

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## New Panel Has Fair Mix, Worthy Agenda

The county's new Zoning Overlay Committee represents a fair mix of interests with a worthwhile agenda.

The committee, appointed by the county commissioners Monday night, includes two environmental activists, two real estate brokers, a farm supply dealer and a retired industry supervisor. Their considerable task will be threefold:

- to identify resources along the Cape Fear River worthy of, and eligible for, protection in the public interest;
- to identify interests related to land-use policy and collect comments and evidence about how county policies impact industry and the environment;
- to make recommendations for actions to address concerns, including the creation of overlay districts.

The group will probably begin its work a little awkwardly, its members coming to the table from such disparate points of view. However, these can be the circumstances under which the dogma of individuals evolves into something more serving of a reasonable majority.

The issues on the table need to be addressed—and not just when communities feel threatened by alarming new kinds of development. Eliminating problems by anticipating them can conserve not just the environment, but peoples' time, stress and energy, too.

## Bridging The Ditch

*Reprinted From The Charlotte Observer*

Residents of tiny Sunset Beach are right: The quaint pontoon bridge linking the mainland with the small Brunswick County island ought to be saved. But not where it is.

The 30-year-old contraption is a delight to watch in action as horns wail and windlasses crank. But it belongs in a museum somewhere. As a working bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway, it's a menace to navigation and a potentially life-threatening obstacle to evacuation in an emergency.

Those who have used the bridge can understand its allure. It harkens to another era, to an unspoiled coastal paradise where the fishing and the living are easy, where no one is in a hurry to get there and no one's in a hurry to leave. It is as picturesque as a covered bridge or a white-steeped country church.

The floating pontoon bridge, which swings to the northeast to open every hour on the hour and whenever a commercial vessel approaches, is ideally suited to serving the populace for which it was built. But the day passed long ago when it served only 50 homes; there are now 750 homes on the island and more going up every year; hundreds of visitors, and sometimes thousands, come for a day on the beach or to walk across Mad Inlet to Bird Island. The one-lane pontoon bridge simply isn't sufficient to carry the traffic.

Perhaps the most compelling argument to keep the bridge in place is that its inefficiency, and its occasional malfunction, would discourage more coastal development and hold down traffic on the Waterway. That combination, one theory goes, might somehow reduce the potential for pollution from passing boat traffic or excessive development. But the truth is that development and water traffic will continue to grow no matter what the state does, and the old swing bridge will well-serve neither the population nor the traffic. North Carolina needs better tools to protect its coast.

Sunset Beach residents would be wiser to work with the state Department of Transportation to choose the most suitable alternative to the pontoon bridge. But they ought to demand that the state preserve the swinging pontoon bridge in an appropriate nearby coastal setting as a working reminder of the community's heritage and its ingenuity. If Sunset Beach lovers are as inventive as the bridge's builder, they can have their bridge and cross it, too.

## Clinton, Haiti: Neck-Deep In The Big Muddy

Now that Jimmy Carter has pulled Bill Clinton's tail out of another fire, it will be very interesting to see how the president and his band of merry pranksters try to make us believe that invading Haiti was a good idea after all.

Regardless of how things play out down there, the fact remains that Clinton was poised to cause the deaths of a lot of people, some of them American servicemen, simply because he couldn't figure out anything better to do.

Unless the public's famous short attention span comes into play, the president's bone-headed Haitian policy should be nail in the coffin of his re-election hopes. (As long as the Republicans don't nominate

Eric Carlson



Danny Quayle.)

By the time you read this, Clinton damage-control efforts will be well under way. The president will be portrayed as a forceful and decisive leader, willing to project U.S. power in defense of democracy and blah, blah, blah....

All those Democrat senators and congressfolks who have been hiding under rocks for the past few days will emerge to assure the president they were behind him 100 percent.

Actually, they've been praying this would all blow over before they were forced to publicly oppose their own president to save their political necks.

A week ago, congressional leaders were pulling every trick in the book to keep from going on record in support or opposition to a Haiti invasion. Now they can stand up and say that, although they had some reservation about the use of force, their fearless leader has again demonstrated blah, blah, blah...

What a difference a day makes.

Last week Democrat senators were admitting they couldn't muster 15 votes in favor of invading Haiti. The situation wasn't much better in the House. Polls showed the American public opposed to the idea by a margin of two-to-one.

But he was going to do it anyway. The paratroopers were in the air. Which indicates to me that Bill Clinton has learned nothing from history and is willing to ignore the will of the people to pursue some twisted political purpose of his own.

I'm not one of those who automatically condemned Clinton for protesting against the war in Vietnam.

## Needed: Resources To Plug Big Hole



Susan Usher

We need something for kids to do after school, someplace for them to go so they'll stay out of mischief.

You, like me, probably can't count the number of times you've heard that lament. But do you know anyone trying to do something about it? I do, and today she and her cohorts are disappointed, but not discouraged.

Linda Shaddix, Safe Schools project coordinator for the Brunswick County Schools, had helped draft a grant application submitted by the Brunswick County Education Foundation (BCEF), which is serving as the legal "umbrella" for the county's very young Communities in Schools program.

They asked the N.C. Department of Human Resources for \$200,000 from the state's new Support Our Students (SOS) programs. The General Assembly provided an initial appropriation of \$5 million to fund after-school programs for students in grades K-9.

Brunswick County planned to establish a comprehensive program for

all county middle schools, offering after-school enrichment activities, recreation, homework assistance, tutoring and perhaps other choices, "using lots of volunteers and some paid staff."

"It's a great idea and a real need," says Shaddix. "It would plug up a big hole."

Some of the money was to go toward hiring a half-time coordinator at each of the four sites—Leland, South Brunswick, Shallotte and Waccamaw—to oversee the volunteers and ensure a safe setting, and to buy materials and supplies. But

the bulk of the cash would have been used to remove one of the biggest obstacles in Brunswick County for any type of service program: lack of transportation. Bus drivers would have been hired to get the kids home.

"Otherwise we wouldn't have been able to have the program. A lot of the kids come from poor families and without transportation would not be able to participate," Shaddix said.

But Brunswick County didn't get the money when the grant awards were announced last Wednesday morning. Malcolm McDonald, who works with the SOS program, said several other applicants showed greater need through statistics such as a higher school dropout rate and higher juvenile crime rate.

"We were most disappointed," said Shaddix. "We were really hoping to implement the program. It's a need I consistently hear, that the kids are idle and have no where to go and nothing to do after school."

Shaddix and company plan to keep looking for the funds and people needed to roll those buses.

"There are other grants and other resources. We're going to keep looking, and we're anxious to work with other agencies, organizations and local churches," she said. "Somehow we'll get it done."

It's possible that the program could be pulled together without paid staff, but that would take some incredible volunteers. People who could be there on a reliable schedule, week in and week out; who could deal with difficult situations and difficult people; and coordinate the efforts of others.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping "plug a big hole" by volunteering your time, know-how or other resources, this is one lady who would be glad to hear from you. Give Linda Shaddix a call at 754-9282 or 457-5241, or write her care of the Brunswick County Public Schools, 8360 River Road, Southport, N.C. 28461.

Dealing with disappointment is always a challenge, as my husband and I have recently been reminded.

We had been ecstatic, joyful, at the prospect of becoming parents for the first time, however belatedly, and our friends had shared the excitement.

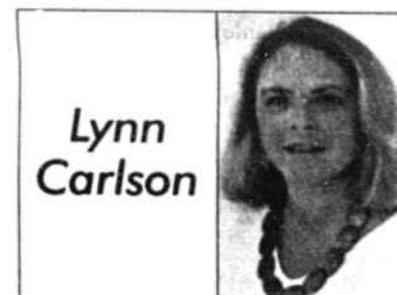
More recently they have also shared our disappointment following a miscarriage and helped us move on.

Unlike some other passages, our society doesn't have a ritual for helping cope with this kind of loss, as many others have discovered before now. We've been fortunate to have birth families and a church family that have been there for us through the excitement and the pain, and are wonderfully supportive and encouraging.

We've been reminded how much even the simplest gesture—a card, a flower, a phone call, a visit, can mean to someone who is hurting. As a result, I suspect we'll be "finding" more time for those small niceties that we have neglected so often in the past.



## The Man Who Could See Around Corners



Lynn Carlson

My man!" Lee Atwater yelled into the receiver with the raspy voice that would someday be familiar to all followers of American politics. "How's that cue?"

It was 1976 and the man who would come to be the architect of modern presidential election strategy was trying to sell a Columbia, S.C., barbecue joint owner on the idea of booking Billy and Benny McCrary, World's Fattest Twins, to ride mini-bikes around the restaurant parking lot and draw a pork-craving crowd.

Lee's desk was one of six in the single room that served as business office, newsroom and advertising department of the *Cayce-West Columbia Journal*. Mine was on the left with the reporters; Lee's was on the right with the ad salesmen.

We were all smiling, listening to Lee's side of the conversation, watching him waving his arms and pacing as far as the phone cord would let him. Everyone knew he'd talk the guy into it.

I hadn't thought about Lee much since he died of a brain tumor. Then I was reading *Newsweek* and ran across his picture in an excerpt from *All's Fair*, the new book by James Carville and Mary Matalin. It struck me that seven months before Lee died he looked exactly as he did in college—which, in grey suit, starched shirt and wing-tip shoes, was nothing like your average 1970s collegian.

I crossed paths with him almost daily for several years back then—in the bowels of Carolina Coliseum, where we attended the University of South Carolina School of Journalism. In the State House, where I was a page in the House of Representatives and he was working with a greenhorn legislator by the name of Carroll Campbell. And later, at the *Journal*, my first job after graduation and Lee's tenth that year.

"Atwater's main talent was that he understood the pulse of the press," Matalin writes in *All's Fair*. "He described it as being able to 'see around corners.' He knew what the press would think was a story and where they would go with it, how to create a story and keep focus on it."

I'm sure. Even back when I knew him, it was obvious that this very straight-looking but very wild guy had a shrewd streak a mile long. He always knew what would work, though sometimes people would have too little nerve or too much decorum to follow his suggestions.

Lee wasn't the world's greatest ad

salesman—largely, I suspect, because instead of servicing accounts, he was busy hanging around the legislature or running some shuck like the McCrary brothers' deal.

He didn't spend a whole lot of time in the office, and he got more personal telephone calls than anyone I've ever known—from politicians, bill-collectors, professional rascals, you name it.

He handled them all with the same unabashedness that would later drive him to get on stage with B.B. King and blissfully play the blues with precisely the degree of soul you'd expect from a white-boy Republican. How he sounded wouldn't have been the point. Seizing an opportunity like that while he was in a position to pull it

"Put her in the peanut butter and jelly sandwich, boys," he said, yanking the camera from around my neck. In a second, I was off my feet and lost in the incredible abdominal mass of the McCrarys—all 1,500 pounds of them. It was a sensation not unlike being pinned by a couple of waterbed mattresses.

I cracked up. The brothers cracked up. And the shutter clicked.

## Worth Repeating...

*Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.*

—Thomas Jefferson

*A man always has two reasons for what he does—a good one, and the real one.*

—John Pierpont Morgan

*I loathe people who keep dogs. They are cowards who haven't got the guts to bite people themselves.*

—August Strindberg

While some may quibble about when the errors began, few would argue that our Southeast Asia adventure was anything but a major mistake. So opposing those policies can't be all wrong.

What bothers me is that Clinton either didn't understand what he was protesting against or hasn't grasped the lessons it provides.

There were two critical mistakes of the Vietnam War that even generals and demonstrators can agree upon.

The first and most obvious is that the U.S. should never send troops to die in a conflict without the full understanding and support of the American people. The second is that we can't create a stable democracy out of a political system that is inherently corrupt.

Clinton ignored both those lessons. There was absolutely no reason to rush into an invasion of Haiti, no immediate threat to U.S. interests. This was no Cuban missile crisis.

If military intervention was the right course of action, why didn't the president make a serious effort to convince us? Why did he assemble an invasion force and wait until a few days before the attack before addressing the nation about his intentions?

Members of congress suggested months ago that the U.S. should send former President Carter to negotiate a peaceful withdrawal of the Haitian generals. Why did Clinton wait until our ships were poised offshore and planes were in the air before making his case?

Could it be that he knew the American people would never support an invasion of Haiti?

Why should they? The idea that we were doing this "to restore democracy in Haiti" is a farce. There has

never been democracy in Haiti, just a series of murderous regimes established and maintained by internal terrorism.

Haiti is probably the most corrupt country in the Western Hemisphere. It is also the poorest. Which is the real tragedy. But it's not a problem that can be solved by a U.S. invasion.

Assembling the massive military means to rattle our sword off Haiti has already cost American taxpayers billions of dollars. That much money could have funded a serious humanitarian effort to build some kind of lasting economic base there. Now it's been squandered.

Even without the big invasion, thousands of U.S. troops are likely to be bogged down in Haiti for months, if not years. The "temporary" forces we sent to Somalia have just returned, leaving the same warlords in power that caused the famine we went to stop.

Likewise in Haiti, we are liable to be sucked further and further into a misguided attempt to create order where none has ever existed.

Which reminds me of an old protest song by Pete Seeger, one that Bill Clinton will remember from his demonstration days. Using the metaphor of crossing a river, the lyrics describe America's growing involvement in Vietnam and President Lyndon Johnson's refusal to reconsider his policies.

Between verses, the refrain sucks us in up to our ankles, our knees, our waists and our chest as the murky waters swirl around us. Before long we are:

*"Neck deep in the Big Muddy  
And the big fool says to push on..."*