

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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School Survey Respondents See Problems Related Not To Money, But To Behaviors

■ Too many students in Brunswick County are, upon graduation from high school, either unprepared for the job market or in need of remediation upon entry into colleges and universities.

■ Many potential businesses and residents choose to go elsewhere because of perceptions about the quality of education in this area.

■ It is desired that the quality of education in Brunswick County, as well as the perception of that quality, be such that residents and potential residents not only consider it adequate for their needs, but also are attracted to the area as a result.

Determining the validity of those statements was one goal of the Southport Oak Island Chamber of Commerce's project to determine how Brunswick Countians feel about their public schools. The answer is a resounding "true, true and true," the poll results seem to indicate.

It's important, but not particularly comforting, to point out that you could probably replace "Brunswick County" with "North Carolina," or even "The South" and expect to get the same "amens" from any random sample of constituents. Still, the just-released survey results deserve to be taken seriously, especially in light of the likely showdown ahead concerning the schools' funding in the new county budget.

Some may see an irony in the release of the survey results at the same time Brunswick County commissioners and school board members are girding their loins for a budgetary impasse that could last year's. But watch for those on both sides of the school system funding debate to refer to the study to help make their cases that (a) the schools are substandard because education is underfunded, or (b) that infusions of cash do not make teachers teach better or students learn more.

The survey sheds some light on how public perception differs from the party line of school administrators and teacher organizations about funding. Two issues raised frequently by school officials—overcrowding and lack of financial support—were not among the problems survey respondents considered most pressing. Respondents believe the top problems are lack of discipline, lack of parental involvement and lack of student interest. Those are woes whose roots are societal rather than fiscal.

Consider Yourself Warned About Sobriety Checkpoints

Don't say we didn't warn you.

Law enforcement officials all over the state will be cracking down on alcohol-impaired driving offenders next week during what the governor has proclaimed "Sobriety Checkpoint Week."

The Independence Day holiday weekend is typically one of the most dangerous weekends to travel, in large part due to the increased incidence of alcohol-impaired driving. Last year during the July 4 holiday period, alcohol was involved in 58.9 percent of all fatalities nationwide.

Here in Brunswick, we have a special problem when tens of thousands of sun-starved visitors pour in to throw their cares to the winds. That unwinding often involves copious amounts of adult beverages, fueled by the attitude that, for this one week of the year, the otherwise responsible drinker may exercise his or her divine right to behave like an idiot while on vacation.

Be as foolish as you'd like, but stay off the road if you're going to drink. (For that matter stay out of the water, too.) If you won't do it just because it's the right thing, think about that cop down the road who's not on vacation but on double duty—and not in a good mood about it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Red Cross Thanks Donors At Seaside For Patience

To the editor:
 On May 25 the Seaside United Methodist Church sponsored a blood drive for the American Red Cross. The community response was overwhelming!

At a time when most blood drives that are scheduled daily throughout the state have difficulty achieving their goal, this drive produced 154 percent of the goal.

The American Red Cross would like to thank all the donors who came to this drive for their patience and understanding of long (or impossible) waiting times. In our future planning, we will not underestimate the large numbers of caring citizens residing in the communities of south Brunswick County!

Jean Maiwaid
 Consultant
 American Red Cross

Keep Mr. Chestnut

To the editor:
 Waccamaw Elementary School is about to lose a fine, Christian gen-

tleman named Terry Chestnut, vice principal.

Many parents and many workers at the school want the board of education and the superintendent to know that we want Mr. Chestnut to stay at Waccamaw.

On Wednesday, June 22, at 5:30 p.m. in Southport, many of us will present our feelings.

Pat Purvis Brown
 Ash

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.
 Anonymous letters will not be published.

World Cup: Can 2 Billion Be Wrong?

I had an interesting conversation the other day with a 15-year-old girl named Emily, who lives just north of Dayton, Ohio.

We were on a boat returning from an offshore fishing trip when she plopped down on the seat next to me and said, "Hi!" in that wonderfully friendly manner characteristic of nearly all Midwesterners.

An hour earlier, I had snapped a picture of her reeling in a small red snapper and noticed that she was wearing a T-shirt advertising the "Huber Heights Warriors" soccer team.

Wanting to reciprocate her warm greeting, I casually asked if she planned to watch any of the upcoming World Cup Soccer matches, which—in case you haven't noticed—are being hosted by the United States for the first time in history.

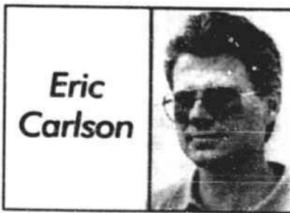
As it turns out, this was like asking a Charlotte auto mechanic if he pays any attention to NASCAR racing.

I learned that Emily is the goalie for her high-school soccer team. Her brother is a college soccer player. So of course she's going to watch every World Cup game she can. In fact, she's going to videotape each one for future study.

Emily is such a devoted soccer fan that she even wrote her latest term paper on the history of the world's most popular sport.

Although it is impossible to say for sure when or by whom soccer was invented, Emily tells me that the Vikings used to celebrate their conquests by playing a variation of the game using the severed head of an enemy.

According to Emily, modern soccer can be traced directly to a me-



Eric Carlson

ieval English version of the sport, which was played over vast areas with goals sometimes spaced several miles apart. These contests became so time-consuming and grew so popular that they diverted the king's subjects from their duties. So in 1314, King Edward II issued an edict forbidding its play.

Still, the game flourished and became England's national sport. At the time it was called "association football" to distinguish it from "rugby football." The modern word "soccer" comes from the second syllable of "association."

As the British empire flourished, English sailors introduced soccer to cultures around the globe. In less than a century, it became the number-one sport of almost every nation on earth. Except America.

Why is that? Marketing experts will tell you that soccer won't become really popular in America until the games are shown on television. Trouble is, soccer is an unpredictable game without the regular time-outs that make it easy to sell advertising time.

Boxing is the perfect TV sport. You get 15 three-minute rounds with a 60-second (commercial?) break between each one. Unfortunately, today's viewers prefer their violence sanitized and in soft focus. So sponsors give us a mind-numbing bar-

rage of magically bloodless shooting deaths each night while condemning (as barbaric, no less) the courage and fortitude a top-notch boxing match can display.

American football (soccer claimed the name first) is another ideal made-for-TV sport. Each team gets to call time outs. The officials get time outs. There's a pause after line changes, a break after every punt and another after each score. Every half has a two-minute warning break, with more pauses after each quarter. And that doesn't include half-time.

Baseball games likewise have convenient stopping points. Basketball games take a time out whenever Nike or Reebok says so. Stock cars are already dressed up like orbiting billboards, so nobody minds much when they pause from racing action to sell you something else.

But in soccer, the clock never stops. Each 45-minute half goes on without a single break that's long enough for a sponsor to hawk your mutt's favorite dog food. They don't even take time out for injuries. Instead, fallen players are quickly whisked off the field, with the expended time added by the officials at the end of the half.

Americans, with their notoriously short attention spans, say they find soccer boring because there are so few goals scored. They prefer the shot-a-minute action of professional basketball, despite the fact that the only important shot is the one that wins the game a few seconds before the final buzzer.

Seeing Ireland win its first-ever World Cup victory over Italy Saturday, I realized that watching a soccer match merely to see a few goals scored is like watching the

Daytona 500 just to see who crosses the finish line first. It's the drama between the flags that matters.

A soccer game is really hundreds of small, intense contests between the player who has the ball and members of the opposing team who are trying to steal it. Each skirmish is won by a artful maneuvering around a defender or an accurate kick to a team-mate. Or the momentum is lost to an equally deft steal by an opponent.

Goals are merely the icing on the cake, the climax to a burst of skillful positioning and passing that gains the attackers a tiny but sufficient advantage over the defenders. For the novice soccer watcher, it often takes an instant re-play to sort out all the maneuvering and teamwork that results in a successful scoring drive.

Soccer is the national sport of almost every country on earth. Nearly one out of every three people on the planet—an estimated audience of 2 billion—is expected to watch this year's World Cup finals. In 1990, the final game was seen by 75.8 percent of Argentina's population, while only .004 percent of Americans bothered to watch.

In a world made smaller every day by television, computer networking and international trade, Americans can't afford to ignore the rest of the world. One of the best ways to understand other cultures is to learn about the games they play.

And we are beginning to do just that. All across the U.S., schools are discovering that soccer programs cost a lot less (in dollars and injuries) than American football. They're also discovering that kids—boys and girls, big and small—like to play soccer.

Just ask Emily.



What You Get For Two-Years, \$3,000

The N.C. Department of Community Colleges has some great news for all those parents who have been forking out big bucks for four-year educations at state universities.

If an immediate increase in earning potential is the only, or the major reason you're sending a child through state university, think again. If you're an older worker considering enrolling in a degree program at a community college to upgrade skills, read on. I hope the numbers aren't too hard to wade through.

Tar Heel community college students who completed a two-year associate of applied science degree in spring or summer quarter of 1991 overall had higher first year earnings than corresponding University of North Carolina bachelor degree recipients, according to a recent study by the N.C. Department of Community Colleges. An AAS degree is intended to prepare a student for the workplace, and in some instances can be used to transfer to a four-year institution.

DCC tracked graduates' earnings by matching school records with unemployment insurance quarterly earnings files maintained by the N.C. Employment Security Commission. They didn't track graduates who had earnings outside the state, or those who earned less than \$2,040 a quarter (the equivalent of full-time at minimum wage).

The numbers will mean more once additional studies are done that document pre-enrollment earnings of community college students, earnings of individuals who do not complete programs, and the long range relationship of postsecondary education and salaries.

Meanwhile, the numbers now available suggest that in terms of immediate earning potential, a two-



Susan Usher

year AAS degree serves very nicely indeed.

The AAS grad was earning an average annual first-year wages of \$23,102, while the average BA/BS grad was earning \$21,923. University grads with a master's degree were earning an average of \$30,990 their first year out of school. Community college students who graduated from a certificate or diploma program (less than two years) were earning around \$20,000.

Results lean slightly in favor of the university grad when you take into consideration students' ages. Of the study group over 70 percent of the bachelor degree recipients are under 25; over 60 percent of the AAS degree recipients are 25 or older.

Cluster grads by age and degree and you find that bachelor degree recipients earn more than their AAS degree counterparts in all but one age category. But the AAS degree recipients trail their bachelor degree counterparts by only a small margin in five categories, and were slightly ahead in age 25-29, which happens to be the age when many adults begin returning to school for additional training.

Here are the average annual first-year salaries:

- under age 20: AAS, \$16,391; BA/BS, \$17,684;
- age 21-24, AAS, \$19,996;

- BA/BS, \$20,569;
- age 25-29, AAS, \$23,649; BA/BS, \$22,763;
- age 30-34, AAS, \$26,300; BA/BS, \$26,675;
- age 35-39, AAS, \$26,781; BA/BS, \$28,554; and
- age 40 and older, AAS, \$26,383; BA/BS, \$31,034.

According to DCC's calculations, the difference is less than 15 percent in each age category, and 7 percent or less in all but the last category. In the 21 to 24 years of age category, which constitutes a large majority of the UNC BA/BS completers, the average first year earnings of AAS degree completers was 97 percent of the BA/BS average.

Look at the earnings of the AAS grads as a percentage of earnings of the BA/BS grads and the results are equally interesting. For all ages combined, the AAS graduates' first-year earnings equaled 105 percent of the BA/BS completers. For all but one age group they ranged from 93 percent to 104 percent. Only in the 40 and older category was the figure significantly lower, at 85 percent.

It's impossible for me to get as excited about these numbers, as some folks in the community college system, because I've never believed earning more money was the best or only reason to go to college, though it's certainly the most tangible.

What I do see confirmed in the numbers is the community college being an excellent starting point or alternative to a four-year education for probably a majority of high school students. They can capitalize on this opportunity even more by taking advantage of the Tech Prep or "4 + 2" track in high school.

Two-year degree programs offer a means of earning a decent living, a

fast route into the workplace, a chance to explore a career area without making a \$50,000 investment, and for many, simply the next stage in what will be a lifelong educational journey as they train and retrain for jobs of the future.

Good things in a community don't happen by magic. Whether it's a major do like the N.C. Festival By The Sea or something smaller, there's always a group of people hard at work in the background to make sure an event goes off as planned.

That's certainly true on July 3, when the Volunteers In Blue Air Force National Guard Band presents an open-air evening concert at Sunset Beach. Members of the sponsoring organization, the Sunset Beach Beautification Committee, have been working hard to arrange a proper welcome. On arrival the National Guardsmen and women will be treated to supper at the Sea Trail Plantation Pavilion, with committee members like Cathy Kakos and Ginny Barber preparing some of the food and arranging for contributions of other items from supportive local businesses.

By the way, they're expecting a larger crowd at this year's concert. Mid-morning heat kept some music lovers away last year, but a 7 p.m. start time Sunday week should assure a good crowd. If you live close by, consider walking over, Ginny suggests, since parking space will be limited. Don't forget to bring a towel or folding chair for seating.

P-lease don't consider this an invitation to "Stump the Band," but if there's a favorite tune you'd like to hear, don't hesitate to ask. "These folks are great," says Cathy. "They can play everything."

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