

## MAKING SACRIFICES TO IMPROVE THEMSELVES

# BCC Ambassadors Hope Their Stories Will Motivate Others

BY SUSAN USHER

For stories that inspire and motivate, you need look only to Brunswick Community College's 1994-95 Ambassadors. Reflecting BCC's diverse student body at its best, they're achieving what some would-be students don't believe is possible.

They're overcoming challenges that could stop anyone less determined, juggling family and job responsibilities with full-time studies, extracurricular involvement and service.

"We are at a level with people our age," says Ambassador Terri Matson of Supply. "We can talk to them. We've done it."

Other 1994-95 Ambassadors are Beverly Stanley and Bobbie Anderson of Shallotte, Rodney Jenrette of the South Brunswick Islands area, Dawn C. Clements of Southport and Tikila Morgan of Supply.

Nominated by faculty and the president, selection is based on gradepoint average, leadership potential and communication skills. The BCC Foundation gives each Ambassador a \$500 scholarship and a college blazer. They receive special training in public speaking, motivation, communication skills, hospitality, etiquette and orientation in BCC's history, programs and mission.

In return the Ambassadors serve, at every event from the dedication of the Odell Williamson Auditorium to student registration. Ambassadors host all major college functions, conduct campus tours, recruit students, assist the BCC Foundation and speak to community groups. Ushering for Odell Williamson Auditorium functions is an added responsibility this year.

Most serve more than the required five hours a week and maintain a required 3.0 or better gradepoint average. All are officers or active participants in student government. All but Jenrette are parents.

"These students are delightful," says Dianne Ledbetter, advisor to the Ambassadors, BCC Foundation director and BCC development officer. "Every one is eager to help whenever needed."

A Thomasville High School dropout, Matson credits family and BCC with helping her turn around her life. If she can do it, anyone can, she says.

Matson eventually landed in California, a drug addict whose husband was sent to prison, leaving her with their small child.

"I hit rock bottom," she frankly admits. With the help of family she started over.



BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE Ambassadors (from left) Dawn Clements, Tikila Morgan, Beverly Stanley, Rodney Jenrette, Terri Matson and Bobbie Anderson. As official hosts for the college, they help promote the opportunities it offers.

She moved into her mother-in-law's home in Oregon and began attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings every day. "Clean" five years, Matson and daughter now live with her parents in Brunswick County. She helps with the family's upholstery business while going to school.

"My daughter's what keeps me going," Matson says, displaying a picture. "I want to give her everything I possibly can. With my going back to school, I hope I can get a good job and not have to depend on anyone else."

Matson earned her GED at BCC, then enrolled in business administration. Someday

she wants to own her own accounting business.

"In high school I made poor grades. I was only interested in partying and rebelling against my parents," she said. Matson ended her first year at BCC with a 3.9 gradepoint average and membership in the National Vocational-Technical Honor Society. This year she's vice president of the Student Government Association.

Like Matson, each Ambassador has a story to tell. For them, as for many community college students, getting an education has demanded trade offs.

"It's good for people to hear the sacrifices

they have made to come to school," says BCC President Michael Reaves, who considers the Ambassador Program a valuable asset to the college and to students.

Stanley, Morgan and Anderson are also business administration majors with big ambitions. Jenrette, who endures a lot of affectionate sisterly teasing as the only man, and youngest member, is the "quiet rock" of the group and state student government association vice president. He's majoring in electronic engineering.

Clements, an administrative office technology major, wants to work in a doctor's office after graduation and continue taking

courses. The others expect to transfer to four-year schools.

When not in school or volunteering, the Ambassadors are at work: Anderson in the BCC financial aid office, Jenrette in a restaurant kitchen, Matson in her family's upholstery business and Stanley at a grocery store. Morgan just quit waiting tables to accommodate an equally demanding role: the approaching birth of her second child.

A 1984 graduate of BCC's cosmetology program, Clements spent six years as a hairdresser before "retiring" to become a full-time mom. She returned to school "not only to better my education but to insure a better future for my children."

"BCC's the kind of school a mother of twins can come back to and fit right in," she says. "Everyone here makes you feel like part of the family." That's a tradition her role as Ambassador allows her to help continue.

Her family's attachment to BCC dates even earlier. Her father, the late William F. Cockrell, was on the steering committee that got the college started. Her mother, Reita Cockrell, has worked for the college since 1982. Caring for twin three-year-olds Thomas and Will is Clements' job, she says.

Anderson, who could have been a TV "weather girl" instead, juggles school with single parenting two children, and managed all A's last year. As president of the Student Government Association, she serves on the BCC Board of Trustees. When she has long days on campus, her parents, from Dunn, park their "mobile childcare center," a 32-foot recreational vehicle, out front at BCC to bed down the children and give Anderson encouragement and a bite of dinner.

All six Ambassadors have learned to be resourceful, to appreciate help from family and friends in maintaining their busy schedules, and to laugh when it gets tough.

It took Morgan to convince Stanley, a newlywed with a full-time job, schoolwork and baby, to become an Ambassador last June. She's kept up, with only a few "stressed-out" moments.

"We Ambassadors are really good at working under pressure," says Morgan. "And we help each other."

EDITOR'S NOTE: To schedule a BCC Ambassador to speak before your civic, community, church or educational group, call the BCC development office (Ext. 305) at 754-6900, 457-6329 or 343-0203.

## Area Tree Lighting Sparks Spirit Of Christmas Season

Want to recapture the joyous spirit of the Christmas season?

A good place to start is the area Christmas tree lighting Friday, Dec. 2, at 6 p.m. at the intersection of Village Road and Main Street in Shallotte.

During the hour-long program, 75 students from The Cray School and The Altarmen Quartet, a local gospel group, will sing the carols and hymns of the season and lead a group sing-along in the small park area overlooking the Shallotte River.

A special visit from Santa Claus, with transportation provided by the Shallotte Volunteer Fire Department, will close the evening. A section of Village Road will be closed off to accommodate the program.

The community-wide event is coordinated by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce. Mayors of all local municipalities have been invited to participate.

Bleacher seating will be provided, said Angela Caison, the chamber's administrative assistant for marketing.

## Brunswick Town Celebration Has Service In Church Ruins

Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Historic Site will present a Christmas celebration on Sunday, Dec. 11, an open house from 1-4 p.m. with a Vespers service in the ruins of St. Phillips Church at 3:45.

Activities are scheduled on the historic grounds and inside the visitors' center. Costumed interpreters outside will share and interpret colonial and civil war lifestyles from 1-3:30 p.m. Musicians will perform inside the center, where three performances are scheduled. The Recordaires will perform at 1 p.m., the Wind Pipes at 2 p.m., and Musical Pleasure at 3 p.m.

The visitors' center will feature traditionally baked 18th and 19th century Christmas treats and decorations made in the old way—from nature's own supplies. Baked goods,

to be served from 1-3:45 p.m., are supplied by the local history classes at Brunswick Community College's Southport campus, and by community volunteers.

Concluding the program will be the Vespers service, to be led by the Rev. Beasley and members of St. Phillips Episcopal Church in Southport.

The Christmas program is sponsored by Friends of Brunswick Town Inc., site staff, area businesses and community volunteers who donated time or money to the event.

Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site is off N.C. 133 adjacent to Orton Plantation. The site was once a prosperous colonial port town and civil war fort.

There will be no charge to attend the Christmas celebration.

## Feed The Birds Or Not—Let Others Debate

BY BILL FAVER

We often read contradictory advice about feeding the birds. Some feel such activity causes birds to be dependent upon us to the extent they cannot take care of themselves in the wild.

Others feel we help provide food when natural supplies are scarce, particularly in winter.

Still others feel it is a legitimate activity, even if many of us feed the birds for our amusement and entertainment as much as for the good it does the birds.

Natural food is plentiful at this time of the year. Insects are still on the wing and in bark crevices. Berries and fruits are still on some of the trees and vines. Seeds from a variety of plants are there for the taking, and many birds find them easily.

But as the weather changes to cold and insects and seeds become scarce, it may be a good idea to think about our feathered friends and some of the ways we can provide for them.

Cardinals, chickadees, titmice and many other birds enjoy those feeders offering sunflower seeds. Goldfinches and others like niger seed, a small black seed that is imported and expensive. A good mix of millet, sunflower, grains and cracked corn is a good all-around feed for sparrows and many other birds.

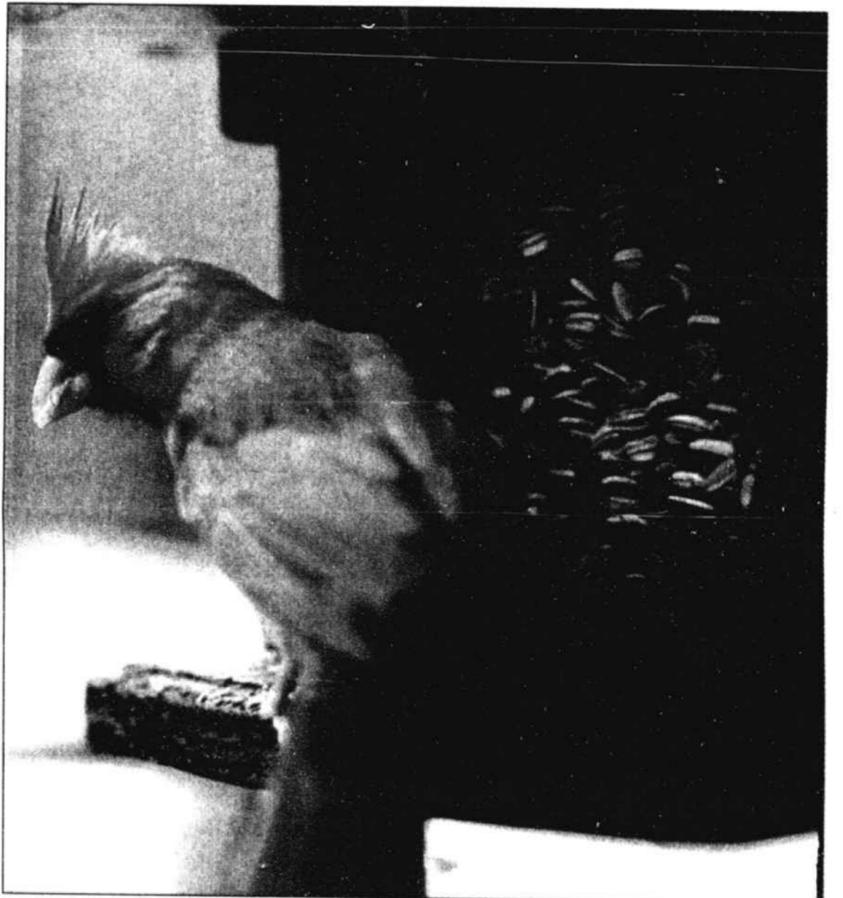
Some suet mixed with peanut butter and placed in a mesh bag, a wire feeder or in holes in a piece of wood is irresistible to some of the woodpeckers, wrens and warblers. Even half an orange impaled on a nail or hung by a piece of wire can become tasty to some species of birds.

Don't forget the ground feeders like mourning doves and some sparrows. They usually find food which has fallen underneath the feeders, but on very cold days, it may be helpful to scatter some food for them.

Join me in letting others debate the pros and cons of feeding the birds. If you enjoy watching them come to your feeders and want to encourage them to continue being your guests, by all means, put out the food!



FAVER



CARDINALS will come to your feeders for sunflower seed!

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

## Brunswick County Concert Band Sets Holiday Program

The Brunswick County Concert Band will offer the community a little something extra for the holidays, a Christmas concert Sunday, Dec. 4, at 3 p.m. in the Centennial Center at 8th and Lord streets, Southport.

Spokesman Ted Moss of Boiling Spring Lakes said the program will feature Christmas music as well as selections from a variety of other works. Paul Pittenger directs the group of approximately 30 musicians from across Brunswick County.

No admission will be charged, but "donations will be gratefully accepted" by the group of volunteers, he said.

## Fort Fisher Planning Open House For Dec. 10

Fort Fisher State Historic Site will host an open house on Saturday, Dec. 10, from 1-5 p.m.

Visitors may warm up and sip on hot apple cider, view traditional decorations and listen to local musicians play holiday music in the visitor center.

Entertainment will be by the The Windpipes at 2 p.m., the Wilmington Brass Quintet at 3 p.m., and Sam Glaize, classical guitarist, at 4 p.m.

Visitors also may participate in a game of "town ball"—a precursor to baseball—and try their hand at some of the 19th century toys and games on display on the grounds. A 24-pound Cohorn mortar also will be demonstrated.

Admission is free. For more information, call (910)458-5538.

Fort Fisher State Historic Site, an agency of the N.C. Department of

Cultural Resources, is 18 miles south of Wilmington on U.S. 421. From Brunswick County, it can be reached via the Southport-Fort Fisher ferry which crosses the Cape Fear River.

## Parents' Advisories Now In TV Listings

The Brunswick Beacon's television program listings now include the parental advisory warning developed and standardized by the ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC networks. A "PA" warning indicates parental discretion is advised on a program which airs during prime time on one of the 4 networks. An average of 4 listings per week are marked with the advisory.