



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

WE DON'T INHERIT the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

## We Borrow The Earth

BY BILL FAVER

There is an old Pennsylvania Dutch expression which goes something like this: "We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."



FAVER

This not-so-subtle reminder of our role in the ownership of the earth is something all of us need to understand. When we come to realize we only "borrow the earth," we should be able to see what our stewardship of the earth means to us and to our environment.

wears out while in our care. Some stays in the safety deposit box until passed on to another generation, doing us little good! But ownership gives us the right to do with the property pretty much what we please.

Borrowing is another matter. When we borrow something, we intend to make a specific use of it and then return it to the owner. It isn't ours at all. Borrowing carries the responsibility to take good care of the item borrowed so that we can return it in as good a condition as when we received it.

"Borrowing the earth from our children" tells us we do not own it. What we do own in property rights is the use for a time. We borrow for a while. We practice good stewardship while it is in our care and return it to the next borrower in good condition.

If we can understand and practice the old Pennsylvania Dutch saying, we'll take better care of the earth entrusted to us.

## What Are We Really Teaching Kids?

"Maybe. How much will you pay me if I do?"  
"Oh, I think that's worth about a dollar."

Whoa! Surely I wasn't hearing right.

Pay? To make up her bed and straighten up her room? Since when did routine household chores become negotiable with a 9-year-old?

Probably about the same time we began rewarding kids for behavior that should be the norm. When every A or B on a report card began to have monetary value, every book read worth a treasure chest prize. Nothing, it seems, has innate value.

It may not be a popular idea in some circles, but I'm convinced we stifle children's sense of worth and confuse their values when we send them scrambling for prizes or teach them that something or someone has value only when it bears a price tag. We're teaching our kids to be greedy WIIFMers ("What's in it for me?"), that the only reason to do something



Susan Usher

is to get something tangible back in return.

I asked a friend who is a parent about this. "Well, you know the story about the mule that followed the carrot dangling on a stick."

Oh, yes, positive motivation, offering an incentive for the behavior you want (moving forward) instead of punishing the behavior you don't want (sitting in the mud).

Sorry, we may act as stubborn as a mule sometimes, but we are not mules.

We are human beings, innately curious, creative, tooled for lifelong learning, gifted with the ability to

reason, to comprehend, to dream. At an early age most of us can distinguish good from evil, right from wrong.

Unlike the mule, we can learn to motivate ourselves from within. We don't have to have a carrot on a stick, which is a good thing since carrots aren't always in season. Sometimes we do need a spark, though, someone who believes in us even when we do not believe in ourselves.

When we overuse rewards, I think we unwittingly undermine not only kids' natural love of learning and their creativity, but also their strong need to belong and to be useful. And to think we do it in the name of building their self-esteem.

Kids need to learn to like themselves all the time.

Why not make them contributing members of the family, the school, the community, giving them appropriate responsibilities and privileges, as well as the opportunity to succeed?

## MORE LETTERS

# Library Friends Need Help To Keep Service Available

To the editor:

The community is looking forward to the renovation of the Shallotte branch of the county library system. This renovation will mean the closure of the building for about five months beginning in March so the work can be done in a swift and safe manner.

Many library users hope that some form of service can be continued in the area during this period. This might mean moving to an empty store, use of a church for the children's reading program and even reactivating the Bookmobile on a limited basis.

The local Friends of the Library has approached the Library Board of Trustees about working out an arrangement so that some level of library service can be maintained during the renovation. This support includes raising a yet-to-be-determined amount of money to pay rent, utilities and moving expenses, and the possible use of volunteers in some manner.

If library service (even on a limited basis) is to be kept, the supporters need to come forth and let the Friends of the Library know of their interest. Please attend the meeting this Friday, Nov. 19, at 1 p.m. at the N.C. National Guard Armory in Shallotte.

Don Eggert, Chairman  
Board of Library Trustees

## Vietnam Vets Deserve More From Brunswick

To the editor:

As I watched the national Veterans Day ceremonies on television, I couldn't help wondering why Vietnam veterans can't get the support and services they need in Brunswick County.

First of all, I don't think President Clinton and Vice President Gore are worthy of appearing on the same podium with any veterans on any day. Clinton is a draft-dodger and his health care plan will make things even worse for the veteran than they are now.

Second, I think Brunswick County ought to have a place where Vietnam veterans can get together as a group and talk about their experiences and the problems they have in common. I served two tours in Vietnam as a Marine and, believe me, no one can understand unless they were there, too.

We have to go to Fayetteville to get medical care through the VA, and there are no medical personnel nearby who have enough knowledge of post-traumatic stress disorder and

the other medical problems Vietnam veterans have to deal with.

With all the Vietnam veteran has gone through and given for his country, it's a disgrace that Brunswick County doesn't care about giving something back.

Curtis E. Bullard  
Ash

## Advice For Speedy

To the editor:

In one of the late James Thurber's humorous books there's a sketch submitted to him by a reader, showing a large number of cats crawling inside a home, and under the sketch, the reader's comment: "We have cats the way most people have mice."

Thurber's reply: "I see you have. I can't tell from your communication, however, whether you wish advice or are just boasting."

This came to mind after I read Eric Carlson's Nov. 4 column, in which he describes how he got his most recent speeding ticket and details his traffic "rap sheet."

If it's advice you're seeking, Eric, here's some: Don't get another ticket; there's no excuse for it! I've been driving since 1938 and have never gotten a speeding ticket, or one for any other moving violation. Now that's something to boast about.

And I'm not a slowpoke, either. I flew at 300 knots across the Everglades, so low that had I dropped by tailhook, I'd have snagged an alligator! But highway speed limits are posted for a good reason—to protect us, and others in our paths.

So slow down, Eric, or go sit in the corner!

Alden B. Carlson  
Belle Mead, N.J.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is the columnist's father.

## You'd Scream, Too

To the editor:

This is just a note in response to a letter to the editor last week from (Karl) Brandt.

I don't feel that I have in any way libeled Martin Marietta when I state that they apparently have no real concern for the citizens of Brunswick County. Rather it appears that I am joined by many concerned citizens in my cry of dismay at what they propose.

I would like for Mr. Brandt to avail himself of the material we have reviewed, or perhaps to take a tour of the Castle Hayne site.

Better yet, maybe he should check out the other sites this company has utilized in the past. I believe that if he looked at the facts,

not the hype, he would have to agree with the seven local townships who have resolved against it, as well as the 2,000 people who have signed the petition.

There may be applications for this type of mining where the environmental impact would not be so great. When a company such as Martin Marietta endangers our drinking water, estuaries, protected species and, most importantly, our children, I am inclined to believe that they do not care.

I guess when you feel that your, and your neighbors', quality of life is on the endangered list, you might scream a little, too.

Suzanne Osborne  
Southport

EDITOR'S NOTE: There was a typographical error in Mr. Brandt's letter last week. The sentence in which the error occurred should have read, "No reasonable person could suppose men who seek to engage in such a technical business are indifferent to local consequences, especially in these days when litigious lawyers and victims are quick to seek compensation." We regret the error.

## Not All Radicals

To the editor:

Through well-placed sources I've heard it said that John Harvey and others of his ilk on the Brunswick County Planning Board consider informed environmental activists to be leftover hippie radicals from the '60s.

Tell me, Mr. Harvey, how do you label your group—those who would sell us down the Cape Fear River, seeking to open our county "backyards" to any and all who wish to plunder and pollute?

Not only do you have your priorities badly confused, but also perhaps your perception of who is in the minority here.

Ann Tucker  
Southport

## Write Us

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters must include your address and telephone number. (This information is for verification purposes only; we will not publish your street/mailling address or phone number.) Letters must be typed or written legibly. Address letters to:  
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