

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Repeat After Me: 'No Disney Theme Park, No . . .'

Dont' believe it. The rumor, that is, that Walt Disney enterprises' will build a Disney World-type theme park in Brunswick County. It just ain't so.

We've been trying to scotch the story for several years now on a personal basis, but it keeps springing back, stronger than ever, with only the specific location changed.

Maybe people think if they talk about it long enough it will come true. Maybe anything seems possible given the dramatic growth around here during the past ten years.

However, to the relief of some and disappointment of some land speculators,



Susan Usher

Disney has no such plans. Not on Beach Road across from Oak Island, not near Sunset Beach and not at Brown's Landing. Not anywhere in Brunswick County.

"It's been all over the county—even in the Green Swamp," says

Michael deSherbinin, executive director of the Resources Development Commission, which works with industry interested in possibly locating in the county.

"I get calls all the time," he continued, "from Raleigh, from Wilmington, from everybody but Disney!"

It should come as no surprise that, modern folklore spreading as rapidly as it does, rumor has it Disney plans to build that same theme park from Manteo to (almost) Murphy and in plenty of other states as well. The folklore researchers at N.C. State University surely must be on to this

story. It certainly beats the heck out of "the poodle in the microwave," "the snake in the grocery store" and "the alligator in the sewer" tales.

But while some of us—like me—tend to laugh aloud at the idea of a major theme park right here in Brunswick County, others aren't so quick to laugh. While deSherbinin can see the humor of the situation, he also sees potential.

"It's a rumor at this time," says deSherbinin, "but that doesn't preclude development of a theme park in the county at some time."

"We did invite them to look over the county."

That's right. When the rumors were spreading so well about 1 1/2 years ago, the development commission dashed off a letter to the folks at Disney, inviting them to give the county their serious attention.

In deSherbinin's files is the reply from Disney's corporate director of real estate. It thanks the county for the information on the opportunities available here. It goes on to say that the Disney folks have no intentions of expanding their theme park business, but that they will keep the information on file for future reference.

If they've taken up the invitation to "look over" Brunswick County, they're doing it without the help of deSherbinin's or any other county office.

Apparently the idea of such a park isn't so outrageous—not like it might have been once when Brunswick was North Carolina's sleeping giant. Growth has been phenomenal over the past five years, though. Our population has increased from 36,000 to 50,000 year-round and to a peak-day population of 139,000 or so. The number of golf courses has doubled and the number of beach homes has probably more than doubled.

So why not a South Brunswick Islands Disney-type dream come true—if not from Roy and the boys, from somebody else?

While the county will soon have plenty of water available for a large-scale enterprise, it won't have the rest of the infrastructure such a park would require—four-lane access, wastewater treatment, a jetport.

"There are a lot of elements that would have to go into such a development," says deSherbinin.

Most developers would expect at least some of those facilities to be in place. But a heavily bankrolled operation could provide its own, he pointed out.

We may be sitting on a time bomb.

Local Reef Project's Future In State Hands

An apparently well-intentioned Marine Fisheries Commission says it wants to "get a handle" on the artificial reef situation along the coast.

Commission officials want to establish criteria for locating artificial reefs, particularly within the state's three-mile limit—the waters called "inside", and to establish additional state reviews before a permit can be obtained.

They may be needed. It seems, you see, that a lot of other communities and fishing clubs are following Brunswick County's lead once again in this fishy area. The result could be a clutter of reefs offshore that interfere with commercial fishing and are costly for someone to maintain, state officials fear.

Brunswick fishermen established the state's first offshore reef in the 1970s and now they're working hard to rebuild their first two reefs with more substantial materials and to establish six new ones, all outside the three-mile limit. They have had the required permits since mid-summer.

Yet, for some reason, state Marine Fisheries officials can't say what effect their reef activities will have on the Brunswick County projects for which permits have already been issued and county, municipal and private support obtained.

With permits in hand, it doesn't sound like a major concern. But there's one small catch: 200 boxcars donated by Seaboard Systems to the state and a matching legislative grant of \$300,000 to pay for locating them offshore. Brunswick County fishermen have their permits, but they need material to drop on the reef sites and the money to do it, and they need state cooperation to maintain the bouys that mark the reefs as well.

It would be a crying shame if the state's beauracracy took the steam and volunteer initiative out of this local venture.

Downtown's Clean Now; Help Keep It That Way

Town and state crews made their annual clean sweep of the Shallotte business district last week in preparation for the Dec. 7 Christmas Parade.

The streets look good, but how long it will last depends upon us, not town or state employees.

They've cleaned up; let's keep it clean. If each of us picks up our own litter and a little bit of someone else's too, downtown should stay clean at least until spring.

Importance Of Oysters

Most Brunswick County residents and visitors don't need to be reminded of the importance of oysters. Those of us who take in the oyster roasts and the Oyster Festival know well the good taste of our Brunswick County delicacies. What we may not realize is the importance of oysters to marine life in the ecosystem.

We know the marshes are breeding grounds for shrimp, crabs, and many of our fishes. Oysters help sustain the marshes as they filter food from water flowing over them as the tides flush the marsh grasses. The nutrients would be lost to the salt marsh and carried out to sea if it were not for these mollusks. The tidal changes also carry off wastes from the oyster beds and the phosphorous and ammonia from the excrement spreads over a large area.

As clumps of oysters build, small dams can form and the resulting "ponds" become havens for blue crabs and other marine animals at low tide. These ponds provide refuge for fishes, worms, and smaller crabs



Bill Faver

caught in the marsh when the tide goes out. The ponds attract predators who feed on the concentrated animals. Shells of the oyster beds trap leaves, stems from marsh grass, and other debris, bringing necessary carbon to the system. The enriched soil gives other organisms a chance for growth and many kinds of bacteria and algae flourish as the beginning of the marine food chain.

While oysters are valued as excellent food, their pearls as fine jewels, and their shells as decorations and road materials, we can add their contributions to life in the salt marsh as perhaps their greatest value.

NEWS ITEM MALL TO BE BUILT ON EDGE OF TOWN

THERE'S A LOT OF LAND BEING MAULED, LATELY!

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Get Out The Scissors; It's Parade Time!

When you see the Union Primary School float in the Shallotte Christmas parade this Saturday, I want you to cheer extra loud.

My mother is chairperson of the school float committee, and for the past two weeks our house has been cluttered with paper and glitter and scissors. The conversation centers around what costumes the children should wear, how big the letters should be on the signs and what colors would look best where.

In other words, I'm going bananas. Last night I was going to go upstairs to my room and finish re-reading "Catcher In the Rye." (I should have been going up to listen to the album "Purple Rain" to hear Prince sing "Let's Go Crazy.") Suddenly my mother exclaimed, "What about the holly!"

"Holly who?" I asked. Personally, I thought she'd flipped out and was talking about the character on that soap opera she likes.

"The holly for the signs!" she answered.

The next thing I knew, I was sitting on the carpet pretending to be Matisse with my scissors, cutting leaf after leaf out of green construction paper.

Tomorrow, I get to cut out candies.

The other evening I told her I'd be in Greensboro the week before the parade. I was going to help my university's yearbook staff with some sections, do some Christmas shopping, and see as many movies as possible. That night, near midnight, I heard a knock on my door. It was Mom.

"Will you be back for the parade?" she asked.

"Well-l . . ." I started in reply. "The parade is Saturday! You've got to be back! I mean it!"

She was standing on the deck, giving me that "you'd better" look.

"See you at the parade," I said.



Dawn Ellen Boyd

When your mother climbs up the outside stairs to your room at midnight in her nightgown and housecoat to ask a favor, it is wise not to say no.

Since our house has become parade headquarters, I've become a remote control. No kidding. Mom spends all her time sitting on the carpet, cutting out letters or sketching designs on a notepad. Whenever she wants to see a television show, she says, "Dawn, change the channel!"

Now, I read to her what will be on each evening from TV Guide, so she can make her choices and I will know when to flip to another station.

One "person" who is enjoying all the activity is my cat, Colour. Colour is mischievous, and whenever mom rattles a piece of paper, the cat pounces on it.

"Dawn," I'll hear, "come get your sweet babboo!"

What can I say? We like "Peanuts" cartoons.

Sometimes though, I wonder what the neighbors think of these conversations.

All kidding asoc, Mom has put a lot of work into that float. But then, she always spends a great deal of time working on school-related projects—grading papers or making bulletin board materials or doing something she thinks will help the students.

In fact, I'm really proud of her. But don't tell her that. She might get ideas about an Easter parade or something!

Calendar Of Events

Thursday, Dec. 5

SANTA CLAUS will be the guest at the covered-dish dinner meeting of the American Association of Retired Persons, Calabash Volunteer Fire Department, 6:30 p.m.

COVERED DISH DINNER at the Shallotte Point Volunteer Fire Department, with all residents of the fire district invited. A drawing will be held to select a little fireman and a queen, 6:30 p.m.

WOODY DURHAM, "Voice of the Tarheels," is guest speaker at the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce membership meeting, Harbor Town Restaurant, 6:30 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. dinner.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL Board of Directors meets at the public assembly building to discuss the 4th edition of "Artists in Our Midst," Brunswick County Government Center, 7 p.m.

Friday, Dec 6

A CHRISTMAS BAZAAR sponsored by the Brunswick Hospital Volunteer Auxiliary be held in the main lobby of the hospital, starting at 9 a.m.

TURKEY SHOOT sponsored by the Longwood-Grissetown Volunteer Fire Department will be held behind Holden's Produce on U.S. 17 at Four Mile Road, 6 p.m.

RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION of Brunswick County will meet at the Captain's Hut Restaurant in Yaupon Beach, 6:30 p.m.

A TURKEY SHOOT sponsored by Calabash VFW No. 7288 will be held just north of the traffic light on N.C. 179, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 7

THE SHALLOTTE CHRISTMAS PARADE forms at Shallotte Middle School and proceeds to UCB's main branch parking lot, 10 a.m.

A TURKEY SHOOT sponsored by the Grissetown-Longwood Volunteer Fire Department will be held at Holden's Produce, corner of U.S. 17 and Four Mile Road, 6 p.m.

A TURKEY SHOOT sponsored by Calabash VFW No. 7288 will be held just north of the traffic light on N.C. 179, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

GAME NIGHT at the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department, 8 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 8

FISHES OF NORTH CAROLINA will be the topic of a free speech by Scott Rodden at the N.C. Marine Resources Center at Fort Fisher, 2:30 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 9

OCEAN ISLE BEACH PLANNING BOARD meets to discuss proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance, at the town hall, 9:30 a.m.

THE CALABASH TOWN COUNCIL meets at the town hall, 4:30 p.m.

HOLDEN BEACH SENIOR CITIZENS will hold their Christmas party at Reaves Fish Camp, 6:30 p.m.

THE BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH meets at the Sea Trail Links Clubhouse for a Christmas dinner, 6:30 p.m.

THE SHALLOTTE PLANNING BOARD meets at the the town hall if there is any business to discuss, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 10

VOLUNTEER AND INFORMATION CENTER board of directors meets at the Sizzling Sirloin Steakhouse in Shallotte for a Dutch luncheon meeting to follow up on a Dec. 7 board workshop, 12:30 p.m.

SAND CANDLE WORKSHOP at the N.C. Marine Resources Center at Fort Fisher, 2 p.m. Call 458-8257 to pre-register.

OCEAN ISLE BEACH COMMISSIONERS meet at the town hall, 4 p.m.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE SUPPORT GROUP will meet in the conference room at Brunswick Hospital in Supply, 7:30 p.m.

GRISSETTOWN-LONGWOOD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT meets in the AA building at Grissetown, 7:30 p.m.

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