

The State Port Pilot Opinion

For the people

Your vote next Tuesday stretches beyond the usual endorsement of a particular candidate

Tuesday's election gets us back on track with four-year staggered terms for county office. In the recent past, all five seats for school board and county commission were up for grabs every two years.

Hard to believe this county actually voted for that. It seemed like the expedient thing to do at the time, so we gave it a try. It didn't work.

It made it tough on boards wishing to preserve continuity and on residents who wanted to serve. The big question now is whether the return to four-year terms has produced a better slate of candidates.

The answer is obvious. Yes, it has. And our county is better for making a switch back to staggered terms. The Democratic process has returned and it has given the political races back to the voters.

Two years ago, a school board candidate and a commission candidate both ran unopposed in the general election. They were declared automatic winners without a challenge and avoided any type of political debate. That type of race isn't healthy for the democratic process. It's not good for citizens to rely on representatives who secure their seats by default, affording no explanation of their views or stance on the issues important to a growing county like our own.

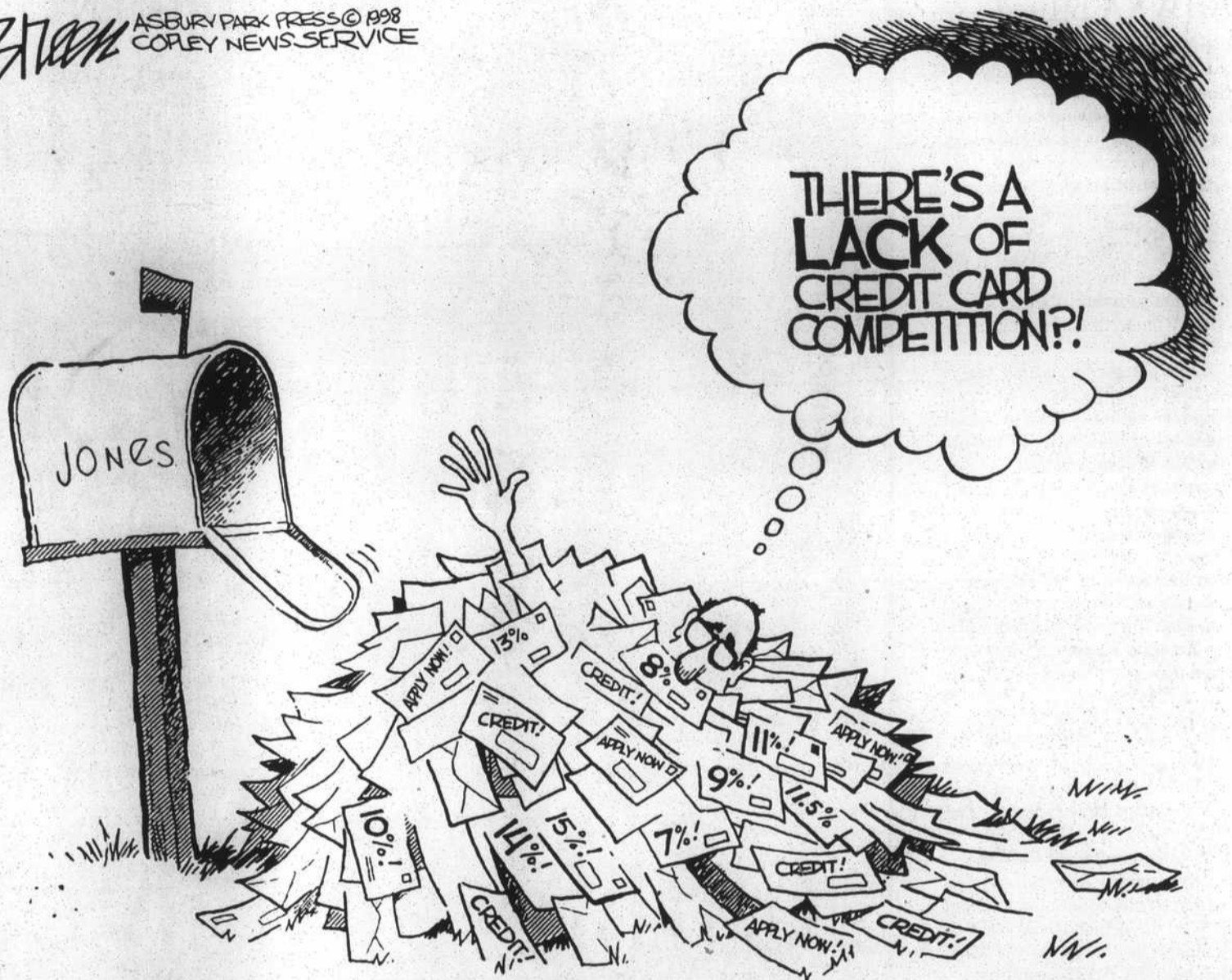
On Tuesday's ballot there are good, healthy choices involving Republican and Democratic candidates for each of the two seats that are up for grabs on the school board and county commission. This election has the potential to turn the commission back over to Republican control. It is that important of an election.

Residents know there are real choices to make and that their vote stretches beyond the usual endorsement of a particular candidate and can swing the party control one way or another. There are no empty ballot spaces staring at voters this time around, and some good qualified persons have filled those spaces.

It's one good reason to head to the polls Tuesday to vote. There are other races, too, that may pique a particular interest or concern for voters -- the race for sheriff, State House or U. S. Senate. The lack of a presidential race always seems to lower the number of persons who vote during off-year elections, but don't let that stop you this time around.

There is a good slate of candidates awaiting you Tuesday at the polls. The candidates have given of their time to pursue office and to possibly serve. The choices are better than they were in past years, and it's all in your hands.

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Clean water

Tuesday's vote for loan and grant availability is important for Southport-Oak Island and the county

In addition to the number of state and county leaders voters will select at the polls next Tuesday, another measure critical to the future of our state and our communities will be decided.

A "yes" vote on a referendum authorizing sale of Clean Water Bonds is essential for the economic, environmental and public health everywhere in North Carolina.

Living and working in the Southport-Oak Island area, it is easy to be persuaded of the need to increase the pool of funds available for clean water projects. Virtually every local government here is involved in some way in either the planning or construction of water and sewer systems or the repair and upgrade of them. The proposed \$800-million bond issue subject to referendum Tuesday would make an additional \$600 million available for water and wastewater management projects. Those funds would flow to local governments in about equal measure as low-interest loans for infrastructure and outright grants.

This means Southport can compete for funds from a bigger pool to repair its wastewater collection system. Another funding source will open up for Long Beach as it begins phase I of its wastewater collection system. Another funding source would be available to Yaupon Beach and to Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District to add capacity at treatment plants they operate. Another funding source would be available to Caswell Beach for the collection main it will need to run some day from town limits eastward to the Baptist Assembly. Another possible source of funding will be available to Boiling Spring Lakes if Brunswick County can't adequately address that city's drinking water needs.

The remaining \$200 million of the proposed bond issue would establish a grant and loan pool for extension of natural gas service. We need only look to the economically important and rapidly developing areas of northern Brunswick County to see the need here.

If any of us remains uncertain of the need for more state money for water and wastewater system development locally, let us remember that Southport-Oak Island lies downriver from some very large cities with very large wastewater management demands. Grants and loans from this pool will help clean Brunswick County's source of drinking water on the Cape Fear River and make smaller rivers and streams in the basin between here and the Piedmont cleaner. And, the cleaner all discharge is upstream, the less pressure there will be on future discharge conditions applied here at the mouth of the Cape Fear. That may be of critical importance as local governments south of N. C. 211 and east of the Lockwood Folly River seek to develop a regional wastewater management system.

It makes good sense for our communities to vote "yes" for the \$800-million Clean Water Bond referendum on Tuesday's ballot.

Not exactly news

Soundings -- "The Nation's Boating Newspaper" -- devotes three full pages to Southport in its November edition, on sale everywhere but probably sold-out in this area. The story tells of our favorite things -- "... shady streets lined with quaint cottages and immaculate homes embellished with curlicues, columns and fanciful gingerbread" -- and includes everything from restaurants to movie-making to the N. C. Fourth of July Festival. A half-page of copy is devoted to the Southport Maritime Museum, as well it should be, and there are plenty of waterfront photos... The writer, Mary Maynard Drake, notes that "the supermarket is 1.5 miles away" but dismisses the fact with the oft-repeated story, "A local boater is likely to say, 'Here's the keys to my car,' or 'I'll drive you up.'" That's increasingly less likely, now that Wilson's has moved another two miles out the road, so here's a good rumor: A small grocery store is said to be in the permitting process to locate near the Small Boat Harbor. That would be good news not only for boaters but for townspeople needing a loaf of bread.

Our favorite south-of-the-border chef, Jose, is back in town. He's opening in the former Del's Restaurant in Long Beach, and will undoubtedly

make some new amigos among newcomers to Oak Island. His former Southport patrons will have yet another reason to cross that bridge... Southport business news this week includes the opening or soon-to of two Howe Street clothiers: Great Mistakes will relocate from Oak Island to the new building at the corner of Howe and West streets, and Fins and Feathers opens its doors today next to the ABC store... Want to show-off that fancy new ragtop to everybody on Oak Island? The Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce is looking for convertibles for its Christmas-by-the-Sea parade on Saturday, December 5. Those who wouldn't mind having a pretty young beauty queen or Rep. Butch Redwine riding in the back seat are asked to call Nancy at the chamber, 457-6964.

Another good 70-degree, not-a-cloud-in-the-sky weekend to report, this one something of a surprise since it followed our first cool spell of the fall. Temperatures dropped to the low forties Friday morning and have been comfortably cool every night since... The current local weather, and the calendar, made us totally oblivious to formation of Hurricane Mitch in the Caribbean. Not only have we gauged the severity of hurricanes

by Hazel in 1954, we have used that date -- October 15 -- as sort of our unofficial end to hurricane season... Saturday night is Halloween and we issue the usual warnings: Don't take candy from strangers, wear light-colored clothes. The safest place is at any of several church functions or at county- or Long Beach-sponsored events, where fun will be had by all.

There's only one South Brunswick home football game left this season so it's now or never to say this: We hope on its halftime march Friday, November 6, the band chooses to play some of the upbeat tunes it plays from a seated position while in the stands. "Hey Jude" is not what a young football team down 14-0 needs to hear during break... Baseball season's over -- the Yankees put a quick end to that last Wednesday -- and, while we're still in the midst of football season, we're anxious for basketball. Plans are in the making for a Brunswick County high school tournament, Duke is picked number one and the Tar Heels are underdogs, and the NBA is trying to decide how many millions of dollars players will be paid. With Michael Jordan's retirement drawing closer, interest in pro basketball will wane, and players can expect less of a paycheck.

Public opinion

'Newsprint'

To the Editor:

Last Wednesday was a sad day for this animal lover. The wonderful story about "Newsprint" was heartwarming. But the news of his death was heartbreaking.

It was always a joy to see him come to the door at the shop. He was always a welcomed guest. He was tolerant of my picking him up for some affection -- but only for a second, because he was a true independent.

This handsome feline specimen will be truly missed, for Southport has lost a beloved citizen.

Julie Belk
Waterfront Gifts
Southport

Legacy

To the Editor:

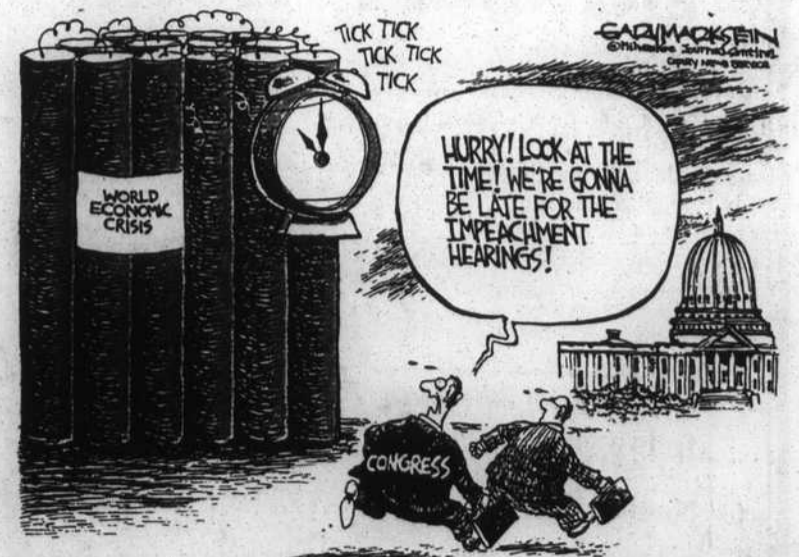
My condolences on the loss of "Newsprint."

As an almost daily visitor to

the waterfront, I have admired his smooth moves as master of Waterfront Park, his tolerance to the touching of many small hands. I have seen him flatten himself in the grass among the seagulls, believing himself invisible. Other times he was typically nonchalant and always dapper in his red collar. I will miss seeing him.

I did notice that in the same issue of the paper there was a rather pretty female black-and-white cat for adoption at the animal shelter. I'm sure I was not the only person who wondered about the possibility of someone to carry on the legacy.

J. Brown
Boiling Spring Lakes



Letters to the Editor..

The State Port Pilot invites its readers to share opinions on matters of public interest. Letters should be limited to 250 words; longer letters will be edited for space, or will be returned to the writer if editing would significantly alter the content. The writer's address and/or telephone number must be included in case verification is required. No letters will be published without the name of the writer, addresses and telephone numbers will not be published.

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