

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweatt and Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Publishers
 Edward M. Sweatt.....Editor
 Lynn S. Carlson.....Managing Editor
 Susan Usher.....News Editor
 Doug Rutter.....Sports Editor
 Eric Carlson.....Staff Writer
 Mary Potts & Peggy Earwood.....Office Managers
 Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Advertising Director
 Timberley Adams, Cecelia Gore
 and Linda Cheers.....Advertising Representatives
 Dorothy Brennan and Brenda Clemmons Moore.....Graphic Artists
 William Manning.....Pressman
 Lonnie Sprinkle.....Assistant Pressman

PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1994

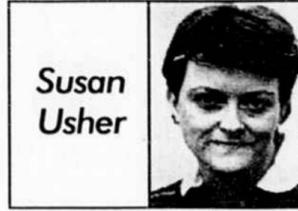
Why Not Return Ethics To The Classroom?

"Values traditionally taught in the home and church—honesty, morality, courtesy, tolerance—have found their way into the rhetoric of a special legislative session on crime."

Middle-age must be near. Upon reading the above sentence in a regional daily, my mind automatically added—"and school." Not teaching those values in the schoolroom is very new as traditions go—only 20 to 25 years old. Must have been a young reporter working on that story of how some state legislators hope to reduce the crime rate by making sure kids get taught right from wrong.

I'm just old enough to remember when concepts like "honesty" and "courtesy" were a part of everyday classroom life. No one made a big deal out of them; they just were. Most parents would have been surprised if what they were trying to teach at home hadn't been reinforced at school.

Our parents were, for the most part, trying to pass on to us those



Susan Usher

traditional values, despite growing pressure from outside forces to the contrary. We're talking about a time in which "Peyton Place" (TV show and book) was still considered scandalous. I remember checking out Grace M's book from the public library to see what all the fuss was about.

Television was as much a part of our lives as church, in some instances more, which certainly had not been true for previous generations. And what a mix of programming. We had Lassie and Laugh In, Dick Clark and American Bandstand, belly-button Cher, Shock

Theatre and Peyton Place. Lawrence Welk was on his way out, on the heels of two other popular music leaders, Tennessee Ernie Ford and Mitch Miller.

It was a time of rapid change. On every side young people were challenging their parents and everything they claimed to stand for, including ethics and morality.

Soon the schools were teaching what was happening outside their walls: situational ethics—right or wrong depends on the situation, with no absolutes. Or else they were teaching no ethics at all.

No standards? No absolutes? Children need to learn to make decisions for themselves and to gradually take on more and more responsibilities. But how can they be expected to manage when there are no limits? When there are too many choices?

We've seen what happens to young people reared without any rules or guiding values.

It's true we can't legislate morali-

ty or ethics and I don't think we'd want to. But we can teach students about basic values and citizenship. We can and should have higher expectations in common for their behavior.

We can teach that it's wrong to lie, cheat and steal. We can teach respect for self and for others and their property. We can teach right from wrong. We can teach what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Kids need boundaries, need to know what's expected of them, what is acceptable. Once taught, it's up to them whether to act on that training or accept the consequences of not doing so.

A lot of youngsters aren't getting this kind of guidance at home, for a variety of reasons.

Our schools can't do it alone—they need the help of the church and the community at large—but they're a place to start. After 25 years of telling teachers to leave ethics outside the schoolroom, it's time we wised up.

An Excuse Not To Expand Plan Board? There Is None

What does a town do when its planning board has a meeting attendance problem?

A workshop last week between the Ocean Isle Beach Board of Commissioners and planning board certainly illustrated the point when only one planning board representative showed up—the most recent appointee.

That fact in itself, combined with a pretty embarrassing attendance record for some planning board appointees, should garner support for a proposal to expand the planning board. Being discussed is a suggestion to increase the planning board from three to five residents of the town limits and to adopt rules to replace those who routinely fail to appear at meetings.

Commissioner Ken Proctor, who has been doing all he can to keep the idea afloat, said, "I just want to hear a good excuse for not having a five-member board." There doesn't appear to be one.

It seems fairly obvious that five people can provide better representation than three—provided they all care enough to participate. And good service to the citizenry is the point, isn't it?

An attendance problem with any group or committee is usually symptomatic of a motivation problem, a scheduling problem, or both.

The fact that the board meets weekly at 9 in the morning may be a problem for Ocean Isle Beach's planning board, where a majority of the members have traditionally been working people. The same is not true at neighboring Sunset Beach, where a planning board constituted primarily of retirees meets weekly at 10 a.m. with excellent attendance. So any changes should include the choice of a meeting time which suits the needs of the planning board members, as well as the citizens.

If there is a motivation problem, there's no excuse for that, either. Anyone who doesn't care enough to show up with some regularity and fulfill his or her commitment to the town should be replaced. Period. Failing to do so would be an injustice to all the qualified citizens of Ocean Isle Beach who might be willing to serve on the planning board and do a good job of it.

It's good to see the commissioners giving healthy public discussion to these issues. We'll look forward to a solution which benefits not only the town officials, but the townspeople.

A Poetic Definition

For those fortunate enough to live here, or with the foresight to have visited here last weekend, it was the poetic definition of a harbinger of spring.

In a winter which has been kinder to us in the South Brunswick Islands than to our neighbors north and west, but nonetheless far from balmy, last weekend was just right to quench many a soul parched from breathing furnace-generated air and paying multi-hundred-dollar power bills.

By the time you read this, it will probably be over—the 70-degree days, the open windows, the happy-faced shorts-wearing people converging on the beach.

But you have to be thankful for spring—especially for a pure little sip of it in wintertime.

Worth Repeating...

- Say not you know another entirely, till you have divided an inheritance with him. —Johann Kaspar Lavater
- Sacred cows make the tastiest hamburger. —Abbie Hoffman
- True happiness is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise; it arises, in the first place, from the enjoyment of one's self; and, in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions. —Joseph Addison
- I wish you all sorts of prosperity with a little more taste. —Alain Rene Lesage



Bohunk, The Bobbitts And Bachelor Number Two

"It's for a good cause."

That's what they said about a "bachelor auction" to raise money for the March of Dimes.

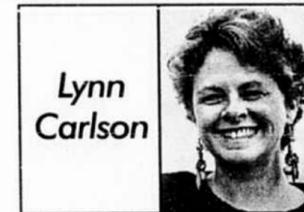
Hmmm... Then how about a cockfight to benefit the Humane Society? A keg party and drag race for Mothers Against Drunk Driving? A pig-picking for the American Heart Association?

I suspect I'm not the only recovering liberal out there who has a problem with the notion that it's okay to sell people, even consenting adult males, to one another—so long as it's all in fun and "for a good cause." But I haven't heard anyone else objecting.

The caption of a color news photo describes how one man "struts his stuff as he is auctioned off..."

The accompanying article quotes the female emcee as saying, "Tell me about your jewels," as Bachelor No. 2 throws necklaces at the "roomful of enthusiastic women."

Turn all this around and picture Shriners in the audience and Bachelorette No. 2, clad in a merry widow and fishnet stockings, handing



Lynn Carlson

out balloons. Not in a million years—at least not for the past 20 years, and certainly not receiving any jocular coverage in a family newspaper.

No, they'd never pull off a public "bachelorette auction," even if it would save every crippled and burned child on the planet.

We women have been pretty successful in pounding home the message that we deserve respect and won't tolerate exploitation. And we do, and we shouldn't.

But it concerns me lately that we as a gender seem to feel no obligation to apply the Golden Rule when the roles get reversed.

We're willing to file suit if some-

one flirts with us at the office but, in that same office, we don't mind laughing off the sexual mutilation of a real-live man by a real-live woman. What's wrong with this picture?

I'm not suggesting that John Wayne or Loretta Bobbitt deserve your respect. No one had to make fools of them; they did a perfectly good job of that on their own.

But it seems pretty elementary to me that anyone capable of taking a knife to her mate has way more chutzpah than it takes to simply pick up the keys and leave. Only a jury full of hybrid knuckleheads could have found her less than 100-percent guilty and accountable.

Meanwhile, back in your very own family room, here comes the Diet Coke commercial, with the gals in the office all leering out the skyscraper window.

As the song "I Just Wanna Make Love to You" starts blasting, Bohunk on the construction site below takes off his shirt and flashes his glistening pecs as he enjoys a soft drink break.

I have a vague memory that, not too many years ago, then-Mayor Koch of New York appealed to the chivalrous sensibilities of Bohunk and his colleagues. Seems their wolf-whistles and hoots in appreciation of the female pulchritude on the street were offending the objects of their affection. And that wouldn't do...

Then there's the Hyundai commercial. Two women are waiting for a taxi or something, passing the time by judging men based on the cars they drive.

The guy in the flashy red convertible "is obviously overcompensating for some sort of shortcoming." Tee-hee. Another, they speculate, drives an expensive car to cover "deep-seated feelings of inadequacy."

Ah, but the Hyundai owner... "Wonder what he has under the hood?"

Is this any more acceptable than a Maidenform commercial with men guessing cup sizes and laughing at fat chicks? It would seem so.

We've come a long way, baby. Indeed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Columnist's Stand Praised; Journalists Said To Oppose Citizens Bearing Arms

To the editor:

Eric Carlson's recent column chronicling his letter to the National Rifle Association was both surprising and encouraging: Surprising because journalists are overwhelmingly against private citizens bearing arms. Encouraging because he recognizes how the powerful liberal media has totally misrepresented the crime problem by blaming guns.

Thus, he has wisely decided to join the NRA. Unfortunately, he has also probably ruined his journalistic career by doing so.

Mr. Carlson obviously knows what the NRA, an organization castigated by media lies, really is. He knows the NRA is the prominent leader in wildlife conservation and preservation of ranges and hunting lands. He knows the NRA is an organization fighting to have the "Eddie Eagle" child safety program adopted in schools across the nation, an organization battling for stern sentencing and a stop to our revolving-door criminal justice system, an organization that has created a popular program called "Refuse to be a Victim," which teaches women how to defend themselves against rapists and muggers,

and an organization that has sponsored meaningful legislation to protect law-abiding citizens from the lowlife bacteria roaming our streets.

I applaud Carlson for having the intelligence to see that our rights are not the cause of crime. Crime is caused by the demented mind that, without regard for life or property, instructs the finger to pull the trigger. The only way to stop crime is to extinguish the offender—not his knife, car, golf club, baseball bat, chain saw, hammer, or gun.

Banning guns to combat crime is as absurd as banning cars to stop drunk drivers. No logic exists to dispute this fact. However, many well-meaning people are allowing the media to distract them from real crime solutions and letting politicians convince them they are doing something about crime by stripping honest citizens of their Constitutional rights.

Luckily, Mr. Carlson is a journalist who has been neither distracted nor misled. We just need more like him.

Patrick Newton, P.E.

Southport

The writer is the chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Health.

Noise Ordinance Gets A 'Yes'

To the editor:

We support a noise ordinance in Brunswick County. We moved from Sea Village because of dogs barking 24 hours. Now at Seaside North, noise is just as bad on weekends.

Tom Auman
 Ocean Isle Beach

Missing VISTAs Are Sought

To the editor:

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is trying to contact former VISTA volunteers for participation in events marking the program's 30th anniversary and its new role as a pillar of President Clinton's national service program.

VISTA does not have current addresses for many of the 100,000 Americans who served in the program since it was signed into law in August 1964, and the first VISTA volunteers entered service in January, 1965. On Oct. 1, 1993, VISTA officially became part of the president's national service initiative.

Currently, about 3,700 VISTA volunteers serve at more than 800 local projects.

Readers knowing others who served in VISTA are asked to pass the word that VISTA needs their skills and energy once again. Former VISTA volunteers are urged to write VISTA, Washington, D.C. 20525 or call 1-800-424-8867.

Gladys Wagenseil
 Brunswick County Literacy Council
 (More Letters, Following Page)

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.