



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

LET YOUR IMAGINATION lead you in thinking about this brown pelican and his unusual pose.

How About A Guessing Game?

Sometimes watching birds along the beach can turn into a real guessing game. Not just guessing which bird species we are seeing, but trying to guess what the birds are doing or what kind of behavior they are exhibiting.

A good species for this guessing exercise is the brown pelican, the familiar local birds we see just about every day.

I often wonder what the individual birds are doing as they fly just above the waves, sometimes in flocks of many birds. Just when you pick out the leader and decide the game is "follow the leader," one pelican will peel away and fly in the opposite direction.

Did he change his mind? Or see some fish the others missed? Or is he showing his independence?

We are told by those who study such things that these birds only react to conditions in their environment and learn to respond to stimuli as they evolve a

system for feeding, surviving, and reproducing.

We have also been told it is "anthropomorphic" for us to attribute human characteristics to our birds and other animals. Still, it is fun to guess what their behaviors mean, or to "put words in their mouths."

Look at the pelican pictured above. What does this unusual pose suggest to you? Maybe this pelican is a choirleader leading a choir, or an orchestra conductor. Or could it be an aerobics instructor leading the bird aerobics group? How about a politician giving a Nixon-like victory sign? Or a minister pronouncing a benediction over his flock? Or, perhaps it is only a "praise pelican" enjoying the sunshine and the water and expressing its joy in being alive?

Let your imagination lead you in thinking about this one bird. And then watch for others along our beaches, waterways, and roadsides and see what fun you can have with this "guessing game."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The photo accompanying Bill Faver's column last week was mistakenly attributed to Mr. Faver. Susan Usher took the picture.



FAVER

On Big Brother's Broad Back

Every day the message gets stronger that people want government off their backs. They're sick to death of paying taxes, being regulated, and serving as unwilling financiers of bloated and self-perpetuating bureaucracies.

Until, that is, there's a natural disaster or emergency. Then, by golly, they expect—no, demand—to be harnessed onto the broad back of Big Brother, high and dry, safe and warm, snug as a bug in a rug.

A case in point: those Michigan prep school kids who got rescued from the blizzard in the North Carolina mountains last week. Two co-eds and their parents were on one of the morning talk shows to share the harrowing story of their snow-bound wilderness experience. And granted, it must have been a horrible ordeal for them, huddled together under a tarp with nothing left for nourishment except boiled snow and one lick of peanut butter a day.

The kids seemed to take the calamity in stride, proud that their survival training had paid off and that they had been brought out alive. However, one father had the nerve to criticize park officials for failing to warn the group that their planned excursion might be ill-advised.

Come again? If you've been anywhere in Pisgah National Forest or the Great Smoky Mountains National Park more than a quarter-mile off the parkway, you know it's not a country club. There's no guard gate or check-in desk. How (and whether) you survive is predicated on your preparedness, your skill, your fitness, and whether or not your number is up.

And that, along with the preservation of some of the most beautiful gifts God has given us, is the point, as well as the allure, of wilderness.

But that won't deter the well-heeled parents of those girls with the straightened teeth, Ralph Lauren

Lynn Carlson



wardrobes and patrician accents. They'll call on their congressman, try to rattle some Park Service cages, and maybe even succeed at getting a few rangers fired for absolutely no good reason.

How much protection do we really need from ourselves, and how much insulation from reality do we require? A good bit, it would seem.

This is, naturally, the week of the obligatory how-I-spent-my-winter-storm column. Here's mine:

Saturday morning dawned ominously, with sharp lightning and thunderclaps punctuating a ripping wind. We woke at 6, worried that the power would go off soon and coffee-making might cease to be an option. I did some housework while Eric wandered off to the beach in his foul weather gear.

By mid-morning the wind settled down a little, the sun came out and it looked as if the rain would end earlier than had been forecast. I took some shrimp out of the freezer for dinner. It was an hour before high tide, and the water level in the canal outside our back door looked about right.

I called my sister, who was watching the first foot of snow accumulate on her patio in Asheville, and was relieved to learn she had electricity, food and the company of her fiancé.

Close to noon, I showered and started looking around for Eric, since the power had gone out and

things were getting a little iffy outside. It was past high tide, but the water was still rising and the wind was fierce.

Eric came upstairs and said the canal was coming over the bulkhead and we needed to rescue what we could from the downstairs storage room. It came fast, rising to within an inch of Eric's car door before the tide finally turned.

At the height of the tide, the *Beacon's* sports editor Doug Rutter, who lives nearby, forded our street in his red Subaru. His downstairs apartment had flooded and he needed a dry hangout to weather the storm.

All afternoon, the three of us took turns wandering from window to window, saying little, watching the spectacle outside.

From the front door we saw the marsh fill up, first with water and then with wads of pink insulation blowing from beneath a house under construction. A portable toilet overturned and began floating down the street, along with a couple of garbage cans and their racks.

On the canal side, we watched three docks float off their pilings. It was raining shingles, along with an occasional piece of guttering or vinyl siding.

As it started getting dark, we rounded up the kerosene lanterns, attached a propane bottle to our old reliable gas heater, and realized we were getting hungry. Forget the shrimp. It would have to be cold meatloaf sandwiches, cheese, crackers and peanut butter.

We got out the cards and the coin cache and played a little poker by lamplight while listening to the mini-dramas unfolding on the portable police scanner. While we slept, the storm rolled away; the power came on just as we awakened.

It was a weekend to remember, but not to repeat.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Removing 'Odious' Language Shows Hope For Republicans

To the editor:

Kudos to the GOP delegates who had the following wording removed from the education preamble, as reported in the March 4 issue of *The Brunswick Beacon*: "Instead of training our children to be self-centered and focused on their 'feelings' and 'rights,' and 1,001 ways to have sex..."

The author presents a splendid example of specious reasoning.

Just as I was convinced that the Republican party had become pharisaic and incognizant of the beliefs and diversity of the American people, the removal of this odious language emits a glimmer of hope for the restructuring of a once grand and truly representative party.

As we approach the 21st century, perhaps the GOP will finally see the light of day and climb out of the 19th century.

Would the author of the deleted wording care to share with those of us who are obviously sexually illiterate the 1,001 ways?

Carol Spear Hemlein
Calabash

Support Brunswick Youth Choir

To the editor:

We asked for musicians to come out and help with the Brunswick County Youth Choir. We also asked parents to bring the youths ages 9 to 18. We've gotten little cooperation.

Are we as adults concerned about our youth as we say we are? So far I've had 20 children in the choir who've been faithful and want something better than hanging out on the corner. I talked to lots of adults who promised their assistance. Where are you now?

Let's look at our children for a moment. We complain about their being on street corners, and about drugs, robbing and killing. Now the adults say we want to offer them a better tomorrow. Do we? We go to church and tell God we love all the children. Here's a chance to show some of that love.

The children are our future, so let's not throw them out to the streets. Let's have less talk and more action.

Joyce Wise
Southport

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ms Wise is director of the Brunswick County Youth Choir.

Praise For BEMC During Storm

To the editor:

The employees of Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation are to be commended for prompt and sustained job performance during the storm of the century.

The men and women of the co-op, the general manager and at least one member of the board of directors worked through the night during very adverse weather conditions to restore electrical service.

Michael D. Powell
Shallotte

Gaston Zoning Experience

To the editor:

As a property owner in Gaston and Brunswick counties, I thought the residents of Brunswick County might be interested in what happened up here. The Seven Lords in our county commissioners' seats tried to ram a county-wide zoning ordinance down our throats. The people up here were so upset that the commissioners had to have armed police for escorts.

They were so low-down that they held meetings in rooms that would only seat 30 people, with hundreds standing out in the street with our local police up on rooftops, dressed all in black. I suppose they were there to shoot us because we wanted what was and always has been our right to do with our land what we want, as long as our neighbors aren't bothered.

I can't begin to tell you folks down there how proud I

am of the common folks up here. The working men and women and retired people stood up to the Seven Lords and said "enough is enough."

We voted out all of the old heads but three, and they are next on the block and know it. As Ross Perot has been saying all along: It is your government. The commissioners are employed by you. Make them do what you want, not what they want.

Robert E. Greene
Gastonia

Hats Off To Emergency Workers

To the editor:

After paying close attention to the fire and rescue frequencies Friday afternoon, and talking with some of the responders at the scene of Friday's bus accident, I would like to take my hat off to all who participated in the rescue and care of the victims involved.

I feel that some special recognition and thanks are appropriate. First to the Highway Patrol and Sheriff's Department for their quick response and efficient crowd and traffic control at the scene. Second, to the Supply Fire Department for their quick response and assistance in removing the injured from the bus and assisting Emergency Medical Services personnel at the scene. Third, to the ambulance crews from around the county who responded to treat and transport the injured, as well as covering areas left open by local ambulances being tied up at the scene.

Last, but certainly not least, to EMS Director Doug Ledgett, who handled the situation with the cool, calm professionalism that it takes to keep this type of incident from becoming a gross tragedy. His coordination of many EMS and rescue sources saved many precious minutes when they count the most.

One of the amazing aspects of this coordination is that it was all done from the front seat of his vehicle, with a radio in one hand, a telephone in the other, and well-trained personnel performing their jobs and relaying information. Mr. Ledgett knew how many injuries there were, the severity of the injuries and which hospitals had room and physicians on hand to handle the injuries. In approximately 30 minutes all the injured were removed from the bus, triaged and either at a hospital or in route to a hospital.

Were we "lucky" that all of this could be accomplished in such a short time? The answer is no, we weren't "lucky." The people responding to this emergency—both paid personnel and volunteers—are well-disciplined and trained to perform their parts efficiently, effectively, and in minimal time.

With the proper training and equipping of the people responding to an emergency, loss of life and property can be held to a minimum. All too often when fire, rescue and EMS units submit their budget requests to the local municipalities and the county each year for funding, they have an uphill battle just to get enough funds to survive. Every year the cost of vehicle maintenance rises, along with the costs for training and education.

I can only hope that the county commissioners, as well as local officials, when putting together next year's budgets, will keep in mind one thing. Most emergency service personnel don't want to be trained to handle "worst case scenarios," certainly hope they are not called to one, but never know when they may be called upon because of one.

My heart goes out to the victims of last Friday's accident and their families are doing as well as can be expected under the circumstances. Before I sign off, let me ask one more question. How many of these families thought it could never happen to them, that it's always the "other guy,"

Dan Liebl
Brunswick County Volunteer Firefighter

Readers Respond To Resignation Of County Manager, Attorney

To the editor:

The resignation of David Clegg is a serious loss to the people of Brunswick County, who admired his honesty and integrity in county management.

There are questions regarding his resignation concerning rumors as to what the newly elected county commissioners wanted him to do. These rumors include:

■ Pay over \$300,000 to Houston Associates when the jury mandated a \$50,000 settlement. Why?

■ Settle with the former clerk (Regina Alexander) with back pay and reinstatement to her former position.

■ Create positions for two former county commissioners, which smacks of cronyism.

My only hope is that the county commissioners will have the guts to answer to these rumors, bring everything out into the open and appoint a new manager who will be as politically independent as David Clegg.

It appears that the county commissioners are waging a campaign to harass a number of county department heads. This action can cause a deterioration of morale in county government and the concern of voters.

Eileen Kellagher
Long Beach

Politics As Usual

To the editor:

David Clegg, good for you! You told the county commissioners what they can do with your job.

And you, stupid county commissioners, I hope you are now happy. You have lost one of the best managers Brunswick County has ever had.

I'm a life-long Democrat, but I was very impressed with the previ-

ous all-Republican board. Under David Clegg's wise and intelligent guidance, they made decisions that were good for the county, not because they were good for politics.

This present board of commissioners has done nothing but cause trouble. They are more interested in "politics as usual" than they are in making wise decisions for the good of the county. (Commissioner) Wayland Vereen either "doesn't know," "isn't prepared for a comment" or "wants to think about it." If he were honest about it, he'd say, "Bill Stanley hasn't told me what to do yet."

I wish Mr. Clegg a lot of luck. He will be missed. He should say some prayers for the county commissioners; they'll need them.

May I make some suggestions for Mr. Clegg's replacement? How about Mike Lord or John Smith? Stephanie Meadows
Southport

'Monumental Loss'

To the editor:

My fellow Brunswick Countians have experienced a loss of monumental proportions. We have lost the most forward-looking, competent county manager and attorney (David Clegg) that this county ever had. I knew him well and am very sad and worried over the effect this will have on our beloved county.

We the people: old-timers, natives, young people, children, new residents, the schools, industry and businesses are the losers, not the new county commissioners. They have their own agenda!

Rumors are that Chairman Don Warren wants relief from his job as commissioner to be the interim county manager, and Commissioner Wayland Vereen wants to be the

next county sheriff.

The extent of our loss cannot be calculated. We will never know how good it would have been five or ten years down the road. The book is closed; the past has returned with all its political infighting and acceptance of the status quo.

We will now be subjected to the political gridlock and self-serving firings and hirings that existed in past eras before the 1990-1992 period of improved governmental leadership and farsightedness.

If I were allowed one prayer to be answered for the benefit of my friends and fellow citizens of Brunswick County, it would be this: Dear Lord, please give us another David Clegg and a board of commissioners reminiscent of the 1990-1992 leaders.

Bob Slockett
Yaupon Beach, NC

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Slockett was an unsuccessful Republican candidate for Brunswick County Commissioner in 1992, losing to Wayland Vereen.

Ashamed Democrat

Reading of David Clegg's resignation upset me more than I can say. Mr. Clegg performed his duties with intelligence, integrity and commitment to Brunswick County.

He will be missed, and I fear what will happen to Brunswick County without his guidance. I am ashamed and embarrassed to admit I'm a Democrat. Hopefully, as the old Democrats in Brunswick County die off, things will change.

Who will we get as our new county manager? Who would want to work with the county commissioners, at any salary?

Richard T. Hamden
Shallotte