

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## Help 'Coastal DWI' Save Hassle, Lives

Everyone thinks it's only the other guy who's unfit to drive after consuming a couple of beers over a seafood platter. Case in point: Last summer, a New Jersey municipal prosecutor who had worked to have his state's legal intoxication level changed from .10 to .08 percent blood alcohol was charged with drunken driving at Sunset Beach. If he'd known about Sunset Beach Police Department's reputation for zero-tolerance, he'd probably have steered clear of the place. He was convicted in Brunswick County District Court and is appealing the verdict.

Beginning this month, the State Highway Patrol will conduct a summer-long driving-while-impaired enforcement program with Brunswick and seven other coastal counties. "Coastal DWI '94," to run between Memorial Day and Labor Day, is funded by a \$75,000 grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program. The grant allows the Highway Patrol to allocate more troopers to work with local police and sheriff's departments, concentrating enforcement on DWI violations.

Highway Patrol Commander Col. Robert A. Barefoot says people tend to be a little more relaxed when they vacation at the beach, and aren't as careful about drinking and driving as they are at home. If we're honest with ourselves, we locals know it's true. Vacationers do all kinds of things here that they're too smart to do back in Gastonia or Lumberton—like crossing a busy street without looking both ways, walking barefoot through a fire ant mound, swimming in a thunderstorm, or driving to the store for ice after they've already had a few too many.

Folks in these parts who rely on tourism for their living tend to cringe at law enforcement projects or government sanctions which might subject visitors to unexpected hassle. And getting a DWI would unquestionably qualify as one.

"Coastal DWI '94" is going to happen, and South Brunswick Islanders who serve and rely on visitors can make the best of it by lending a hand. If rental agents, waiters and waitresses, store clerks and other service workers take the time to mention the DWI crackdown to their customers, two purposes can be served. A word of warning to a tourist may spare him or her from an expensive, humiliating experience with long-term repercussions. Or it could save the precious life of a visitor or resident.

## Too Little, Too Late

Thanks for the information, but it's too little, too late. You're going to have a hard sell ahead.

That's what one member of the public told a frustrated Brunswick County Board of Education at a recent, hastily-called public hearing on the schools budget.

He was right. The hearing was attended mainly by school system employees and their spouses, and a handful of parents who didn't also work for the schools. That's because the hearing was called only after some candidates for the school board talked up the idea at primary time, and after county weeklies were published. Too bad, because taking a budget directly to the public can be a very effective way to win taxpayers' support for improvements and to defend legitimate past expenditures.

The hearing was a beginning, and may set the precedent for future boards of education to do more explaining—and more selling, if you will—of school needs and school budget requests. But I doubt it did much for the current board's efforts to sell its 1994-95 budget.

Those who attended received a summary of the budget and saw overhead transparencies that summed up needs in various areas. But most had no chance to actually study the budget, not enough to have many questions about it. They still didn't get that chance after the hearing, when the board insisted that attendees return their copies of the budgets because they had not been adopted by the board. They were told that a copy was available for public inspection at the Board of Education office in Southport, as required by law.

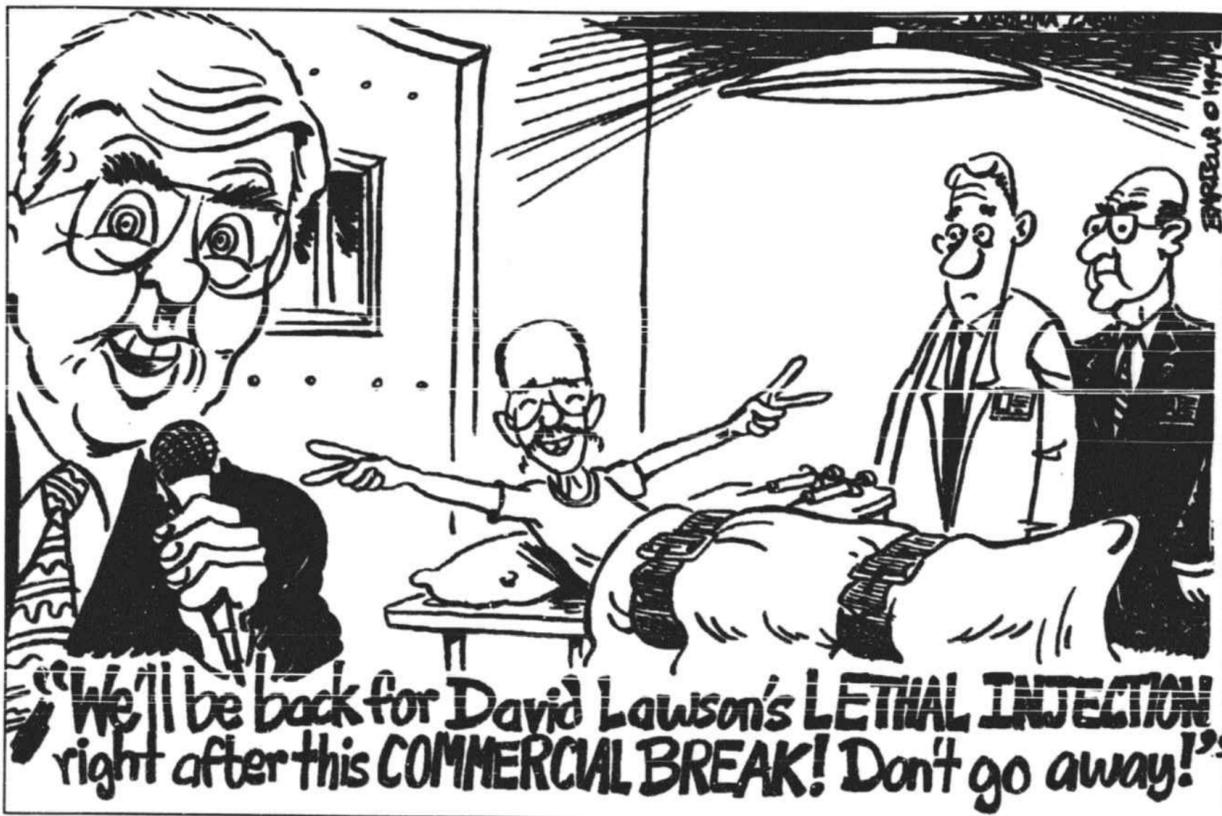
Never mind that, adopted or not, they were public documents, that the money had already been spent to prepare and distribute beaucoup copies of them, and that these were people who had taken the trouble to come to a hearing and were interested in trying to understand a very complex, but important subject.

The speaker who called the school board on its timing was right about something else too: the board of education needn't be afraid of the public, but should consider us as people who share their concerns about education and make efforts to keep us informed about what they're doing and why.

Too bad they didn't hear what he said.



Susan Usher



## It's Lovelier, The Second Time Around

"You know," said my mom's friend Edith, whose sense of humor is as dry as a rice cake but as refreshing as a beverage you'd wash one down with, "This is a whole lot nicer than having two or three hundred people you don't really care about."

"Yep," I replied. "As long as you don't need the gifts."

We were sitting on a veranda at Asheville's Grove Park Inn Country Club enjoying the elegant champagne brunch at my sister's wedding last Sunday. It was a small group—just 30 or so family members and best friends. The ceremony was brief and intimate, and there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

The brunch was delicious—a roast turkey, home-baked breads, fresh fruits and an array of nibbles like bite-size salmon quiche, tiny mushroom tarts and mini-croissants stuffed with cheese. There was no wedding cake; Brenda and Dave opted for bread pudding and cheesecakes instead.

In most cases, second (or should I say "subsequent"?) weddings are a lot more fun than first ones. The bride and groom have generally been around the block a few times and are more interested in creating a



Lynn Carlson

warm atmosphere than in putting on a show.

Brides and grooms are generally given more social latitude the second time around. And those of us old enough to have attended dozens (hundreds?) of virtually identical wedding receptions (nuts, mints, punch, four-tiered cake with that icky sugar-and-Crisco frosting...) are glad of it.

The hotel took care of everything, so my sister and I were able to spend some time together before the wedding, pretty much just hanging out—which, believe me, beats the heck out of hanging bows.

They said they didn't want gifts, and some of us ignored them. But instead of toasters and Crock Pots, the presents were meaningful and fun—a beautiful blanket with thousands of Mama's loving stitches in

it, a cozy two-person hammock, a dozen perfect long-stemmed red roses and, from me, a freezer full of butterbeans and homemade vegetable soup. (If you gave someone frozen produce as a gift for a first wedding, they'd have you institutionalized!)

But the best gift of all went to the guests on the bride's side—being with our sweet, wonderful Brenda on the happiest day of her life.

Every now and then, there's nothing like a nice long road trip by yourself. I got one by employing the excuse that I needed to go up to Asheville a couple of days early to provide prenuptial moral support.

I left Thursday and made it a point not to drive on one inch of interstate highway. I renewed my acquaintance with every Main Street along Highway 9 from Loris to Spartanburg, including Cheraw, my hometown, where everything looks the same as last time I was there five or six years ago.

There's something comforting about leisurely travel on a familiar route, remembering when those old gas stations were still gas stations, when the drugstore with the Butter-

cup ice cream sign out front really sold Buttercup ice cream.

When you're driving alone, it's okay to sing real loud, not stop for lunch and explore every factory outlet store along the way.

It may not sound like much to you, but it's the closest thing I've had to a vacation in a blue moon...

Climb up from Tryon to Hendersonville on Highway 176, then down through Terry's Gap into Biltmore Village, and there's no denying that this is a special kind of spring in the high country. Even the most jaded mountaineers will tell you they've never seen it prettier.

Rhododendrons are blooming in the lower elevations, the roadsides are exploding with wildflowers and the foliage is as brilliant and rich and thick as you can imagine.

Surrounded by all that extraordinary beauty, it's no wonder that folks are...complaining bitterly. Everywhere you go you hear constant sniffing and sneezing, as western North Carolina's allergy index soars to new heights.

But for this tired tourist, it was a welcome change of scenery and greenery—even taking it in through itchy, watering eyes.

## They're Still Rolling, Gathering No Moss

I know  
 It's only rock 'n' roll  
 But I like it.

—Jagger & Richards

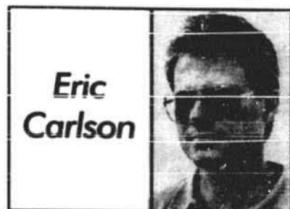
Guess who just got tickets to see the "Greatest Rock-and-Roll Band in the World?"

That's right. This fall, Lynn and I will celebrate her 40th birthday with The Rolling Stones, a group whose founding members recently reached the ripe young age of 50 and gave new inspiration to us gray-haired rockers trying hard to not fade away.

We likewise commemorated her 35th birthday when the group last toured America in 1989. It was her first Stones concert and my fifth.

In general, my musical tastes have mellowed over the years. I still enjoy some of the more artistic rockers—like The Clash, Elvis Costello, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Red Hot Chili Peppers—but nowadays I'm more likely to put on a Mozart concerto or some '50s jazz than the latest radio hits.

But the Rolling Stones are another matter. I've been a lifetime subscriber since I first heard "Get Off My Cloud" in 1965. I can still remember each Stones concert as if it happened yesterday.



Eric Carlson

When they came to America in 1969, Madison Square Garden sold out two shows in a matter of hours while I was stuck in high school. Then word got out that a local "head shop" had 50 pairs of tickets to sell beginning at noon one Sunday.

A friend and I stayed up all night and parked my mom's 1962 Chevy outside the shop door at 2 a.m. About three hours later, we were awakened by some very bad harmonica playing just outside the car. We raised our heads to see a dozen sleepy faces already in line ahead of us.

By 8 o'clock, there was a major "happening" on the street, with a crowd of more than 100 long-haired hippie-type people lining the sidewalk, listening to Stones tapes and doing all those kooky things folks did in the '60s.

On Thanksgiving night we finished our family feasts and took a bus to Manhattan for my first big rock concert, which also featured blues master B.B. King and a group known back then as "The Ike and Tina Turner Revue."

Tina Turner had just begun the "rough" side of her trademark "Proud Mary" rendition when another woman danced onto the stage with her back to the audience and her head concealed by a huge rabbit-fur hat. As the "rollin' on a river" chorus began, she whipped off the hat, grabbed a spare microphone and wailed a gravel-throated harmony that could only come from one person—Janis Joplin!

The Stones themselves were magnificent, from the opening chords of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" through Mick Jagger's demonic "Midnight Rambler" to the final echoes of "Street Fighting Man."

That night I discovered something interesting: Although one person can't balance for more than a few seconds on the back of a folding aluminum chair, a row of 20 people can stay perched on a row of seat backs for an hour if they hold on to each other and dance in unison.

Movie footage taken during the show was later used in the film "Gimme Shelter." (A sharp-eyed viewer can find little teen-aged me in the 12th row jumping up and down under Mick Jagger's arm.)

Three years later, the Stones were back. And so was I. This time on the Fourth of July at Philadelphia's JFK Stadium. Opening the show was a rising star named Stevie Wonder, who finished his set with Jagger singing harmony on a new hit single called "Superstition."

Keith Richards was his usual in-temperate self, kicking off the holiday celebration by chugging a half-bottle of Jack Daniels and proclaiming, "I drink to your independence!" before leading the band through a rollicking set from their newest (and arguably best) album, "Exile on Main Street."

I somehow missed the 1975 tour, but managed to score tickets to the next one in 1978. That was the beginning of the Stones' "Big Stage"

performances, when the floor of Madison Square Garden was transformed into a giant lotus flower with huge petals folded high into the air.

The show began quietly, in pitch blackness, with 300 steel drummers playing from 300 different locations in the audience. Then thousands of tiny lights began flashing in bizarre patterns along the walls and ceiling.

As the light show reached a disorienting frenzy, the steel drummers started marching down the aisles toward the lotus flower. By the time they reached the stage, their tune had changed to "Sympathy for the Devil."

Richards' guitar picked up the rhythm from inside the flower. There was a rumble of Bill Wyman's bass, a few smacks of Charlie Watts' snare drum and suddenly Jagger's face came leering down from one of the flower petals. The lotus unfolded to the familiar refrain "Please allow me to introduce myself..."

I saw the Stones again—on Keith's 39th birthday—at a 1981 Hampton, Va., concert that was filmed for a cable-TV special. It had sold out before I got tickets. But fate came to the rescue a few days before the show, when a guy who had extra seats approached me in a Nags Head parking lot.

He had noticed the Rolling Stones trademark—a big red mouth with the tongue sticking out—painted on the back of my van and figured I was someone who deserved tickets. I wholeheartedly agreed and bought all he had.

It was eight years later, after a band break-up and reconciliation, before the Rolling Stones toured the U.S. again. Lynn and I drove to Birmingham, Alabama, where a friend had organized a very large party and chartered a bus to carry the celebrants to the show.

From their latest hits to their oldest favorites, the Stones performed better than I'd seen them in 25 years. Now they're coming back for what will likely be the final tour by the most enduring (and still the best) band in the brief history of rock and roll.

I wouldn't miss it for the world.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Maybe Sunset Islanders Should Secede

To the editor:

I recently read a copy of a letter from Mason Barber, mayor of Sunset Beach, to the full-time residents of the community regarding the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association and the proposed sewer system. Barber's letter is the latest attack in a long line of attacks on the SBTA by town officials, and is in reality a veiled attack on the residents and homeowners of the island since the majority of SBTA members are full-time or part-time island residents. It is a disgrace that a mayor and town council repeatedly attack the property owners' association, which represents the majority of the community's taxpayers.

Barber has said that the sewer referendum passed by "an overwhelming majority." Let's look at what this really means. The referendum passed by 184 to 76 votes. Should we 2,000-plus

island property owners quietly accede to less than 200 residents, many of whom have ties to local developers? I think not; we have too much at stake.

It is unfortunate that the majority of property owners and taxpayers may have to resort to legal steps to have any say on decisions affecting their lives and property. However, it is crystal clear that the Sunset Beach Town Council has no intention of allowing the island residents and property owners to have any voice in decisions concerning the town, even though the island provides the lion's share of financing to support the community. This has been confirmed by the appointment of a third mainland member to the Water and Sewer Authority, leaving the island with no voice on the authority.

I read in the Beacon that the Easter SBTA

meeting brought forth the usual joke of seceding from the town, the state and the USA. What struck me was that there appeared, for the first time, to be a serious discussion of this possibility (from the town, of course, not the state and country).

I believe Sunset Beach may be the only island in North Carolina which includes a mainland portion. Perhaps it is not possible to have one government for two distinctly different and physically separated places. I think the time has come to look into the possibility of establishing the island of Sunset Beach as a separate town.

Susan McArn  
 Laurinburg  
 The writer identifies herself as a Sunset Beach property owner.  
 (More Letters, Following Page)