

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Where There's A Will, There's A Way

In 3-inch letters the sign behind his head read "ALL FEES CASH." Over on another wall, a photograph of Gov. Jim Martin hung directly above the office's newest piece of equipment, a computer linkup with Raleigh. A list of services and fees hung on that wall and against the door. Next to the opening were two more signs, one a review of road symbols, the other a red, white and blue job that read, "Register To Vote Here."



Susan Usher

There was more than enough time to read the writing on the walls—and the doors—last Wednesday afternoon. It was one of those miserable, but universally shared experiences, like waiting at the doctor's office.

More than 20 of us squeezed into Room 107, sitting at the old-timey wooden pupils' desks or standing wherever there was space; the rest overflowed down the hall that serves the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

I had breezed by on the way to Southport, planning to plunk down \$10 in cash, identify a few signs, sit for a mug shot, and exit five minutes later with a brand new driver's license. It had taken no more than a quick five back in October 1981, when I moved back to the Shallotte area and had to change addresses.

That experience was a fluke, no doubt about it.

On a "normal" day, business backs up down the hall. Wednesday, it so happened, was busier than normal. And, as my luck (and his) would have

to say hello on her way out. I slipped in a seat between Cliff Woods and Herman Berry, all of us in for a long wait.

Cliff, who lives in the Seaside community with his parents, Wilton and Zola, had just turned 16. He had passed the written test and was waiting to drive. He seemed a lot calmer than the visibly shaken girl ahead of him, who had just finished driver's education that morning. A short while later, she learned she had failed the written test by just a few points. That's misery.

As several of us "newcomers" stood in line waiting to register, another familiar face entered to exclamations of "Hey, Margie!"

The only seat left was the one you sit in to have your snapshot made. Margie took it, reigning like a queen for most the afternoon against a backdrop that changed from yellow to blue to red, depending upon the age of the driver being photographed. Yellow was for 18-year-olds, blue for 19 and 20 year olds and red for the rest of us.

One man had brought along a paperback. The rest of us just sat there, occasionally chatting or watching the fate of those around us.

One person took the written test, admitting she hadn't studied the North Carolina handbook. She failed. Another required an oral test, but failed it. He apparently had not studied with anyone in advance. Another took the chauffeur's test, do-

ing well until he came to the trucking questions. He lucked up, however, getting credit for past years of experience—an option that won't be available to many more chauffeur's license candidates, Reynolds pointed out.

Cliff's big moment came. "Is your gas tank full?" Reynolds asked Cliff's dad as they headed out the door.

"No, but it's got some gas in it," Wilton replied.

"Does it have enough in it to get me out of state?" came Reynolds' quick response.

It sounded like he had Virginia or Tennessee in mind, not nearby South Carolina. Can't say as I blame him.

Three o'clock rolled around; there would be no way to get to Southport in time to help judge a photography contest for the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department at 3:30 p.m. As it happened, it would be after 5 p.m. when I straggled back to the office. Meanwhile, in response to a call of desperation, a P&R summer intern, Emma, appeared at the examiner's door with a portfolio of photographs.

Slipping around the corner into the kitchen at the sheriff's department, we gave the photographs a quick once-over and then sped them off to Southport for Randy Davey's critical inspection.

It doesn't matter who said it first, but believe it: Where there's a will, there's a way!

West End Barricade Stirs Fear, Anger

Long known for its unspoiled oceanfront and undeveloped territory, the west end of Holden Beach slipped even further into the claws and powerful grip of growth last week.

It came as no surprise that the barricade placed across Ocean Boulevard West where the state road turns into a private road brought shock and dismay to many residents and motorists. Many people were shocked to learn, for the first time, that the clay road that has provided access to the west end of the beach for years was, indeed, a private road.

They were even further shocked to learn that its owners would establish an "exclusive" development on the island, using private ownership of the road as a means to restrict access to the project and oceanfront.

Despite the fact that its owners have every legal right to barricade the road, the gesture was taken as a slap in the face for many Holden Beach visitors and residents. To many residents and property owners, Holden Beach has never been viewed as an "exclusive" beach, and the move toward a more exclusive atmosphere was shocking.

So the gasps heard coming from the west end of Holden Beach last week were real. What may be viewed as the final frontier on Holden Beach has been closed to those on the outside looking in.

AIDS Screening Due Consideration Again

With reported cases of AIDS on the rise nationwide, the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners should reconsider a plan by the county health department to offer screening for the disease, acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

AIDS disrupts the body's immune system, leaving victims defenseless against infections that other people usually withstand.

In June, after a brief discussion, commissioners nixed the idea of screening for AIDS on a motion by Vice Chairman Jim Poole, who said, "I'd just as soon we don't get into it." Commissioner Frankie Rabon was absent; Commissioner Grace Beasley cast the only dissenting vote.

The most common routes of transmission of AIDS appear to be through body fluids and through the use of contaminated hypodermic needles. The disease usually proves fatal.

AIDS was originally linked primarily with the male homosexual community, Haitians and other specific groups. But it is now striking heterosexuals and the pace of its attack has quickened, increasing the possibility of the screening program's use if available locally.

This movement of AIDS into the mainstream should be argument enough to provide the screening for those concerned about possible exposure or contraction of the disease.

The proposed screening project wouldn't determine if a client has AIDS, only whether further testing were needed.

It could be provided at no additional cost to the county and the risk of staff members contracting the disease would be less than the current risk they face of contracting hepatitis. Staff members have completed the training for the screening and for counseling those who would seek the highly-confidential service.

A public health department is the logical place to screen for a disease threatening the public health. With the recent deluge of information on the subject, commissioners should be better informed and more able to deal professionally, rather than emotionally, with the subject.

The plan deserves their reconsideration.



TAKE THE ROADS WITH A LOT OF GARBAGE ALONG THEM, IT WILL TAKE YOU RIGHT TO IT!

Islanders Must Share Home With Animals

Some folks believe the only thing "wild" on the South Brunswick Islands is a few teenagers who stay up past their bedtime and hang out at the arcade on Friday or Saturday nights. But there is a different form of life on these islands that don't depend on quarters and "Centipede" video games along with an occasional hamburger or french fries.

To many folks, an island is just an island, a place with no woods and no natural hideouts. The ocean itself and the life it supports holds enough mysteries to keep curiosities occupied for a weekend stay or vacation.

That is, until along comes a friend-



Terry Pope

ly raccoon or two. There is an area next to Heritage Harbor on Holden Beach that is partial wetland and partial woodland. Poco, my cocker spaniel, and I recently found out that it is also home to rabbits and raccoons. Nevertheless, he's delighted.

Many times, weekend visitors or property owners have just left behind the rolling hills and woods of the piedmont or mountains and are looking forward to seeing the ocean. They may not even notice that the islands also have a few places that are home to wild creatures.

They may not realize what is tearing into their garbage bags or what that dark object is darting across their lawns. On a recent afternoon

walk, Poco and I encountered a creature stalking across Sand Dollar Drive with a long, bushy tail and what looked like a curved spine.

Large cat? At first glance it was a possibility. Then another dark creature with an identical tail and body jumped from a trash container just yards in front of us and skirted into the bushes, carrying a hamburger wrapper or some other debris sagging from its jaws.

Meanwhile, the animal further down the street stopped and stared in our direction with such an innocent face. I had never encountered a raccoon before and now here were two. Poco considered them more than just innocent and began begging me to let go of his rope.

On the same walk, we also encountered a small rabbit resting in someone's driveway. I allowed Poco to give chase, just for fun, knowing that his short legs could in no way match the rabbit's speed. The rabbit darted through some bushes in a tiny clearing that only he could have known about, leaving Poco on the

outside looking in.

Earlier in the summer, a deer was spotted swimming in the surf near the Lockwood Folly Inlet on the east end of Holden Beach. Police Chief Raymond Simpson said the crowd that had gathered to watch the swimming buck was cleared back to allow the deer room to come ashore.

Once the deer beached itself, he darted into a nearby wooded area on the island. The swim even made a local television newscast, since it's not everyday that a deer is spotted in the surf.

Holden Beach Commissioner Gloria Barrett also noted at a recent board meeting that she saw a "fuzzy little black thing" running across her lawn. It was larger than a rat, she said, but did not have a flat tail like a muskrat.

It looked like what a black mink would look like, if they were running wild on the beach, but it wasn't a skunk, she said. Did anyone know what it was? she asked.

No one did, but then no one was surprised either.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Smoking Ban Column Has Reader Puffing

To the editor:

In recent issues of the Beacon, there have been several accounts of the Sunset Beach Town Council action to ban smoking at public hearings. Initial coverage of the action was followed by an editorial comment from Susan Usher supporting the Town Council's action.

I would like to voice a different perspective on the action and of Ms. Usher's commentary. My perspec-

tive centers around three points as follows:

- 1) The issue of "social engineering," that is the intrusion of government in matters of individual behavior, is both unnecessary and repugnant.
- 2) There is ample evidence—from studies by our own government and foreign countries—that there is no health threat from ambient smoke.
- 3) The writer of the editorial comment—Susan Usher—is one of an in-

finitesimal number of people allergic to smoke.

Instead of banning smoking in the town hall, which may very well exclude people from the proceedings, why not look into better ventilation of the facility? Better yet, why not ask that individual courtesy control the issue rather than adding one more local government action to the books?

Charles S. Martin
 Chesterfield, Virginia

Rainbows In The Mist

Last Saturday morning was one of the days we dream about on the Carolina coast. The air was crisp and cool, like late September or early October. Skies were clear and bright and the deep blue overhead was not dimmed by haze. The water was glistening and lights danced on every wave rolling toward the shoreline. A more perfect day for fishing or walking or just being on the beach could not be found!



Bill Faver

Some friends and I chose to fish and by the time we gathered rods, buckets, sand spikes, and assorted bait, the good early morning fishing was coming to an end. But we did spend a couple of good hours offering the remaining fish their choice of several appetizing treats. So much was happening all around us it was hard to concentrate on the fishing at hand.

A shelf of sand had built up and was moving in toward the dunes to rebuild some of what had been lost last February. It was fun to watch the movement of sand and shell fragments at our feet. We were standing in what must have been a mole crab hatchery, for there were thousands of tiny mole crabs scrambling to gain a foothold in the sand before the retreating wave washed them into deeper water.

Three young Ospreys were soaring overhead, angling their hawk-like heads in search of fish in the surf. An occasional dive and splash proved

fruitless on this particular morning as they came up without any fish. They were practicing and moved up and down the beach every time a school of menhaden created some activity.

Each time a wave splashed against the sand shelf a wall of mist would rise and catch the light of the bright sun with a momentary rainbow. I wondered how many of the people enjoying a morning walk on the beach saw the rainbows. The one or two I asked thought I was crazy; it wasn't raining and there were no clouds in the sky!

My grandfather always said there was a whole lot more to fishing than catching fish. On this Saturday morning in August I had to agree. I didn't do any better than the young Ospreys, but maybe they were enjoying a beautiful day and rainbows in the mist as much as I did.