



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

THE CAROLINA CHICKADEE is "a tiny bundle of black, gray and white feathered energy and optimism."

## Carolina Chickadees Are Favorites

BY BILL FAVER

One of the first birds to come to a newly installed bird feeder is the Carolina Chickadee. This "animated ball of gray and white feathers" sports a shining black cap and bib and a white face. It is about the size of a small sparrow, a little over four inches long.

Carolina Chickadees are smaller than their northern cousins, the Black-capped, and were discovered by Audubon and Bachman near Charleston in 1833. In the west, we have another similar species, the Brown-headed Chickadee.

The natural habitat of the chickadee is the woods and hedgerows where they find dead trees in which to hollow out cavities for nesting. A pair will work frantically for days to fashion a hole about eight to ten inches deep and then fill it with every kind of soft, downy material. They nest early in spring and, after the eggs are laid, the female covers them with some of the

down when she is off the nest. This helps conceal the four to eight eggs from predators as well as to provide the warmth needed to continue incubation. These birds will also nest in bluebird nest boxes and other bird houses with small entrance holes and deep interiors.

The cheerful chickadees are one of our most vocal species, with their "chicka-dee-dee-dee" and their scolding "fee-bee, fee-bay." They are among our most energetic birds and feed almost constantly to keep up their energy level. They are very acrobatic, sometimes hanging upside down on a branch to search for insect larvae.

Now is the time to get the bird feeders ready. I can almost guarantee you'll have a Carolina Chickadee among your first visitors. I hope you will agree with Robert Lemmon in *Our Amazing Birds*, when he wrote, "If chickadees spoke English, it would be easy to imagine one of them calling to its gang through the gloom of a winter blizzard or sleet storm. 'Are we downhearted?' and all the other chickadees calling back in chorus, 'NO!' For if ever there was a tiny bundle of black, gray, and white feathered energy and optimism, the chickadee is it."

## Riding Rails Brings Back Memories

Do you remember your first train ride?

If you're from someplace back East and over 60 years of age, taking a train may not have been that uncommon. And there's always the subway or the elevated.

But for a kid from southwestern Brunswick County, riding the train could be a very big deal. If you haven't noticed, there aren't any railroad tracks in this part of the county, and haven't been in my lifetime. Before that, lumber companies did build narrow-gauge tracks into the swamps to bring out prime hardwoods such as cypress. But most evidence of those tracks has long since disappeared.

I can still remember my first train ride, though differently from the way an adult would remember it. I would guess it was first grade, Gay White's class.

We combined a trip on the train from Whiteville to Wilmington, with a field trip to Greenfield Lake, if memory serves me right.

The train came alive under us like a cat purring, and then the conductor shouted his last warning—and blew the whistle! My first. Then, gradually, the train began to pick up speed, shoosh, shoosh, shoosh, just like the train in the book *The Little Engine That Could*. It did, and I had a window seat on the world. It looked very different.

That experience stuck with me. Ever since then, I've taken advantage of any and all opportunities to



Susan Usher

ride the train, which admittedly have been few on my limited budget.

But being of the press has its privileges, along with some pains. One of my favorite feature stories involved spending an entire day up in the mountains with folks who were seeking state and private support to restore a narrow-gauge train that had once served a mica quarry and a spring factory and could have been a great tourist attraction.

The conductor took me out for a ride, creeping along the rickety track along the North Toe River that eventually connected with a larger railway in Tennessee. Ahead of us the rail literally bounced; we were limited to 5 mph. That's why getting the story took all day; I spent portions of four other days writing it up, following up my visit with phone calls

to various parties.

I still have a stake from that railroad. It never got the funding it sought.

But another railroad did, and on our last vacation, Don and I rode on part of the Murphy Branch of the Great Smoky Mountains Railway, from Bryson City across Fontana Lake to the Nantahala Gorge.

At times the scenery was spectacular, as when we watched whitewater enthusiasts kayaking in the Gorge.

Other times, the view was almost obliterated by kudzu, scourge of Piedmont and Western Carolina.

My recommendation: go in late spring or early summer, when there's more activity in the Gorge. Fontana Lake hasn't been drained down to accommodate winter rains and early spring flooding; and the kudzu isn't at its annual peak.

It's a fun trip, with a choice of club or open cars, box lunches or dinner at the restaurant at Nantahala Gorge. The Nantahala Outdoor Center and the railroad also offer a combination package for folks who want to combine outdoor adventure with a rail trip. It makes for a different kind of day, wouldn't you say?

**BOATS**  
Affordable!  
1-800-545-2293  
919-457-9080

Holden Beach Voters  
**ELECT**  
**Dwight Carroll**

## MORE LETTERS

# Mayor, Council, Not 'Others' Responsible For Good Works

To the editor:

As a non-voting permanent resident of a community bordered by the Town of Sunset Beach on three sides, I would like to remind the citizens of Sunset Beach of their responsibility in the upcoming town election.

Mayor Mason Barber, Ed Gore and Julia Thomas have certainly been good friends to our non-voting community of Shoreline Woods and Seaside Station, and I would like to remind the voting citizens of those who fought the Food Lion store for opening a store in the Town of Sunset Beach—not the mayor or council, but Others.

I would also like to remind the voting citizens that the bridge was not fought by the mayor and council, but Others, and now the price of the bridge has escalated to nearly three times the original cost. Action for the bridge was placed in Superior Court, not by the Mayor and Council, but by Others.

When the sewer authority was created by the mayors and councils of Sunset Beach and Calabash, Others fought the sewer authority. When the mayor and council went to Raleigh for a public hearing to speak in favor of the sewer system, Others spoke against the much needed sewer system.

Also, when a lady from Greensboro wanted to develop her Bird Island property, the planning board, with mayor and council approval, developed the Conservation Reserve Zoning District, which allows the owner her legal rights while limiting excessive development.

The mayor and council provided funds for a free paved parking lot and a beautiful gazebo, with access for the handicapped, which greatly improves access to the beach.

There are so many more good deeds that the mayor and council have done that space would not permit them to be printed. Even though I am not a voting citizen of Sunset Beach, I dine, bank, and buy groceries in Sunset Beach (and get caught by an out-of-date worn out bridge), am protected by the Sunset Beach Fire Department and Rescue First Responders and purchase water

from Sunset Beach. In an emergency the sheriff's department would call the Sunset Beach Police Department, as they could respond quicker than the sheriff's department.

In closing I would like to thank Mayor Mason Barber, the town council, the employees of the town, Sunset Beach Fire and Rescue Responders, the Sunset Beach Police Department, and the sewer authority and planning board for looking after my best interests. Not Others.

Lloyd V. Grantham  
Sunset Beach

### Incumbents Accused Of Vested Interest

To the editor:

The coming election in Sunset Beach is vitally important to not only the residents of the town, but also to those of us who live in adjacent areas.

Every action of their mayor and town council affects our present and future environment. The present officials, by and large, represent vested interests seeking to further their economic advancement.

In contrast, we have an individual with an outstanding record in public service of representing and fighting for the homeowners. Minnie Hunt is the ideal candidate for mayor.

I urge every homeowner to make a "yes" ballot for Minnie Hunt and aid her efforts to keep Sunset Beach the best retirement community in North Carolina.

Dr. Arthur Templeton  
Bonaparte Landing

### Saying 'Yes' To Bonds Boosts Health Care

To the editor:

I am encouraging all voters to vote for the bond referendum on Nov. 2. While there are many worthwhile projects to be voted on in this bond, I would like to particularly express support for the community college bond.

As a provider of health care services throughout southeastern North Carolina, we employ hundreds of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nurse aids, many of

whom are produced by the community colleges. These dedicated health care personnel are "in the trenches" every day rendering service directly to the patients in a compassionate, confident and cost-effective manner.

However, our ability to continue to render these fine services will be determined in large part by the availability of qualified staff. The bonds you will vote on Nov. 2 will enable community college in the region to enhance their nursing and other health care programs in order to continue to provide health care providers the supply of health care personnel we need to serve the public.

Steve Smith  
Southport  
EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is president of Interim HealthCare of the Eastern Carolinas, Inc.

### Where Was Concern With Nuke Plant?

To the editor:

My question to all those concerned citizens (opposing Martin Marietta's quarry proposal) is where were you when CP&L acquired the land to build a nuclear power plant?

Where were you when the impact studies were made? Did they spell out to you the impact that a nuclear power plant would have should a disaster occur?

Of course not. Back then no one had seen the movie "The China Syndrome," nor had anyone heard of Three Mile Island, much less Chernobyl.

The biggest danger to all of us was here long before Martin Marietta decided to locate here. All we need is a hurricane, a forest fire and cracked shrouds at the same time, and God help us all on Oak Island—one way on, one way off.

Potholes on the roads along N.C. 211 and 133 from Martin Marietta can be repaired. Thousands of lives in the Southport-Oak Island and Long Beach areas cannot be replaced due to nuclear holocaust.

Once something has been cracked, it's never the same. God bless us all.

Sandy B. Coffey  
Long Beach

## "Protecting Our Legacy To Our Children And Grandchildren"

# THERESE REGAN

FOR

## SUNSET BEACH TOWN COUNCIL



- Sunset Beach Property Owner For 20 Years
- President of Sunset Beach Beautification Committee
- Public Health Nurse 15 Years
- Supervisor of Adult Health, Florence, S.C. County Health Department

**Vote on November 2nd**

**Remember, Your Vote Is Important.**

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE FOR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT  
Joseph Brandel, Treasurer

### ONE HOUR EYE GLASSES

Complete Pair  
**Single Vision Lenses**  
\$12<sup>95</sup>  
Any Power  
CR-39 Plastic

Complete Pair  
**Bifocal Lenses**  
Any Type  
Any Power  
\$29<sup>95</sup>  
CR-39 Plastic

Complete Pair  
**Progressive Any Type Lenses**  
Any Power  
\$79<sup>95</sup>  
CR-39 Plastic

Complete Pair  
**Trifocals**  
Any Type  
Any Power  
\$39<sup>95</sup>  
CR-39 Plastic



Transition lenses are the new plastic lenses that change into sunglasses. Present this coupon and get \$25 off transition lenses.

## CLEAR-VUE OPTICIANS

We can make arrangements to get your eyes examined today.

(919)395-6563 3901-A Oleander Dr., Wilmington  
1-800-634-1085 Mon.-Fri. 9:30-7p.m., Sat. 9:30-5 p.m., Sun. 1-5 p.m.  
Other locations—Kinston, Greenville, Jackson, Wilson, Raleigh & Goldsboro.