

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Water Quality Symposium Has Profound Implications

The session topics may sound a little dry to the average guy on the street, but the symposium on integrated coastal wastewater management in North Carolina, which begins Thursday in Wilmington, could have profound implications for Brunswick Counties and other coastal dwellers.

There's a good chance that, somewhere down the road, Brunswick Countians will be able to look back at this gathering and be proud that it all started with us—not the problem, but the first real step toward a workable solution to the problem of development-related coastal water quality deterioration.

The two-day symposium is an ambitious effort, pooling the resources of government officials, business leaders, scholars and interested citizens toward the goal of concurrently managing wastewater and stormwater.

It's not insignificant that the symposium grew, at least in part, out of strong, honest differences of opinion about how to improve estuarine water quality in southeastern Brunswick County.

Proponents of central sewer service—for the most part governments with the ways and the means to make it happen—were willing to listen to the arguments of the skeptics, private citizens who pleaded for more consideration of what they termed the simpler, cheaper stormwater option. It became increasingly obvious that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive; indeed, there is reason to believe they may be interdependent if either is to have a good chance for success over the long run.

At least on paper, the symposium appears to have been designed with no particular scientific or ideological bias. The sponsor list includes entities as diverse as Brunswick County, the American Association of University Women, the Duke University Coastal Environmental Management Program, the N.C. Coastal Federation, UNC Sea Grant and the Wilmington-Cape Fear Homebuilders Association. The scheduled presentations involve not just academicians and politicians, but a fair cross-section of experts on numerous aspects of the issues.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the symposium is what it signifies—the fact that doing nothing is no longer an option while shellfish beds continue to close and more people continue to fulfill their dream of living at the seashore.

Efforts Toward Temporary Library On The Right Track

It was heartening to hear all three beach property owners' groups ask their members' help in keeping some type of library service available while the West Brunswick Branch is being renovated.

The Sunset Beach Taxpayers' Association, Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners Association and Holden Beach Property Owners' Associations all brought before their annual Thanksgiving weekend gatherings the news that library service in Shallotte will be suspended for a few months beginning in March unless citizens who care do something about it. The effort, being led by Friends of the Library, will require a temporary space to house a makeshift library, plus the money to operate it.

The fact that the property owners' groups were contacted is an indication that the Friends group is on the right track. Our library serves the entire community and, in Brunswick County, the community includes those who own property here and reside elsewhere. Many of those owners have strong ties to, and feelings for, Brunswick County as a second home; a good number will ultimately retire here.

It's exciting to look ahead in anticipation of the newer, better West Brunswick Branch Library in our future. It will be nearly twice the size of the current facility, and built with public funds.

For the time being, keeping temporary service available deserves the commitment of the community's private sector—its businesses and citizens.

Worth Repeating...

- When an American says that he loves his country, he...means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect. —Adlai Stevenson
- Backward ran sentences until reeled the mind. —Wolcott Gibbs

This Thanksgiving, We All Ate Humble Pie

What is depicted on the back side of a \$20 bill?

What two vice-presidents served without ever being elected?

One state has two words in its name and also has a capital with two words in its name. Name the state and the capital.

How many points are there in the headpiece on the Statue of Liberty? What do they represent?

Name the Twin Cities.

Who is buried in George Washington's Tomb?

In what year did Alaska and Hawaii become states?

The game the cousins talked a willing sucker into playing Thanksgiving Day, after one more nibble of ham, two cups of high-speed coffee and a big wedge of chocolate pie, should have been a piece of cake.

After all, we were all born, reared and educated in the United States, and have had lifelong access to material relating to our own country's geography, history, economy and government. That doesn't count all the stories we've heard parents and



Susan Usher

grandparents relate.

Seems we may not have been listening. The game we played sounded more like a round of Stumped Again!

Even playing as teams, with members allowed to consult before answering, we missed more answers than we got right. As our playing pieces moved across a (blank) map of the 50 states, the game was neck and neck.

You only got to roll the die and move the piece forward one to six places if you correctly answered a question of the same color of the state on which your piece was standing. Red questions were the easiest,

purple the hardest. But for us, the color didn't seem to matter. We former Monopoly marathons were mainly guessing—and listening for clues from the adjacent room where members of an older generation or two sat, priding themselves on knowing certain answers.

It was painfully clear how much we take for granted about America, and how little some of us know about our nation. Yes, it was just a game and we are talking trivia. But all those little facts and figures add up to something larger—a core of basic knowledge or information we simply didn't have individually or collectively.

If you can answer all of the questions given above (these were the easy ones I can remember) then you might have a chance to play the game at a lower level of frustration than ours. That is, if you can find it.

My cousin Timmy brought the game home from Germany, where he is stationed with the U.S. Army. While marketed by a well-known toy chain, he says you can hardly

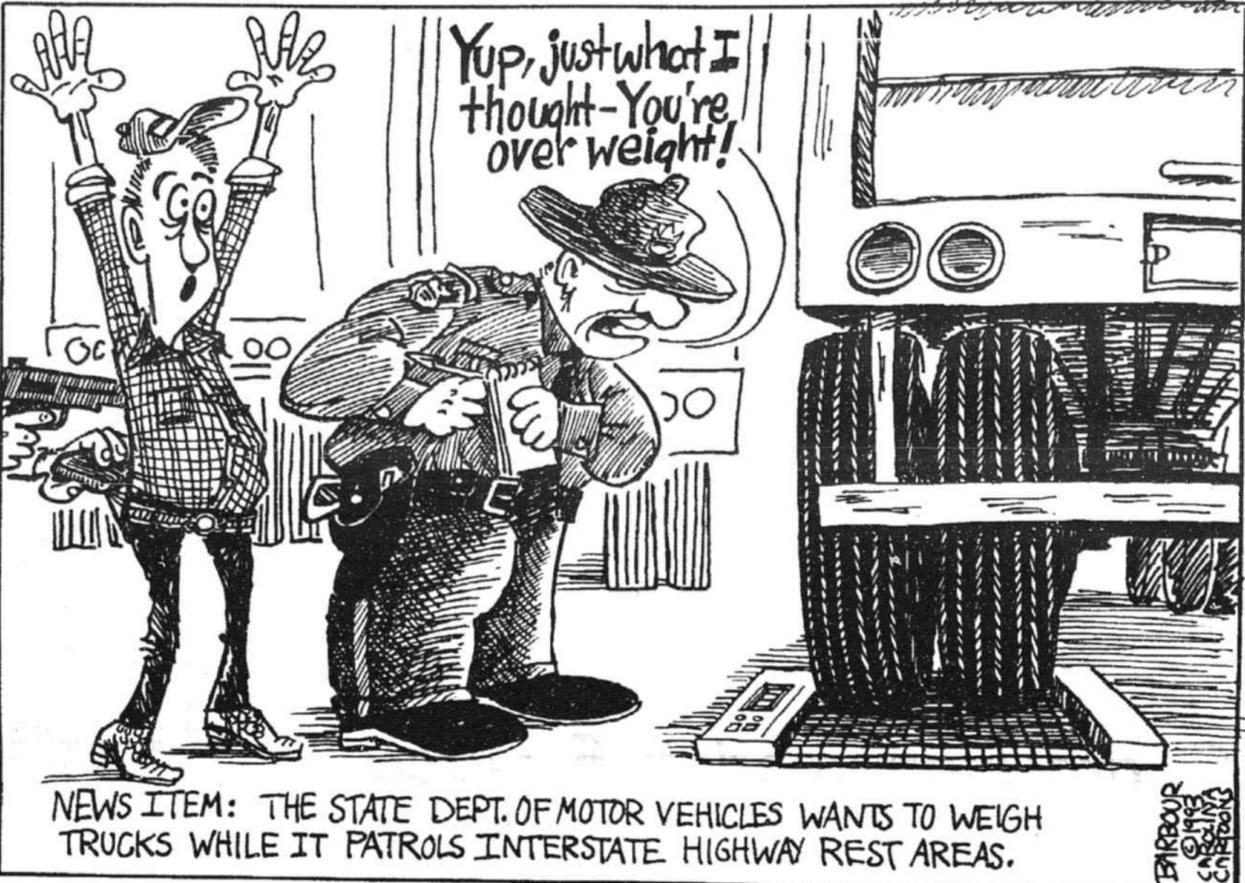
find "U.S.A. Trivia" (Item No. 910 by Boynton) in any stores in the United States. (Stumped Again!, Round No. 2)

That's a shame, because I think it would make a good classroom activity or personal game for middle or high school students, as well as adults.

Apparently the board game is marketed mainly in Europe, feeding an interest among teen-agers and young adults in any and all things American. On many geography-related questions, a player who has actually visited a place can earn an extra roll of the die. Being able to pass around a U.S. \$20 bill and show other players its back side is also worth an extra turn.

I'm looking for a copy of my own, in order to bone up before Timmy returns for Christmas and there's a chance for a rematch.

Because of our lack of knowledge, what might have been a piece of cake turned into a generous helping of humble pie, even for the winning team.



NEWS ITEM: THE STATE DEPT. OF MOTOR VEHICLES WANTS TO WEIGH TRUCKS WHILE IT PATROLS INTERSTATE HIGHWAY REST AREAS.

Tax Dollars At Work: Idealism Imperiled

I'm trying to resist becoming a conservative. Something in my psyche equates that with loss of optimism, idealism and youth—not to mention hair, sense of humor and the right to listen to a Rolling Stones album from time to time.

But every time I open the morning's mail, it gets harder to resist crossing that line.

Here's a sampling from today's stack:

"Dear Editors and News Directors:

We look to you for help in bringing society up-to-date in its use of language when referring to persons with disabilities. Language changes with time and events, and the media is (sic) the primary source for educating the public in proper use of terminology...

We have enclosed suggested guidelines which we suggest you use in educating the public about the preferred language."

Attached is a two-page document entitled "Suggested Guidelines When Referring to Persons with Disabilities," complete with an entire page of "affirmative phrases" as contrasted with "negative phrases." We Editors and News Directors are therein reminded not to refer to anyone as "crazy" or "nuts," but rather as "a person with psychiatric disability."

Am I alone, or do you get a little ticked at the idea of someone being paid \$40K or so a year of tax money to tell me this?



Lynn Carlson

I want to set the mind of the executive director of the Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities at ease by assuring her that, at any newspaper for which I have worked, the market takes care of this type of problem all by itself. If we do somebody wrong, we hear about it quickly, loudly and, occasionally, clearly.

Ten years ago I covered the trial of a worthless sack of... sorry, a person with ethical disability, who had spent an entire afternoon raping and otherwise brutalizing a non-ambulatory woman with multiple sclerosis. My account of the trial described her as "confined to a wheelchair."

The paper had been on the stands for less than two hours when I received a call from another woman with multiple sclerosis who informed me in no uncertain terms that when your legs don't work, a wheelchair is not an instrument of confinement, but of liberation.

She was right. I thanked her and banished the phrase from my usage forever.

Item 2:

"The enclosed press release announces the (U.S.) Public Health Service/Region IV Culturally Appropriate Health Care Symposium, scheduled for Nov. 30-Dec. 1 in the Atlanta, Ga., area... (as if I can't flip the page and figure this out)

The theme is "Cherish our Diversity—Cultivate our Commonality..."

This symposium reiterates the importance that as educators, health professionals and community leaders we have a responsibility to not only understand that this world is made up of uniquely diverse cultures but that each should be understood and respected as such."

Call me cranky, but I want my contribution to PHS to be used on things like vaccinations, pap smears, mammograms, AIDS prevention, and TB treatment.

Seems that we could divide up cultures and find ways to be uniquely understanding until the cows come home. I heard last week about an Asheville radio announcer who said he will no longer tolerate being referred to as a white male. He wants recognition as a "Hillbilly American."

Item 3, saving the best for last:

It's from Paul Hardin, chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For a page and a half, the chancellor pleads with students, occasionally lapsing into snivel, to understand the university trustees' recent decision to rescind a trial 24-

hour visitation policy in six campus residence halls.

"I hope you...will refrain from attacking either the sincerity or authority of the Board..."

Many people of my generation have found great happiness in reserving sex for marriage and making that ultimate physical expression part of a total, loving commitment to a lifetime partner. They—we—hope that members of your generation will not carelessly pass up the opportunity to nourish that kind of enduring, exclusive relationship. I also express the hope, as a man, that the men of Carolina will respect the women they date. I worry especially about acquaintance rape, a serious problem most often related to excessive use of alcohol (and probably not related directly to official visiting hours in dormitories).

Is there even the slightest possibility that the chancellor's message to newspapers throughout North Carolina will result in the taming of a single collegiate hormone? Well, of course not.

How much respect will his communication engender among students for administrators and trustees? About as little as parents get who enforce a rule on their kids and then apologize for having done so.

...All of which reminds me that it's Friday, time to go home and dive into the album stacks and try to stave off curmudgeon status for another 48 hours. There's no more mail until Monday.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hearing Speaker Says Remarks About Mining Misconstrued

To the editor:

Your headline article last week depicted me "as favoring the proposed Martin Marietta Aggregates limestone mine." What I said at the planning board hearing was not a lecture on the merits of a rock quarry.

You conveniently failed to quote my remark that "There are numerous legitimate concerns over the Martin Marietta project, many of which I share. However, approving this request as written would affect several other property uses." My concern over the zoning amendment was that a total ban on mining would eliminate the removal of topsoil and peat, and that the extraction of these products is necessary.

I also made some philosophical comments to illustrate that property rights are increasingly under attack and that preposterous reasons are often cited to deny the use of private property. Although some of these inane reasons have been cited to prevent the quarry, you somehow equated my criticism of them to being "pro-quarry."

These remarks were unrelated to the quarry. I was simply calling attention to a growing trend that should be immensely disturbing to everyone.

I happen to value human life above that of woodpeckers and lizards. And when demands are made to deny humans of their constitutional rights because these crit-

ters might be inconvenienced, those demands need to be challenged.

Some of the latest "environmental concerns" have reached the level of absurdity. They do not protect the environment and, in many cases, ultimately do more harm than good. They are nothing more than an excuse to prevent the use of private property.

Our society demands and deserves the standard of living it has acquired. And preserving that standard sometimes means changing what some of us would prefer to be left alone.

Only a dimwit would oppose being good stewards of our environment. But good intentions have become idio-

cy and it's time to halt the nonsense. We should at least be smarter than the woodpeckers and lizards when assessing how progress is regulated.

Editor, I understand your need to sensationalize things. That sells papers. But by mischaracterizing what I said, you did your readers a disservice because they were shielded from the crucial point I was trying to make. If you must sensationalize, please do not do it at the expense of something that is so important to our well-being.

Patrick Newton, P.E.
 Southport

(More Letters, Following Page)