

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Soles Bill Stacks Deck In Favor of District 1

Given Senator R.C. Soles' powerful position as deputy president pro tempore of the N.C. Senate, there is good reason to believe that his bill calling for a vote to divide Calabash and Carolina Shores will clear the Senate as written. This despite the fact that the measure conceivably could allow a very small number of unhappy Calabash residents to force a split that the majority may very well oppose.

The Soles bill provides for a referendum on removing Carolina Shores Village from the Town of Calabash as of June 30, subject to the approval of a majority of voters in either voting district. The operative word is "either," and therein lies the problem.

In 1989, both districts voted in favor of consolidating to form what is, at least for now, the Town of Calabash. Old Calabash voted 42-36 and Carolina Shores voted 458 to 142. If history were to repeat itself in terms of District 1 turnout, and if even a handful of those voters have changed their minds about the union, as few as three percent of the town's residents conceivably could force a split.

Soles said Calabash and Carolina Shores "incorporated by vote and can unincorporate by vote." However, his bill stacks the deck in favor of District 1, despite some strong indication that a majority of residents of the whole Town of Calabash as it currently exists would like to continue trying to work out the town's deep-seated problems. A good example is the fact that only three of 200 people attending a public hearing on the matter in February said they support the division.

District 1 residents who favor the split have been given some good reasons to throw up their hands in exasperation. The business people and native Brunswick Countians who make up the district have been afforded very little support of their endeavors to make a living and to continue doing so with as little government nitpicking as is possible. But cutting off Carolina Shores won't solve all the problems and may well create some new ones. For instance, a separated Calabash will be bordered in large part by Carolina Shores, cutting off much of the extraterritorial jurisdiction on which the town has come to rely for revenue. And if the past is an indicator, a separated Calabash may have difficulty assembling a municipal government system in which there is healthy public participation.

Since there apparently is no avoiding some sort of vote making the division of Calabash and Carolina Shores possible, it should at least be made a fair vote—one in which 40 or so people in District 1 do not have the power to scuttle an incorporated North Carolina municipality of 1,200 residents.

The people in best position to do that are Reps. David Redwine and Dewey Hill, who have not said publicly whether they will support the Soles bill as is, assuming it reaches the House of Representatives intact. Although Soles says he has conferred with the two representatives "at length" on his plans, Redwine has declined to say whether he will support the bill until he sees what sort of measure the Senate ends up sending the House. We hope Redwine and Hill do their part to make the vote fair by amending the bill to require both districts to approve before a split takes place.

It's too early to give up on the possibility of making the four-year-old union work.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sunset Police Recover Stolen Property Promptly

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter was addressed to Mayor Mason Barber of Sunset Beach. A copy was shared with the Beacon by the author.

To the editor:
 Recently, my wife and I spent two months on the island of Sunset Beach. We enjoyed our stay very much. You truly have a community to be proud of.

Unfortunately, in February, near the end of our stay, our peace was shattered by a robbery at our house as well as another on the same street. We reported this to the Sunset Beach Police Department, but we felt sure we would never recover our property. I was wrong.

The officers promptly responded, took our report and went to work. To make a long story short, your police department solved this case in 72 hours. Within three weeks, we had our property returned to us and the thieves were in jail.

We encountered several officers during that time and were always treated with courtesy, helpfulness and professionalism. Your police department is truly a credit to their community.

To Sgt. Lisa Massey and Officers Hal Macon and Edward Rudloff, a special thank-you and well-done.

Mitchell Faulkenberry
 N. Myrtle Beach
 (More Letters, Following Page)

Worth Repeating...

■Fear tastes like a rusty knife and do not let her into your house. Courage tastes of blood. Stand up straight. Admire the world. Relish the love of a gentle woman. Trust in the Lord.

—John Cheever

■Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.

—Anais Nin

Drop-Out Rate High In Manners 101

A Gastonia physician writing to a Charlotte newspaper says men who keep their caps on while eating in restaurants are "another indication of a cultural decline in our society."

While the infraction seems to me fairly low on the scale of all social blunders, the good doctor is right. When did people get to be as ill-mannered as they are these days?

Folks in Gastonia must be light years beyond lots of other places—our own beloved environs included—if the grossest violation he witnesses on the public dining scene is hat-wearing. In any given week of eating lunch out every day, I invariably encounter:

■a table neighbor whose uncovered death-rattle cough for a full half hour not only ruins my appetite but convinces me that the Black Plague has returned and mutated;

■a toddler whose care-giver blatantly ignores prolonged and repeated shrieks loud enough to make dogs howl in Charleston;

■and countless cap-sporting (or even curler-wearing) diners with both elbows on the table, hunkering over plates, shoveling with one hand and sopping with the other, simultaneously talking and chewing.

Granted, this ain't Manhattan and we're not lunching at La Cote

Lynn Carlson



Basque. But I'm not talking about knowing which fork to use or how to hold your own in the wine-opening ritual with a supercilious waiter. I mean Manners 101.

I had my first formal class in dining etiquette at Miss Funderburk's Little Red Schoolhouse at age 5, right along with learning to tie saddle oxfords and do the bunny-hop. And I'd already heard it at home. But I suppose there are kids out there now who never (never!) have experienced a whole-family sit-down meal or dined in a restaurant that serves water in goblets and uses cloth napkins.

Television's "Frugal Gourmet" recently devoted part of a show to teaching children about table manners, and it was fascinating. He took a group of four kids about eight years old to a fancy restaurant and did a beautiful job of explaining to

them where the manners rules come from, and how they are designed not to intimidate us, but to make us feel more comfortable with each other. They took to it like ducklings to a pond.

But by all means, let's not limit this to a discussion of table manners. I get frequent phone calls at work from people who neither say hello nor identify themselves before they launch into a spiel, making it necessary for me to interrupt and say, "I'm sorry, but I have failed to intuit who you are or what you want from me." Others are busily carrying on a conversation with someone else for several seconds after I've picked up the receiver. Many hang up without saying good-bye.

What happened? Is it that parents no longer have time to teach manners, or has what my elders referred to as "plain old common courtesy" simply gone the way of eight-track tapes?

Part of the problem is that harsh modern realities and our hamster-wheel lifestyles have made us suspend some of the old rules to protect ourselves and our offspring. In the safer world of my childhood, not being attentive and polite to a stranger calling on the phone or knocking on the door would have been a *faux pas*

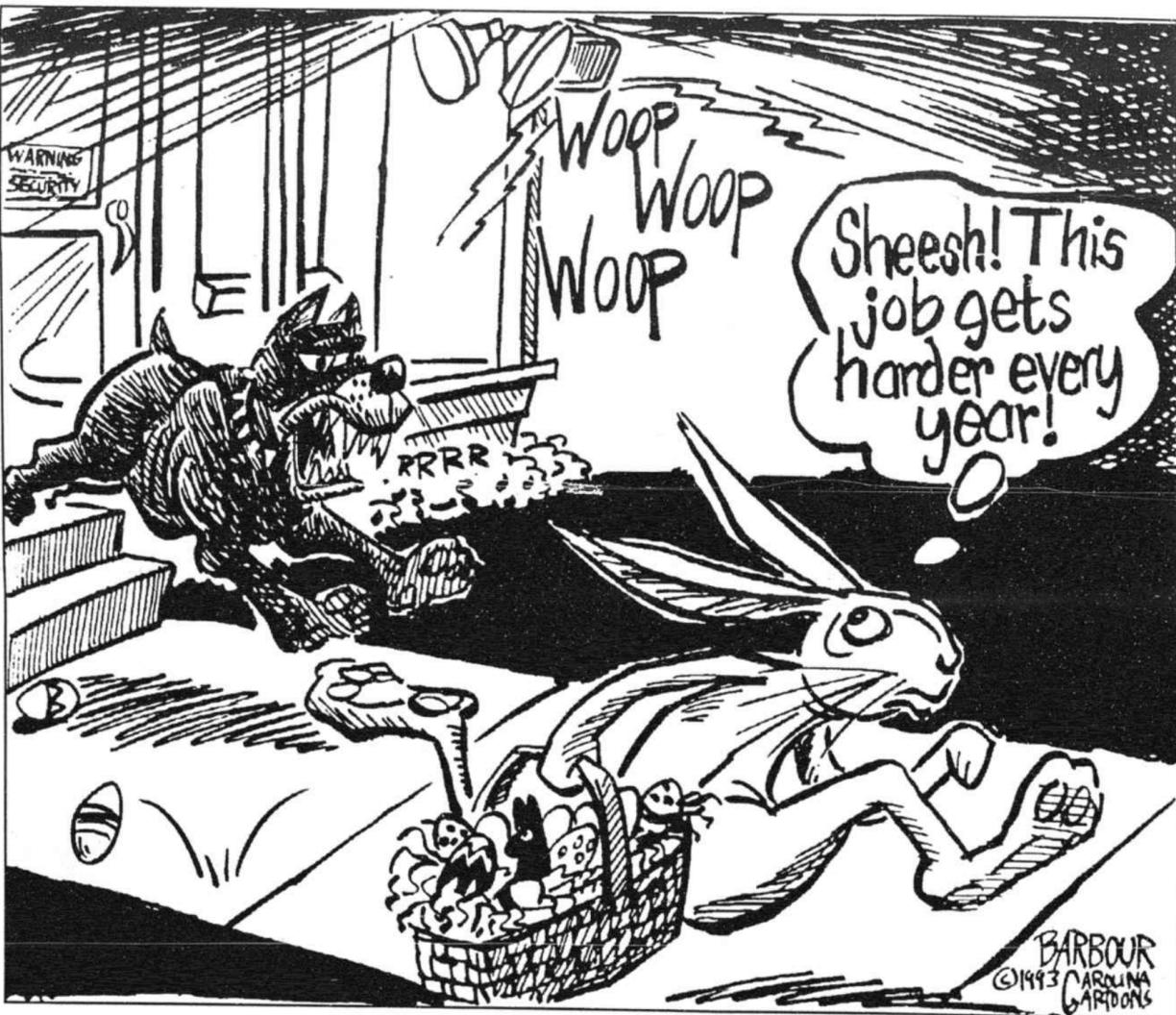
punishable by the familiar parental rhetorical question, "Haven't I taught you better than that?"

But for today's home-alone kids, survival rules like remembering to always leave both the deadbolt and the answering machine engaged must supersede the less essential behavioral rules like remembering to always say "yes ma'am" and "yes sir."

And although my mama would remain unfailingly gracious, even to a telemarketer who called during supper, I've decided that it's perfectly acceptable to suspend all rules of nicety (even to the point of cussin' and hangin' up) when hucksters invade the privacy of my home.

Nonetheless, I'm convinced we suffer as individuals and as a community when the tenets of genteel behavior lose their priority. I remember them all, the silly as well as the sacrosanct. Although I still get a chuckle from the former (never wear white before Easter or after Labor Day, ladies don't smoke on the street, always go to the powder room in pairs), I will always respect the latter (people really DO appreciate a thank-you note).

After all, the rules of behavior we obey when we're young are the highway markers we rely on until we learn the way by heart.



In My Mind I'm On The Road Again

This morning, as I crossed the Holden Beach Bridge, I realized that eleven years ago today I was sitting on a motorcycle rumbling across another bridge—from Nags Head to Roanoke Island—just as I used to do every morning.

Yet I still remember minute details of that ride: how the cool air felt as it wafted into my helmet, the way the sunlight glistened off the water, and how the heavy, fertile aroma of the salt marsh signalled another low tide.

I remember because I wasn't just riding west for another day of work. I was REALLY riding west. Past Manteo, over Croatan Sound, beyond the Alligator River. Then on through Rocky Mount and Atlanta and Birmingham and Shreveport and across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains to California.

Nothing freshens your outlook on life and recharges the batteries of your soul like an epic journey. And for Americans, that means a cross-country road trip.

We seem to be unique in this regard. You won't hear restless Irishmen getting fired up for a blitz trip from Dublin to Galway. Maybe because it's the same distance as from Wilmington to Raleigh.

The (former) Soviet Union is bigger than the United States, but nobody writes songs about driving from Leningrad to Kamchatka. Because they never had a Route 66 (or a little red Corvette) to take them there.

Australia is a bit like America, with two coasts, a vast land mass and a similar breed of adventurers. But there is just too much nothing

Eric Carlson



between Sydney and Perth for a trip like that to catch on.

Lewis and Clark introduced us to the West. Then Horace Greeley urged young men to go there. Kerouac and Cassidy made it the hippest trip in town. Chuck Berry put the road west to music. "Easy Rider" brought it to the screen. Hunter Thompson's acid wit gave tripping west a savage reputation. And Thelma and Louise took it over the edge.

A cross-country journey with "farther" as your only itinerary is the quintessential expression of the American free spirit. To date I've made the BIG DRIVE twice and would do it again in a heartbeat.

A year from now, the only thing I'm likely to remember about the past two months will be the March 13th storm. But even now, eleven years later, I can still re-play every day of that 10,000-mile journey like a mental videotape.

After four days of interstates and hotels, I spent my first night in the southwestern desert. Amid fitful moments of sleep I awoke to behold a luminescent landscape bathed in silence so profound that the scurrying of horned toads echoed off canyon walls like a buffalo stampede.

At dawn I jumped to my feet convinced that an avalanche was bearing down on my campsite. But it was only a mule deer setting a few rocks rolling as it lazily climbed a hillside a thousand yards away.

There were two days of exploration in Carlsbad Caverns. Three nights in the Gila Wilderness. Then an unpleasant visit to the Flagstaff emergency room with a runaway case of poison ivy.

I recall finding Indian petroglyphs in the Grand Canyon. Seeing Libera in Las Vegas. A sunset at Zabriski Point in Death Valley. The wacky world of planet Los Angeles. Chilling out in Big Sur. A pilgrimage to Haight Ashbury. Then up, up, and away along the Pacific Coast highway.

I remember 20 feet of snow at Crater Lake in May. Re-tracing the Oregon Trail. Sleeping beside a moonlit waterfall in Idaho. Real cowboys in Wyoming. Forty-knot winds in Nebraska. Frank Lloyd Wright's "Falling Water" house in Pennsylvania. Old friends in Watkins Glen, N.Y. My brother's graduation in New Hampshire.

You simply can't understand our country's vast diversity until you've driven coast-to-coast. Until you've crossed the endless plains, peered deep into the Grand Canyon and watched the waves crash against our Pacific cliffs.

Everyone ought to do it. In fact, if I were king, I would proclaim it every American's birthright to drive across the country from ocean to ocean. Here's how it might work:

On your 18th birthday you would receive a special credit card. With it, you could go to your nearest airport

and get a one-way ticket to any airport on either coast. There you would use your card to rent a car. (In a perfect world, this would be a Cadillac Eldorado convertible with a killer sound system).

Then, every day for the next two weeks, your card would allow you to charge three modest meals, a hotel room and all the gas and oil your car needs. The only requirement would be that each overnight stop must be at least 200 miles east or west (depending on your starting coast) of the previous night.

After 14 days (and at least 2,800 miles), you would exchange your car for a plane ticket home.

Imagine the boost this travel voucher would give to the economy. A few million people turn 18 each year. If each car makes about 20 trips, the program would boost auto sales by 150,000 units per year. The oil companies, tire makers, mechanics and used car dealers would also get a shot in the arm.

The travel industry could sell another 42 million room nights and 126 million meals annually. The airlines would fill several million additional seats. Retailers across the country would benefit as Easterners bought Western souvenirs and vice versa.

But more importantly, we would grow stronger as a people. Independent ranchers in Wyoming might come to understand the plight of decaying Northeastern cities. Environmentalists in Boston could learn first hand how an unemployed Oregon logger feels about spotted owls.

If nothing else, we'd all have some great stories to tell.