

Mixed Signals From Another Time

BY BILL FAVER

As a child I was fortunate to know two grandfathers. One was a country doctor who had mostly retired and spent many days and hours with me sharing his knowledge and observations of nature. The other was a small farmer who had barely survived the Depression and, among other things, was scared to death of snakes.



FAVER

I learned from one to love and appreciate nature. I got mixed signals from the other about the natural world, and especially about snakes, skinks, and anything else that might cause harm.

To this second grandfather, any snake in a brush pile or on a rocky wall was a cottonmouth; any snake in a path or among the cotton rows was a rattler; and anything in or near the water was a water moccasin. I did learn from him to be cautious around snakes, and it took a long time for me to learn to tolerate the non-poisonous kinds.

Some time spent in Florida's Everglades helped me learn to appreciate snakes, and we kept several rat snakes in a storage shed to control mice. We could observe black racers and black and golden rat snakes almost everyday. We watched king snakes eat water snakes and frogs. We also learned to be aware and cautious, for many of the species were poisonous.

So those mixed signals and a certain amount of curiosity have made it possible for me to learn about several of our most familiar species. Most seem to want to get away from us as quickly as we want to avoid them. At a respectable distance, we can watch them glide along a path or chase a frog or climb a tree. A good long lens on the camera enables us to



NOT ALL SNAKES are poisonous, but this copperhead, photographed from a boat on the Lockwood Folly River, is.

capture a closeup without having to get too close to our subject.

We can see the "savage tooth and claw of nature" when we watch a black rat snake destroy a mockingbird's nest and consume the eggs or the young birds. We can understand that snakes are

predators and have a place in nature just as we do. Perhaps we should curb our automatic response to kill snakes and take time to learn about their habits and their part in our world.

After all, they were here long before my grandfather was!

MORE LETTERS

Business Owner Has Stories Of Problems With Inspector

To the editor:

This is to support attorney Benedict Del Re in his lawsuit against the Town of Calabash and Ed Schaack, building inspector.

I have been harassed, too. The Town of Calabash claimed an easement deed on my deed, named it Somerset Drive, used Powell Bill money to pave it 21 feet, even over my parking lot and gave permission for business adjoining it to add far more parking than I have for my business. This is causing traffic problems for my customers trying to get off the state road to my business.

Now they state, after the damage is done, and say in a letter to me that they do not own it, nor was it dedicated to them, and that they do not have enough Powell Bill tax money to keep it up.

The other end of the easement has a sign, "Private Road—Keep Out." Who is "Town Hall" they say you can't fight? I have worked hard for what I have and should not have to give it away.

Mr. Schaack called the health department to come and inspect a complaint of me throwing chemicals on the ground. The health department found this untrue; it was cat litter.

Mr. Schaack also had my "Adopt-a-Highway" sign moved behind a store from an ideal intersection, but the gentlemen at the N.C. Highway Department said give him three days and he would see it back in its correct location. Upon consulting Mr. Schaack about the situation, he stated it had no business there, and I thought he looked like a bulldog ready to bite.

Why enforce and condemn some and not others? There are chicken lots in the middle of town. If someone wants a wake-up call at the motel, I tell them to raise their windows and listen to the roosters.

Let's call it either politics or discrimination. Good luck to Mr. De Re.

Peggy Thompson
Calabash

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is owner of the Calabash Motel.

What About Seniors?

To the editor:

After the budget charade put on by County Manager John Harvey, no one in Brunswick County will be surprised at anything the adopted budget may contain.

However, the addition of two museums and the omissions of the senior citizens does cause me concern.

Southport's Maritime Museum is proposed to receive \$20,000, and Ocean Isle's Museum of Coastal Carolina, \$10,000. In previous budgets the senior citizens were given \$25,000, with \$5,000 going to each

district.

Compared to the budget, \$25,000 is just a drop in the bucket. Senior citizens' contributions and volunteer work are immeasurable. A few weeks ago Doshier Hospital stated that the hospital auxiliary, many of whom are senior citizens, had saved the hospital a very large sum of money.

Senior citizens volunteer for the Special Olympics, etc. Call for a beach or road clean-up and the senior citizens respond in numbers. Look at any worthwhile project with a meager budget, and you always find senior citizens involved.

Ask yourself this: "What would Brunswick County be like if every senior citizen moved away? Who would pick up the slack?"

Don't you think it's time Brunswick County showed its appreciation for the contributions of senior citizens?

M.L. LaMar
Yaupon Beach

Pork-Barrel Time

To the editor:

Pork barrel time is upon us once more. I'm referring to the "give-away fund."

This is always close to the hearts of the county commissioners. One might say that it is another form of vote-buying, but now the money is coming from the taxpayers.

The law mandates that we pay our taxes, and the Lord loves a cheerful giver. The good Lord never mentioned taxes and charity in the same breath.

Southport and Ocean Isle each have a museum. They charge admission, different things are sold from their shops, and one may have a paid director.

We are forced to subsidize CP&L for outages, etc.

The taxpayers should not subsidize any more businesses. Give me a break!

Eileen Kellagher
Long Beach

Thanks, Volunteers

To the editor:

The faculty, staff and administration of Supply Elementary School wish to express our appreciation to all the volunteers who have given time to our school this year. There have been more than 3,000 volunteer hours recorded, and countless amounts which have not been documented. This effort by our parents has helped us to have a productive first year.

A special note of thanks is extended to Jean Gillette, who coordinated the volunteer effort for the school. Appreciation is also extended to Gloria Foss, who acted as the staff coordinator, notifying Mrs. Gillette when a volunteer was needed.

Supply Elementary School is a better school because of our parent/volunteer involvement. We truly appreciate their interest and help.

Carolyn S. Williams
Principal

Litter Letters

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letters were submitted by Diana Smith's and Douglas Vogel's first-grade class at Bolivia Elementary.

To the editor:

Don't litter. Don't pollute. Don't waste. Do recycle. Do clean the Earth. Do make the world a better place.

Howard Hill

To the editor:

Please don't pollute. It's killing the world and it's killing people, too. I hope you can stop this. I can't.

Matthew Caudill

To the editor:

I love the Earth. Don't pollute the water. Give a hoot, don't pollute. I don't want you to hurt the animals. The Earth is our home and world.

Veronica Ennis

To the editor:

Don't be mean to the Earth. Don't kill the fish in the water.

William Crisco

GUEST COLUMN

Tax Freedom Day: When You Take Home Your Pay

EDITOR'S NOTE: This column was submitted by the Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan organization based in Washington, D.C.

If you thought you were done with taxes on April 15, guess again! According to the Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan Tax Foundation, the burden on the average American taxpayer wasn't lifted this year until May 3—Tax Freedom Day 1993.

What is Tax Freedom Day? That's the date that the average American stops working to pay federal, state and local taxes and starts bringing home wages for food, clothing and housing.

In its report, "Tax Freedom Day 1993," the Tax Foundation calculated that the average American taxpayer had to work 123 days—until May 3—before all federal, state and local taxes were paid.

Of those 123 days, 40 were required to pay off individual income taxes—the largest tax Americans will face in 1993—while social insurance payroll taxes took more than 38 days to pay.

Sales and excise taxes together required more than two weeks of work to pay, as did property and other business taxes. Almost 10 days were required to pay corporate profits taxes.

The Tax Foundation also calculated

ed the Tax Freedom Day in every state and the District of Columbia, based on the federal, state and local tax burdens on residents.

(North Carolina's Tax Freedom Day was on April 23, day 113. The state ranked 42nd.)

Residents in some states realized their Tax Freedom Day later than May 3. New Yorkers, for example, had to work until May 22 to satisfy tax obligations, Alaskans worked until May 19, and Connecticut residents didn't achieve tax freedom until May 14. At the other end of the spectrum, South Dakota residents celebrated Tax Freedom Day somewhat more appropriately on April

15.

According to the Tax Foundation, the future doesn't look much brighter as Tax Freedom Day is expected to fall even later next year. State and federal tax hikes enacted over the past three years, coupled with major tax increases being considered in the U.S. Congress this year, have led the organization to predict that Tax Freedom Day 1994 will arrive on May 6—the latest ever.

And, based on figures from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, the Tax Foundation believes Tax Freedom Day will be even later in 1995.

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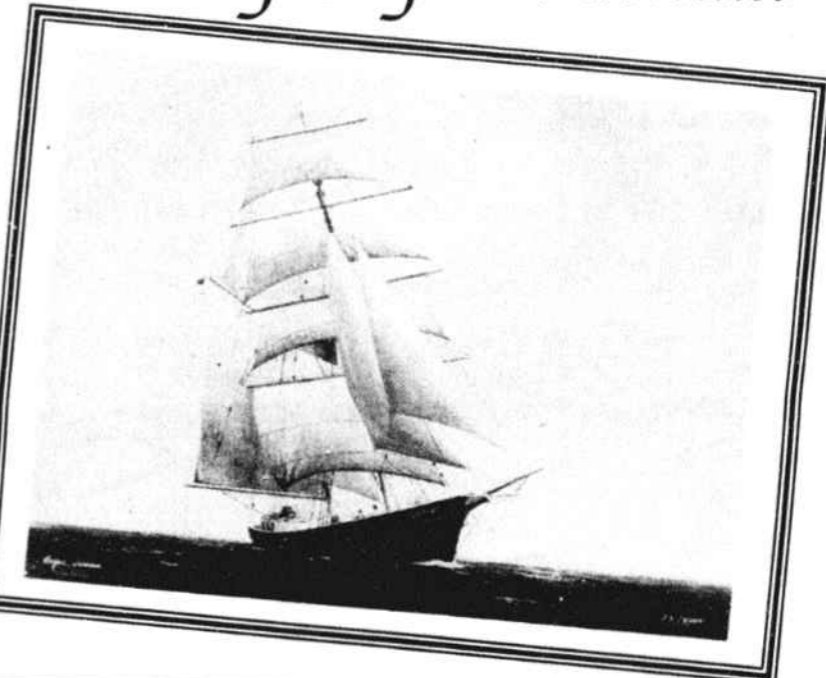
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