows. (Just remember that if you don't have the guts to sign your name, Mr. Calabash Resident Korean War Veteran Conservative Smart Person who finds me to be a "liberal social democrat of the 1960's wacko generation," your letter goes directly into the circular file.)

In the meantime, we'll try not to be too "daggy." Whatever that means.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Parents Must Be Responsible For Helping Children Learn

To the editor:

I've never written a letter to an editor before. But I feel very deeply about where and how we live and about our young people in this country.

Week after week I read about the problems with the education in our schools. I read about the superintendent, the principals and teachers and about how they aren't doing a good job.

But I don't read or see much emphasis being put where the real problem lies. That is right square on the shoulders of the parents.

Who held a gun on the girl and boy to make them become parents? Who told them to bring a child into the world for someone else to provide food, home and education for?

Parents have to accept full responsibility for their children's needs until they are old enough to accept responsibility for themselves. Children need and have a right to expect their parents to provide them with a clean place to live, clean food to eat, and clean clothes to wear.

They also have a right to help a parent to help them learn to read and do their homework every day. Our teachers then would have children they could help to gain a higher education, which is what they are taught and paid to do.

Then, as citizens, we will find we will have higher scores in our education fields and less crime in our neighborhoods. Then we can begin to enjoy our well-adjusted, educated children and grandchildren. Yes, it all starts with the boy and girl who made the baby.

So get off the superintendent, principals and teachers' backs and back in the mirror. Find our cause and you will find our cure.

Doris Smith
Ash

Steinem To Blame

To the editor:

Concerning the controversy going on in your letters to the editor column, I think there are a few things that need to be said about the battle between male and female that has been going on all over the country for about 30 years or more.

The hatred that has been created during that time is brand new to our society. Only a few years ago a man would not even say the word "damn" in front of a woman. A woman was the most highly respected thing in our society.

This division and hatred has not happened by accident. It has been well orchestrated. There are a number of well-financed, well-organized

groups that have been spreading hate venom among our people. Their desire is to destroy the family, thereby destroying the nation, or at least changing it to suit their own perverted taste.

One of these groups are fashion designers. They have all but stripped our women naked, and this has created a great disrespect for women. Movies, soap operas, magazines, books, the television networks have aided in creating this immoral society.

We could learn something if we ask ourselves who owns and controls the above-mentioned. However, the number-one problem comes from Gloria Steinem and her well-trained lesbians and the rest of her National Organization for Women (NOW) crowd.

People like Gloria Steinem have no love for our people or our country. They are destroying us, and we are allowing them to do it. They are putting words in our mouth and they are coming out just the way they want them to.

We as a people had better start paying some attention to what's going on around us and stop fighting among ourselves before it's too late.

Opal J. Stanley
Calabash

Thanks For Coverage

To the editor:

First, I would like to thank your paper and staff for all the coverage that you have given to me. If it had not been for your paper, people in this area would not have known my situation or my medical condition.

Second, I would like to thank all the businesses, churches and individuals who gave their time, prayers and donations to my bone marrow transplant fund.

I had my bone marrow transplant in September 1992. Afterward I had to take about 25 treatments of radiation. I am doing very well with good medical reports.

Duke Hospital and the transplant clinic did almost all my treatment on an outpatient basis to help curb our financial responsibility. Although we still owe them money, we will continue to have fundraisers until we get them paid.

Thank you all for helping to save my life, for it couldn't have happened without you.

Crystal (Chris) Caudill
Supply

Neighbors Helped

To the editor:

It was Tuesday night about 11 p.m. Winds had registered 41 mph

on my weather vane, with a wind chill factor of 17 degrees. I had just come home from playing basketball in the church league (we lost by one point!). I already felt bad, so I went outside to check how the boat was surviving in this "gale."

I couldn't believe my eyes. It was gone—the boat, the dock, everything. Thank goodness, the wind was coming from the north, so the only possible way the boat could be going was toward the end of the canal a half-mile away.

I grabbed a flashlight and began running through the back yards, checking all the docks as I ran. What a glorious sight when I got almost to the end. Two police cars, a rescue or fire vehicle and numerous residents had responded to a cry for help over the radio. "A big boat is loose traveling fast down the canal, with the dock still attached!"

This letter is to thank these men: Dave Harrell, Al Crawford, Bobby Yoho, James Stewart, Tommy Allen, Bryan Ericksen and any others who in this freezing cold lassoed the pilings that had broken off in the ground and were still attached to the dock, and helped us to safely maneuver the dock and boat to safety. Thank you for preventing a near disaster.

Bob Edwards
Ocean Isle Beach

Enjoys Columns

To the editor:

As I write, the snow is falling outside and the temperature is a beautiful 23 degrees. The forecast is for the temperature to be 32 tomorrow (seasonable), and there is to be some sunshine.

I enjoy Eric Carlson's column tremendously and liked his column of Jan. 21 ("Cheer Up, It Could Be Worse"). My wife and I live 30 minutes west of Syracuse and know exactly what he's talking about. We come to Sunset Beach every April break from school—we're both teachers—and we've already started getting ourselves into a tizzy about this year's trip.

Eric's writings, as well as Lynn Carlson's and Susan Usher's, really do warm the days and, believe it or not, a tiny bit of South Brunswick sunshine escapes from the pages into the central New York skies. Keep up the great work!

Kim Locks
Auburn, NY

Write Us

The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address and telephone number. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. We reserve the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to The Brunswick Beacon, P. O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.



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