

# OPINION

## Take care in zoning

Last week the *Pilot* supported countywide zoning as an intelligent and necessary means of assuring that county growth is also county progress. We still do. But we suggest that the county commissioners now take great care to look at their zoning program, perhaps holding more workshops and public hearings, to avoid bad mistakes. An example: Monday it was discovered that the county was about to zone the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District out of business. One can imagine other innocent flaws in the document presently in hand.

The imperative to pass a zoning ordinance before the December turnover in board membership is self-imposed. The same discipline should be employed by the commissioners to ensure that what they produce over the next two months meets the test of good government, and not a mere deadline.

## Building for the future

People often compare Brunswick County schools to our neighbors to the north, New Hanover, and academically the local schools do fall short.

But, Brunswick County schools should be congratulated for the way they've been handling school construction. Officials have had the foresight to develop short- and long-range plans to find out what their needs will be as the school system ages and grows.

Unlike their neighbors to the north, they are making use of the half-cent sales tax designated for school construction and are planning construction projects each year. That way they are avoiding an unpleasant confrontation with taxpayers by asking for a multi-million-dollar bond referendum to play catchup on renovation and construction.

The board of education has hired Boney Architects of Wilmington to begin planning for a new central office to replace the hodgepodge of old buildings and trailers outside Southport. The architectural firm will also draw plans for additions to West Brunswick and North Brunswick high schools. The price tag for those three projects this year is \$750,000.

Work will soon begin on the new cafeteria at Southport Elementary School and in the summer the old cafeteria will be converted into classroom space. That will cost an additional \$750,000, part of which has already been paid.

As part of the five-year plan, the school system will spend a total of \$17.5 million on various building projects which include two new elementary schools. The money will come from the half-cent sales tax which residents pay each time they make a purchase.

That's how the county paid for the new "state-of-the-art" Supply Elementary School, and that's how they can, in one school official's words, manage to have the "best equipment and buildings in the state."

Now, maybe with a new superintendent, who comes on board this week, Brunswick County schools can begin work on having the best academic record in the state.

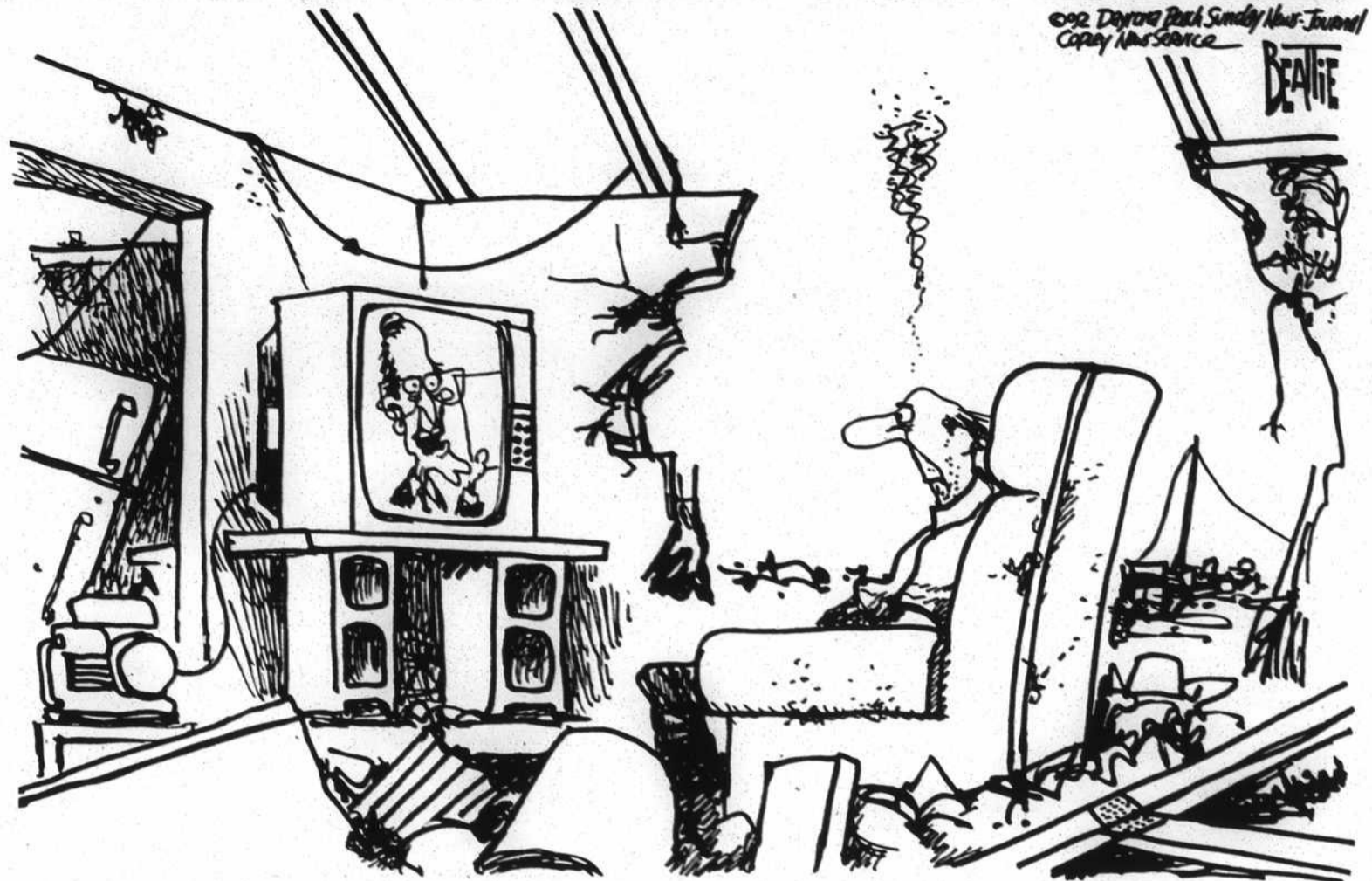
## Unqualified success

It was 15 years ago that a committee representing the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce visited Arthur Smith to suggest that Southport be made an official weigh station for the annual king mackerel tournament which bore his name. They were treated politely, but were turned down.

These people returned home more than ever convinced that Southport was the best place on the Carolina coast from which to fish for king mackerel in the fall. Their conclusion was that if they can't join them, beat them, and so the U. S. Open King Mackerel Tournament came into being. It now enjoys the prestige of being one of the best events on the East Coast.

Originally underwritten by local businesses which had faith in the future of this chamber of commerce project, it soon was able to stand on its own. Lessons were learned by local officials and participation and prizes continued to increase year after year. In the process one of the most knowledgeable volunteer organizations imaginable evolved and it is from this leadership that the success of the 1992 tournament is guaranteed.

Depending, of course, on the weather.



"I told you the economy would turn around! Look at the figures for housing starts in South Florida and Louisiana!"

## Not exactly news

A trip upstate last week revealed only a slight hint of fall color in hardwood foliage. A conversation with a family member in the mountains brought the information that it was cold that day but only a few leaves had begun to turn... Here at home the temperature dipped into the 50s one morning but the low readings lasted only a couple of days.

There was some uneasiness over the weekend about tropical storm Danielle, which never attained great velocity as she remained well offshore when she passed Brunswick County. However, some excessively high tides occurred, causing considerable erosion damage... There was a real marsh-hen tide Friday, with water knee-deep at the west end of Bay Street, and some hunters took advantage of high water because we heard gunfire from over in the marshes.

Gladys Johnson told us Sunday that the day before she had seen a flock of wild geese in V-formation headed southward. "I'm afraid this means we are going to have a cold winter," she said... Also getting an early start for a winter down south was the *New Shoreham II*, Intracoastal Waterway cruise ship which spent Saturday night at the

Southport city pier. She will be spending the winter in Florida. Two of her sister ships will come through in November.

On two occasions recently tour buses have had Southport on their itinerary and Waterfront Park was their local destination. We were pleased to see and hear the reaction of these visitors and we predict more will follow. These groups will give a boost to the local economy during the fall and winter seasons when tourist travel slacks off... What's happened to tennis in Southport? Our two splendid lighted courts aren't getting much play during the past couple of months.

Several close friends joined Dorothy Gilbert in celebrating her birthday last week. She is the only woman who ever held the office of mayor of Southport and is the widow of J. A. Gilbert, who also held that office... Sunday we watered a bed of pansy plants we had just set out because it was so dry; Monday we covered them over to keep them from being drowned. It was that wet.

When the Dunn Clowns show up for the N. C. Fourth of July Festival parade next summer they will be one man short. D. H. Johnson, Jr., long-

time member of that famous fun-loving troupe, was "Hobo". His last appearance as a clown was here in July and shortly afterward he was diagnosed with cancer. He died last week... Just when we wondered whatever happened to all of the cats on our block, the matriarch of several generations of feline families showed up with a new litter of four kittens. Now it's curtains for rats, which were making a comeback.

REF Products of Winnabow is a home industry whose fame is spreading. One reason is the nature of the product, which consists of pound cakes and pies. Ralph and Shirley Frazier are the principals, with Shirley handling the baking chores and Ralph assisting with sales and advertising. Samples were served Tuesday afternoon at a meeting of the library committee, of which Ralph is a member... Big fish will be the prime target this weekend when the U. S. Open King Mackerel Tournament is held in Southport, but every resident should consider himself a member of the hospitality committee and do everything possible to make our visitors have such a good time they will want to come back again.

## Public opinion

### Disservice

To the Editor:

As a parent and concerned citizen of Brunswick County, I am extremely sensitive to child neglect and child abuse problems that may face many of the children in this county.

When evidence shows that a child is being mistreated, then social services has a mandate to try and correct this situation. However, the current system of operation of social services seems to be out of control.

A family should not automatically be determined to be guilty of child neglect without proper evidence, or on the whim of some misguided social worker. Recent developments have seen social services react in a manner not seen since the days of the Third Reich. Their KGB-like tactics left an 11-year-old girl in tears due to an

interrogation that should never have happened in the first place.

If a child is indeed being abused, then further abuse by some out-of-line social worker only makes the situation worse. Viciously attacking a family or the character of the family is appalling. A list of names supporting this family could be compiled in a matter of hours that would make President Bush envious.

Social services needs to take a hard look at the direction they are going and get a grip on the way they spend our hard-earned tax dollars.

Jeffrey Townsend  
Southport

### Exemplary

To the Editor:

Supply Elementary School faculty, staff and administration would like to express our apprecia-

tion to the many community volunteers who have worked with us to assure a smooth school opening. There have been individuals and groups who have moved boxes, unpacked items, assisted teachers, run errands and manned the phone.

We have also had many contributions toward our aquarium project and other areas of need for which we are most grateful. We believe that strong community support will help Supply Elementary to be a truly exemplary school.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn S. Williams  
Principal

### Kind words

To the Editor:

Thanks for the kind words in your

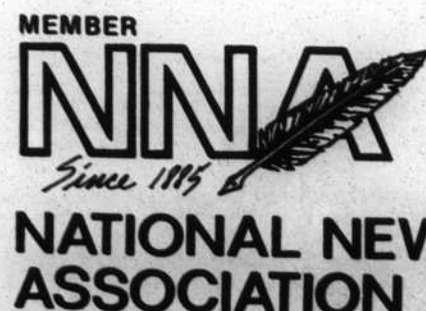
September 9 column. Earl and Anna Brown passed it on. They're the kind of folks who soften my 1930s opinion of Duke. But I pull for Duke in everything except when UNC is involved.

So you, too, recall my old slogan on the Onslow paper. When the folks who bought it painted over the slogan on the building wall, it was a sad day for Edith and me.

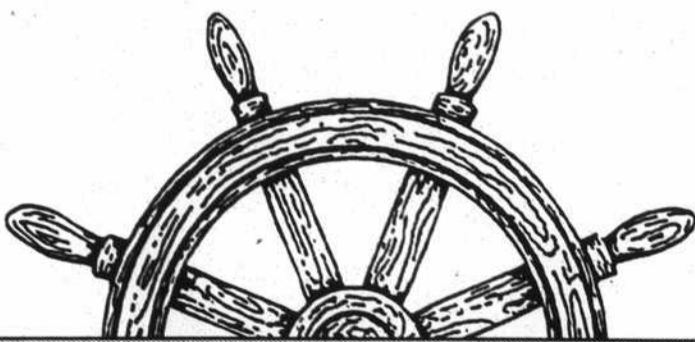
But, I didn't use the word "damn". I used "whoop". Remember, if you can, back then people didn't use four-letter words in print like they do now promiscuously. Maybe it was something about family values? But I really meant "damn".

Thanks again ... for your help on the yarn and for remembering. God bless!

Billy Arthur  
Chapel Hill



General Excellence - NCPA weekly division: first 1989, '91; runner-up 1990



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### To The Editor:

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