

# Drive-Through 'Nature Trails'

BY BILL FAVER

Some of the most exciting natural areas I have seen were drive-through nature trails. They were not substitutes for walking, but provided opportunities for those who would rather drive than walk.



FAVER

Two of my favorites are the nature trail in Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge at Sanibel Island, Florida, and Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountains National Park in Colorado. But closer to home, we have two mini-trails here in Brunswick County. They are both high-speed bypasses—one around Boli-

via and one around Shallotte. The recent construction and new grasses are beginning to show some signs of old field succession, particularly around the ditches and creeks where mowing can't interfere. Cattails abound in several places along with some sedges and other grasses. Wildflowers bloom in the open sunshine and along the edges where open area and woods come together. Roadkills tell us there are rabbits, raccoons, and opossums in those woods.

Hawks positioned in tall trees let us know there are field mice and other small rodents they can prey upon. Red-headed woodpeckers appear on the trunks of some pine trees and the undulating flights of large pileated woodpeckers carry them across the highway as they move from one patch of woods to another.

Great blue herons and great herons, the white ones, are sometimes seen feeding in the wet ditches. Cattle egrets comb the medians and the roadsides for insects. Even a kingfisher can be seen balanced on a favorite perch, watching for any evidence of minnows in nearby streams and ponds.



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

**PILEATED WOODPECKERS** can be seen along the drive-through "nature trails" in Brunswick County.

These drive-through "nature trails" would make excellent places for bluebird trails. Perhaps some Scout troop or other organization could work with the Department of Transportation to place some nest boxes along the fences before another nesting season next spring.

Scan the roadsides for plants and animals as you drive along the by-passes. They are no Sanibel or Rocky Mountain trails, but they give us fine examples of what Brunswick County drive-through nature trails can be.

## MORE LETTERS

# They're Not All Realtors; There's No Official Position

To the editor:

One of your staff writers, Eric Carlson, wrote an article in the June 24 edition of your paper in which he made several erroneous statements. First, the term Realtor is a registered trademark of the National Association of Realtors. Not all real estate agents in our area are Realtors.

At the meeting with the Brunswick County Health Board there were several Realtors present, but only three of them were present representing the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors. They were Jimmy Sanderford, president; Bill Robertson, president-elect and Peggy Stanley, secretary-treasurer. The other Realtors and real estate agents present were representing their own firms.

As of this writing the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors has not taken any official position on the subject discussed at the meeting, and only one representative of the Board of Realtors was selected to serve on the committee. The balance of the committee is made up of both Realtors and real estate industry people. Further, Mr. Holden's "doomsday" predictions were his, and not the official position of the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors.

The term Realtor was clarified at the meeting but apparently Mr. Carlson did not choose to distinguish between Realtors and real estate agents in writing the article.

The 100 members of the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors would appreciate your publishing a clarification in your next issue.

Jimmy L. Sanderford, President  
Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors

### Commonly Confused

To the editor:

I enjoyed reading Bill Faver's column "Mixed Signals From Another Time." It is an interesting account of some of the writers' experiences with snakes. In this article, Mr. Faver states, "Perhaps we should curb our automatic response to kill snakes and take time to learn about their habits and their part in our world." I could not agree more.

With Mr. Faver's words in mind, I bring your attention to the photo which ran with his column. The caption identified the animal in question as a "poisonous...copperhead." In fact, the animal pictured is a harmless brown water snake (*nerodia taxispilota*).

The brown water snake is one of a number of common snakes which are often confused with venomous forms. Water snakes bear a vague resemblance to copperheads, and some older and darker individuals can bear a striking resemblance to cottonmouths.

Therefore, if a water snake is encountered on dry land, it is often identified as a copperhead and killed. Likewise, if the snake is found in its more typical habitat, in or around a body of water, it is often killed as a cottonmouth.

Of course the logical way to deal with most any snake is simply to leave it alone. Most snakes are not only harmless but are in fact beneficial. Even the venomous forms have an important place in the natural order. Several native snake species, including three of the six species of venomous snakes which occur in North Carolina, are now protected by law.

Even if the snake you encounter is venomous, as long as it is away from human habitation and is left unmolested, it poses very little threat to you or anyone else. In most cases common sense, and in some cases state law, requires that the animal simply be left alone.

Russell H. Rollins  
Winston-Salem

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Bill Faver did not take or write the caption for the photograph which accompanied his column on snakes.

### Speak Out On Smoke

To the editor:

Recently, state government has proposed legislation that will limit the ability of local governments to regulate smoking in public buildings. House Bill 957 is now being considered by the state Senate, and will go into effect Oct. 1 this year if it passes the Senate. The bill will require public buildings to maintain at least 50 percent of the public space as smoking areas, and will prohibit local governments from passing more restrictive regulations.

Some statistics should be reviewed when considering this issue. First, 75 percent of Americans do not smoke cigarettes. Second, the number of adults annoyed by smoke from someone smoking near them has risen from 46 in 1964 to 69 in 1986. Conclusion: most people don't smoke and are annoyed when exposed to smoke in public places.

The Brunswick County Board of Health is reconsidering a proposal that was not passed earlier this year to regulate smoking in public places. The regulation is not yet in final form, but proposed setting aside non-smoking areas of 25 percent in restaurants (for the 75 percent of non-smokers), requiring bars to post signs stating that smoking is or is not allowed, and prohibiting smoking in public areas of retail stores, service lines, elevators, public restrooms and pooling places. It would not prohibit a business owner from declaring their place of business smoke-free.

Finally, it is obvious that regulation of smoking in public places is going to occur. It may be decided at the federal, state or local government level, and there will probably be an ongoing battle between the powerful tobacco industry lobbies and health-oriented citizen groups.

If you are interested in having a say in how smoking is regulated in Brunswick County, please contact the Board of Health and/or the Brunswick County Health Department to make your feelings known. Health board meetings are open to the public and allow a time for public comment at each meeting. Make your feelings known. Let's find out if the 75 percent of non-smokers has a louder voice than the 25 percent of smokers.

Dr. Brad Kerr  
Shallotte

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Dr. Kerr serves on the Brunswick County Board of Health.

### No Respect

To the editor:

On Wednesday, June 9, my husband and I attended the graduation of my daughter and the Class of 1993 at West Brunswick High School.

Graduation from high school is a wonderful, joyous and emotional experience for those graduating as well

as for the parents of these young adults, so I was very disturbed by the lack of respect shown the graduating class by those who attended this time-honored ceremony.

There were many who arrived late as well as a great many leaving before the graduation was finished. There were people young and old who were constantly milling, going up and down steps. Even during the "Pomp and Circumstance" procession, in which the students marched up the steps and to their seats, numerous people would walk either up or down the steps along with the seniors. To me, this was appalling and disgraceful.

Most of the time I couldn't even hear the names of those graduating seniors receiving their diplomas for all the yelling and talking. I realize relatives and friends were happy for their children, but it went beyond a congratulatory yell.

I was very proud of my daughter who was graduating. I was also proud for every other senior graduating, too. It was their day that should not have been blemished with disrespect and dishonor by those in attendance. To have shown our children such blatant disrespect and rudeness during their graduation is thoughtless and disgraceful.

How can we as parents expect our children to reflect thoughtfulness, respect and honor when we ourselves show them the opposite?

I graduated from WBHS in 1973 and it's a graduation I will cherish forever. The graduation of the Class of 1993 I will never forget, for even though it was a happy occasion, I will also remember how many numerous uncaring, thoughtless people showed such disrespect for those young people who were graduating.

I hope that for the future WBHS graduates, that those who attend will be more thoughtful and respectful by being on time, sitting in their seats and not leaving until the ceremonies are over.

Isn't that the least we can give our children upon their graduation, or is that asking too much?

Linda McMillion  
New Bern

### Deserves Recognition

To the editor:

We would like to thank Dr. Kendall H. Suh and the South Brunswick Isles Civitan Club for the support it has shown our local high school. On June 3 this organization presented scholarships to six West Brunswick seniors: Amy Caison, April Cumbee, Emily Gore, Kristy Poulos, Maria Turner and Keith Holden.

When this information was printed in the June 10 *Brunswick Beacon*, the Civitan Club did not receive recognition for their generous contribution to our students. I feel this organization should be recognized for its outstanding efforts on behalf of these students.

Thank you, South Brunswick Isles Civitan Club.

Janet and Allison Holden  
Supply

## GUEST COLUMN

# Yes, You Can Help An Alcoholic

BY CONNIE LEHR

This is a very important message to all who have said, "You can't help an alcoholic, they have to help themselves."

My wonderful husband of 16 years died May 8 of liver cancer. Years of alcohol abuse destroyed his liver. Neither of us were "hard-core" drinkers, but just moderate drinking can destroy one's liver.

We both had many chances to change our lives. God sent many warnings to stop drinking and live a life without alcohol. Neither of us asked anyone for help.

I accused my husband of being too weak. He was told he had to stand on his own two feet. They need the guidance of a friend or loved one to stop drinking.

My husband's life was cut short at the age of 35 because no one knew he needed help but me. I hope this article can save thousands from the guilt and grief I live with.

Both of us decided never to drink alcohol at the beginning of this year, 1993. We were so happy to start an-

other 16 years of marriage alcohol-free. But it was too late for my dear husband. His symptoms appeared in March of this year. Rapidly and painfully he died at 8:15 a.m. on May 8.

I could have made a doctor's appointment for my husband.

I should have taken his hand and both of us gone to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

I should have called churches and family members for help.

Now I have this unbearable guilt that haunts me day and night.

My husband was my best friend. He was everything to me. He loved life with a kindness and gentleness that radiated from him. He was loved by many.

Watching my husband deteriorate in just one-and-a-half months was the most pain I have ever witnessed. His parents, who love him very much, held his hands with me as he took his last agonizing breath. His doctors said eventually I would thank God he didn't suffer as long as most patients with liver cancer do.

In my heart, I know my husband would be alive today if I had only tried to help him. My husband promised to help others know the dangers of alcohol abuse if he lived through this. Unfortunately, he can't write any articles, but I can.

You can help your friends and relatives if you care enough to try. So many support groups are willing to help if you just make that first call. It's too late to try after they're buried. I am living proof of the sorrow and guilt that comes from not helping. Remorse is a terrible burden to live with.

My husband did not die in vain. His message is loud and clear! Don't turn your back on anyone in need of alcohol rehabilitation. With the help of people who care, anyone can stop drinking. Life is a very precious gift.

The article is intended to initiate friends and loved ones to help that alcoholic get the help he or she needs to provide a productive and happier life. I wish I had.

Connie Lehr is a resident of the Ocean Isle Beach area.

# Assigning Blame In The Whiny '90s

There is a comic strip on my bulletin board in which Calvin says to Hobbes:

"Nothing I do is my fault. My family is dysfunctional and my parents won't empower me. Consequently I'm not self-actualized."

"My behavior is addictive functioning in a disease process of toxic codependency! I need holistic healing and wellness before I'll accept any responsibility for my actions!"

Hobbes says: "One of us needs to stick his head in a bucket of ice water."

Calvin replies: "I love the culture of victimhood."

I'm with Hobbes.

A recent Associated Press article explores the phenomenon of "adult children" re-examining their pasts and confronting their bewildered parents with a litany of grievances. We're not talking about the biggies—physical, psychological and sexual abuse. These confrontations are about "parents who were emotionally distant or overly critical, who disciplined a little too harshly, or spent more time at the office than at home; who, wittingly or not, discouraged big dreams or eroded self-esteem."

Allow me to confess to what the article calls a "get-over-it" philosophy by saying SO WHAT? From time to time, my parents did all those things. From time to time, I do them, too—both as a daughter and as a mother. I wish they hadn't, they wish they hadn't, and I wish I didn't. They didn't mean to, and I don't either.

Call it dysfunction if you wish. I'll just call it the way life is.

Here in the Whiny Nineties, it is customary to blame all our screwiness on our upbringing. To derive our excuses from self-help books and our emotional enlightenment from Oprah's guests. It's the bland leading the blind.

Here in the Whiny Nineties, the lines have become blurred. June and Ward were always supportive, fair



Lynn Carlson

and accessible. You and I would be too if we worked from a script and the spotlight was only on for 30 minutes each week.

I have a friend, an only child whose schizophrenic mother was married five or six times. Between her mother's courtships and dissociative episodes, my friend was left pretty much to raise herself, and somehow she managed to turn out as warm, stable, giving and sensible as anyone I've ever known. She tells stories of her childhood without a trace of self-pity. She can look back and see the hilarious absurdity of circumstances which would outdo most things you've heard people bellyaching to Sally Jesse Raphael about.

As many kids do when they don't have much of a family life, my friend married young and was a mother before she was done being a teenager. But the marriage lasted—

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some 24 or 25 years so far—and my friend made her living by operating a family day care home, exceptionally nurturing a half-dozen toddler psyches all day every day for years.

She was magical with children, despite the grave shortcomings of her own maternal role model. She believed in marriage and family, despite having grown up with a parade of stepfathers. She knew better than anyone that childhood holds some hard knocks for everybody, and that it's never too late to have a happy one.

Somewhere in her from way back were the ingredients of a secure, well-adjusted adult with a clear idea of what she wanted to give and get from life. She found a way to make it work for herself. By herself.

And her mom doesn't deserve the credit for that any more than well-meaning parents should be blamed when, despite their best efforts, a child grows up with an overwhelming need for someone to blame for his or her misery.

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