

# 'Educationists Destroy Parental Involvement,' Writer Claims

To the editor:  
In a move educators perceive as a diplomatic effort to increase parental participation in public schooling, parents must this week pick up their children's report cards at South Brunswick High School where they are invited to visit with classroom teachers.

Perception, unfortunately, is misleading. We won't get any news reports of how many "ungrateful" parents find report cards almost worthless these days, nor will we hear about what progress conferences with teachers produces when parents are ignorant of the curriculum.

The trouble is the educationists themselves destroy parental involvement in the grade schools.

On the one hand educationists have assumed parental duties without authorization, and on the other hand changed context and methods of teaching radically from times past, thus forcing many parents to seek relief through politics instead of conference.

Some parents are all too willing to let the educationists run the whole show; others are frustrated.

The atmosphere of "come to us and help us with your child's achievement according to our program" is really an extension of educationists viewing pupils as wards of the state instead of the children of parents who are the legal wards.

The next step, of course, is to compel parental attendance or dictate what they are to do to assist in the program they may not like.

And then other government agencies will also detail what parents are supposed to do. Our educationists doubtless have read the "liberal" presses' notification that Communism is dead!

There are some hopeful signs, however. I discovered this week to my great delight a restaurant in western Carolina who fished the waters of cultural sanity with his McGuffey Readers, a six-page book of "lessons" detailing menu selections.

And the city of Hartford, Conn., contracted with private enterprises to manage its public schools. And parents can now for less than \$100 buy the materials to teach their chil-

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dren language through phonics, the proven method our public educators have largely abandoned.

These few developments create more optimism for the future than reshuffling county school administration titles and offices.

Karl E. Brandt  
Shallotte

**Thanks For Keys**

To the editor:  
Last August I was in the ocean at Sunset Beach and lost my keys in the surf. The keys were of no importance as they could be replaced. But

I had my father's Navy dog tag attached to the ring. I carried it as a lucky piece, and as it dated back to 1911, there was sentimental value important to me.

To the person or persons who found the key ring and turned it into the Sunset Beach Fishing Pier, I give my heartfelt thanks.

Tom Maher  
Sunset Beach

**Purpose Not Lost**

To the editor:  
I would like to respond to the letter "Purpose Lost" by Teddi Neal

concerning the Brunswick Animal League.

The purpose of the league is still active. In fact it is the number-one project. We started the spray and neuter program in 1987. Since that time, according to the records, we have paid veterinarians \$28,520. More than 1,000 animals have been spayed or neutered. Before she criticized she should have learned what she wrote about.

We have an IRS tax-exempt number so people can donate and take it

off on their income tax. We get no money from the county—just donations from friends, animal lovers and hard work—namely, fundraisers, yard sales, cake sales, etc.

I feel Teddi Neal owes an apology to the league and Jeannine Friday.


Oh, well, sometimes a knock can be a boost.

Alma Tolson  
Shallotte

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is president of the Brunswick Animal League.*

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## Is There Life Past The Checkout Lane?

I'm not sure what to think about the theory of reincarnation. But I tend to become more of a believer each time I get into the check-out line at a supermarket or department store.

Judging from my experiences in these commonplace situations, I get the feeling I must have done something truly horrendous to a cashier during a past life. As a result, I am forever being paid back for my indiscretion.

I'm not a shopper by nature. I don't like to "browse" or "window shop" or join in any of those other bargain-hunting rituals so dear to our consumer society.

When I go into a store, I usually know exactly what I want. So I walk briskly straight to where those items are. I put them in my little buggy and head for the door. Where the real fun begins.

Most big supermarkets and department stores these days have giant check-out areas that look like a cattle stockyard. These are equipped with 20 or more of the latest high-tech laser activated universal-price-code reading belt-driven counter/register modules complete with scales, credit-card swipers and light-emitting-diode panels displaying the running total of each customer's purchases.

The trouble is, there are usually no more than two or three actual human employees around to run the darn things. And more often than not, each of those is desperately looking around for an assistant manager to repair the latest break-down in the system.

Always ready for a challenge, I tend to approach the check-out area like a running back looking for a slice of open field between opposing linemen. But I rarely seem to find that promising sliver of daylight.

As I head for the end zone I survey the handy numbered lights that are supposed to indicate which cash registers are operating. Unfortunately, what these actually indicate is which numbered lights have new bulbs in them and which ones are burnt out.

Next, I survey the lines in front of each cashier. This is not as simple as it might seem, for all lines are not created equal. You must consider each one in terms of its potential for delay. Think of them as time lines.

For example, four construction workers—each holding a 12-pack of beer and a frozen pizza—actually create a much shorter line than a single housewife pushing a cart containing 87 cans of cat food.

Don't be fooled by the sign that says "Express Lane—10 Items or Less." This is an invitation to disaster; a black hole that relentlessly attracts people who cannot grasp the concept of simple addition.

Here you will find shoppers who somehow believe that eight cans of soup, plus five bags of candy, plus six boxes of cereal, plus a half-gallon of milk adds up to less than 10.

The so called "express lane" is also the traditional home of the dreaded first-time cashier. You know, the clueless guy who stares blankly at the head of fresh garlic in his hand before looking up to ask, "Uhhh...broccoli?"

I would like to believe that store managers assign their beginning employees to the express line so they can become accustomed to the job without having to immediately deal with an endless line of overflowing grocery carts.

But what really happens is this: The store's most efficient customers—the ones who get in, get it and get out—are forced to deal with the store's least efficient staff members. "Uhhh...cauliflower?"

Over the years, I've gotten pretty savvy to the more subtle aspects of the cashier selection game. Like watching for customers holding check-books (add five minutes) or food stamps (might go smoothly, might not) or coupons (big trouble).

Then, just as I feel secure in having chosen the right lane, The Big Guy plays one of his little tricks.

Like yesterday, for instance. I had scanned the rows carefully and made my decision. It was one of the longer lines, but one I felt confident would move quickly: Lots of customers with small purchases. People in a hurry. Folks with wallets and bills already in their hands.

Sure enough, I was just one shopper away from the door and smiling triumphantly at all those chumps who chose the apparently shorter lines. They were still waiting, five customers deep. The smell of victory was in the air.

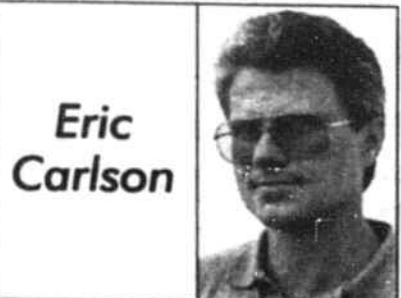
Then it happened. The woman in front of me announced her intention to pay for two 29-cent candles with a wadded-up, out-of-town paycheck, made out to her husband for \$389.47!

Needless to say, my swift exit turned into a 15-minute ordeal as layer upon layer of management was summoned to look at the check, flip it over, look at her driver's license, flip it over, look at her social security card, flip it over, ask her a few questions and scratch their head before calling the next manager.

Long before I got out of there, my competitors in the other aisles were already home watching Princess Diana's latest escapades on "Hard Copy."

So here's another tip for smart shoppers: If you notice a check-out area that seems surprisingly uncrowded, beware of any wild-eyed customers staring skyward and mumbling, "What have I done to deserve this?"

That line ain't as short as it looks.



**Eric Carlson**



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