

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1994

## Investigation Needed To Remove Stench From Sheriff's Race

The race for Brunswick County sheriff has turned ugly in the vilest kind of way, with serious implications for both the Democratic and Republican candidates. It is important to separate what can be substantiated from what is alleged.

These facts are **admitted**:

■ Two years ago, a group of seemingly responsible adults taking a course to learn basic law enforcement rented and watched an X-rated videotape in mixed company while in a classroom.

■ The incident occurred at Brunswick Community College, a taxpayer-funded institution of higher learning, on equipment bought with public money.

■ Excerpts from an X-rated videotape purported to be one they watched have been distributed in Brunswick County along with a letter besmirching the heretofore good name of Democratic candidate Ronald Hewett.

These are the **allegations**:

■ Three of 12 students enrolled in the class say Hewett, who was their instructor, allowed the viewing to take place and was present when it happened. At least two others admit the tape was shown, but say Hewett was off campus for lunch at the time, a claim the college administration says its investigation bears out.

■ Hewett's attorney is accusing Republican candidate James Brown of having taken an active part in distributing the smut in an overt, mean-spirited and possibly illegal attempt to impugn the character of his opponent. Everyone known to be involved in the distribution will face legal action, the attorney says.

The admitted facts point to bad judgment, unprofessional conduct and questionable morality on the part of a few men and women who were supposed to be studying to become officers of the law. The letter raises questions about the wisdom of accusers who would implicate themselves in the process of trying to discredit a candidate they oppose.

The allegations are more serious, since they involve the possibility of illegal activities such as conspiracy, libel, dissemination of pornography and violation of copyright laws.

The voters of Brunswick County deserve to have this cloud of stench removed from the sheriff's race before they go to the polls on Nov. 8. The only way to accomplish that is with an immediate and thorough criminal investigation—from an authority higher than the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department—followed by a full public disclosure of the findings.

## Searching No More

Campbell's Zesty Tomato Soup, imported sausages, a particular brand of Creole spices, a favorite cleaner. Lemon ice cream.

You never know when a column is going to strike a chord. Lemon ice cream seemed an unlikely topic. However, it seems many of us have experienced that frustrating search of the aisles to find a product that was there only a few weeks ago, or was on the shelf of another store in another place but seemingly can't be found here.

During the past week eight people have called with promises to send recipes for Italian lemon ice, lemon sherbet and the real thing...lemon ice cream. I plan to try every one.

They and others have also shared their own tales of the hunt; some are still looking, I'm sad to report.

Two callers offered almost immediate relief in my own search. Ken Proctor, co-owner of the new grocery store at Ocean Isle Beach, reported that with a few telephone calls he had found a source for lemon ice cream and will soon have it in the freezer case. Hurray and thanks! Maybe he can help those other folks out too...

The volunteers with Brunswick County Habitat For Humanity came through with an unexpected source that I had to share, "Partners in the Kitchen, From Our House To Yours," a cookbook published by Habitat For Humanity International. Brunswick County's Habitat chapter just received copies that it started selling at the N.C. Oyster Festival this weekend. Like any true cookbook lover, Karen Stanley immediately skimmed it from cover to cover. She sent word it included a Lemon Velvet Ice Cream recipe. President Doreen Alloway made sure I received a copy at the festival.

A beautiful, spiral-bound collection of recipes submitted by Habitat affiliates across the United States, it uses the analogy of a house-raising for its structure and incorporates photographs and information about Habitat's housing ministry. "Feeding Hungry Workers," for instance, features make and take recipes good for a house-raising or for a family reunion, church dinner or neighborhood potluck.

You can try the lemon ice cream recipe yourself with your own cookbook from Brunswick County Habitat For Humanity Inc., P.O. Box 3347, Shallotte, N.C. 28459. Cost is \$10 plus shipping. For more information contact Habitat at 910-754-3788. Proceeds will go toward the partnership's effort to see that people have decent, affordable housing.

Sometimes all you need to do to find an answer is to ask the right question.

Susan Usher



## Worth Repeating...

- Knowledge of human nature is the beginning and end of political education. —Henry Brook Adams
- It is the customary fate of new truths to begin as heresies and end as superstitions. —Thomas Henry Huxley
- Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning. —Thornton Wilder

# Some Days Are Better Than Others

So how was your day? I usually answer that question, as most people do, by saying something like: "the usual" or "nothing new" or "same stuff, different day."

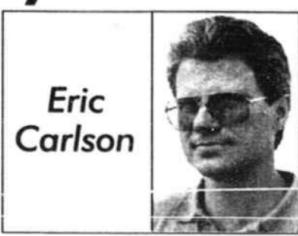
After all, much of newspaper reporting involves pretty boring activities, like talking to government officials and going to public meetings that you lucky readers don't want to attend any more than I do.

But every now and then, there are days like last Tuesday, when the adrenaline in your bloodstream won't let you sleep until the wee hours of the following morning.

It started out quiet. Too quiet. Another slow day in what we in the bizness call "a slow news week." Nothing exciting to write about—just the most recent meetings of the Utilities Operations Board, the Economic Development Commission, the Board of Health, etc. etc.

I was busy working on stories about septic tank regulations when the police scanner went totally crazy:

"Motor vehicle accident near the state line!...Gasoline tanker and one automobile!... Car overturned!... Subjects trapped!...Vehicle on fire!... Fully involved in flames!...Danger of fuel spill explosion!... Priority traffic!... All available units respond!"



Eric Carlson

I reckon that means me, I thought, grabbing my camera bag and the portable radio. I got behind a Charlotte Volunteer Rescue Squad crash truck and buzzed down U.S. 17 toward the state line.

Often, these emergency calls turn out to be less urgent than originally reported. But not this one. The radio traffic became more intense as police, fire and rescue units updated their progress. Blue lights and sirens wailed past me in the left lane.

Miles from the scene, clouds of smoke could be seen billowing into the air. Knowing I might not get too close, I fumbled to attach a telephoto lens and loaded a fresh roll of film while steering with my knees.

protective turn-out gear. I ran too, straight into a scene that looked like something from the movie "Road Warrior." A dozen black skid marks covered the pavement for a hundred feet, trailing off into deep gouges across the grassy shoulder of the highway.

One set of marks led toward the tractor-trailer truck, jackknifed and twisted into an inexplicable contortion of cab and tanker, leaning at a strange angle across the embankment.

The other black scar became a furrow of plowed earth leading toward an unrecognizable mass of smoking, crumbled metal surrounded by yellow raincoats and streaming fire hoses.

How many in there?  
 Two. Maybe three.  
 Male or female?  
 Can't tell yet.  
 Anything spill?  
 The car's gas tank ruptured. Set the woods on fire.  
 How about the tanker?  
 No leaks. Thank God.  
 It was bad. But it could have been a LOT worse. That was the general sentiment from everyone who helped prevent things from getting that way.

What if the first responders had arrived a few minutes later? What if

the car fire had spread to that 4,500 gallons of fuel? What if the truck's cab had jackknifed the other way, overturning the tanker into the inferno?

As the smoke cleared and rescue workers began the grisly business of cutting open the wreckage, there came a tidbit of good news. Better anyway. There was only one person inside, a 35-year-old woman I hope never knew what hit her. The other charred body was a dog. The third suspected fatality turned out to be a pile of laundry.

It's hard to get your mind back on the ramifications of septic drain field overload after witnessing a scene like that.

I had just finished the septic tank story when the photos hit my desk, bringing back the images in stark black and white. I selected two pictures suitable for a family newspaper and left for the Calabash town board meeting.

Somehow, the lengthy discussions of drainage ditch maintenance, sewer system acquisition and street-sign installation seemed inconsequential as I jotted down notes and gazed into space, lost in a thousand-yard stare.

It was the same expression I saw afterwards at the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department building, where I stopped to make a phone call. They had been there, too.

Driving up Thomasboro Road, I moved along briskly, hoping to get this last story out in time to make it home by midnight. But no.

I was near the end of the last long straightaway before the final curve leading to U.S. 17 when I saw headlights in my rear-view mirror. They were closing fast. Expecting a display of flashing blue lights, I glanced at my speedometer. The needle hovered just below 65.

The car came around and passed as if I was standing still. I watched the tail lights arc into the curve and thought, "There is no way he's going to make it."

Sure enough, I rounded the bend and entered a thick cloud of airborne dust. There was the car, upside down, laying beside the road on its crumpled roof. I slowed to a stop and unfastened my seat belt, not wanting to see this again. Knowing I had to.

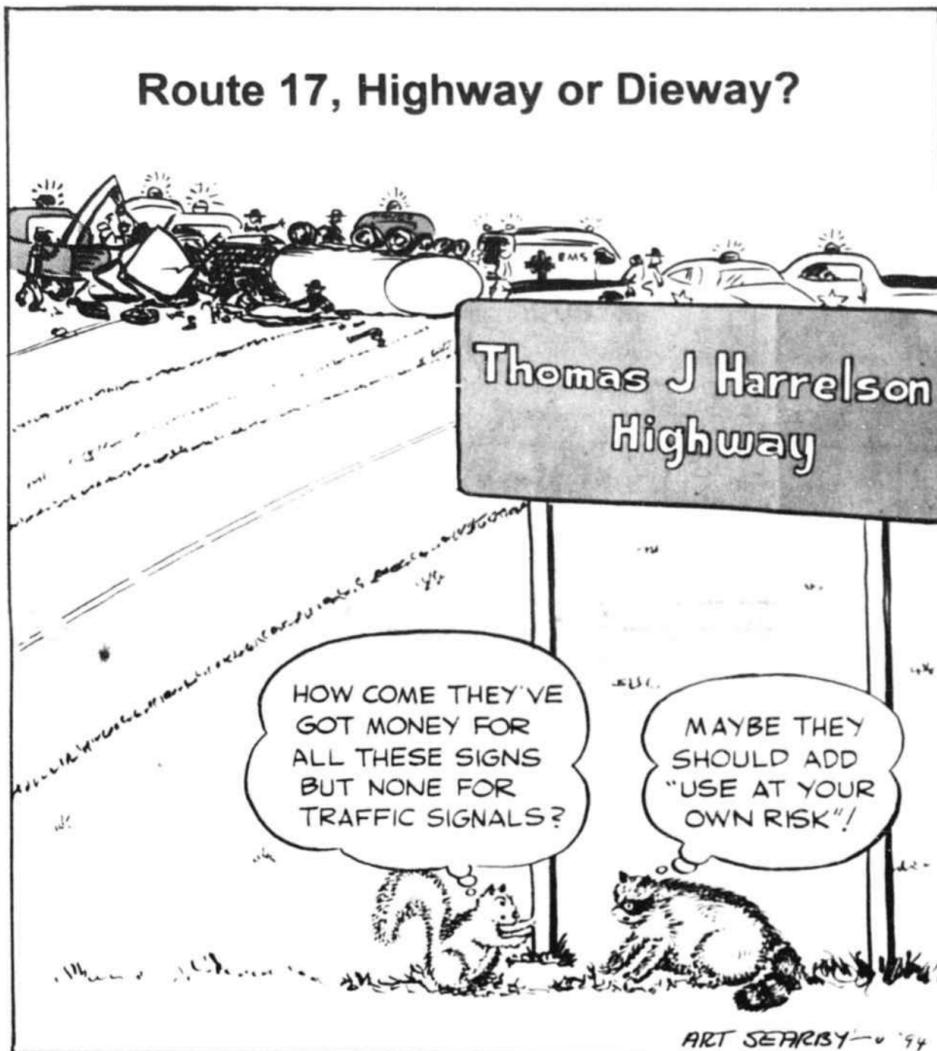
A woman emerged from behind the wreckage waving her arms in the air and screaming, "Call 911! Call 911!"

It seemed like a good idea, since I wouldn't be much help fixing what might be wrong inside that car. So I flew up the highway looking for a house with a light on inside.

It seemed to take forever to find a place and make the call. Heading back, I was relieved to see emergency lights already flashing near the curve. The driver was miraculously unhurt. He had run away. Sheriff's deputies apprehended him and put him into a patrol car.

For some reason, I had difficulty focusing on the town board story. But I was wide awake for the drive home. And for a long time after that. Until the warm, brown liquid took effect.

So how was YOUR day?



## Reunion Brings Memories Sweet And Bitter

When Hazel blew in on that awful Friday morning in October 1954, the only thing left to celebrate afterward was that she killed no more than she did.

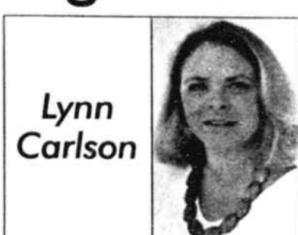
Forty years later, 40 people came together on Holden Beach to remember—not just the devastating storm and those who were lost, but a sweeter, slower island lifestyle altered for keeps by Hazel and the inevitable march toward more troubling times.

The idea came from Franda Pedlow, whose Sand and Sea Fever, published last year, is an oral history of Holden Beach before the storm changed every life it touched. She thought it would be fun to get people together to share the kind of treasured youthful memories she has of a vacation spot that was a pain to reach and offered few amenities—except, of course, a pristine beach, lazy days, stary nights and waters teeming with good things to eat.

How much fun, she couldn't have anticipated.

They gathered last Friday upstairs at the Seafood Barn to exchange handshakes and hugs, to show old photos and clippings, and to tell fascinating tales about Hazel and the earlier years. Most had made their first visit to "Holden's Beach" as kids in the '30s and '40s. Their tales are peppered with universal memories of bogging down their cars on the sand causeway, dancing to the jukebox at the "honky-tonk," flirting with Coast Guardsmen, the wartime blackouts, and turning down opportunities to buy mile-long pieces of oceanfront for a couple of thousand dollars.

In one corner, a videocassette recorder played grainy tapes dubbed from home movies of Rose Holden Cole and little brother John Quinton



Lynn Carlson

Holden splashing in the surf and running along the strand. On several tables, party-goers thumbed through scrapbooks and photo albums documenting the beach's development and how Hazel, in a day's time, turned more than 200 homes into less than 20. At the front of the room, Franda called on people to share their most poignant memories.

■ Marion Skinner Erath, who was first brought to Holden Beach when she was three months old in the mid-1930s: "We came down the day school closed and stayed until time to go back in the fall. I kept coming all through college, and I wrote my thesis while fishing on the dock. A part of our house had been made of crating from coffins...I remember the bonfires, watching the sunrise and square-dancing on Saturday nights. Everybody danced with everybody, and the paratroopers would step on our toes with their boots. Most of us were barefoot."

■ Rose Holden Cole: "I came for the first time in 1932 at three months old. I remember the Coast Guard boys riding their mounts up the beach and stopping by houses to water their horses or get water for themselves. We'd snoop in their barracks when they were gone, and we learned our first dirty words from reading them on their walls and saw our first dirty pictures in the maga-

zines they'd leave....

"We had to bury our garbage, so over the years when we'd come back, we'd have these beautiful vines with cantaloupes, and there was a peach tree that the wind kept pruned all the time. I remember waiting for the ice truck."

■ John Quinton Holden, her brother, remembers moving to Brunswick County from Durham in 1941 and the family building its first cottage on the beach. He remembers the war years there, with blackouts at night and Coast Guardsmen on horseback patrolling the beach.

He remembers waiting out Hazel in the family's Shallotte home, them driving out to the beach to survey the damage. "The only thing left of our cottage was the back concrete steps. I walked into the woods and found myself standing on a hardwood floor and realized it was my bedroom floor. I found my sister's wedding dress in a tree. The chair my mother had rocked us in was up in another tree."

He remembers the people who stayed on the island during the storm, including his Uncle Luther who went house to house looking for safer and higher ground. "I can't image the terror and bewilderment they felt," he said.

■ Elwood Newman rode out half the hurricane in a trailer on the causeway where the waterslide is now. "I left in the middle of the storm for Whiteville, but I'd probably have been better off staying put," he said. After the storm, he returned and cut his boat out of the trees. He saw houses in the marsh—some intact—and a sea of refrigerators, stoves, commodes and other remnants of day-to-day life. A brand new restaurant, where he'd eaten breakfast just hours before the storm

hit, was gone. A man he knew rode out the storm on a boat in the waterway, bow pointed into the wind and engine running full throttle to stay afloat.

■ Taylor McMillan remembers family lore that his Uncle Washington Holden sold all of what is now Long Beach for \$2,000 in 1905. Hazel left his folks' yard with nothing on it except the cottage's septic tank, which had floated two feet out of the ground. The day after the storm they spotted the top portion of their cottage on the other side of the intracoastal waterway. When they reached it, there were eggs still in the refrigerator and plates unbroken in the cupboard. The place simply floated over intact.

He brought along a scrapbook compiled by his mother, Rhoda Holden McMillan. The title page says "Black Friday, October 15, 1954, Hurricane Hazel, Rhoda H. McMillan." A headline screams "HURRICANE KILLS 109 BEFORE FADING OUT."

Not one of those people will ever forget the horror of Hazel or the richness of carefree days spent in one corner of paradise. I'd bet they don't forget Franda's reunion, either.

## Write Us

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 Anonymous letters will not be published.