

# OPINION

## Jousting with the budget

The messenger of bad news is often met with an astounding reply - off with his head or else feed him to the lions.

Is interim county manager John Harvey a modern-day Don Quixote, inspired by lofty and chivalrous but impractical ideals?

Not many of his bold budget recommendations for 1993-94 survived even the first battle Monday. Residents and county employees ready to march to the front lines to perform their duties are suddenly relieved.

But Harvey wore the armor well. No arrows penetrated the skin. County commissioners fired live rounds and some stinging remarks in Harvey's corner about "concept rejections" and some baffling ideals that are either "totally unacceptable" or represent "not efficient government."

Harvey was tabbed on the Ides of March (an omen no less) to lead the noble empire left stunned by county manager David Clegg's sudden resignation.

Rescued from Harvey's flaming tower Monday were a 68-cent tax rate, a threatened Resources Development Commission, the "invaluable" Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees, the cooperative extension program and the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department. He wanted them gone or made lame, free of his realm.

Even parks director Bobby (B. J.) Jones survived a plunge into a safety net. He had been banished from county government.

What awaits commissioners now is the task of revising basically every dollar amount in the budget. Harvey's plan to wipe out most funds to county agencies and non-profit groups is also sure to create havoc at Thursday's public hearing.

The message delivered Monday attempts to smooth some ruffled feathers as commissioners are injured by the recent uprising.

They seek unity, to forget partisan politics for a moment and the 3-2 Democrat versus Republican rift that created it all.

The people have been heard.

To Harvey, budgets are more than a bottom line. They represent a future plan for county governments to follow, including the county's methodology for spending and what long-range plan should steer a specific course of action for even ten years down the road.

His restructuring plan for county operations, such as grouping maintenance crews from each arm of government into one division, has some merit and could result in a savings. His five-year capital improvements plan lists \$70 million that will be needed prior to 1998 for county buildings, the landfill and public utilities.

But his plan questions the status quo and follows no precedents. Commissioners are left to hammer out what they really want from what they view as a bit eccentric.

A leader forced to leave in March was never entangled in such a communications block.

But it's time to stop looking back. Right?

Meanwhile, Harvey attacks a few windmills because they are there.



## Not exactly news

Quinton has a baseball card. Brett McKeithan attended a card show in Newark, Del., last week with his cousin, Hank Mangum, and saw a prospect card for his former classmate at South Brunswick, Quinton McCracken. He decided to invest in futures and purchased two cards... We recall that when baseball cards first appeared on the scene 50 years ago they were free with packages of bubble gum or candy. Now if you get 'em you buy 'em, and some are very expensive.

Lee Roberts wrote an interesting article for the *Sunday Star-News* about Jim McKee and his excavation project on the lawn in front of the Southport City Hall, formerly the Brunswick County Courthouse. We have a strong feeling this work is important enough to be continued... It may be out of season, but we are glad NBA playoff games are still in progress.

Two recent interested Southport visitors were Mrs. Sallie Veasey and Mrs. Margaret Holden Duvall of Lakeshore Commons in Wilmington, when Mrs. Veasey's son Ed brought them down for a look about town and dinner at the Ship's Chandler... An all-out Southport High School reunion will be held here this weekend when classes

from '44-'55 combine forces for a two-day Memorial Day celebration.

For two towns so far apart Southport and New Castle, Pa., have several ties. It is the home of Marybeth Bianchi where she was better known as Buffy Kovacs; it is the hometown of alderman Bill Crowe where he and his wife, Almeta, spent the past weekend attending a reunion; it is the place where all the fireworks used at the N. C. Fourth of July Festival in recent years are manufactured; and it is the hometown of Jane Lynch, who still subscribes to the daily newspaper and helps keep the others informed about what's going on in Pennsylvania... A sailing regatta may be slow but it is a beautiful spectator sport. We were reminded of this Sunday afternoon in the Southport harbor.

Mose Lewis and his wife have the ultimate in versatility in their family circle. Their daughter, Ola, was sworn in last Monday as a District Court judge and they have a son who is a former National Football League player... Waterfront Park is a perfect location for watching the twilight flights of literally hundreds of ibises as they return from their inland feeding ground and swoop down over the Cape Fear River in their landing approach to

Battery Island. Put them on your list of interesting things to watch out for.

This weekend Southport will welcome scores of graduates of Southport High School and we want to urge them to make a trip to the CP&L Visitors Center to see the historic display which was assembled for last year's 200th anniversary celebration and which still is intact. We guarantee you will be impressed, and admission is free... Claude McCall, who grew up in Southport before pursuing a career in Washington, now makes his home in New Bern. He was a visitor here during the past weekend and said he missed seeing people swimming in the river. "I remember swimming over to Battery Island," he said, "and there were several other boys my age who could do that."

Elizabeth Watkins was a visitor in the *Pilot* office Monday and talked about entertaining her playmates in the basement of Miller Hotel, which stood at the corner of Howe and Bay streets. She remembered that no water ever stood in that underground room of the hotel, which was owned and operated by her parents... This reminded us of her brother, Leonard, who could play the accordion.

## Time to move on

Southport residents and city officials put their heart and soul into the All-America City contest this year, and everyone involved should be commended for his efforts.

Developing a presentation of Southport's strengths and weaknesses gave the city a chance to redefine itself, and to draw on every aspect of Southport's unique characteristics. In preparing for the contest, the city reminded its residents of their precious cultural heritage, and of the heroic community efforts that have helped solve the city's problems.

Poverty, crime, drugs. All of these are present in Southport. But, they are apparently not prevalent enough to warrant an All-America City award for problem-solving.

For two years in a row the city has done its best to win the award, and for two years in a row it has failed. It is time now to turn our attention to other matters.

The city has invested \$13,500 and seven months of preparation in the contest this year. If that is not enough to win the award, let's let well enough alone and invest our time and money instead on making Southport the best it can be -- All-America or not.

Mayor Norman Holden said this week that the board of aldermen may be thinking the same thing. Everyone is disappointed and disheartened, he said, and wondering if perhaps this shouldn't be the city's last All-America effort.

Competing in the contest for the past two years has reinvigorated Southport's civic pride, and for that reason our time and money have not been wasted. But it's time now to say we've put our best foot forward and have come up empty-handed. There is absolutely nothing that we could have done differently that would have won that award.

## Public opinion

### Recreation

To the Editor:

The Brunswick County community needs to be aware of a great potential loss if the interim county manager succeeds in dissolving our parks and recreation department.

Parks and recreation has numerous programs for children, senior citizens, athletic programs for adults and youths, environmental education and for people who like to have clean, healthy, adventurous fun!

I'm the vice-president of the Associated Artists of Southport and we co-sponsored "Art in the Park" with the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department. I have witnessed, first hand, the teamwork involved in making parks and recreation a very successful program. Bobby Jones, the director of parks and recreation, has worked very hard to make the department what it is today and our community would be losing a great attribute if he were no longer the director.

If you or your family have ever participated in any of the following programs: Beach Sweep, after school art, soccer, symphonies in Raleigh and Wilmington, canoe sweep, senior citizen cruise, water

aerobics, whitewater rafting and Easter egg hunt, then this county needs your support.

To keep this cultural asset in our community alive please attend the meeting at the public assembly building in the government complex this Thursday, May 27, in Bolivia at 7 p.m.

Thank you  
Kimberly Smittle Caroon

### Adverse impact

To the Editor:

Our family was very disturbed by the article concerning the abolishment of the very successful Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department. This

department has provided numerous recreational and cultural opportunities for families and people of all ages in Brunswick County.

Art in the Park, Beach Days, weekend excursions, countywide craft classes, aerobics and intramural sports -- to list but a few -- one only has to look in the newspaper every week to see pictures of people enjoying themselves or to find out about the numerous activities offered by the parks and recreation department for young and old, for tourists and locals. In every program we have participated in, the leadership and organization of parks and recreation personnel have been outstanding. We urge the county commissioners to reconsider the current move to abolish the successful parks and recreation department. Losing these programs

can only have an adverse impact upon the quality of life in Brunswick County. We strongly urge the people of Brunswick County -- young and old -- to take a stand, be vocal, support our parks and recreation department, Thursday, May 27, at 7 p.m. at the county complex.

Thank you,  
Toby, Sarah, Alisha, Cabell,  
Toby Mac and Lacy Levin  
Long Beach

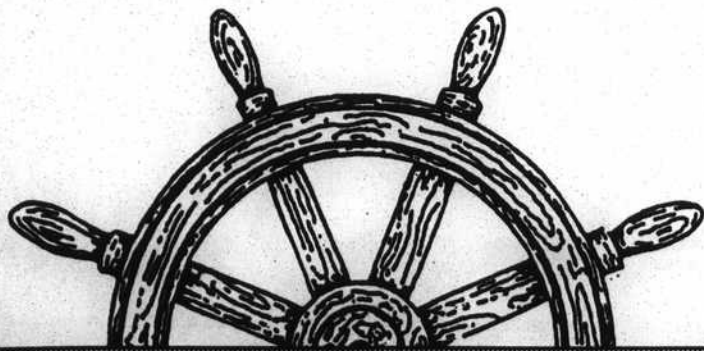
### Thank you

To the Editor:

The Junior Woman's Club of Southport wishes to thank the Jaycees of Southport-Oak Island for the fantastic support of the March of Dimes Walkathon, 1993.

Their generosity for the use of the building and grounds as headquarters for the walkathon was gratefully appreciated.

Community support means a lot. We make a great team! Again a huge thank you!  
Sandra Albert  
Public Affairs  
Junior Woman's Club of Southport



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