

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Boycott Was 'A Bad Idea'

Two short sentences in Joseph Stevenson's letter to the editor on this page said just about everything that needed to be said about the proposed boycott of Brunswick County public schools which appears, at least for now, to have been called off.

"It's a bad idea."
"Use something other than the children."
There are valid reasons for black Brunswick Countians to feel frustration toward the public education system and, for that matter, numerous other organizations and institutions. And it is true that acts of civil disobedience—including boycotts—have traditionally been effective weapons in the war to achieve racial parity and establish minority rights.

All that notwithstanding, it would simply have been wrong to use children to fight adults' battles. The operative word there is "use"—as in "exploit: to make use of meanly or unjustly for one's own advantage."

The point of the threatened boycott would have been to punish the Brunswick County Board of Education for hiring practices the boycott proponents say discriminate against blacks. That punishment would have taken the form of money lost—funding calculated by the state on the basis of school enrollment during the first ten days of each academic year. If a large number of children had been kept out of school for 10 days, the school board could have lost a considerable sum.

But if those funds had been lost, the school system would somehow have recovered. Academically, some of the children involved might not have.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Strength Of Black Community Depends On Its Leadership

To the editor:
Over the past few months there have been several issues that affect primarily the black community. There are a few things that I would like to point out once again. Parts of the letter are taken from an article I wrote as a Shadetree Journalist in 1983.

The black community subsists both upon leadership and its citizens' positive responses.
Leadership need not be by a single person. Committees and boards, churches and organizations will do quite well as single leaders, but even here one person in these groups must be given authority to regulate debate.

No matter how near or far apart the members, how compliant or cooperative, they require leadership just as greatly and for the same reasons as any other group.

The structure of societies has been compared to that of an onion whose each successive skin supports or depends upon the next layer.

The inability of blacks to tolerate or adjust to one another politically is a problem. Most blacks are aware of at least some parts of any problem. You are not likely to find other blacks any better informed, although their information may concern other parts of the same problem.

It is a fact, not a myth, that if a number of blacks put their heads together, their united information will issue a collective judgment superior to any decision that each could make alone.

This seldom is ever demonstrated, because it is those who cannot reconcile within themselves the sum of

what he/she knew before and what he/she now hears from others. Few can make up their minds and so they wait for someone else to propose some course of action, resolving doubts which each still harbors but would prefer to put aside.

The private vision of what the rest are discussing in their minds impels them to arouse the rest from their blindness.

If blacks are not open to one another's hurts, no justice can be done. And if they lie to and about one another there can be no foundation of mutual confidence to support each other's future needs.

Those who are talking the loudest concerning the (proposed) boycott have no children in school. This is a touchy subject with other people's children, and in some cases the children themselves.

No child can afford to miss 10 days of school, then get sick or hurt for another 10. If I'm not mistaken, 20 days missed is a grade failed. Not only that, the first month of school is critical to a child's learning. It's a bad idea.

If the five school board members can't do things fairly, remember that on election day. If the blacks in the system can't put together a plan as to what positive or constructive course of action to take, then maybe we should not expect anything.

Use something other than the children. My children, along with those of numerous other parents I have talked to, will be attending school.

Joseph Stevenson
Supply

(More Letters, Following Page)

Just What Can You Do With \$5,000?

Want a visual idea of what \$5,000 can do, other than buy a top-of-the-line laptop computer, a piece of a car, or one semester at a state university?

Just visit Brunswick Community College's campus in Southport.

Last Wednesday college trustees met at the Southport campus. It was only their second meeting there. You might describe those visits as "before and after."

On that first visit, the building was incredibly rundown, inside and outside, and shabbily furnished. The heat and air systems were rustic. The lighting was poor.

If pictures speak louder than words, they were easily persuaded the campus needed attention.

Last Wednesday, it was hard to



believe we were stepping inside the same building, even though Trustee Jim Rabon had been keeping everyone posted on the progress of the project. A front door that opens and closes easily. Trim paintwork and carpeting. Quiet mechanical systems.

The front offices and entry area looked absolutely spiffy, as did the

renovated classrooms along the hall, including a computer lab. Even the bathrooms looked better.

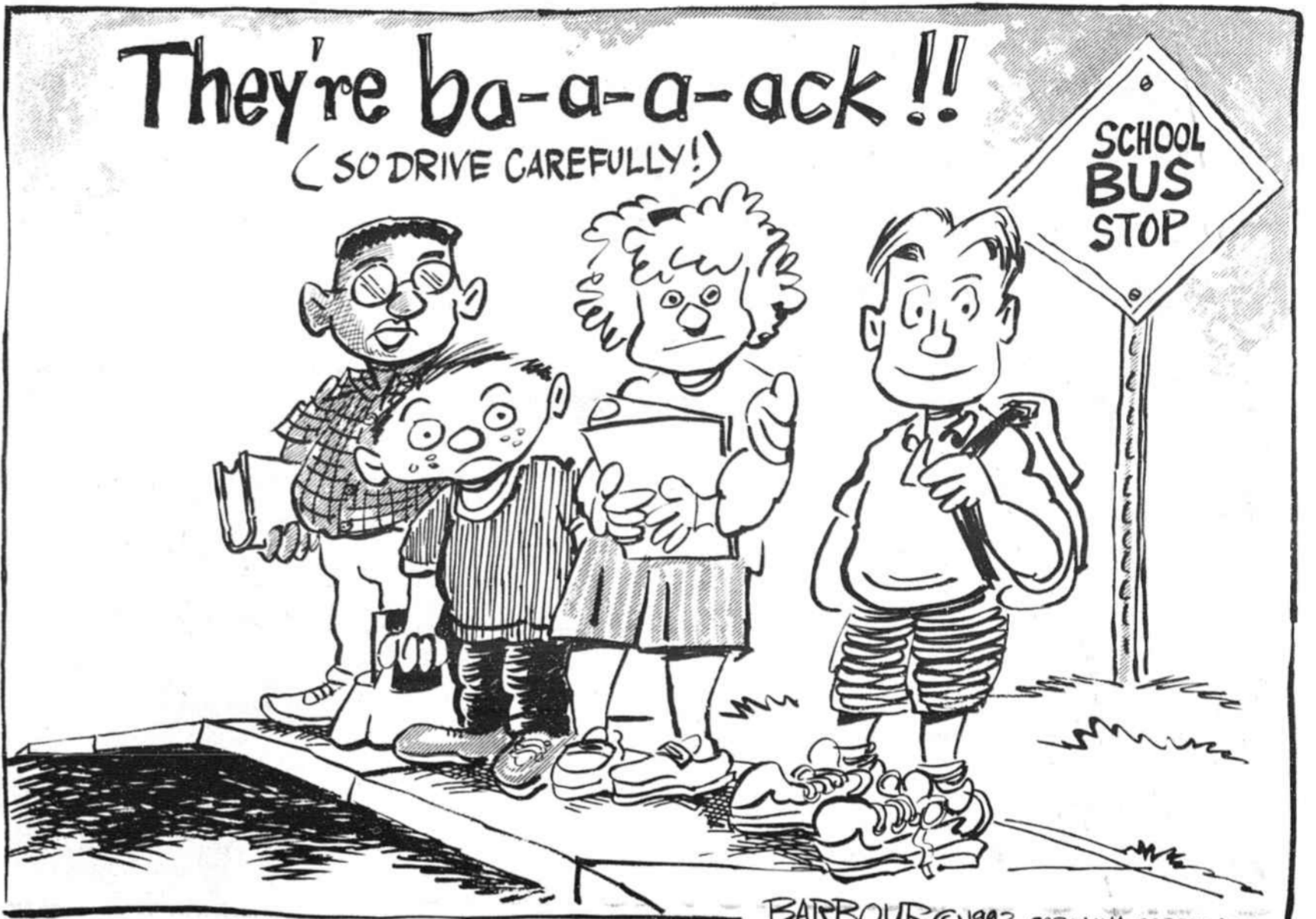
It cost roughly \$5,000 to renovate each classroom, with the college staff doing some of the work and contracting the rest out. Supporters, from county government to local businesses and individuals, are chipping in the dough. Those who contribute \$5,000 get a room named after them, with a nice plaque on the wall with their company logo or whatever. Smaller contributions of \$100 or more will be recognized on a single, large plaque, trustee Jim Rabon says.

Ceilings have been lowered, new lights installed and windows repaired or replaced. Each room is newly furnished with chairs, tables,

blackboard.

The front entrance is also getting a facelift, including a touch of stucco. New trustee Dean Walters had never seen the building before, but like other trustees, he liked what he saw Wednesday. "First class," he said of the building interior, offering \$100 to spruce up the sign out front. In one of the understatements of the year, he added, "It's a little faded."

BCC now has three quality locations for classes—the main campus at Supply, the training center at Leland Industrial Park, and the Southport campus, which Nations-Bank, one of the renovation supporters, anticipates using when training employees for the Southport branch it plans to open sometime next spring.



Help Bill Hewett Through A Dark Hour

I met Patsy Hewett shortly after I moved back to Brunswick County last June. She was at the Senior Citizens Center in Shallotte, with all her visiting relatives in tow—even the little kids—treating the seniors to an ice cream party at her own expense.

I liked her immediately. She'd read something I'd written about living at the Outer Banks; she and her husband Bill, a Brunswick County native, had just moved to Shallotte Point after 20 years in Moyock. I knew Moyock from having supervised a Currituck County reporter when I was with a newspaper on the Outer Banks. We joked about the politics up there.

A few months later Patsy wrote a very funny guest column for the *Beacon* about the trials and tribulations of the Hewetts and their Shallotte Point neighbors while waiting to be connected to county water.

And though she was bedridden with a bad back, she was happy to help when I called on her for suggestions about interesting people we might interview for the *Beacon's* first senior citizens' supplement.

We don't know each other well, but my brief experience with Patsy has been with a person who lives to give—to old folks, to her neighbors, to her family—when her chronic back problems allow her to do so.

Lynn Carlson



I'm asking you to give Patsy something back.

In the mail this week I received a letter from Patsy mailed from a Holiday Inn in Baltimore. With it was a July 13 clipping from the *Baltimore Sun* about her husband Bill having been seriously injured when he fell more than 40 feet into the hold of a dredge ship docked in that city.

Bill and several other workers of the Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Co. were doing routine maintenance on the dredge ship *Carolina* when an unidentified object broke loose and knocked him to the hold. He suffered serious injuries, including head trauma and several broken bones.

Patsy wrote to me "because at this point (five weeks) Bill's recovery is going very slowly and he needs the prayers and encouragement in cards and notes from friends and family there."

Bill is a Boone's Neck native. His given name is Hoyle Gafford Hewett Jr. but, writes Patsy, "he has always been known affectionately in Shallotte as 'Bill Jr.'"

"As a teen-ager his parents, Ersell and Gafford Hewett, owned and ran the Dairy Maid, which was the drive-in restaurant of the Happy Days era there. Mr. Gafford has been gone for 26 years, and 'Miss Ersell' is married to D. Edgar Long, who used to deliver the *Beacon* to Shallotte when it was printed in Latta, S.C. Mr. Long is now very ill with cancer.

"In the accident, Bill suffered two breaks in his spine, a broken foot, several broken ribs, a laceration to his head as well as many scrapes and bruises. He was doing very well in light of the injuries he sustained and had been transferred to the Maryland General Hospital Rehabilitation Unit where he developed a multiple infection in the major surgery on his spine.

"He was then transferred back to Shock Trauma Unit of Maryland University Hospital where he was in intensive care for about a week. He is now in his sub-acute care unit and his spirits are very low because of the pain, constant nausea, the inability to keep even fluids down, the effects of going into the hyperbaric chamber twice a day to force oxy-

gen into his tissues, not to mention the effects of the massive antibiotics he is being given.

"All of this is complicated by the fact that we are here and cannot be home near family and friends. We are very grateful for the many prayers that have gone up for us, and it is our desire that all the folks in Shallotte keep us on their prayer lists until we are home again.

"Lynn, please use this information to write an article for the paper any way you see fit. Our family needs prayer and encouragement very much."

Cards and notes may be sent to Bill Hewett, c/o Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Co., 3811 New Gate Ave., Baltimore MD 21224.

Patsy and Bill have a daughter Mandi who is a rising freshman at West Brunswick High School. Patsy worries that Mandi is nervous about being away from her parents for the first time and that, although her grandmother and cousin are with her, Mandi also needs support from friends and teachers.

I don't know Bill or Mandi. But I do know that natural givers like Patsy don't ask for help unless they really need it. And prayers and cards are certainly not too much to ask for this family going through one of its dark hours.

Take Your Time, Take The Ferry

"We were very tired, we were very merry— We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.

—Edna St. Vincent Millay
If that idea sounds ridiculous, read no further.

To me, it sounds like my weekend, of which nearly seven hours was spent riding three ferries across three expanses of the Pamlico Sound.

First, aboard the state's longest ferry ride, we journeyed beyond the sight of land from the sleepy fishing and farming community of Swan Quarter to the picturesque Silver Lake harbor on Ocracoke Island.

Fifteen miles up the beach, another busy ferry took us to Hatteras Island, home of million-dollar bill-fishing boats and the famous candy-striped lighthouse. We rode that one twice.

Completing the great circle, we put to sea again on the boat to Cedar Island. An escort of laughing gull frolicked in our wake as we watched a glorious sunset fade into the waves.

Few places on the East Coast offer such a view. Fewer still let you watch from the driver's seat.

Spanning these waters and others—from Southport to Ft. Fisher, from Currituck to Knotts Landing, from Cherry Branch to Minnesott and across the Pamlico River—North Carolina has one of the best (if not THE best) ferry systems in the country.

Having spent much of my life within a short drive of a ferry dock, I've come to think of our them as our state-sponsored cruise line.

I doubt you could find many long-time residents of the Outer



Banks who haven't ridden the ferry from Hatteras to Ocracoke and back simply for something to do. With only two roads off the Banks, and a lot of miles between you and anywhere else, a ride on the ferry becomes something of a free mini-vacation.

Many, like myself, have spent entire days cruising back and forth from island to island, occasionally glancing up from a good book to watch a fishing boat or a flock of terns glide by.

Including ferry ride in your itinerary might add an hour to your trip, but it also provides a welcome break from the miles of highway

and the tension of paying attention. Even a short voyage helps you pause and enjoy the journey instead of anticipating the arrival.

Which reminds me of some other ferry rides to other places in other times. Like the one I took across the Store Baelt channel separating the eastern peninsula of Denmark from its capital of Copenhagen.

I had hitched a ride out of Bremen with a paranoid Israeli who assumed that most of Germany and everyone who looked vaguely like an Arab was out to assassinate him. As he pulled his battered Volkswagen onto the giant seagoing ferry, I vowed to leave the ship with someone else.

Climbing several parking levels, I found myself on an expansive deck that looked like a miniature city, equipped with shops, a small casino and a restaurant. There, at the bar, I met a boisterous Texan who agreed to give me a lift on his motorcycle.

A few weeks and many miles later, I boarded an even larger ferry at

Ostend, Belgium, for the crossing to England. Impressed with its size, I began exploring of its passenger and cargo decks. After many stairs, cabins, cargo bays and hallways, I finally reached the lowest level.

There, on a half-dozen rows of steel rails, looking like a giant toy-store window display, was an entire passenger train!

Duly impressed, I returned to the surface to have another ferry sunset forever etched in memory. Leaning against my backpack on a giant spool of cable, I slathered runny Belgian cheese on fresh bread from an Antwerp bakery and washed it all down with Mosel wine as the shoreline of Flanders faded into the cold North Sea.

For the return to France a month later, I mistakenly opted for speed over ambiance and bought a ticket for the one-hour "Hovercraft" ride from Dover to Calais instead of the slower ferry voyage.

Riding on a cushion of air generated by huge fan blades, the Hovercraft flies a few inches above the

water and makes short work of the English Channel crossing. But it's about as romantic as going through a car wash in a Trailways bus.

I made it across the channel real quick, all right. Then I stood on the road for three hours, trying to hitch a ride into Paris. But unfortunately, the only cars using the road were those disembarking from (you guessed it) the ferry.

So I finally caught a ride with a London businessman who had spent the previous three hours sipping cold English ale and watching a televised soccer match on the ferry that I didn't take because I wanted to "save" a couple of hours.

It was a good lesson about the futility of "travel planning" and "time management" and one of the reasons I often go out of my way to "waste" an hour or two, just to ride the ferry.

"For my part," as Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote, "I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move."