

MORE LETTERS

# Sewer System No Answer To Crowding

To the editor:  
Do you rent your beach house?  
Since I moved to Holden Beach in mid-1989, the one topic of conversation that remains consistent is the "overcrowding of rental property on the beach." We were told by the Realtors showing us property that "most" of the homes here were bought by people with an eye toward using them at retirement. However, we have since found that there are people who own more than one home and that they are "in business" renting to tourists.

It is obvious, even to the casual observer, that when there are six, eight or more cars in front of a single family residence that there are most likely too many people in the house. The following is the law as told to me by county and state officials. The septic system is designed to hold 60 gallons per person per day; however, since the effluent does not zip in and zap out (it takes time for it to filter through the system), they mandate a 24-hour holding period.

Consequently, if a property has a 750-gallon tank the house can handle six people; 900 gallons, seven people; 1,000 gallons, eight people; and 1,500 gallons, 12 people. These people can all be in one room or divided up into several bedrooms; that does not matter. The tank capacity and number of people are the variables.

It was also explained to me that one of the worst possible scenarios is when a person closes his home in the fall and then returns with a large crowd in the spring and immediately start bathing or showering, flushing toilets, doing laundry and operating the dishwasher. Then they close up

the house until the season starts and it is overcrowded until fall.

Those of us who are permanent residents and those who own homes and utilize them for family only would like to be able to swim in clean water, fish in clean water and eat shellfish that come from clean water. This is not possible if people are to stuff (as one renter told me) 30 people in a house with a system built for 12.

Presently the Town of Holden Beach has no power to enforce the laws as established by the County of Brunswick and the State of North Carolina. However, when there is an obvious infraction of these ordinances they can report it to the county officials and they, in turn, can investigate. The feeling is that the property owners and Realtors are best able to control this situation, and we hope that they are correct.

Those with an eye toward building more and more homes would have one believe that a sewer system and wastewater treatment plant would solve all of our problems. Wrong! They would only create new problems.

We are downwind from what is rated one of the least efficient nuclear facilities in the country. Should it fail and we are forced to evacuate I would hate to see the gridlock created by all the cars that would be on this small island. There are already too many during the peak season.

Secondly, the roof areas, foundations and roads would create a severe stormwater runoff and contaminate our waters.

And last, but not least, the supposedly treated wastewater must be pumped someplace. Upcoast it goes into the rivers, and they are having

problems just as severe as ours. It has been suggested that it be pumped out into the ocean but even this is no guarantee that the waters won't become polluted. And then there are those times when the system breaks down and the raw sewage bubbles up near the treatment facility. A sewer system is not a quick fix.

It stands to reason that until such time as engineers and scientists, along with appointed officials, can come up with a system that handles the sewage and stormwater runoff, and allows for orderly evacuation of the area, the septic systems can and will do a job.

This, of course, assumes that each and every property owner is willing to establish a limit, and the number of occupants is determined by the size of their septic system. By reducing the overcrowding we also reduce the strain on our various service operations. And you, as a property owner, will reduce your cost of upkeep and prolong the life of your valuable property.

Crawford A. Hart Jr.  
Holden Beach

## Reducing The Deficit

To the editor:

One of the greatest myths about government spending and the economy is the belief that the public sector can produce net new economic investment and jobs simply by raising taxes and spending more money, which is full of holes.

You will not have produced any net new jobs or any new investment in the economy via a host of government programs such as roads, bridges, job training, etc., which will only produce some short-term public employment in those specific sectors.

The economy is weak because government spending is taking too much out of the economy through taxes and borrowing. When government curbs spending and cuts taxes, the economy always regains its health.

The deficit can be resolved by eliminating waste, fraud and unethical practice in the supply system, food stamps, welfare, health care, procurement, contracts, foreign aid, pilferage, pork barrel, junkets, perks, duplications, etc. Also by eliminating wasteful and useless grants and subsidies, especially in research and studies.

Therefore, the government should not raise new taxes until the above situation/problems are corrected. Also, the government shouldn't favor the special interest groups and lobbyists over the public interest.

Hundreds, thousands of jobs can be available in the employment market providing only one member of a household is employed by a governmental agency, so that another household member may obtain a job.

Workfare should replace welfare.  
James Somerset  
Mims, Fla.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Somerset is a former resident of Grissetown.)

## Praise For BCC

To the editor:

Currently I am attending Brunswick Community College. I find it very convenient to be able to take an English course at the Leland location of the college.

I believe anyone who lives in this county should consider it well worth their time to further their education at Brunswick Community College. The benefits of attending BCC to the local community are invaluable.

I even know of many students who come to BCC from areas outside of Brunswick County. It is my belief that these students choose to travel because of the smaller class sizes and attention given to them from the instructors. I found this to be true in my English course. My instructor, Kim Knochel, offered me much consideration and even extra help if needed.

BCC offers many classes at satellite campus sites, such as the one I attended in Leland. I understand there are many other satellite campuses throughout the county.

Many people I have spoken to share their success stories with me. More and more BCC graduates are finding good jobs or even setting up their own small businesses. Once again, I would recommend attending BCC to anyone.

Betty Sanders  
Winnabow

## Award Was Deserved

To the editor:

The recent naming of Lt. Ron Hewett of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department as the DARE officer of the year was one award we can heartily agree with, as it was well deserved.

Lt. Hewett is a fine example of a young man who gives his all to the performance of something in which he really believes. Brunswick County should rightfully be proud of his efforts and performance.

Our sincere congratulations!  
Len Ferguson  
Calabash



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

**BROWN THRASHERS** are found in all parts of the Carolinas at all seasons of the year.

## The Thrasher Can Sing

BY BILL FAVER

Within the next few weeks we can expect to hear a brown thrasher singing from the top of a small tree. Now is the time when we can see this blue jay-sized bird with the heavily striped breast and reddish-brown back.



FAVER

One of the "mimic thrushes" in our area, the brown thrasher joins the mockingbird and the catbird in singing songs of other birds in our area. We are told the mockingbird will sing a bird's song three times in a row and the catbird only once. The brown thrasher sings the song twice, and this can be a clue to the identity when the bird cannot be seen.

Brown thrashers are about 11½ inches long with strong legs, a long tail, a slightly curved bill, and a yellow eye. The only similar birds of the same color are the thrushes with shorter tails, no wing bars, heavily spotted breasts, and brown eyes.

Thrashers are found in all sections of the Carolinas at all seasons. Overgrown fields, hedgerows, woodland edges, and yards are the preferred habitats. They prefer to feed on the ground, scratching among dead leaves for grubs, beetles, grasshoppers, caterpillars, and other insects. Thrashers also eat seeds and fruits, but insects make up more than 60 percent of their diet. The noisy "thrashing about" under the shrubs is probably the source of the bird's name. They can be heard when they can't be seen, since they are often secretive and difficult to see.

Nests are cupped and bulky with several layers of small twigs and sticks, leaves, grasses, paper, string, and other soft materials. Fine roots line the inside of the cup and make the bed for the 3 to 6 greenish blue-tinted eggs spotted with reddish-brown. Nests may be placed within one foot of the ground up to 5 to 6 feet and are usually in bushes, vines, or low-growing shrubs.

Incubation takes 12 to 14 days and the young stay in the nest about 11 days. Both parents share in the nesting duties beginning in mid-May and the can raise 2 to 3 broods each season.

Listen for the thrasher's song and take time to watch these very interesting birds as they live among us.

## Tech Prep Is Coming

Tech Prep.

You're going to be hearing those words a lot between now and the start of the fall school term, as both Brunswick Community College and Brunswick County Schools begin gearing up for a new level of cooperation.

At a recent meeting William Furfless, vocational education director for the county schools, noted that he had never seen the type of positive response before that he's gotten for Tech Prep.

That's because, I think, Tech Prep is designed to fill a void in public education that the people who hire high school graduates have long been aware of, as have employees of the state's community college system: High school graduates are leaving school without the skills they need to move either into skills training at community colleges or directly into the workforce.

Last fall, for instance, 89 percent of the incoming freshmen tested at Brunswick Community College required at least one math course, and in some cases two or three, before they could even begin taking college credit math courses. In some cases the students may not have had the prerequisite courses, perhaps because they didn't decide until late in their high school career or even after graduation to continue their education. Tech Prep should help change all that.

The Tech Prep/Associate Degree program agreement between the state's public schools and community colleges has as its goal to prepare at least 85 percent of all high school students through a Tech Prep or College Prep course of study.

An article in this month's Smithsonian magazine which says, "Germany prepares kids for good jobs; we were preparing ours for Wendy's," perhaps sums up the problem. "As college—any kind of liberal arts diploma—came to be seen as the only ticket to success, the country backed away from apprenticeship. In high schools, so-called shop courses evolved into a dumping ground for students who couldn't cope with (or had little interest in) education aimed at college. The idea that schools should prepare students to fill a niche in an industrialized society was regarded as elitist and un-American."

Attitudes in education and among society in general are changing, hallelujah. While not demeaning the value of a broad liberal education background, we're taking a second look at American education in general, partly because of a shortage of skilled workers and the need to revive American industry. Work-based learning, apprenticeships and other programs such as Tech Prep are gaining popularity and credibility.

BCC and the local schools have wanted to go with Tech Prep for several years, but the planning had to be put on hold until funds were available. Now they're moving at a near-dizzying pace, hoping that the rest of the money they need to put the program in gear will fall into place at the right times.

What will Tech Prep mean? The program takes a slightly different form in each community. But in general we can expect more attention to be paid in the public schools to students who may not be definitely bound for four-year schools.

That's good, especially given that all the job trend data we receive suggests that some of the best jobs in the future are going to go to those with two-year degrees in skilled fields. It means beefing up vocational education. It means high schools guiding students in curricula that include more and higher level math, science and communication courses. Teaching students good employment habits such as punctuality, inquisitiveness, cooperation, and thinking for themselves. It means paying more attention to non-four-year college prep students and their needs—giving them, as Furfless says, "a reason to stay in school."

It means high school students perhaps getting college credit for some technical courses they've taken. It means community colleges offering higher levels of technical courses to better prepare students for work.

Our high school students stand to gain, the community colleges stand to gain. But I think business and industry have the most to gain. After all, they will be getting a better prepared employee. As one businessman said in the Smithsonian article, "It really comes down to having thinking people on the shop floor."

Bravo. Stay tuned and start getting acquainted with the concept of Tech Prep. It's coming.



Susan Usher

## Houston Responds To Articles About Lawsuit Against County

To the editor:

I am writing to correct two misimpressions regarding the case of Houston and Associates vs. Brunswick County which appeared in a portion of your March 4 article on the Brunswick County Commissioners' meeting.

Contrary to the statement in the article, Houston and Associates has in fact filed a formal appeal. Contrary to the implication of the article, Mr. (David) Clegg (county manager and attorney) was and remained one of the attorneys of record for the county throughout the case and trial.

Although not the county's only lawyer, Mr. Clegg was attorney of record for the county, along with several outside attorneys. This fact is readily apparent from a review of the pleadings filed by the county, all of which were signed by Clegg. The pleadings also clearly reflect the filing of the appeal.

As your earlier articles on the case indicated, the case was tried on two issues: (1) Who breached the contract, Houston and Associates or the county? (2) How much in damages should the party breaching the contract pay?

The jury found the county breached. This finding was amply supported by the evidence presented at the

trial and has not been appealed by the county. However, the only evidence on damages suffered by Houston was that Houston was damaged in the amount of \$396,200. At trial the county did not challenge the accuracy of this figure or present any evidence supporting any other figure.

Without any factual basis and contrary to the instructions of the court, the jury entered a damages award of only \$50,000. Houston's appeal is simply that the appellate court should direct that judgment be entered for the full amount of damages shown by the evidence and that the jury's award was not supported by any proper evidence.

Houston and Associates fully expects the appellate court to correct this obvious error and either enter judgment in Houston's favor for the entire amount of damages, or order a retrial on the damages issue alone.  
Jay R. Houston

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