

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Purchase May Serve Calabash Majority, But Leaves Many Questions

It remains to be seen what will happen to the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority, and to downtown Calabash, in light of the Calabash commissioners' decision to buy the Carolina Blythe sewer plant. But the situation doesn't appear rosy for either.

Rarely has an issue divided property owners as deeply as the question of whether any more or all of Brunswick County's waterfront communities should be served by central sewer systems. And while it's certainly no mystery why most Carolina Shores residents would favor the town buying the utility which already serves them, the move is sure to reignite the ever-smoldering ill will between the merchants and restaurateurs of "old Calabash" and the retirees who inhabit Carolina Shores.

There are legitimate reasons to question the commissioners' methods in making the decision. Not the least of these is that the committee recommending the purchase was comprised solely of Carolina Blythe customers. Or that the opportunity was seized to vote when sewer proponent Ed Schaack was out of town, forcing the mayor to cast the tie-breaking vote.

Then there's the puzzling matter of the board agreeing to pay the full \$4.5 million asking price for the Carolina Blythe without no attempt at further negotiation. One commissioner fended off a challenge to that proposition by saying, "We've jerked this guy (Carolina Blythe owner Billy Burnett) around for so long..." One would be hard-pressed to come up with a more lame justification for parting with \$4.5 million in taxpayers' money.

All that having been said, it nonetheless remains the right of the board of commissioners to buy the utility. And if the commissioners didn't feel a great deal of pressure from a majority of voters, they probably wouldn't have voted to do so.

Perhaps in the long run the majority of Calabash residents will have had their best interests served by this purchase. But the commissioners' actions left little doubt that they'll be in no hurry to try to accommodate the critical wastewater disposal needs of the downtown merchants. And don't expect them to fall all over themselves trying to get involved in seeking a regional solution to the regional problem of estuarine water quality. That's too bad.

Everything's In The Perspective



Lynn Carlson

I was at least 17 years old before I heard our most recent national holiday referred to as anything other than "Yankee Memorial Day." Every May 30, only one store in my hometown would close, as best I remember. Everyone else did business as usual.

The Memorial Day I knew took place every May 10. Several things about it were predictable. The girls would wear white dresses for the walk to Old St. David's Episcopal Church cemetery and the ceremony beside the Monument for the Confederate Dead. The guys wore white shirts, long pants, clip-on ties and their Sunday shoes.

It would be summer already in that unshaded part of the cemetery, sometimes hot enough to make least a couple of kids black out and get sent home for the day. I did myself once, and have a vague memory of being relieved to be sitting home sipping sweet tea and watching "The Secret Storm" instead of roasting, bored to catatonia, in that old bone-yard.

There would be a broad gap of understanding between several hundred sweating and squirming grammar school kids and the reverent, gracious, white-gloved United Daughters of the Confederacy who had assembled us there. Looking back, the Daughters were staid in the face of the inevitable—that we

children of the '50s and '60s would not march into adulthood carrying the banner of Southern tradition. A hundred years were gone. The times they were a-changin'.

In the late '70s, Yankee Memorial Day became just Memorial Day, though I'm sure May 10 still holds a place in the heart of Southern traditionalists. Like most other holidays Memorial Day was resituated to Monday for the convenience of bureaucrats and schoolchildren, though to this day many Southern school systems—including some in our own region—do not suspend classes in observance of it.

I grew up much more familiar with the Civil War than with the World War which had ended less than a decade before my birth. The Civil War was all around, in the cannonball scars on the trees in front of our library and in the blood on the stairway at St. David's. It was in the flag that flew over the state capitol—and still does, to the chagrin of

many and the insistence of a few. But from my little-girl worldview, it was more alive in the hearts of those proud Daughters of the Confederacy than anywhere else.

I'd been trying to feel sorry for myself all week, being torn between my very sick mono-nucleosis-suffering teenage son and my job.

His fever began more than three weeks ago, coming and going, his fighting it and going to school anyway, until it set in with a vengeance. No amount of medicine seemed to budge the thermometer from 103; his throat swelled and began looking like...well, something you wouldn't want to look at.

I shuttled my work back and forth from the office to home, being sure I was home as much as possible to pour juice and dispense pills. As luck would have it, my boy was sickest last Tuesday, the one day of the week when I have no choice but to be in the office, the day when the paper goes to press.

We made it through somehow, and by Friday he had turned the corner. The fever broke, the throat started clearing up, the appetite came back. My guilt started to subside—those nauseous, sleep-depriving torn-in-half feelings every working mother knows and hates.

By Friday, I was tired to the core,

looking ahead to a weekend in which I'd have to try to help my son ford a river of homework he'd been too sick to start on earlier. It was then that Alicia Bates Pottorff came in the office door and made me want to kick myself.

Alicia is the Supply woman whose son 15-week-old son Logan underwent a heart transplant March 24, the youngest patient ever to have done so at UNC Children's Hospital.

Logan was supposed to have come home to his daddy, Eddie Pottorff, and sister, Heather Nicole, a couple of weeks ago. Instead, he's back in intensive care with complications.

Alicia continues to burn up the highway between here and Chapel Hill, trying to be by Logan's side as much as possible while fulfilling her obligations to the family back home. All this is intermingled with worrying about the staggering medical bills to be faced by a family which until February 17 was like so many others—too well-paid to qualify for Medicaid and not well-off enough to afford \$700 a month in health insurance.

Seeing Alicia snapped things into perspective for me. If there's anything you can do to help with Logan's bills, write a check to Children's Organ Transplant Association and mail it or take it to Nations Bank, 4920 Main St., Charlotte.

Rain On My Parade

Give me just a little bit more. Rain, that is.

Out of the office and on the road more than usual these past few weeks, I've been listening to the radio, checking out the region's new station mix. Maybe it's just "rain on the brain" but it seems like they're giving a lot of play to the song, "Listen To The Rhythm of the Falling Rain." One station plays Ricky Nelson's original tune, another plays a Nashville-inspired version. Switch stations and I get more water music, with a classical twist. Switch again and sadly, it's "A Rainy Night In Georgia."

Oh, it may not be an official drought, but at our house the lack of rain is beginning to assume overlarge proportions. Judging from conversations with others, it's the same thing all over. Rain—or rather, the lack of rain—is on all our minds whether we realize it or not. It may even be influencing our selection of music.

"Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day."

Did my sisters and I ever hang a quilt over upturned chairs on the front porch, curl up under it and peek out as a slow early summer drizzle fell on the front lawn? Seems like a long time ago.

If we were kids right now, Jean, Carol and I would be out on the front lawn, doing our version of a Cherokee rain dance, possibly under a water hose draped over a oak tree limb and set on mist.

Meanwhile Don and I wake up to the swish of a neighbor's overhead sprinkler, an early reminder of our own watering chores ahead, and retire discussing the next day's watering strategy. This routine is so familiar we could do it in our sleep, and sometimes do. Don's been known to move water hoses from one spot in the yard to another in his dreams (or is that nightmares?); he's almost to that point again.

"Every time it rains, it rains pennies from heaven."

At least we have hoses to move, an abundant supply of water and a yard small enough our piddling efforts can make a difference, a small voice notes. Friends who have large gardens or who farm without irrigation are in far worse shape, and their family's food supply, perhaps livelihood, is threatened.

Right now every bone in my body, like every flower in my yard, craves rain. It's dry.

"Just singing in the rain, just singing in the rain."

What a glorious feeling, I'm happy again."

The other night I dreamed about a summer walk along Franklin Street in Chapel Hill. It was June 1974, a National Science Foundation summer school program. Three couples had been to see the movie "Z." On our way back to Spencer dormitory, where the girls were staying, it started to rain. Not a hard summer afternoon thunderstorm or a squall that chills to the bone, but one of those soft, caressing rains. Cool, refreshing, even romantic. Without a care in the world we just strolled along, arm in arm, singing our favorite James Taylor tunes.

Susan Usher



Save Your Marks For The Real Beasts

Don't know the reason I stayed here all season, With nothing to show But this brand new tattoo; But it's a real beauty, A Mexican cutesy, How it got here I haven't a clue.

—Jimmy Buffett

I was reading in the Sunday paper that New Hangover County is thinking about passing a law that would require all vicious dogs to get a tattoo so they can be easily identified.

This is a great idea. It means that the next time you are walking down a Wilmington sidewalk and a mouth-foaming pit-bull sinks his canines into your leg, all you have to do is roll up his sleeve.

If the animal has a bloody dagger tattooed on his bicep, you will know for sure that you have been bitten by a genuine, certified Grade-A vicious dog. This will leave no doubt in your mind when you report the attack to police.

"So you say it was a vicious dog that bit you?"

"That's right, officer. His hair was cut in a Mohawk. He was wearing a black leather jacket and steel-toed engineer boots and he had a ten-penny nail through his nose."

"Sorry sir, but we can't jump to conclusions based strictly on appearances."

"Well, he also had this tattoo..."

"Hold it right there! I'll alert the SWAT team!"

The newspaper story says veterinarians will be able to tattoo all animals that are determined to be "vicious, dangerous or potentially dangerous." I wonder if that means different markings will be applied for varying degrees of anti-social behavior.

Perhaps the proven man-eaters, the ones who eat letter carriers for breakfast, would have really nasty tattoos, like leering skulls with blood dripping from their teeth, emblazoned over the motto "Attack



Eric Carlson

'Em All—Let God Sort 'Em Out!' The merely dangerous dogs could get by with a Ralston-Purina checkerboard logo over the words "Live To Bite—Bite To Live."

Trouble is, once word got around that only the baddest junkyard dogs could wear the hard-core insignias, all sorts of wanna-be mongrels would be snapping at every human in sight, just for the status of scoring a cool tattoo.

No tough-guy hound in town would want to be seen with a sissy-looking "Mom" valentine etched in his hide. Dogs confined to animal shelters would start using straight pins and india ink to give each other pound-house tattoos: with "Love" on the knuckles of one paw and "Hate" on the other.

This would surely lead to a major fashion fad, especially among your more respectable AKC-registered types who want to emulate the "dangerous doggy" look. Before you

know it, you'd have prissy-looking poodles prancing around with little roses and unicorns showing through their close-cropped fur.

In no time, there would be dog tattoo parlors springing up. Next, you'd have whole tenderloin districts filled with K-9 bars, petting parlors and hoochie-koochie-poochie shows.

All along the waterfront, dogs would be waking up with horrendous hangovers and bandages on their arms, wondering exactly when during the previous night they acquired the colorful scab that looks vaguely like a Samoyed in a bikini.

This sort of moral decline has occurred before. In fact, the seedier side of dogdom was once captured in a series of paintings that include the world-renowned "Dogs Shooting Pool" and the much beloved "Dogs Playing Poker." Prints of these masterpieces are popular decorations for basement recreation rooms and are frequently available for sale at fine thrift shops and yard sales.

A close look at the cigar-smoking bulldog who's lying up a bank shot in one of the painting clearly reveals the source of all this doggy debauchery—a tattoo.

Is this really what we want for our puppy population? I don't think so. But that's what we can look forward to if this government sanctioned

mutt mutilation is allowed to go forward.

I suggest that, before we apply this primitive means of identification to helpless animals, we should experiment first with a more deserving species of guinea pig. (I use the term figuratively.)

Why not tattoo the foreheads of violent criminals? Nowadays even the most serious offenders only stay behind bars long enough to learn new ways of preying on the public. So why not give us a way of identifying THEM instead of worrying about a few stray dogs?

A woman living alone is not likely to be fooled by the phony delivery man staring back at her through a front-door peephole if he has "RAPIST" emblazoned above his eyebrows.

Gun shop owners won't need to bother with a background check on a customer who wants to buy a shotgun if the guy has "ARMED ROBBER" tattooed beneath the visor of his cap.

School officials will have some pretty serious explaining to do if they hire a man whose forehead has "PEDOPHILE" written all over it.

If, as in days past, we're going to use scarlet letters to identify menaces to society, lets put them where they will do the most good.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

He Takes Exception To Holden Beach 'Goof'

To the editor: Regarding Doug Rutter's front-page article "Real Estate Office Too Close To Ocean," May 19:

Only some weeks ago you published a really inflammatory article wherein Dwight Carroll alleged he was elected, apparently in part, to get Holden Beach rid of the town manager, Gus Ulrich—reportedly a do-nothing guy.

In the May 19 issue, you report a real estate office building too close to the oceanfront and clearly in contradiction to the building codes. Carroll, who was the building inspector, blithely stated, "It was a goof and now it's in CAMA's hands." Typically, Dwight presents it as a goof, rather than his error. Amazing.

Dwight's strongest talent seems to be able to show error or blame any-

where other than at his own doorstep. I would, however, credit Carroll with an amazing propensity to be able to put both feet in his mouth and at the same time still loudly proclaim his worth.

Charles E. Stokes Jr.
 Charlotte, N.C.
 Mr. Stokes notes that he is a Holden Beach property owner.
 (More Letters, Following Page)