

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 1994

## A Community's Problem Need Systemwide Solution

It certainly isn't difficult to understand School Board Member Bill Fairley's frustration, even to the point of withdrawing from the race for re-election.

Fairley wanted to standardize the schools' performance-based accountability plans and tie teachers' bonus pay to students' academic achievement. That doesn't seem like too much to ask. After all, in the real world that houses most peoples' workplaces, raises and bonuses are handed out only under very simple and narrow circumstances: if the boss can afford it, the employee has done something special, and the company is flourishing.

Not so, it seems, in the public education arena, where obtuse plans with serious-sounding names but very few measurable goals can be submitted as solutions to the grave fact that Brunswick County students aren't learning what they ought to be.

There is no question that teachers deserve more support than they receive from students, parents, administration and community. And there is no disputing teachers' argument that their students come from a problem-riddled community with 13-percent unemployment, functional illiteracy and abnormally high death rates due to alcohol and drug use.

But that would seem all the more reason to argue that standardized system-wide goals are the logical step toward improving education in the face of standardized community-wide social ills. As the situation now stands, expect a year's wait while the rules are drawn for "site-based management," a concept of strengthened authority for individual schools that the teachers advocate but apparently don't fully understand.

Maybe site-based management will turn out to be everything educators hope it will be. But it certainly seems tantamount to having every department of a corporation function with its own goals in lieu of a quantifiable master plan for the whole organization.

## Reconsider The Noise Law

The county board should heed the suggestion of Commissioner Jerry Jones and re-consider a countywide noise ordinance, which was proposed several months ago but never acted upon.

Seaside resident Tom Singleton has mounted a petition drive in favor of such a measure and is having no problem getting signatures from every corner of Brunswick County. He also has done extensive research on noise ordinances in other counties and municipalities statewide, and is ready to share the information here at home. And just last week, the commissioners heard fresh complaints from a group of Ash residents about loud music, gunfire and other disturbances in their area.

It's a perennial problem all over Brunswick County, and this gap in the county ordinances ought to be sealed. Citizens deserve some recourse when others routinely infringe upon their peace and quiet.

Spring is coming, and folks will want to open their windows. They ought to be able to do so.

# Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Shoreline

My dad lives in a rural area of New Jersey where former city dwellers and suburban refugees have been moving in at a rapid pace. This causes occasional conflicts between the newcomers and the farmers, who are forced to sell off land to pay skyrocketing property taxes.

A very wealthy family built a huge home across the road from a large, working dairy farm. The home had a postcard view of rolling green pastures, white fences and red barns. Which is why they chose the location.

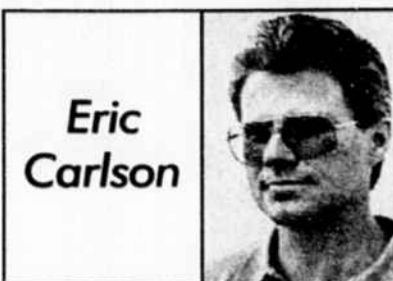
But after a while, the newcomer decided he didn't like looking out his picture window and into the open doors of the farmer's tractor barn, which was a good quarter-mile away.

So, being a city fellow, he didn't walk up to the farm house and discuss this with his neighbor. He went to the township council and demanded that the government order the farmer to keep his unsightly equipment properly shielded from view.

But the township elders were not newcomers. They politely told the city fellow that things were different there. The courts likewise threw out a lawsuit he filed against his neighbor.

When all the legal wrangling was over, the farmer constructed a new barn. It was very big and had two huge, wide doorways, but no doors. He built it at the very edge of his pasture, down by the road, about 20 yards from his neighbor's picture window.

He didn't really need the new barn. But it turned out to be a dandy



Eric Carlson

place for storing his smelly old manure spreader.

I thought of this the other day as I read the morning paper.

It seems those high-class folks over in Wilmington, which they think of as "Paris on the Cape Fear," are afraid their bumbling country cousins might build something on OUR side of the river that will spoil THEIR waterfront view.

The Wilmington City Council wants to impose "extra-territorial jurisdiction" on the river's west bank, allowing THEM to control development IN PORTIONS OF BRUNSWICK COUNTY!!!

The article noted that "in the past decade, the city invested heavily in the waterfront and the Historic District, building a riverfront park, making street improvements and supporting business development."

Now here's the good part: "That tourist-friendly environment could be ruined by ugly construction on the west bank." (In other words, here in Brunswick County.)

Hooooooweeeee Bubba! You reckon them city folks are afraid we might sell off all that valuable pulp wood and put in a mud-bog race track or a 24-hour flea market?

Or maybe they figure we'll build us another nuke plant or ammunition depot right on the water. I hear there are some huge limestone deposits about 60 feet underground just begging to be mined. Maybe Martin Marietta would be interested.

Perhaps we could create a tenderloin district of neon lights, loud honky-tonks and topless bars where the dancers remove everything but a few hospital bandages. We could call them "West Bank Gauze-A-Strippers."

No...I know what we need there! A hog farm and slaughtering operation! There's plenty of muck along the water for them pigs to wallow around in, once we get all those darn trees out of the way.

And lucky for us, the hot summer months bring winds from the southwest—directly toward the Historic District.

Picture a group of well-heeled Wilmingtonians sitting at a waterfront restaurant, sampling a fine 1982 Puy Lacoste as the evening breeze wafts across the river.

"Ahhhh...the most spectacular vintage since '61...I detect notes of raisin and black currents and...Ugggggh! Waiter! Take this wine back! It tastes like hog manure!"

Meanwhile, just offshore...

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome aboard the Henrietta II for our sunset cruise down the Cape Fear River. I'd like to take this opportunity to suggest that you avail yourself of the complementary oxygen masks that will automatically drop from your overhead compartment as we pass the Eagle Island Pork Processing Plant..."

Naturally, we on the west bank wouldn't think of doing such a thing (unless provoked). Just to show how much we want to get along, we could continue developing our portion of the shoreline in the same way the east bankers seem to like it now.

You know that rusty old half-sunken barge you see from the bridge crossing the Brunswick River? The one the locals call the USS Belville?

Why not dredge us out a little harbor on Brunswick County property next to the Battleship North Carolina and create our own floating (sort-of) museum? We could take people on tours of the ship and shoot fireworks and build a little gift shop that sells "USS Belville Memorial" T-shirts.

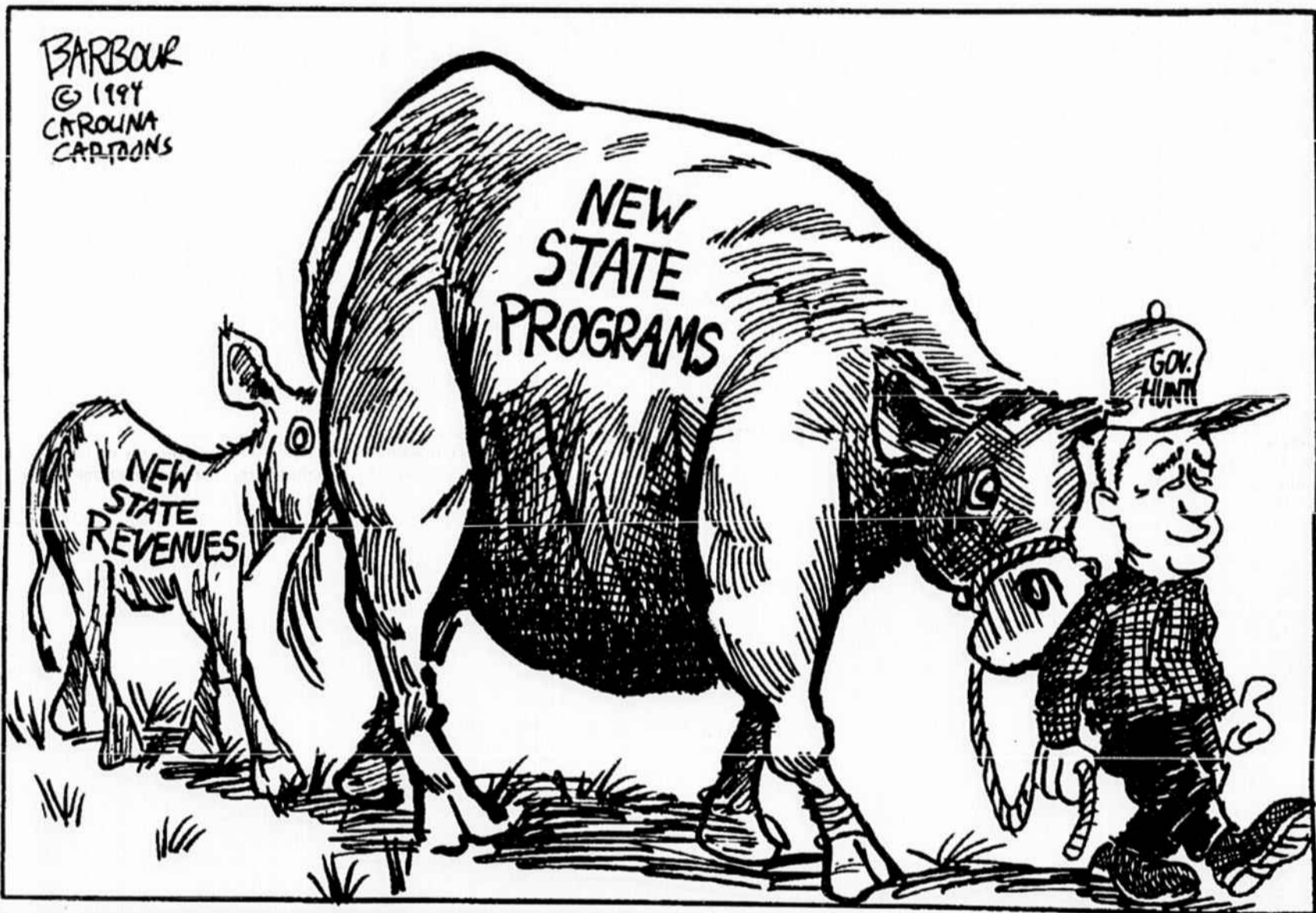
Which makes me wonder what the fine citizens of Belville think of all this. They probably have some pretty strong feelings about the way the river's east bank has been developing over the years.

In fact, I wouldn't be surprised to hear Mayor Ken Messer suggest that the town extend its extra-territorial jurisdiction across the river. Maybe take in Water Street and the Cotton Exchange?

How else are Belvillians going to protect their view? Heck, they could wake up one morning and look across the river and see some tacky picture of a giant whale painted on the side of a building.

Remember Wilmingtonoids: Two can play at this game. The next time you have illusions of extending your extraterrestrial jurisdiction, consider these five words:

Chandler's Wharf Mobile Home Park.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# He Doesn't Oppose Sewers, But 'Lack Of Fairness' In Sharing Cost

To the editor:

The Feb. 17 Town of Calabash public hearing relative to the proposed sewer authority raised a number of questions including that of distribution of costs in a fair and equitable manner. Most all agree that there is a need for a sewer system; however views differ as to whether the Town of Calabash should purchase and expand the existing Carolina Blythe service as opposed to becoming involved in the sewer authority concept.

I consider as a drawback to the former, the inability of Carolina Blythe as currently constituted to provide services other than to the town itself. Land use and zoning control over the town's extraterritorial jurisdiction is exerted by the town, hence an obligation to provide service to those areas.

As to the sewer authority alternative—and I believe that eventually Carolina Blythe would be absorbed by the sewer authority—development costs would exceed \$34 million, of which approximately \$21 million would be incurred via development of distribution lines to properties, both developed and undeveloped, which would benefit from the service.

Traditionally, the cost for distribution lines from is large borne by benefiting properties. N.C. General Statute (160A, Chapter 10) addresses the development and extension of sewer/water distribution lines and establishes the basis upon which special assessments may be levied. The theme of the statute is quite evident, i.e. that benefiting properties share equally in the cost.

Not so the sewer authority plan, which provides that undeveloped properties pay an impact fee, while developed properties are excluded, even though the benefit to both is the same. The excuses given are that impact fees on developed properties "may cause significant hardship," "that they have already paid for their septic systems."

Seems to me that our nation's communities would be in dire financial straits had this theory been applied to the development of water distribution lines, i.e., if you paid for a well, no need to pay an assessment fee for development of the lines.

The fact is that both developed and undeveloped properties would benefit from a sewer system, both in

appreciation of property value and existing burden of recurring expenses in maintaining septic systems. As to the perception that an impact or special assessment would cause hardship, such would be payable interest-free over a ten-year period.

The bottom line to the sewer authority proposal is that the bulk of the cost for distribution lines would be paid through customer user fees. Data provided at the hearing, "Typical User Fees Neighboring Communities," indicated that when no impact/special assessment fee was levied for development of distribution lines, the monthly user fee charge ranged from \$8 to \$15 per month more than had an impact or special assessment fee been levied.

As I said, I'm not opposed to sewers, be it through a sewer authority or Carolina Blythe. What I am opposed to is a lack of fairness in sharing the cost.

As to the Calabash business district, they could have had sewer service years ago through Carolina Blythe; however, they didn't want to pay for it. Now we hear the same old record. Some of the representatives on the Town of Calabash Board of Commissioners should reconsider who they represent.

Al Smith, Calabash  
 Mr. Smith is chairman of the Calabash Planning and Zoning Board.

### Irony In Calabash

To the editor:

It was ironic to read in the Feb. 24 edition of your paper that Calabash Commissioner Ed Schaack accused fellow Commissioner Teddy Altreuter of possible unethical conduct.

The irony is that Commissioner Altreuter was the only one of District II's elected officials who had the common decency to brief her constituents on the actions of the commission and ask if they approved or disapproved.

The callous arrogance of our commissioners in persevering in the creation of the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority, involving what is usually described in the summer brochures (as) "The quaint little fishing village" of Calabash, should be the question on the front burner at commission meetings, rather than condemning

the actions of the one person who sought out the opinion of her constituents before committing us to this \$36-million-plus endeavor.

If passed, this venture will solve problems that Calabash doesn't have, but other surrounding areas do.

They promised us a referendum and reneged on that, claiming there was no legal requirement for them to do so, but conveniently forgetting their moral obligations to the citizens who elected them to office.

If your people had covered the standing-room-only meeting at the Calabash fire house on Feb. 17 you would have observed that up to 90 percent of those attending were in favor of rescinding our commitment to participate in the water and sewer authority.

In closing, I would suggest that when covering stories of such magnitude in the future, that the Beacon instruct their reporters to consult with the "governed" as well as with those who govern them. You may find a better and more accurate story may develop.

James T. Reagan  
 Calabash

### Nothing Unethical

To the editor:

At the last election of commissioners in Calabash there were four candidates for three positions. I was one of the two candidates who openly stated a position on the Town of Calabash joining with Sunset Beach to form the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority.

Stu Thorne also stated his position; he was for it. The other two candidates, Ed Schaack and Al Leisey did not declare for or against the authority. Mr. Thorne was not elected. I, along with Mr. Schaack and Mr. Leisey, was.

There is, contrary to Mr. Schaack's opinion, absolutely nothing unethical about my living up to my stated position in opposition to the sewer authority. Indeed, I have an ethical and moral obligation to honor my promise to those who elected me.

The sewer authority is not a good deal for the people of Calabash, and I will continue to speak out against it. I will not need "subterfuge or circumvention" to do so against this ill-conceived project with my colleagues on the town board and with my fellow citizens. I will continue to be entirely "up front" about my opinions on this

and all other issues.

Certainly, I will continue to encourage our town board to pass the ethics code I have introduced. It is needed in Calabash.

Teddy Altreuter  
 Calabash Commissioner

### Americans First?

To the editor:

I am responding to the letter in your Feb. 24 issue pertaining to black history.

The first successful heart transplant was performed in South African on Dec. 3, 1967, by a five-surgeon team headed by Dr. Christian N. Barnard. He trained in the United States and was white, not black as insinuated by the writer.

Also, the yo-yo, the toy, came to the United States from the Philippines. The name "yo-yo" means to move up and down and was given to the toy by the Tagaloy, who are members of the Malayan people of the Philippines. No black slave brought the yo-yo to the United States.

People should read and get their facts straight. That's what encyclopedias are for.

I too am fed up with this so-called black history. United States history being taught in our schools should pertain to all Americans and not any special group. Remember, we are Americans first.

Rosalie Visser  
 Ocean Isle Beach

### 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.