

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Youths Involved In Shooting Not Representative

To the editor:
 I would personally like to respond to your article, "Cedar Grove Youth Shot In Neighborhood Feud" in last week's publication.
 First of all, the feud did not come from the leaders of our church, our incorporated association members, our citizens' league, or our Cedar Grove Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—NAACP. Rather it was the participation of young men doing what young men sometimes will do.

Therefore, coming to the defense of a wonderful people, endowed and blessed of Jehovah God through His son in Holy Spirit, these continue to give service to humanity in many states. They include such honorees as Yale, Harvard, and Oxford matriculants; a West Point graduate; doctors of philosophy; doctors of divinity; lawyers, deputies, state missionary supervisors; state missionary presidents and youth counselors; nurses; homemakers; missionary evangelists; pastors; county personnel directors; regional food service coordi-

nators; educators in administration, supervision and instruction. There is the potential to keep delivering and producing the same to make helpful contributions in the future.
 Seemingly, this happening has magnified the carryings-on of a few of Cedar Grove's children that were hungry for a little excitement, but sought it in the wrong place and way.
 Barbara T. Hewitt
 Cedar Grove Community
 (More Letters, Following Page)

Caudill Case Shows System Has Priorities Upside Down

Crystal Caudill is not in pain anymore. The much-loved 37-year-old Brunswick County native died Friday afternoon after a strong fight against not only an especially pernicious form of breast cancer, but a health insurance system with its priorities upside down.

Most everybody in Brunswick County knew Chris—even those who had never been introduced to her. If you never dropped a dollar into a collection plate or bought a raffle ticket to help pay for her bone marrow transplant, you probably read about her or saw her picture in the newspapers or on television.

Her plight was easy for people to identify with. Though Chris had health insurance—federal employees' insurance, the kind you'd expect to be the top of the line—her Blue Cross and Blue Shield policy failed to cover the long-shot bone marrow transplant treatment she hoped would save her life. She just wanted to see her sons grown up, she said.

She sued and lost, but got the treatment anyway when friends, neighbors and lots of strangers raised enough money to convince Duke University Medical Center to perform the procedure and let the Caudills pay over time. As Chris waited for a ruling on appeal, her time ran out. The transplant didn't work, and the Caudill family remains \$35,000 in debt to Duke.

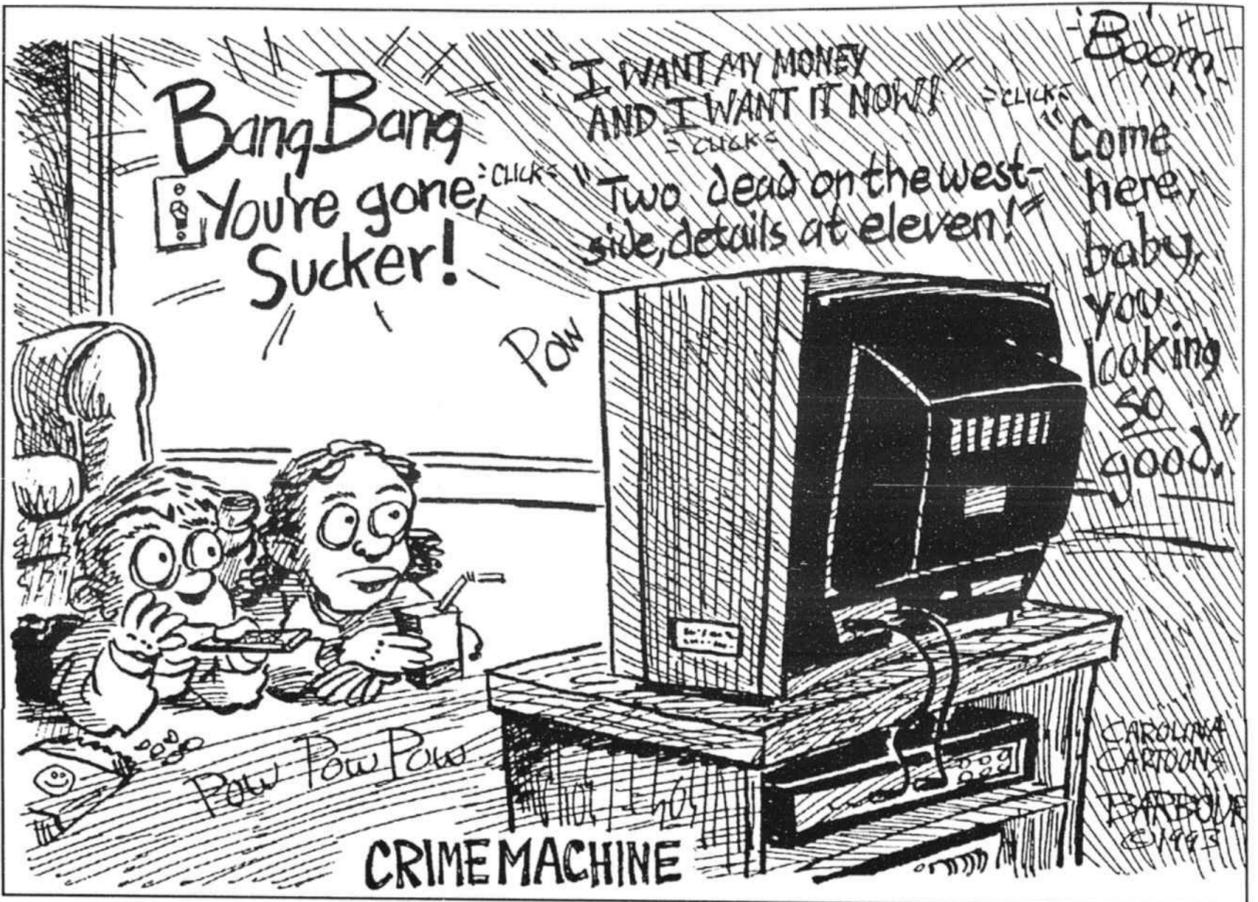
Crystal Caudill shouldn't be remembered just for her lawsuit and medical bills; her loved ones will see to that. But her case should remind us that as long as Americans are forced to rely on medical care that is sickness-based instead of health-based, every community will lose too many women and men who might have been saved if preventive care were more accessible and affordable.

Early detection probably wasn't a factor in Chris's case; she was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 34, before even baseline mammograms are recommended for most women. But her experience reminds us that a fundamental dissonance exists when health care policies will pay for mastectomy but not for mammograms, hospitalization but not immunization, treatment but in most cases not prevention.

If policies paid for more mammograms, there would be fewer mastectomies, less chemotherapy, less long-term disability and less physical and emotional suffering by patients and their families. And more money for the "longshot" kind of treatment a gravely ill young mother desperately seeks when all her other avenues have been exhausted.

Worth Repeating...

- (Baseball) breaks your heart. It is designed to break your heart. The game begins in the spring, when everything else begins again, and it blossoms in the summer, filling the afternoons and evenings, and then as soon as the chill rains come, it stops, and leaves you to face the fall alone.
—A. Bartlett Giamatti
- Avoid fried meats which angry up the blood. If your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts. Keep the juices flowing by jangling around gently as you move. Go very light on the vices, such as carrying on in society. The social ramble ain't restful. Avoid running at all times. Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you.
—Satchel Paige
- There comes a time in every man's life and I've had many of them.
—Casey Stengel



Remember: Words Mean Something

Want to know how to get away with murder?

Most people assume that anyone convicted of killing somebody will go to prison for a very long time. They might even be executed.

What most people don't know is that you can be convicted of causing another person's death and receive a maximum sentence of only five years in prison. Which means—under current early release policies—you would probably be out in less than a year.

Do I have your attention? If so, you are probably wondering what this murderous loophole in the legal system might be. Well, I'm not going to tell you.

What if I did? And what if a reader used that information to kill somebody? You can bet the victim's lawyer would file suit against me for contributing to his client's death. My lawyer would try to defend me on the basis of my First Amendment rights to freedom of the press.

But it is unlikely that a jury or appeals court would accept that argument. Any more than it would excuse someone who yelled "Fire!" in a crowded movie theater, causing a stampede that resulted in someone's death. Because there are limits to our right to free expression.

However, that is not why I'm keeping this information to myself. I won't tell you because it would be wrong to do so. Just as it would be

Eric Carlson



wrong to outline the best method of getting away with burglary or forgery or arson.

Nor would I describe how to avoid suspicion at a police drug interdiction road block. Because a violent cocaine trafficker might take my advice, sneak through a roadblock and kill innocent people in a drug war shoot-out.

Again, lawyers for the victims would accuse me of contributory negligence, saying my advice helped the assailant slip past police to injure their clients. More importantly: Don't you think it would be wrong to offer such advice?

Shalotte lawyer James Payne recently wrote a "Legal Tips" column for a local publication telling readers (drug dealers and all) the best way to slip through a Brunswick County Sheriff's Department highway drug watch without being stopped.

"When you are driving through such checkpoints, remember that in the bushes the police officers are

watching your car for any suspicious activity," Payne writes.

He paints an ominous picture of a "cruiser from nowhere" that might descend on you merely for applying your brakes or failing to switch on your turn signal. He warns that two other police officers will swoop down and scare you into consenting to a search in which "your car is torn from limb to limb."

And what is Payne's advice to the innocent motorists (and the violent drug traffickers) who might read his column?

"The answer is simple," he writes. "Refuse to allow anyone under any such circumstances to search your car."

Obviously, Payne did not write his column for the purpose of helping drug dealers avoid the law. I expect his intent was to inform readers of their constitutional right not to be subjected to unreasonable searches and seizures.

And while his column was clearly controversial, it was not unethical and was, I'm told, legally accurate.

But nowhere does Payne acknowledge the existence of a drug problem in Brunswick County. He expresses no sympathy for those whose lives have been lost or shattered by drug abuse. He says nothing about the innocent victims of drug-motivated crime.

Instead, he asks readers to feel

sorry for some client of his who was arrested at a local checkpoint, charged with felony cocaine possession "and had to go to trial simply because a drug was found in his car."

Boo hoo. Payne's comments about local police are shocking, and they are justifiably outraged about his column.

He writes: "You must remember that the law enforcement officers are not out to help you. They are trying to find evidence sufficient to give them probable cause to arrest you."

Those words were written by a former chairman of the Republican party who publicly champions "family values" and who recently urged party members to work toward making government "get out of your way so you as individuals can make it or break it on your own."

As Republican guru Rush Limbaugh constantly reminds his followers, "Words DO mean something."

With that in mind, consider this closing statement from Payne, who ran for a seat on the Brunswick County Board of Education, which oversees the police officer who teaches the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program:

"Please remember that when the officer asks you for permission to search your car, you do not have to give it," advises Payne. "In other words, JUST SAY NO."

What Does It Take For Educational Reform To Really Work?

Educational reform isn't something unique to Brunswick County, or even North Carolina. Everybody's doing it—East Harlem, N.Y., Kentucky, and Gainesville, Fla., among others.

In fact, the Tar Heel state has been a mite slow, which may ultimately work to our advantage if we learn what has worked and hasn't worked in other school systems, other states. Some of those experiences were aired in a public television documentary recently.

Since reform is certainly in the air here, I was all ears. I wanted to share some of what I heard with you, because educational reform will affect us all, as consumers, parents, students, taxpayers.

Reformers compare education in the United States today to the auto industry of the 1970s and warn that unless major restructuring takes place, the two will have even more in common.

Kentucky had already tried the fads of the '80s—more teacher pay, longer school terms, merit pay and career ladders, and found nothing changed—when a bold court order

Susan Usher



forced sweeping changes from the top down by legislative action. The changes were funded by the state's largest tax increase ever, \$1.3 billion. Educators and parents believe the changes can and are making a difference in how teachers teach and how and what children learn.

Since 1990 schools have been reorganized; decisions are made at the school level, with parental involvement; elementary classrooms are ungraded; students and teachers have access to new technologies; teachers are involving students in active, cooperative learning aimed at improving their ability to solve problems, make decisions and simply think. School campuses include preschool programs and family centers that provide an array of service

to bolster the family, and schools and teachers are being held accountable for how well students perform on skill application tests that bear little resemblance to the true-false, multiple choice quizzes of earlier days.

East Harlem was the first district in New York to try bold changes, including schools by choice. The district created specialized schools offering quality programs within their emphasis. They are small, 200 to 300 students, in order to create a sense of community. Parents were told they could send their children to any school in District 4. If principals couldn't turn around schools with declining enrollments, they were closed.

Since then, test scores have gone up and students and their families seem more enthusiastic about schools and learning.

The greatest opposition came from fellow educators outside the district. Now they are beginning to see that choice may just work, if you offer families quality education.

But what happened in Rochester,

N.Y.? Everyone there wanted the schools to change, to improve, and embraced the so-called "Rochester Plan." Four years later parents were still waiting for change, feeling like they had been sold a bill of goods at a high price.

Teachers wanted "professional pay" and got it, 40 percent pay raises, with the potential of earning up to \$70,000 a year. In turn they were to make home visits and get to know their students' home circumstances.

Parents and educators were to make the decisions in managing local schools. But the plans passed on to local schools weren't very detailed.

These days educators and parents are fighting in most of the schools; teachers refuse to make home visits, saying that is the job of social workers; and parents feel they are being left out of the decision-making process. They're ready to wipe the slate clean and start over.

"The biggest challenge," noted show host Thomas H. Kean, "was not embracing the new, but letting go of the old."

The two biggest mistakes he sees

in Rochester: not enough time or money spent in training the teachers, the people expected to make the most changes; and a failure in accountability.

In Gainesville, Fla., sweeping reforms are also in the works. From a Headstart program has evolved a program that works with preschoolers and their parents. Parents can learn parenting skills, improve their own educational levels, and access a variety of services from Food Stamp eligibility to job training at the family service center.

Organizers recruit door-to-door because they believe that once families find that the people behind the program really do care, they'll take more interest as well. They believe the benefits of offering high-quality programs to this target group will pay off in several ways: That students will be able to hold on to the gains they make early on, unlike previous Headstart graduates who often fell backward because of family and home situations. They foresee cost savings to society through preventive action for parents and youngsters, as well as the creation of a stronger community through

collaborative efforts.

What lessons can we draw from these models?

Kean suggests four for any system considering educational reforms they want to endure beyond the terms of key charismatic personalities:

- Provide incentives. Reward those who make changes; change won't happen simply because it's the thing to do;
 - Invest more time and money on teacher development, make reform easier for the people you expect to do the most changing;
 - Change must be radical, sweeping, rather than delicate or gradual;
 - Truly involve parents; don't simply give lip-service to the concept of shared decision-making and accountability.
- Common sense ideas all, but somehow, systems all around have missed one or another in putting together their recipe for success. Perhaps we can avoid that. Our schools can do better and we know how to make it happen. Let's make sure it happens.