

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1993

## Rabies Clinic Response Good News For Critters And Owners

One scare can sometimes do what a thousand warnings can't. The discovery of two rabid raccoons in Brunswick County last week prompted pet owners to have more than 1,000 critters vaccinated in four rabies clinics last Saturday, and that's good news for everyone.

The veterinarians and their staffs who participated are to be commended for dealing beautifully with an onslaught of pets and owners the likes of which they couldn't have anticipated. Clinics which were scheduled to end at noon were extended as late as 5 p.m. in some cases. In at least one site, pet owners were invited to return on Monday by vets who agreed to extend the \$5-per-shot offer for another day to accommodate the overflow.

Hundreds of pet owners remained patient while waiting hours in line, and managed to keep their cats and dogs from...well, fighting like cats and dogs. "It was a miracle," as one veterinarian joked.

That takes care of lots of pets fortunate enough to be under the care of loving and responsible humans. Too bad it doesn't solve the problem of the others who run wild because they've been dumped, left to proliferate and become a nuisance as well as a health hazard.

## Tough New Drunken Driving Law Will Mean Safer Highways

The following editorial was supplied by the N.C. Department of Transportation:

Enactment of the law which reduces the threshold for convicting a person of driving while impaired to .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is a major step forward in North Carolina's battle against drunken drivers.

Effective Oct. 1, North Carolina drivers whose BAC registers .08 or above can be convicted of driving while impaired on the basis of that evidence alone. The current threshold is .10 BAC. The new law means, for the average 160-pound male, about one drink less.

The statistical case against drunken drivers is overwhelming. Nearly half of all fatal motor vehicle crashes and nearly half of all crashes resulting in serious personal injury involve alcohol. There is persuasive evidence that a normal person's judgment begins to deteriorate after a .02 BAC which for an average person results from a single beer, glass of wine or mixed beverage. No one can deny that a person's reaction time is slowed by the use of alcohol.

The logical case against drunken drivers is even more convincing. When you consider the human loss, suffering, grief and agony brought about by the negligence of drunken drivers, it is hard to understand why we have tolerated this menace as long as we have.

The cost of a drunken driving conviction may be enough to sober most drivers. Including fines, court costs, administrative fees and the almost punitive increase in liability insurance premiums, the total cost of a single conviction for driving while impaired may exceed \$10,000. That is still much less than the damage which drunken drivers do to others. The cost of a typical motor vehicle crash involving personal injury averages nearly \$15,000 and the cost of a vehicular fatality exceeds, on the average, \$750,000.

The new .08 BAC law will result in more arrests and more convictions. We hope it will ultimately result in fewer violations. Only when people stop driving while impaired can our roads become safer.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Parent Wants Spanish Class At Shallotte Middle

To the editor:  
 I am a new parent in this area. I have one daughter entering Shallotte Middle School this year. I have another daughter presently at Union Elementary. Although I am very happy with Union Elementary, I have some concern about the middle school.

First, I would like to say that I think our new principal, Ms. Robinson, will be a great asset to our school. I also believe the new Choices program is a good idea. I think the majority of parents feel that more discipline is needed in our schools today.

My concern, shared by many other parents, is the fact that Shallotte Middle School requires French class but does not even offer Spanish class. I feel this is a great disservice to our students. They begin to learn Spanish in the lower grades and, before they have a good base, they are switched to French. It is my opinion, as well as many other parents I have spoken with, that this is extremely counterproductive.

We believe that Spanish will be a much greater tool to help them not

only in their daily lives, but in the future job market. Statistics show more and more Spanish-speaking residents each year moving into many areas. How many publications, directions, notices, etc. do you see written in English/Spanish versus English/French?

We would like to hear from the Board of Education what steps we as parents need to take to get Spanish in the Shallotte Middle School. Do we need petitions? Do we need representatives at board meetings? There are many parents waiting to hear the board's response.

Pam Piscitelle  
 Shallotte

(More Letters, Following Page)

### Write Us

The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must include the writer's address and telephone number. Under no circumstances will unsigned or anonymous letters be printed. Address letters to The Brunswick Beacon, P. O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.

# Two Years Under Glass: Heaven Or Hokum?

Here's a joke for you:  
 Once there were two sisters, Jane and Joan, who were best friends. They lived together all of their lives. As they approached the autumn of their years, Jane and Joan agreed that the sister who died first would try to make contact with the other and give her a description of the afterlife.

They lived to be a ripe old age, but eventually Jane passed away. About a week after the funeral, Joan was awakened by a voice calling to her in the darkness.

"Jane? Is that you? What have you been doing?" Joan asked.

"I've been eating a lot of vegetables, and having sex, and eating a lot of vegetables, and having sex, and eating a lot of vegetables, and having sex," came the ghostly reply.

"Does that mean you're in heaven?" Joan asked hopefully.

"No," said Jane. "I'm a rabbit in Wisconsin."

Which reminds me of another joke.

It's called Biosphere 2, a \$150 million science-fair project in which four men and four women have been trying to prove that they can live inside a giant, three-acre terrarium for two years without going crazy and killing each other.

Organizers claim the catchy name reflects the project's lofty goal of broadening our understanding of the fragile ecological interrelationships on the planet earth. (Which they call



Biosphere 1...Get it?)

Only the core group knows that the word "Biosphere," is actually an acronym for "Brazen Impostors Openly Suckering the Public and Happily Exploiting a Rich Entrepreneur."

It's an idea cooked up by a self-described "engineer, ecologist and poet-playwright" named John Allen. He used to be known as "Johnny Dolphin," back in the hippie days, when he was one of the leaders of a commune that some former members describe as a cult.

Mr. Dolphin, behaving more like a scavenging remora latching onto a shark, attached himself to a Texas billionaire with a knack for salesmanship and a tendency to confuse fact with fantasy. (No, I'm not talking about Ross Perot. Though it does make you wonder if there's something in the water down there.)

This big-bucks buckeroo named Ed (Largemouth?) Bass not only agreed to bankroll Biosphere 2, he even set up a pseudo-university in London called the "Institute of Ecotechnics" where his bio-boys

and bio-babes could get degrees in "biospherics." Whatever that is.

Bass and Dolphin (Sound a bit fishy?) spent six years and many millions building a giant steel-and-glass greenhouse in Arizona. It's divided into seven separate ecosystems called "biomes," including a rain forest, desert, savannah, marsh and a 25-foot-deep "ocean" complete with a wave machine and a coral reef.

On Sept. 26, 1991, the eight bio-adventurers were locked inside. The plan was to live for two years, growing their own food and recycling their air, water and waste, with no physical contact between them and the outside world.

Why, you might ask? Biosphere 2 is not much of an experiment at all. They see it more as a theme park under glass, an expensive indulgence where little or nothing of scientific value is likely to be learned.

Twice in the past two years, more air had to be pumped into the Biosphere to keep its inhabitants from going belly-up. One Bio-babe had to be taken out for surgery. And more than a dozen shipments of sup-

plies were sent in to re-stock their shelves. (So much for self-sufficiency.)

But perhaps science wasn't really the point. Because—lo and behold—Biosphere 2 has become quite a tourist attraction. About a million people have plunked down \$9.95 each to walk around and peek inside, hoping to get a glimpse of the bionauts doing whatever it is they do.

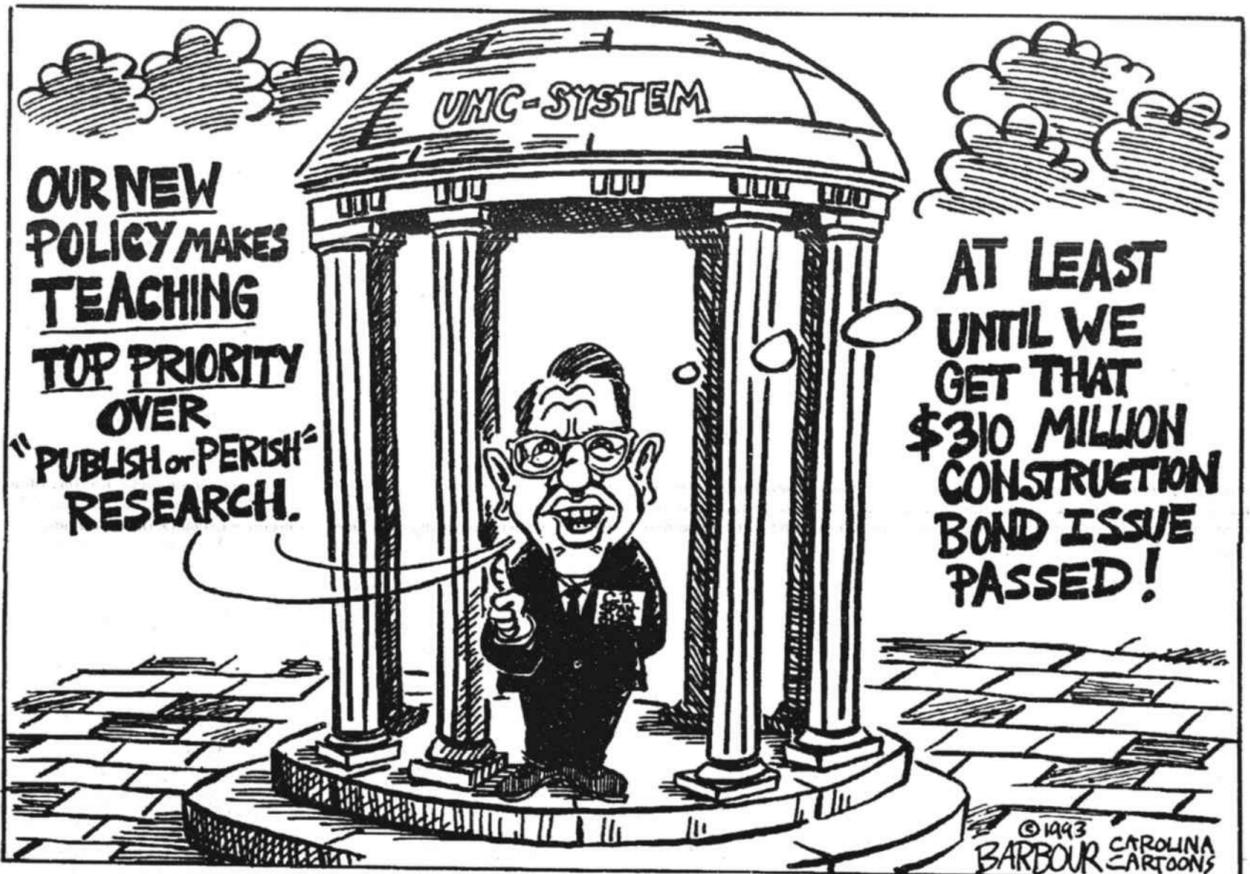
And of course, Biosphere 2 offers a well-stocked souvenir stand where visitors can purchase T-shirts, bumper stickers, playing cards and books on "biospherics." Whatever that is.

Even Biosphere 2's inhabitants don't seem to know. On Sunday, they emerged from their voyage to nowhere wearing their way-cool space suits and squinting into the sunlight as an orchestra played Aaron Copland's inspirational "Fanfare for the Common Man."

In a surprising show of honesty, Marc Van Thillo, the co-captain of the Biospherians, summed up the experience:

"Two years ago, I stood here wondering what was going to happen," he said. "Now I stand here wondering what happened."

It may be a while before we learn what those four men and four women did to amuse themselves in there. But considering the fact that each one lost about 20 pounds, we can be sure of at least one thing. They ate a lot of vegetables.



## Get It Together: Advice From The Slob Sisters

Have you met the Slob Sisters? You probably know a pair who deserve the nickname, but I'm talking about Pam Young and Peggy Jones, authors of *Get Your Act Together, a 7-Day Get-Organized Program for the Overworked, Overbooked and Overwhelmed*.

First, let me say that being "overworked, overbooked and overwhelmed" is the lamest excuse in the world, and too many of us use it to excess. If you and I are honest with ourselves, we have no choice but to admit two inevitable truths:

■ **The busiest people get the most done and cut the fewest corners.** They are generally well-organized because they have to be.

Otherwise, how do you explain the fact that it's the women with a carload of kids, a business of their own and an elective office who never run out of toilet paper and whose dogs are always up to date on their shots? You don't find them whining about forgotten tasks and missed deadlines, because for them, keeping track is not a vague goal but a key to daily survival.

■ **No matter how busy people are, they will find time to do the things that are truly important to them.** I'm busy, and I find time to cook, because I love it and I want to. I do not have time to work in the yard, a task it is all too obvious that I despise and at which I am deliberately inept.

Young and Jones divide the world into two groups: slob and "immacuholics." They are both recovering slob. Young says the turning point in her slobdom was when the moving van unloaded her belongings at her new home and she realized there were 157 boxes on the lawn, all of which she had labeled "miscellaneous."

Jones describes forgetting to



shop, then filling her husband's empty bottle of electric shave with water and blue food coloring and his shampoo bottle with Woolite. He went to work with his face blue and dried-out hair that stuck out in a wedge. (Another day, he was forced to wear damp underwear, because she had forgotten to dry the load she washed a couple of days earlier.)

It was living with some world-class slob in college that provoked me to change my slobby ways for good. Grossed out by roommates who went two semesters without unrumpling, much less washing, their sheets, I evolved into a woman who might have a dust bunny under her own bed from time to time, but won't go to work and leave it unmade.

And I was blessed to end up with a mate who shows his appreciation for a good meal by carefully storing the leftovers and cheerfully doing the dishes without having to be asked.

While there seem to be many more true slob than true immacuholics, I think they both suffer from a kind of self-centeredness bordering on psychosis. On one extreme, there's your woe-is-me slob, living in utter chaos and devoting more energy to apologizing and rationalizing than it would take to straighten the mess out. On the other extreme is your control-freak immacuholics, too one-dimensional to

realize that letting a couple of dust bunnies into your life can give you the time to broaden your horizons a little.

Young and Jones give the best piece of advice there is for slob, but immacuholics would do well to heed it, too. It's simple: delegate. When taking care of the home we share is the whole family's job, no one has to be overwhelmed, and everyone feels like a part of the team.

■ ■ ■  
 An update on Bill Hewett of Shallotte Point, the subject of this column after he broke his spine, foot and several ribs in late August when he fell from the deck of a ship into the hold while on a job in Baltimore:

His wife Patsy writes, "We have received cards and letters from all over North Carolina, many from people we don't even know. All have offered prayers and encouragement, and we have shed many happy tears in reading them. Many of those who wrote have said they will be looking for further news of us in the Beacon."

"The good news is that Bill is now in Good Samaritan Hospital

rehabilitation unit and is now able to get out of bed into a wheelchair and is doing upper and lower body workouts with small weights! He has even walked between the parallel bars a couple of times! We know that the prayers and cards from the wonderful people who read the Beacon have helped immensely to encourage his efforts..."

"The best news of all is that it looks as though we will be coming home in about three more weeks. By then our new grandchild may even be born to our son Billy and his wife; our daughter Connie and her family will be able to visit from South Carolina; and we will be with (daughter) Mandi again, at home."

"We appreciate the help of our families and friends since we have been away. There's no way we could have made it without their help...Our thanks and gratitude to you and to the wonderful people who took a few moments from their busy lives to write and pray and lend support to us when things were so dark. We love you all."

It's nice to know you're listening out there...

## Worth Repeating...

■ **The difference between a moral man and a man of honor is that the latter regrets a discreditable act, even when it has worked and he has not been caught.**

—H.L. Mencken

■ **I married beneath me. All women do.**

—Nancy Witcher Langhorne Astor

■ **There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.**

—Willa Cather