## THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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### **Curtailing Curbside Business In Shallotte:** It's A Timely Proposal

Imagine you were in business, paying a mortgage or rent, paying your taxes, paying your employees, paying your utility bills, paying for advertising and generally trying to be a good commercial neighbor in your town. Then suppose one day, right down the street from your place, someone pitched a tent and started selling the same kind of merchandise you carry-someone who might leave in two days or two weeks, who has no particular interest in your town other than as a place to turn a quick buck, who doesn't employ a local soul, and whose only investment in your community is a couple hundred dollars, at most, for a temporary license to do business there.

You wouldn't have to imagine it if you were a merchant in Shallotte. If you were Bed Land or Heilig-Meyers or Kimball's or Shallotte Furniture, it would have happened to you last week when a tractor-trailer load of furniture was set up under a tent in a Main Street parking lot. It stayed only a couple of days and was replaced by a short-lived curbside "art" sale of the Elvis-on-vel-

Shallotte Alderman Carson Durham got the support of his board last week in asking the town attorney to draft an ordinance prohibiting or controlling businesses that set up for a day or two along the streets of Shallotte. It's about time.

There's something about Shallotte that seems to bring out the impulse in folks to spread their wares on the street and do business-it's probably the fact that they can. There may be some truth to arguments put forth in the past against regulating curbside peddling-some folks no doubt do rely on it as a means of making a living-but there are bigger issues to consider.

Not least among them is the desire of the Shallotte aldermen and many local residents and merchants to boost the town's business economy and make Shallotte attractive to new commercial and industrial ventures. At the risk of appearing elitist, the aldermen really have no choice but to crack down on streetside peddling if they're going to succeed in drawing the types of proven, long-term, successful businesses we all want to see populating Shallotte in the future.

A secondary but increasingly significant concern is the traffic snarl that results as motorists enter and exit peddlers' sites and the risk of accident posed by drivers paying attention to what's being sold on the roadside rather than who's on the road ahead.

Alderman Durham's proposal deserves the support of not only his fellow board members, but of shoppers and merchants, too.

Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English lan-

There's no such thing as old age; there is only sorrow.

Political campaigns are designedly made into emotional

issues involved, and they actually paralyze what slight

powers of cerebration man can normally muster.

orgies which endeavor to distract attention from the real

Worth Repeating...

### 1908 Was Banner Year For Education

1908 was a banner year for education-minded individuals in Brunswick County. County residents wanted more and better schools and were willing to pay the cost.

That became apparent while skimming microfilm of issues of the old weekly Southport Herald, looking for something else. I started jotting down notes on the schools.

Whereas prohibition was a divisive issue in 1908, pitting neighbor against neighbor, education was an issue that appeared to draw communities together though there was some sectional jealousy evident.

Given the current interest in education, it seemed like a good time to share some of those gleanings.

Early in 1908 a community correspondent wrote about Brunswick County needing a high school. Graded lower schools were available to children in many communities, but to attend the upper grades students generally had to leave home and board somewhere. That was an expensive proposition beyond the means of most families. In some rural areas, parents often banded together to pay a teacher and provide a small building for classes to be held.

In the ensuing February 20 issue a proud and defensive H.F. Brinson writes to set the record straight:

Susan Usher

Brunswick County HAS a high school at Regan (a community above Longwood that in 1908 also has its own String Band and a new Baptist church, but in 1915 loses its post office).

"The writer evidently overlooked the fact that our school at Regan has required the services of three or four teachers for the past two years, that it has a good two-story building, which, without change except finishing two rooms, will seat two hundred students; that its curriculum meets the entrance requirement of every college in the state; and in three years gives the entire high school worked as proscribed by state High School law.

(There's no indication as to whether the school is public or private; I tend to believe it was a private initiative.)

In that same issue correspondent

Robert L. Phelps reports a May C. Ward had passed through Makatoka on her way to Regan to enter the

Throughout the year Superintendent of Schools Bellamy has been stumping from community to community, exhorting the value of education and pushing for support of district taxes to build new schools.

In a personal column in the Feb. 20 issue, the editor assures readers that Southport will soon have a public high school, small to begin with, but sure to grow larger and perhaps become a college someday.

In the May 21, 1908, issue Adrian Willets of Winnabow expresses that community's concern for education.

He suggests "some extra good teachers" should be appointed in District No. 3 because it has such a good school committee (Apparently there were disparities back then too.) Willets encourages the building of a high school "out here where it is most needed.'

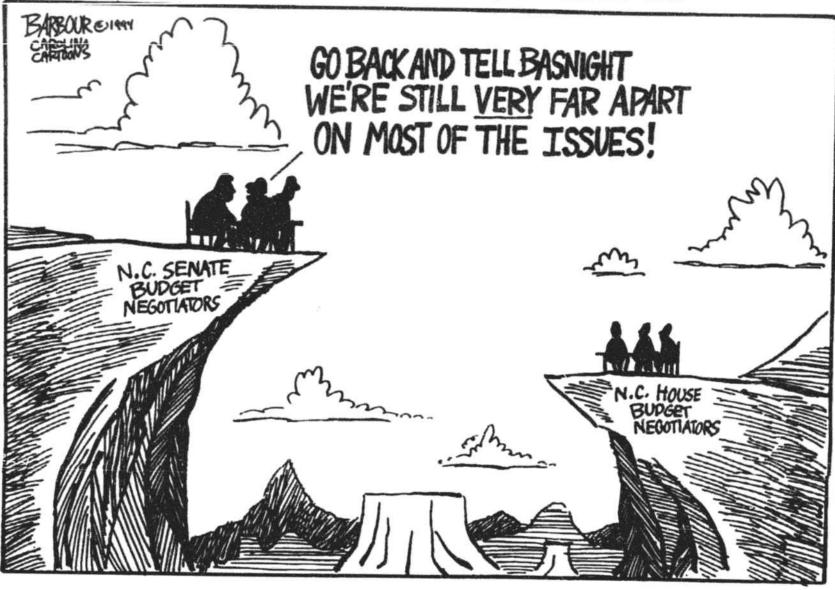
In July the Herald editor reports the county school board has spent more on education in Brunswick "ever before"-County than \$10,000.

That's right, \$10,000. I'm wondering, given all the talk these days about county "effort" versus "ability" to fund education, where we stood in 1908? Was \$10,000 a little or a lot for a county like Brunswick after the turn of the century? This was a time during which even the best of counties and communities were just beginning to educate most of their children, though not all of

Back then it's doubtful education was valued as highly in Brunswick County as it might have been elsewhere. It didn't take an education to fish, farm or build a boat. These days we're told you need a two-year degree to do any of those very well.

In 1992-93, by the way, the Public School Forum of North Carolina suggests, Brunswick's perpupil spending of \$825 per child ranked it at 86th out of the state's 100 counties in terms of effort-evidencing low commitment and priority given to education in its budget in relation to its ability to support education. That pushes it three spots lower than the year before.

Are we still playing catch-up? Is education getting its rightful share of the county budget, compared to other needs? Is it, or should it be, the most important thing we do as a county? Those are questions that taxpayers in any era must ask them-



#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# What 'New World Order' Really Means

To the editor:

The show of patriotism on Independence Day is always a wonderful and hopeful sign. Most Americans love our country and many who celebrate the 4th have been willing to die for it.

With this in mind, consider the implications of an article appearing in the Wilmington Morning Star on June 26, "Mission of the Future, N.C. bases profit from the new world order.'

We all want prosperity for our home state of North Carolina, but think about what the article said.

The new world order means the U.S. military is focusing its resources on troops that are ready to go to trouble spots on short notice." Wait a minute! Do we really want our military ready to go anywhere in the world? Or should their focus be on defending our own shores?

It's what the definition doesn't say that's really scary! Our soldiers, sailors and marines will not be fighting (or peacekeeping) under the Stars and Stripes, but under the command of the United Nations.

This is what the "new world vr- To the editor: der" means. If you doubt this, please

get in touch with your congressman now. Ask him about Presidential Decision-Directive-25 (PPD-25). Insist that he explain this subversive document that surrenders our national sovereignty and puts our troops under U.N. command. What may be great for the North Carolina economy could be fatal to U.S. indepen-

> Catherine Moore Burgaw

'Lover Boy'

Billary "Lover Boy" Clinton has

now lowered himself to begging the American people for donations to his legal defense fund. He and his assistant president have been excellent money-makers for many years, yet they are threatened with bankruptcy by legal bills.

What would happen to those of us not as fortunate, financially, as them? Could this mean that we should have free universal legal care before taking apart our great health care system?

John McAleer Calabash

(More Letters, Following Page)

# Tune In, Log On, Blast Off Down The Information Highway

friends? Explore strange and fascinating places?

Do you enjoy spending a rainy afternoon in a good library, wandering through the stacks and flipping through books, magazines and newspapers?

How would you like join in a question-and-answer session with a former president or a famous rock star?

Are you a shopper who wants to learn everything you can about a

product before making a purchase? Or are you a "people person" who enjoys chatting on the phone, getting lots of mail, playing games, exchanging ideas or arguing with a person of opposite views?

If so, then how would you like to do all that without leaving the com-

fort of your own home? Interested? Then it's time for you to get "On Line." Time to log on, tune in and blast off. In other words, it's time to hit the highway.

The information highway that is. Hold on. Don't go away. I realize that those words remind you of Vice President Al Gore putting people to sleep with long, boring dissertations about the possibilities of and blah, blah, blah... zzzzzzzzzz.

-James Harvey Robinson

-Henry James

-Edith Wharton

Nice guy. And he's right on this. But he could make the Battle of Armageddon sound as exciting as a radish-growing contest.

Fact is, the info highway is a way-cool place. It's easy to get on. It's fascinating and educational and useful and more fun than your imagination can imagine. And it's definitely a wave of the future that promises to alter the way we work, play, learn, communicate and entertain ourselves.

To get on board, all you need is a computer and a modem-the gadget that allows your machine to talk through the telephone lines to every other computer on the planet.

You don't even need top-notch equipment. Even a decent used computer-the kind you find for dirt cheap in the want ads-will give you enough speed and memory to get started.

Then just subscribe to one of several "on-line" networking services. These are giant computer systems packed with libraries full of books, encyclopedias, maps and other research information, video games, useful computer programs, enter-



tainment and product reviews and a seemingly inexhaustible array of other neat stuff.

Most networks let you call up the latest wire service news, up-to-theminute weather forecasts, magazine articles and newspapers from around the world. Many on-line services give you access to the Library of Congress card catalog, the Smithsonian Institution, college libraries and other bottomless pools of knowledge.

If all that sounds too much like work, the on-line communications options will provide a much more enjoyable reason to log on.

The most popular feature offered by nearly all on-line services is electronic mail, otherwise known as "E-mail." Once you know someone's E-mail "address," you can in-

stantly send a message to them from across the street or half way around the world.

After toiling away on news room computers for years, I recently broke down and bought a modem. At last, the concept of a "home computer" makes sense.

Already, through E-mail, I have re-established contact with several old friends I never write, rarely call and otherwise see maybe twice every decade.

Nowadays, it's great to sign on after the 11 o'clock news (when phone rates are cheaper) and check my mailbox for messages from people who have suddenly become neighbors again.

Another communications feature of most networking services are the "chat" areas or "billboards" where you can meet people from all around the world who share similar interests. You can either send them messages to read later or engage in an on-screen conversation with one or several people.

More and more famous personalities-like author Torn Clancy and talk-show host Rush Limbaughhave established E-mail boxes where anyone can send them a mesply. I hear there's even an E-mail box at the White House.

Network services frequently schedule roundtable discussions in which interesting people answer questions posed by the computer audience. Former President Jimmy Carter and rock star Sting have hosted such on-line forums in the past month.

Everyone in the business agrees that it's just a matter of time before television, home computers and telephones are merged into one giant inter-active "mega-medium" through which audiences will participate in-not just watch-what comes across the screen. On-line networks are a step in that direction.

So why not climb on board? If you already have a home computer, you aren't even touching its potential until you get a modem and sign on. If you're thinking of buying a new machine, it will almost surely come equipped with a modem and the software needed to go on line.

The most popular on-line networks are CompuServe, Prodigy and America Online. Costs and features vary, but all three will let you sample their services for free. And

even if you aren't on the same service as your friends, you can send E-mail back and forth through something called the "Internet."

That's where you find the real hard-core computer folks. Originally developed to link American universities doing defense research, the Internet got taken over by its users and expanded into a vast, worldwide communications network.

More than 20 million people use the Internet to exchange E-mail, to access databases in 2 million host computers and to interact with 45,000 smaller networks. Once you're on-line, it won't be long before you start hearing about "The Net.

So why wait? The future is now. If you're already aboard the bus,

drop me a line. I've set up an America Online mailbox with the address "TheBeacon" for on-line readers to send us comments, questions, advice, glowing praise or polite criticism. From CompuServe, Prodigy or other services, just send your Email through The Net to "thebeacon@aol.com" and I'll zap you back.

See you on the highway.