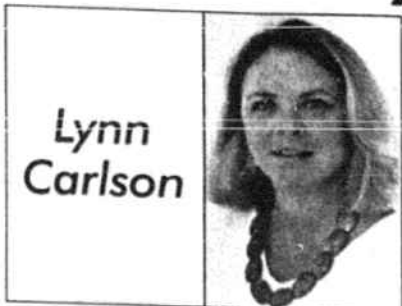


On The Page Or The Screen, A Little Mind-Candy Is Okay

Continuing with the Literacy Month theme...
 "You read all that since this morning?" my incredulous 16-year-old asked, noticing that, between breakfast and supertime, my bookmark had moved from the beginning to the nearly end of E. Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News*.



Lynn Carlson

"Yes, son," I replied testily. "It's miraculous the things you can do when you don't watch any MTV for a whole day."
 Today's kids don't read like we did, the experts say. Speculation is that their attention spans surrendered under attack by the split-second images of cartoons and music videos. ("I hate videos with words," Butt-head says to Beavis. "If I wanted to read, I'd go to school...huh-huh, huh.")

Maybe it's true, maybe not. Communication theory, to my way of thinking, is a lot like education theory and child-rearing theory—we have no idea if the experts were on target until it's way too late to right anything we did wrong.

I like to be optimistic that someday my son will derive as much pleasure as I do from the blessed act of reading a good book—not just some paperback drivel but something meaty and meaningful. After all, I tell myself, he's been around avid readers his entire life. I read to him every day when he was little. There are hundreds of books in our home.

I see my boy slumping behind a copy of *Surfer* magazine and I remember President Reagan smiling kindly and telling an interviewer, "Oh, I don't read books—just maga-

zines." I am not comforted.

I think back to my high school years and remember doing lots of reading—both assigned and unassigned. More a party girl than a committed scholar, I surprised myself by enjoying *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and actually having fun researching a term paper on British journalists Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Who knew?

But for recreational reading, it was nothing but mind-candy. My friend Vickie and I swapped paperbacks of Jacqueline Susann, Harold Robbins and the other featherweight best-sellers of the early '70s. We wept together on the phone after racing to see who would be first to finish Erich Segal's blockbuster *Love Story*. (She won.) We bought *Cosmopolitan* every month, took its silly quizzes, devoured its insipid advice about love and glamour, and were certain this was the path to sophistication.

Vickie and I only talk to each other every couple of years now, and never about books or magazines. Our catch-up sessions are hasty newsbytes about our kids and our work—she's a travel agent with a college-age daughter. We swear

we'll get together this year, but we never do.
 I'd bet you ten bucks she still passes a night every now and then like I did last Saturday—bundled up in a quilt at 2:30 a.m., not even considering sleep until I got to the end of Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*.

Maybe MTV is no worse for the attention span than *Valley of the Dolls* was. Maybe we have to give our teenagers the benefit of the doubt and have faith that when the time is right, they'll start laying some bricks on the intellectual foundation we did our best to construct. Maybe it just happens too gradually for us to see while it's happening...

It makes me uneasy to use this space for a plug, so let's just call this a Literacy Month gift: *The Shipping News* is the finest novel I've read in years.

It's the story of third-rate newspaperman Quoye, who is done dirty by an amoral wife and packs off to his ancestral home in Newfoundland with two young daughters and an old-maid aunt.

In the process of settling in to his new life as single parent and reporter for the weekly *Gammy Bird*, Quoye comes to terms with his personal demons and his nothing-to-be-proud-of lineage with a supremely satisfying ending that uplifts without even a hint of schmaltz.

Proulx's writing is spare and razor sharp. She wastes no words and plays no tricks. She won both the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for *The Shipping News*; read it and you'll see why.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Short School Days Cheat Brunswick County Students

To the editor:
 At a time when some school systems are considering lengthening school days, I do not understand why the Brunswick County school system is shortening theirs.

I am referring to the fact that students will be dismissed from school at 12:30 on Wednesdays. I suppose since they go to school until 12:30, that is considered a full day. However, I do not believe they receive a full day's worth of instruction.

They will be let out early for 30 days! That must affect the quality of education they receive.

Please don't think this is being done to take the place of teacher workdays. There will still be seven teacher workdays in the upcoming year.

I feel our students are being cheated out of valuable education time.

Carole Long
 Calabash

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Brunswick County Schools' 1994-95 calendar lists 18 workdays, 10 holidays and 10 days' annual leave.

Shining Some Truth

To the editor:
 Congratulations on your promotion to this current post. The *Beacon* is just that, shining some truth in a sea of dysfunctional misinformation provided by the mainstream media.

As to your excellent column on books and reading, an English teacher once told me that a person who makes a friend of books is nev-

er lonely. There's always some favorite that has had the capacity to cheer me at times, to entertain me but always to educate me. Everyone should at least have a library card.

Mr. Carlson's latest column, "A Fight Against Crime, Or Class Warfare?" is the finest, most far-seeing article I can recall reading. Unfortunately for me the letters I write deal with the passion against urban journalism that is felt. There has to be a frame to mount Mr. Carlson's article, and I'll be proud to display it prominently in my home.

The Knight-Ridder group of Charlotte and Myrtle Beach seem to be tainted with the type of anti-thinking described in this excellent work. This tops "The Great White Shark" article. Both of these are going to be hard to beat. I have faith that you'll be able to do it.

J.C. Fletcher
 Calabash

Symbol Of Manhood

To the editor:
 Courage, Honor, Fidelity, Family, Country, God!

These are the words that come to mind when I, a transplanted Northerner, look at the Confederate battle flag. To me it has very little to do with slavery, rather it embodies the traditions that have helped so many Southern men and boys sacrifice themselves in the service of our country.

This symbol of Southern manhood does more than honor the one-third of the Southern male popula-

tion that died in the War Between the States and the one-third who were wounded, more than 90 percent of whom never owned slaves.

Imagine how many so-called red-necks carried their Southern battle flags at the Argonne and the Meuse; how many so-called rebels carried their at Normandy and Guadalcanal; how many so-called Bubbas carried theirs at the Chosin, the Pusan Perimeter, Chu Lau and Hue!

Why can't a few frustrated, would-be community activists leave these Southern veterans their own symbol of sacrifice, much as they encourage the wearing of caps and sweatshirts embossed with an X to glorify a radical, anti-white, anti-American criminal.

John McAleer
 Calabash

Write Us

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters must have an original signature and 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. Address letters to:
The Brunswick Beacon
 P.O. Box 2558
 Shallotte NC 28459
 Anonymous letters will not be published.

COUPON
 Discover Outlet Savings!
WICKER IMPORTS
 The largest selection of iron & wicker on the NC Coast
FREE BASKETS
WITH THIS COUPON*
 *No Purchase Necessary • Limit One Per Customer • Expires 9/15/94
 We're celebrating the opening of our brand new outlet store by giving away free baskets this week!
 Come Visit Our New Store Off Hwy. 17 N., Shallotte • 754-4404
 Entrance off Bus. 17 N. just before the bypass or directly off Hwy. 17 N. (Next To Coastal Tire)
©1994 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

ONE HOUR EYE GLASSES

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Complete Pair Single Vision Lenses \$12.95 Any Power CR-39 Plastic | Complete Pair Bifocal Lenses Any Type Any Power \$29.95 CR-39 Plastic | Present this coupon for these special prices Single Vision any power \$69.95 Line Bifocals any power \$89.95 Progressive no-line any power \$109.95 |
| Complete Pair Progressive Any Type Lenses Any Power In Stock \$79.95 CR-39 Plastic | Complete Pair Trifocals Any Type Any Power \$39.95 CR-39 Plastic | NEW-Transition Lenses This offer includes... •Single lenses •Bifocal lenses •Progressive lenses Transition lenses are the new plastic lenses that change into sunglasses. |

Frame Size 54 Eye and Above Add Just \$10.00
 Coupons Expire Sept. 30, 1994. No other discounts apply.

CLEAR-VUE OPTICIANS

We can make arrangements to get your eyes examined today.
 (910)395-6563 3901-A Oleander Dr., Wilmington
 1-800-634-1085 Mon.-Fri. 9:30-7p.m., Sat. 9:30-5 p.m., Sun. 1-5 p.m.
 Other locations—Kinston, Greenville, Jackson, Wilson, Raleigh & Goldsboro.

GO FOR IT!

20% 30% 40%

Summer Clearance Sale Continues

SLEEPERS & LOVESEATS

- Retail \$2,768. Lovely wicker arm by Lane Venture. **SALE \$1459.00**
- Retail \$2,109. Queen Sleeper & Loveseat - Teal, cinnamon, and indigo plaid. **SALE \$1189.00**
- Retail \$2,199. Blue tan stripe with semi-attached back. **SALE \$1199.00**
- Retail \$1,399. Rattan sleeper and loveseat. Pastel Design. **SALE \$799.00**

CHAIRS

- Retail \$800. High back green traditional chair. **SALE \$439.00**
- Retail \$629. Graceful Salmon Damask wing chairs. **SALE \$329.00**

At J. Livingston we don't "Fumble" Around with High Prices! We Simply Cut Prices So You Can "Score Big" During Our Winning Sale.

SOFAS

- Retail \$1,520. Country English floral. Green, rose and peach by Norwalk. **SALE \$749.00**
- Retail \$1,715. Traditional green and rose floral stripe sofa by Norwalk. **SALE \$699.00**
- Retail \$1550. Contemporary green stripe sofa. **SALE \$789.00**

DINETTES

- Retail \$1,069. black iron and wicker 5 pc. dinette. **SALE \$599.00**
- Retail \$2279. Nutmeg rattan swivel game set with 48" glass top. **SALE \$1149.00**

J. LIVINGSTON FURNITURE GALLERIES
 Hwy. 17 Little River, SC (803) 249-6188

LUNCH SPECIAL
 Choice of entree and 3 vegetables
\$4.25
 (tea or coffee included)

Sunday Lunch Buffet
 Relax, we'll do the cooking. 11:30-2 PM
 Closed Sunday evenings.

Seafood • Sandwich Plates • Prime Rib
 Lunch Specials • Salads • Carry-Outs

SANDFIDDLER SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
 HWY. 130 E. SHALLOTTE 754-8168
 HWY. 211 SOUTHPORT 457-6588