

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweett and Carolyn M. Sweett
 Editor
 Lynn S. Carlson
 Managing Editor
 Susan Usher
 News Editor
 Doug Rutler
 Sports Editor
 Eric Carlson
 Staff Writer
 Mary Potts & Peggy Eastwood
 Photo Manager
 Carolyn H. Sweett
 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, JUNE 16, 1994

No Day At The Beach

To paraphrase a wise and clever man, both municipal decisions and sausage have a place in the world, but you can still get nauseated watching either being made.

Take last week's Sunset Beach Town Council meeting as a prime example. The mayor pro tem, in an inexcusable fit of pique, used a term most would consider obscene in reference to a former zoning officer who was present at the time. Residents attending the session, in an embarrassing but fairly routine display of bad manners, chortled and spoke out of turn during the official proceedings. And one lone council member tried to maintain the high ground and serve as ad hoc peace-maker during the long, shameful display—but without measurable success.

We're not so naive as to expect the democratic process to be as pleasant as...well, a day at the beach. But no one is served when relations between the elected and those who show up to watch them do business deteriorate to such a sorry point. It's time for both sides to bend a little for the greater good.

All this acrimony is not about money or mini-golf or bridges or where the water goes when the rains come or a toilet gets flushed—it's about all those things and more.

There are full-time property owners and residents who seek assurance that a way of life they treasure can be frozen in time. But that's a guarantee life doesn't afford any of us.

There are elected officials who take it personally when the wheels get squeaky. But squeaky wheels gave birth to and continue to nourish the principles of representative democracy.

There are those in elective and appointed positions whose only motivation is a sincere desire to serve their community. When they grow weary of trying to salve wounds they didn't inflict, it's nearly impossible to recruit replacements.

Those realities do not necessarily constitute an untenable situation. It certainly shouldn't be so in a small town populated overwhelmingly by comfortable, peace-loving people who share some very powerful qualities—the love of nature's beauty, a reliance on the rewards of hard work, a respect for order and an appreciation of doing things the right way, even when the right way is subject to debate.

When parties on all sides regain sight of those common bonds, the name-calling and heckling will be recognized for what it is—a worthless irritant which does nothing but widen the gap.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Please Don't Teach Your Trash To Swim

BY CRAWFORD HART

Is it a catchy saying or the truth? You decide.

Last December a 24-foot sperm whale washed ashore at Wrightsville Beach. The emaciated female soon died in the surf. The veterinarians and biologists performed the necropsy on this beautiful marine mammal and found the whale's belly full of marine debris—nylon rope, a plastic gallon bottle, a plastic bag and a fishing float. The verdict was that the whale starved to death because it couldn't get enough real food in its stomach.

On April 16 of this year, a female loggerhead turtle washed ashore at Holden Beach. A necropsy showed that the throat passage and stomach were full of marine debris, including plastic bags, plastic foam cups, balloons and other miscellaneous debris that floats.

Turtles eat jellyfish and plastic items look like these creatures. They also eat the Portugese man-of-war. Much of the debris resembles this siphonophore. A turtle ingests its food or, in this case, trash; once it gets into the throat it cannot be regurgitated. It goes into the stomach or blocks the throat and, consequently, the air passage, leaving the turtle to either starve or suffocate. Either is a horrible death.

The first sea turtles date back over 200 million years and, until recently, enjoyed a life free from most predators. In days of old, food containers were made from metal and were too costly to cast over the side. But with the advent of plastic, boaters and beachgoers take their bait, food, drinks and snacks with them in some type of plastic container. They carry it to the beach or boat, so why not carry it home again? No, it is easier to toss it onto the beach or into the water. The result is the loss of endangered or threatened marine wildlife.

Rather than wait for "Big Sweep," why not take a plastic bag with you. If you see trash on the beach or floating in the water, retrieve it. When you are ready to go home, throw your bag (by now probably full) into the nearest trash receptacle. By doing this you will assure that your grandchildren and great-grandchildren will enjoy these fine marine creatures.

Please, don't teach your trash to swim!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Can Retirees Afford New Brunswick Taxes?

To the editor:
 Your front page article in the June 9 Beacon states that most property taxpayers will receive 1994 tax bills of approximately the same amount as their 1993 taxes. I wish to refute this statement. Our 1994 property taxes will increase by close to \$300, a 34 percent jump in our "cost of living in Brunswick County."

live here where so many of we seniors came to retire and enjoy our golden years and reasonable taxes.

Dorothy Crean, Shallotte
"Nothing To Do" is OK

To the editor:
 I have been visiting Sunset Beach for ten years. I have visited during every month of the year.

Never has anyone had to "provide things for" me, my family or my friends "to do" while at Sunset. This lack of someone else providing something for me to do is the main reason I return to Sunset. My suggestion would be for Council Member Mary Katherine Griffith to move to Myrtle Beach.

Max Curlee, Charlotte
 (More Letters, Following Page)

A Glimmer On The Culinary Horizon

"I WANT JUNK FOOD! I WANT JUNK FOOD!"

It was my son's first temper tantrum, and it was about cereal. He was 18 months old, with the face of a cherub and the disposition of a pit bull. He was seated in the grocery cart, halo of blond curls framing his purple-with-rage countenance, shrieking like a banshee because I said no to Boo-Berry.

"I'm not buying junk food," I said in my most unyielding tone. "You're getting Cheerios—plain Cheerios—and you can scream until you pass out."

I won the skirmish, but lost the war.

Today, 14.5 years after the Battle of Boo-Berry, there's a box of Lucky Charms in my larder, along with a sixer of 20-ounce Classic Cokes, a box of Velveeta shells and cheese and a package of frosted Pop Tarts.

My husband and I do not consume these products; they're for That Boy.

I'm keenly interested in seeing how our nation's public schools will manage to get from Point A—chicken nuggets, french fries, vegetable medley with dressing, and gummy white roll—to Point B, a utopian state in which school lunches derive



Lynn Carlson

no more than 30 percent of their calories from fat, given my own experience in trying to be a positive culinary role model.

These are actual selections from a recent weekly school lunch Scatter Menu (whatever that means) in a neighboring county:

- barbecue sandwich, corn dog, french fries, coleslaw, assorted fruits, salad plate and milk
- pizza, fish sandwich, french fries, coleslaw, garden salad, assorted fruits, salad plate and milk
- burger, pizza, oven fries, lettuce and tomato, garden salad, assorted fruits, salad plate and milk
- ham and cheese sandwich, sloppy Joe, french fries, lettuce and tomato, tossed salad, assorted fruits, salad plate and milk
- hot dog with chili, cheeseburger, french fries, lettuce and tomato, garden salad, assorted fruits, salad

plate and milk.

Imagine a future in which the choices are:
 ■ buckwheat groats, radish sprouts, Ak-Mak wafers, organic fruits, skim milk, or
 ■ tabbouleh, tofu vinaigrette, dolphin-safe tuna with organic herbs, ginseng tea...

Can't you just hear all those little darlings squealing with anticipation?

At my house, the meals are good, wholesome and lovingly prepared. I cook fresh foods in a leisurely fashion, grow my own herbs and chili peppers, experiment with tastes and textures, and study the writings of the great chefs.

We don't use bottled salad dressing, put hamburger meat in our pasta sauces or eat hot dogs.

We love fresh seafood and home-grown salad greens, extra virgin olive oil, aged cheeses and lots of fresh garlic and shallots. Most of our dinners are meatless; virtually all of them include rice or pasta.

In other words, it is a fiercely hostile environment to the immature palate.

My kid, who's grown up around good food—prepared the long way and eaten by candlelight with cloth napkins—prefers Zesty Italian to my impeccable basil vinaigrette. A

Whopper Combo in the car to a plateful of cappellini with fresh clam sauce at home. Cocoa Puffs to croissants.

I have all the faith in the world that someday he will look back and wish he'd eaten the soft-shell crabs piquant instead of a half-jar of Claussen's dill pickles on that early June night in 1991. I see glimmers of a brighter culinary future for him. Already he prefers romaine lettuce to iceberg and appreciates a rare standing rib roast of beef on special occasions. It's a start.

So for now, as long as he's slim and still strong enough to surf four hours at a stretch, I'll let him keep eating ramen noodles and chocolate ice cream on a tray in front of MTV instead of gagging through whatever the rest of us are enjoying. Long as I don't have to watch.

It takes a busload of faith to envision millions of American boys and girls raised on Tater Tots and Cheez Whiz embracing baked chicken and brown rice as a part of their new improved school diet. It's an even bigger leap to conceive of a school lunchroom capable of cooking a fresh vegetable to any point short of annihilation. But I agree it's time to try.

Slap that on your tray and tote it.



Blame It On Cain; Don't Blame It On Me

AMENDMENT XXVIII
 Personal Responsibility

Congress shall make no law abridging the right of citizens to act in ways that could be dangerous and potentially self-destructive, provided such actions do not cause harm to any other citizen.

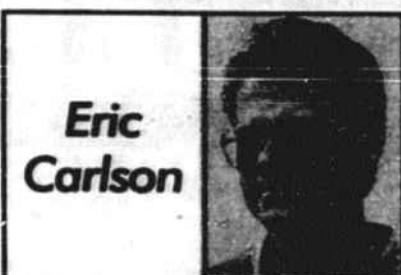
With all the "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" stuff written into the Constitution, doesn't it seem like the founding fathers might have accidentally forgotten this proviso when they added the first 10 amendments and called them "The Bill of Rights?"

That thought struck me after watching a TV news story about the impending passage of national health care legislation, followed by a feature warning us about the dangers of roller blading.

The latter piece concluded with an emergency room doctor nodding sternly in agreement when the reporter suggested that we might need to pass a law requiring skaters to wear helmets, wrist guards, elbow pads and knee pads.

No we don't! We already have enough laws to protect us from ourselves without requiring everyone to walk around in full body armor—just in case the sky begins to fall!

If bungee jumpers want to tie rubber bands around their legs and leap off high places (even though some will die every year doing so), it's



Eric Carlson

OK by me as long as they don't land on anybody.

If someone enjoys smoking three packs of cigarettes a day, who am I (or you) to tell them they can't? They just shouldn't exhale in places where we can't get away from the smoke.

If some inlander who has never seen the ocean before wants to ignore repeated warnings about rip currents and go swimming in 10-foot surf, don't spend my tax money trying to prevent him from doing so.

If a guy wants to fly down the highway on his Harley-Davidson without wearing a helmet, just leave him alone. Chances are, he'll end up as a stain on the pavement and you won't have to worry about him anymore.

I've been riding motorcycles for a quarter century, but only once without a helmet. That was the time I borrowed a friend's 1966 Triumph for a putt through the campus of California Polytechnic University

(before the state passed its helmet law).

I wasn't planning to go fast. And it just wouldn't be the same riding that classic nugget of rolling sculpture with a flower pot on my head. So I spent the afternoon rumbling around town with the sun on my face and the wind in my hair.

Because I chose to accept the risk. Which is a fundamental right that Americans are rapidly throwing away in the insane rush to make government the fatherly protector of all things great and small, wise and stupid.

All but a few states prohibit riding a motorcycle without a helmet. In many areas, a kid can be arrested for riding a bike without protective headgear. Skateboarding is headed for felony status.

Health Nazis have cast cigarette smokers as the lepers of the 90s. The don't-confuse-me-with-the-facts lobby is relentless in its efforts to ban guns. Some North Carolina legislators want to make it illegal to ride in the bed of a pickup truck.

Many of these efforts are well-intended attempts to safeguard the public health. The only trouble is, they lull us into the false assumption that Uncle Sam CAN and therefore SHOULD protect us from the consequences of our own actions.

Wrong again. This line of thinking works in direct opposition to the laws of nature governing "the survival of the fittest." People who want to bungee jump or smoke heavily or ride motorcycles without helmets should have the right to make those choices.

Under the laws of statistics and evolution, they are far more likely to die before they infect their offspring with similar notions. So the problem—if there is one—will eventually take care of itself.

Unfortunately, sympathy for the ignorant and self-destructive infects our legal system. We pass laws requiring government to make sure people don't harm themselves. Then

we allow the so-called "victims" to file lawsuits against anyone remotely involved when the victim gets injured.

Like the guy who smoked three packs a day for 30 years, then filed suit against the tobacco company when he got lung cancer.

Or the drunk driver who sued the host of a party where he got himself in shape to cause a traffic accident.

Or the parents who failed to supervise their children on a camping trip and blamed the National Park Service when one of their kids fell off a cliff.

This cry of, "It's not my fault! Somebody should have warned me!" will only get worse if we let the government control health care.

As it is now, people who drive recklessly or engage in potentially self-destructive behavior are discouraged from doing so by higher insurance rates.

If you don't believe me, ask your agent how much it would cost to get collision insurance on a Harley-Davidson with a prior DWI conviction. It's enough to make a biker sleep it off before riding home.

But if the government starts running things, bureaucrats will simply demand that all "high-risk" activities be banned or regulated to the point of absurdity in the name of cost control.

Too many kids getting scuffed-up knees? Ban skateboarding. While we're at it, let's make them wear knee pads while bicycling.

Too many drownings at the beach? Require all coastal communities to hire full-time lifeguards. Guess who pays for that?

Too many criminals using guns to hurt people? Crack down on them! (The guns that is. The criminals are just misunderstood.)

Too many high-speed car wrecks? Prohibit the sale of vehicles that can exceed 55 miles per hour. Might as well make drivers wear helmets, too.

After all, it's the government and it can do whatever it wants. Can't it?