

RAIN MAKES THE DIFFERENCE for plants and animals on land and in the sea.

## Rain Makes The Difference

BY BILL FAVER

A part of the Voyager probe to Uranus several years ago emphasized again for us the uniqueness of our Planet Earth as the only life-sustaining planet in our solar system. At least, all the others seem to have adverse conditions for life forms similar to those we have on Earth.



FAVER

Scientists tell us that rain makes the difference. When our sun "exploded" to hurl planet-sized masses of molten matter into orbit, the Earth and the other planets began their processes of development.

Over thousands of years, probably, the boiling and cooling took place, hardening the surface and causing eruptions from the interior heat.

As gases from the interior escaped, clouds were formed overhead. These clouds moved higher in the sky until the cooler atmospheric conditions brought condensation and a deluge of rain.

It must have rained for days and days, or perhaps for years. Water shaped the land, eroding away the softer materials and forming the seas. Two-thirds of the surface of the new planet became covered with water. The seas were set in motion by the pull of the sun

and the moon and the spinning of the Earth. That motion spawned air currents and winds. The winds moved clouds and fronts and weather came to be.

We don't know why other planets had no rain, or if they did, why it didn't collect in seas. Perhaps the distance from the sun was such that a different reaction happened with the escaping gases, or a quicker cooling of the masses took place. Or perhaps life was brief and ceased to be years before life even began on Earth.

As the life we know evolved, water has become one of the basic ingredients. We are told the first life forms were in the seas and one day a creature crawled onto land and started depending on oxygen from the air rather than from the water.

Our own blood is very similar to seawater, and many people see this as evidence of our dependence upon the sea. Water is needed by plants for growth and development. We know most of us can live weeks without food but that we quickly dehydrate and will die soon without water. That so many of us want to be so close to the ocean, or to rivers and lakes, or have a swimming pool, is more evidence of the importance of water to us.

So next time it rains on you, think about the importance of that rain to nourishing life, cleansing the air and replenishing the seas. Rain makes the difference on Planet Earth.

### MORE LETTERS

## Control Mainland Stormwater First, Before Dense Development Occurs

To the editor:

Sunset Beach Council Member Ed Gore has proposed that the town council initiate a study of how to manage stormwater runoff on the island of Sunset Beach. He is to be congratulated for his effort to make stormwater management a real part of the proposed wastewater management system.

However, I believe stormwater management for the mainland should have first priority. Stormwater management works best when it is put in place before an area is densely developed. The most effective and least expensive stormwater management is to limit development to the carrying capacity of the land—the density of development that can take place without causing environmental degradation.

Remediation through engineered solutions after an area has been developed is very expensive and only marginally successful. Since large areas of land remain undeveloped on the mainland while the island is already intensely developed, it makes sense to put our money where it can do the most good.

Furthermore, the town's consulting engineers recommend in the 201 Facilities Plan for the sewer system that stormwater management be put in place on the mainland before allowing any further high density development on or near Calabash Creek and the intracoastal waterway.

The engineers also point out that because the island is heavily developed with extremely small lots, and those lots are currently absorbing wastewater through septic systems, the land does not have the ability to absorb stormwater until after the island is sewered.

Mayor Barber has said that concerns about rapid, high-density development made possible by a sewer system should be addressed by zon-

ing rather than by opposition to a sewer system. Stormwater management planning is the vehicle that will tell us what zoning is appropriate to protect the environment.

I would ask our town council to give their top priority to stormwater management for the mainland where we can achieve the greatest environmental protection for the least amount of money.

Sue Weddle  
Sunset Beach

### Protect Animals From Antifreeze Hazard

To the editor:

I would like to tell everyone of a tragic story that happened. I went to work one evening recently and found a beautiful black dog I'll call "Blackie" in the parking lot. From the way he was acting, I knew he was searching for someone. He had no collar on, so I did not know who he belonged to.

When I left work 11 hours later, Blackie was still there searching, so I brought him home with me. I gave him a warm place to sleep and some food and water, but he kept throwing up. I felt it was because he was in a strange place and nervous.

The next day I took him to the animal hospital and the veterinarian suggested Blackie had drunk some antifreeze. I stood beside the examining table and Blackie laid his head on my arm. I rubbed his head and talked to him. I know that he understood that I loved him and I cared about him.

Antifreeze poisoning is not curable unless treated within the hour; then there is little hope.

Later that day, the doctor said Blackie had had two seizures and that they had to sedate him. When he started coming out of sedation, he started having seizures again, and so

they sedated him again. He suggested the humane thing would be to put him to sleep. I agreed.

Had I not taken Blackie to the doctor, he would have crawled off and died a painful and agonizing death with no one to help him or love him. I will take Blackie and I will bury him, but I will always remember the little dog who searched for the person he loved.

If your radiator runs hot, or if your hose breaks, please help save a little animal by putting dirt on the antifreeze so they can't drink it. Please take care of your animals, and don't leave harmful things around for them to get into.

Christine Madison  
Fayetteville

### 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: **The Brunswick Beacon, P.O. Box 2558, Shallotte NC 28459**

Anonymous letters will not be published.

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### GUEST COLUMN

## No More Training Schools

BY L.V. "VIC" HACKLEY

Juvenile crime is on the increase. Political leaders have responded with talk about "getting tough." Some are calling for the construction of more training schools, more detention centers, for juveniles.

But we've got to get smart, not just tough. We're already tough, and it hasn't solved a thing. Our training school admissions, for example, are three times the national average. Only two other states permit a person to be tried and sentenced as an adult at the age of 16.

It's not surprising that our first reaction to a three percent-increase in violent juvenile crime is to build more training schools. As psychologist Abraham Maslow points out, if all you have is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail.

It's time to throw away the hammer. More than 20 years ago, a report by the North Carolina Bar Association noted that the state's training schools were little more than a "dumping ground for unfortunate children." The report, "As the Twig Is Bent," said nearly 50 percent of the children in training schools should never have been sent there. Little has changed.

Instead of serving as a deterrent to crime, training schools often serve as an academy for future criminals, according to the National Association of Counties. In a manual for county officials, the association notes that children who commit crimes but stay out of formal court proceedings rarely graduate to more severe crimes, while juveniles sent to training schools frequently move on to more serious offenses.

Yet studies indicate training schools are still the punishment of preference for judges throughout the state. One recent study of judicial orders sending children to training schools discovered that one-third failed to show that community alternatives had been considered, as required by law.

Another study found that less than one-third of the children were placed on probation before being sent off to training school.

In some cases, emotionally disturbed children are shunted off to training schools which are incapable of serving their needs. These have also become repositories for African-American youth, who constitute one-third of the state's population, but make up 42 percent of the juveniles in North Carolina's training schools.

Of course, the most serious offenders should be isolated from the

rest of society. Among the 800 children under 15 years old incarcerated in North Carolina's training schools, four are murderers and almost 200 others have been found guilty of rape, arson, armed assault or other serious crimes. But the remaining 600 would be better served by alternative community programs—and would be less likely to become career criminals.

A number of states, including Arkansas, Missouri and Massachusetts, have closed their training schools and constructed a few small, high-security units for the most violent, chronic offenders.

These states depend on an extensive network of community programs to serve the majority of those juveniles in state custody. A recent six-year study in Missouri found that only 15 percent of those discharged from Division of Youth Services programs later end up in adult prisons.

Building more training schools is

a mistake. Studies show that states with high numbers of juvenile beds have high usage rates. As noted in the movie, "The Field of Dreams," "if you build them, they will come."

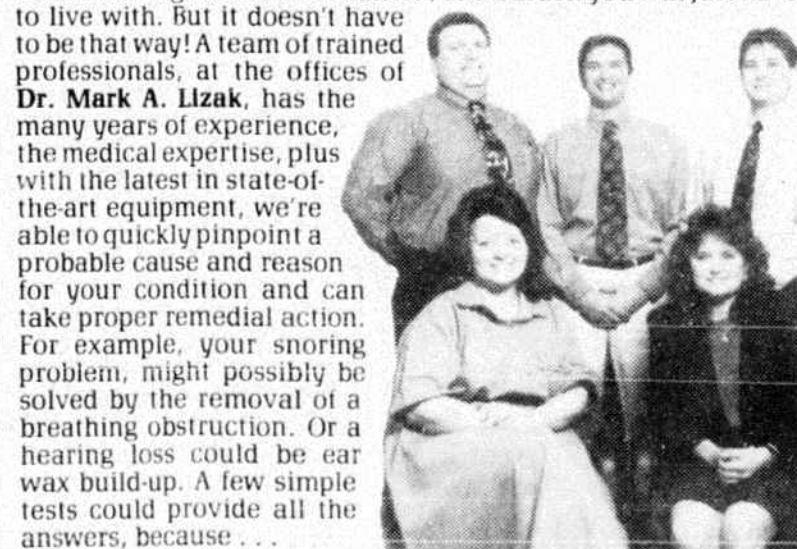
Polls indicate that the public understands the need for alternatives. In a number of surveys, across the nation and in North Carolina, nearly three-fourths of those questioned say children in trouble with the law should receive treatment and rehabilitation, not punishment.

It's time to review North Carolina's fragmented juvenile justice system. Community-based alternatives and quality early childhood programs can do more to reduce crime than building more training schools, more dumping grounds for children. We've tried tougher, now it's time to get smarter.

Hackley, chancellor of Fayetteville State University, chairs the board of directors of the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute, a private, nonprofit organization that develops policies for children.

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There are some things you just don't need to live with!

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