

MORE LETTERS

County Government Accused Of 'Hitting Man Who's Down'

To the editor:
I hope the voters and taxpayers of Brunswick County have been paying attention to what's been going on at the Administration Building up there at the Brunswick County Government Complex this past year. The county commissioners pushed David Clegg and Kelly Barefoot out of their jobs, all the while claiming there was no "hit list." Now, they've decided to hit a man while he is down.

John Harvey's wife was terminally ill and he asked only for a leave of absence to care for her. Instead he was apparently forced to retire. I don't know the man, but I suspect that now that his wife has passed away, Mr. Harvey would like to continue working. But he was immediately replaced, and (County Manager Wyman) Yelton and/or the commissioners didn't even follow the personnel policy procedures for filling the position.

They started to advertise the job for \$35,000 with a requirement of a master's degree, then withdrew the advertisement and gave the job to Wade Horne at \$42,000 who only has a B.S. degree.

David Clegg (where was that Ramos guy?) would have advised the commissioners they were asking for yet another lawsuit from Mr. Harvey, which I certainly hope he pursues. And the taxpayers' money will be spent to defend another lawsuit brought about by another stupid move by the commissioners.

And how must the other Brunswick County employees feel? They are probably wondering who will be next on the "hit list." I am sure many of them are appalled at what was done to Mr. Harvey, not because they might like him but just the unfairness and principle of how he was treated.

I am sure many of the employees want to storm the commissioners' chambers in support of Mr. Harvey and tell the commissioners what they think of them. But freedom of speech is not allowed up there in Bolivia. If you say the wrong thing, your job is in jeopardy.

And about Wade Horne, although all of us want a job with a higher salary, if he had any integrity or decency about him, he would go to Yelton and/or the commissioners and tell them he doesn't want the job and get himself on down to Long Beach. He will probably be happier out of the madness going on at the complex anyway.

We need to clean house and get rid of every single one of those com-

missioners with the coming election—and Yelton too.
David Beecher
Shalotte

Outstanding Play

To the editor:
I wish every person in Brunswick County could have seen the Passion Play presented by Dixon Chapel at Varnamtown Easter Saturday night and Sunday.

Greg Holden gave an outstanding performance as Jesus. Tony Varnam as Pilate, Doug McDonald as the chief priest and all other cast members also gave professional performances.

The costumes, a labor of love by Marlene Varnam and helpers, and the lighting, sound and stage props were so realistic. The crucifixion scene was a real "tear-jerker," and I've only seen one other as good or better—the outdoor drama "Worthy is the Lamb" in Carteret County.

I know our Savior was pleased with Dixon Chapel performers and is saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

Marty McGuire
Varnamtown

Perfect Week

To the editor:
It may be a day early;
It may be a day late;
But it is not a perfect week until we get our *Beacon!*

Mr. and Mrs. Felton P. Pridgen
Fayetteville

Band Worked Hard

To the editor:
I am writing in response to the letter about the West Brunswick Band in the April 7 issue of the *Beacon*, in which a man completely downgraded a hard-working band.

I am a member of the West Brunswick Band and I know personally that there were things said about us that are very untrue. One thing is about what was said about a person standing on the opposing side saying they can't hear us. We are not there for the opposing side to hear.

During the half-time show, we are facing the Trojans' side, therefore our sound goes to that side to support our fans. It's not lack of enthusiasm or attendance; you can't hear any band that has their back turned to you. The sound goes in the direction you are turned.

Another thing is about our funds. Our parents came out for every home game and worked the concession stand. A percentage of everything we made went to the athletic department, not that they helped any.

We got out and worked very hard during our summer vacation in order to be ready for football season. We worked very hard and many hours in the heat learning field shows. They ask what we do with the money we get. We have to have music, uniforms cleaned and repaired, trips and equipment, which got damaged in the rain at Chapel Hill.

I'm very proud of our Trojans and the band strongly gave them support all season. All we ask for is a little recognition for all of the hard work we have done. It's not just the football season; we didn't get any recognition for our all-county concert or any of our competitions.

I'm not saying our football team or any other sports group doesn't deserve any recognition or any less for that matter, but we deserve some too.

Amanda DeStefano
Ninth-Grade Student
WBHS Band Member

Mayor Responds

To the editor:
I am writing in response to a letter that appeared in the March 31 edition of the *Beacon* in which Gus Mandrapilias asked several questions concerning the Ocean Isle Beach Airport Budget. I believe most of Mr. Mandrapilias' questions could have been answered if he had taken the time to review the budget with our finance officer.

The \$170,000 figure referred to was derived by adding both the local and state grant fund monies. The state grant fund revenues total \$89,468.50. This accounts for grant fund monies set aside in the state's budget for use by local airport authorities.

Of this figure \$81,386.40 was funds due to the town on the apron expansion and land acquisition projects. The remaining \$8,250 was funds already received on these projects which was deposited in the state airport checking account. The local airport budget totals were \$81,368.40. This figure represents estimated revenues as follows: \$15,000, Brunswick County; \$16,368.40, airport fund balance; \$50,000 contribution from the general fund to purchase the land and dwelling located adjacent to the airport runway.

This dwelling was purchased for a two-fold reason. One to eventually become a fixed base operation for the airport and second to serve as a command post headquarter in the event of a natural disaster. The town did not own a building on the mainland to relocate in the event of a natural disaster until this purchase.

The Ocean Isle Beach Airport property was given to the town in 1979 by Odell and Virginia Williamson. The airport was leased to Ocean Isle Aeronautics Association at that time. Approximately four years ago the town wanted to improve the Airport and applied for 50 percent state matching funds to extend, widen and pave the airport runway, install new lighting system and add a new parking apron to accommodate the public. Tie-downs were installed in the parking aprons recently. The town presently has a long term lease on both parking aprons.

In 1993, the town applied for a 50 percent matching grant to purchase 4.5 acres of land to extend the approach area at the east end of the runway. Odell and Virginia Williamson donated funds to pay the local share of this grant.

The Ocean Isle Beach Airport is not only an asset to our town but is of economic value to our county and has been used many times for emergency medical purposes. It is the goal of the Town of Ocean Isle Beach to provide additional airport services in the near future to property owners and citizens of South Brunswick County.

Mayor Betty Williamson
Town of Ocean Isle Beach

Emergency Asset

To the editor:
In a recent letter to the editor, a property owner brought up some economic questions in regards to the Ocean Isle Beach Airport. The figures he quoted were erroneous and misrepresented the economic and budgetary issues of this valuable asset to our whole county.

Nevertheless, I would like to also recognize the airport for being a valuable emergency lifesaving asset as well. As an emergency physician at The Brunswick Hospital since 1986, I am familiar with the emergency medical needs and resources of our county. We have used the airport at Ocean Isle Beach to transport critically ill patients to tertiary care medical centers at Duke University Medical Center, Carolinas Memorial Center and the N.C. Memorial Medical Center.

Although we do have a helicopter pad at the Emergency Department of The Brunswick Hospital, there are many occasions when the weather conditions will not permit safe transport by the less stable helicopters. In these cases we have alternative transport capability through fixed-wing transport necessitating the use of Ocean Isle Beach Airport.

When I have a critical patient who requires referral to a major medical center, it is reassuring to know that we have a resource in our airport to transport patients. It would play an even larger role in the event of a major catastrophic medical emergency involving large numbers of victims. For the patients the airport has already transported, the economic costs, as relatively small as they are, are far outweighed by the benefits provided. For how can we place a monetary value upon human life? Be assured that the airport is a valuable asset for the residents of our whole county.

Kendall H. Suh, M.D.
Ocean Isle Beach
EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Suh is also a member of the Ocean Isle Beach Board of Commissioners.

Town Says Thanks

To the editor:
We would like to thank each individual that contributed time and money for the barbecue benefit dinner held for Megan Gaskins on April 2. The response from the public was overwhelming.

Please continue to keep Megan in your prayers. She still has a long, hard road ahead of her.

We also thank all of the volunteer fire departments who responded to the fire at the Goodwill Store on U.S. 17 on Sunday. If it weren't for these dedicated and caring individuals, this fire could have been a much worse situation.

Mayor Sarah Tripp
Police Chief Rodney Gause
Town of Shallotte

Missing Wally

To the editor:
Many knew him as the Voice of the Wolfpack. We knew him as Mayor Wally, and we were proud to have him represent us.

Now the familiar voice is stilled, but Wally Ausley lives on with us. Already across North Carolina there are thousands who miss him.

Bob Moise
Holden Beach

Keep Your Word

To the editor:
At the public hearing on the sewer system for Sunset Beach, the town council was asked to activate the sewer authority and allow the sewer system to proceed.

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
Shalotte NC 28459
Anonymous letters will not be published.

An officer and director of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association stated to the town council, "No, you promised, you gave your word" that you would let the vote on the \$5 million sewer bond referendum be the vote for or against the sewer system for Sunset Beach.

A member of the town council acknowledged that they had indeed promised that, and would hold off activating the sewer authority to allow the vote on the sewer bond referendum to be a vote for or against the sewer system.

The town council kept their promise and lived up to their word, and the sewer bond referendum was passed April 5 on a vote of 184 for and 76 against. Now the citizens and the Town of Sunset Beach are threatened by a possible lawsuit that the SBTA is considering bringing. All of this because a majority did not vote the way that some in the organization had determined it should.

A promise is an agreement, and that is a contract between parties. It is now time for the officers and directors of the SBTA and others of the opposition to accept the vote in favor of the sewer bond referendum as a vote for the sewer system, and to withdraw any further opposition to a sewer system for Sunset Beach. They gave their word, and now is the time for them to live up to and honor their word.

We the residents and non-residents should now be allowed to get on with the task at hand—to take the first major step in cleaning up the waters and environment in our community.

I firmly believe that our action here will send a message to the other coastal and waterway communities in Brunswick County and to those coastal communities in North and South Carolina that the time is here and now, to start the much-needed process of cleaning up our waters and coastal environment.

Carl Bazemore
Sunset Beach
EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Bazemore notes that he is a member of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association, a Sunset Beach resident and a voter.

'Kit' Wasn't From Calabash, But He Was A Hero

It started innocently enough. A review copy arrived of William R. Trotter's "Ironclads and Columbiads," his volume about the Civil War on the coast. Skimming pages to get a feel for the book, I happened across a reference to a 20-year-old private, Christopher Columbus Bland "from Calabash."

Whoa! Local angle. Who was Christopher Bland?

The Census record for 1860 showed only one Christopher C. Bland in Brunswick County, the 2-year-old son and fifth child of William A. and Alice (Gore) Bland. William Brown, a state archivist, cracked, "It seems as though he might have lied about his age to get into the army!"

Military records helped locate the right C.C. Bland. Under Co. K, 36th Regiment, N.C. Troops (2nd Regiment N.C. Artillery): BLAND, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, Private Born in Pitt County and enlisted in Brunswick County at age 19, July 15, 1864 for the war. Wounded at Fort Fisher Jan. 13, 1865 and captured at Smithville January 18, 1865. Confined at Point Lookout, Md., until released after taking Oath of Allegiance June 8, 1865.

Why did he enlist in Brunswick County? Gehrig Spencer at Fort Fisher State Historic Site explained that Fort St. Philip, on the grounds of old Brunswick Town and later renamed Fort Anderson by the Confederates, was a recruiting station. Fellas came from all over to sign on for the war.



Susan Usher

Gehrig suggested Ennis Long of Supply as someone who might know more about Kit Bland. Ennis directed me to Geneva Boyd at Longwood and her brothers.

Their father, James, had named her "baby" brother, Christopher Columbus "Kit" Bland, of Seaside, after their grandfather. Their grandfather happened to be the son of William A. and Alice Bland who was 2 years old in 1860. William had named his son after his own little brother.

According to family researchers, William and Kit appear to be the third and 11th children respectively of Barnes and Catherine Elizabeth "Rhoda" Brooks Bland of Ayden. William was a turpentine maker and came to own quite a bit of land in the Calabash-Longwood area.

I couldn't find any reference to William entering the war. However, his little brother, Christopher Columbus "Kit" Bland, joined a group of mostly Brunswick County boys, the "Brunswick Artillery." By the time Bland signed on, Co. K was under its third command, Capt. William F. Brooks.

The battery spent the war at Fort Caswell until its transfer in 1864 to

nearby Fort Campbell. Then in November or December, the battery moved to Fort Fisher to help in its defense.

During that first attack the gutsy Kit showed what he was made of.

The fort had been under bombardment for hours on Dec. 27 when several warships began concentrating fire on the fort's two flagstaffs. The flag on the Northeast Bastion went first, according to eyewitness accounts. The other flag, planted atop Mound Battery, proved a more difficult target, but finally fell.

"Almost immediately," recounts Trotter, Bland volunteered to raise another flag in what was "an almost suicidal undertaking." The flagstaff had no halyard; Bland was forced to shinny up the pole and tie the banner on by hand. Miraculously the fire slackened, but as soon as Bland returned to ground, the flag was fired upon again and left dangling like a rag.

Bland clawed his way up the pole once again, under continuous fire. This time the refastened flag remained.

In heavy fire on Feb. 13, 1865, during the second Union attack on Fort Fisher, Kit Bland's left ankle joint was fractured by a shell, putting him out of commission. After Fort Fisher fell, he was captured by Union forces Jan. 18 in Smithville (now Southport) and taken to Point Lookout, Md. There, in Hammond General Hospital on Feb. 12, the lower third of his left leg was amputated in a "circular operation."

After the war Kit returned to Pitt County, married Cecelia (or Cornelia) Elizabeth Boyd and became an elder in the Primitive Baptist Church. He died Oct. 17, 1917, and was buried in the graveyard of Hancock's Primitive Baptist Church at Redalia.

His Brunswick County cousins still pass on stories about visits from "Uncle Bud." He wore a wooden leg and always told listeners, in later years often with tears streaming down his face, that he would have liked to have shot more Yanks.

"Kit" Bland wasn't from Calabash, but he was a hero and may soon be recognized as such. The local George Davis Camp of the Sons of the Confederacy has nominated Bland for a Confederate Medal of Honor in recognition of his bravery.

Where's Bill?

Bill Faver's nature column can now be found "Under the Sun," on Page 1-B.

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