

**THE BRUNSWICK BEACON**

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**There is A Solution To Standing On School Bus**

When I was growing up I rode a bus to school everyday for what seemed like a million miles.

And even way back then the local school board had to deal with overcrowded buses.

It just so happened that the school coach, who was considered a really tough guy, drove the bus on the route where I lived.

All of the kids on his route were afraid of him. He just sort of looked like the kind of guy who could crush a ninth grader with one hand—you know the type, with a crew-cut and a marine's tattoo on his arm. If someone even thought about misbehaving on his route, one glare from him squelched the effort.

I remember one time when two boys started fighting on the bus. Mr. Bonecrusher (I don't remember his name but that's what we called him) pulled that bus over to the side of the road and said, "You two boys step outside."

Those were the most chilling words we could hear on Mr. Bonecrusher's school bus. It meant that the wooden paddle with dozens of names on it would get a few more autographs.



Etta Smith

And even though his spankings never really hurt physically, they were the most humiliating experience one could encounter.

It meant bending over and taking your "licking" in front of all your friends, and it took an entire school year for one to live down an experience like that.

What was worse, if my parents found out that my behavior warranted Mr. Bonecrusher's punishment, it meant I would get more of the same when my father got home that night. So I was always well-behaved on that bus.

I'll never forget how afraid I was of this guy. A good example of this is the time I got on the bus and there was only one empty seat—beside a big-

mouthered girl I didn't like. Suddenly, the bus started moving. On Mr. Bonecrusher's route standing while the bus was moving was a capital offense. I started to take the closest seat available when the big-mouthered girl leaned her entire body over to cover the spare seat and said "You can't sit here, I'm saving it for Glenda."

I didn't want to sit next to her, but it was better than facing the bonecrusher. So I sat ON her—for the entire 15-mile trip. When her friend Glenda got on the bus she found another seat.

Lately, when I pass a school bus on the road I've noticed what seems like lots of kids standing on the bus. Curious about why this is allowed, I called Bill Turner, the school superintendent's assistant for operations. In other words, he's the guy in charge of the school buses.

Turner told me the law allows 25 percent of the total passengers to stand on the bus. Those who stand are usually the first ones to get off, he said. So when children stand on the bus it's usually only for a short time.

This county owns three different models of buses. The older model, which Turner said will be phased out as they quit running, holds 48 passengers. The newer models hold 54 and 60.

Any new buses the school board purchases will hold 60 students, said Turner. He added that he thinks the 60-passenger buses will eliminate the need for children to stand in the aisles.

But I have a suggestion that could save the school board money and at the same time initiate a new school bus passenger behavior program.

The board could hire all ex-marines. They could possibly work with the military in recruiting these guys as soon as they retire from that branch of the service. Then they could give them wooden paddles that have lots of signatures on them.

And they could give them all aliases like "Bonecrusher," "Mad Dog," "Killer," etc.

It worked 20 years ago and it would probably work today. I'd even be willing to bet those 48-passenger school buses would grow some new seats.

**"What Is Past is Prologue"**

It's too bad history is not taught with more flair in public schools. Somehow, youngsters get the notion it's dry, dull stuff that doesn't matter anymore. Stuffed with dates and names, by often-lethargic teachers, they choke on those battles and dictators and trade agreements that can't match television, parties and football for excitement.

Much later in life they stumble on the fact that Shakespeare was right: our past continually resurfaces as introduction to the future, and nations of the world repeat and repeat their mistakes.

If only we took seriously the lessons history has to offer, perhaps this cycle could be broken, tyranny thwarted, oppression of the poor averted, idealists supported instead of pooh-pooed.

Steps to promote an interest in history are being undertaken in Brunswick County, even as we write. There are promising moves afoot to get our local past down on paper, to bring it together and make it available to anyone who cares enough to read it.

The National Association of the Advancement of Colored People, whose county chapter sponsored the important Black Cultural Awareness program last month, understands the need to communicate black history. It has until recently been omitted from public school textbooks, but black people need to know of achievements within their race. White people need this information, too.

So the local NAACP is preparing its own "history book," including the accomplishments of black people who can serve as role models for youth, and whose role in our past is significant.

At the same time a new group, the Brunswick Technical College Genealogy/Local History Friends, will help develop a collection of local history in the BTC library. Their aim is also to promote interest in local history countywide.

And simultaneously, Patricia Foy's students at South Brunswick High School have been interviewing oldtimers around the county and writing about their recollections. Ms. Foy has already listened to 57 hours of taped interviews that have captivated her students. Now, that's the way to teach history!

All these efforts are encouraging, and it is hoped the three groups will be forceful in presenting their findings to the public. Lazy members of our TV society just won't travel to a library to pick up a history book, without considerable motivation.

One lure might be an "Evening of History," with socializing over a cup of punch, where students, NAACP members and "friends" of BTC could bring their materials to life.

Whatever the device to "hook" the public, these folks engaged in pursuing county history are themselves already greatly rewarded. They are discovering how our ancestors lived, why they made significant decisions and changes in Brunswick County, what their contributions were, and the obstacles they overcame.

This adventure of discovery does more than entertain. If we look honestly at our history, it charges us with pride, but also with humility and some understanding of those things that went wrong and why.

Armed with understanding and knowledge, we can make the past our teacher, not the prologue to a mindless future.

**Lawmen Under The Gun**

Murder, like June, is busting out all over in Brunswick County. We have had our share of tragedy in the past two months, beginning with the murder of Thomas Summer, near Orton Plantation on Dec. 30, followed by that of Joe Reeves, Feb. 6, in Charlotte, and Beverly Mintz, Feb. 23, in Leland.

We, the outraged public, want the perpetrators immediately brought to justice, relieving us of our fears and satisfying our desire for retribution.

But that seldom happens neatly and quickly. As Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis put it, "If only we could solve them like they do on television!"

Ah, there's the rub. Accustomed as we are to the quick fix of 30-minute solutions to all problems, foreign and domestic, via the tube, we have a hard time being patient with real life. Love affairs take longer, so does growing up, mending a quarrel, educating a dummy, and solving a murder.

One hang-up in real life murders is getting information back from the state crime laboratory. There is just one, in Raleigh, poorly staffed, and it has not yet reported on fingerprinting results in Summer's death two months ago.

Another problem is inconsistency in the involvement of

When was the last time you planned a wedding?

Now, more than ever, I understand why you're only supposed to marry once.

It's not just the part about commitment and marriage is what you make it, etc. There's another very real reason: It's because the bride and groom can only go through this ordeal once. There ought to be a law...

I love Don and he loves me; we want to go through life as partners. That appeared to be challenge enough for the two of us.

That was before we began planning what was to be a very simple wedding down by the river at Fort Caswell, with me in a borrowed dress and Don in a good suit, each with two good friends or relatives in attendance.

Then two things happened: The family got involved and Don decided

**It's Too Late To Turn Back Now**



Susan Usher

we ought to send invitations. Immediately we had struck a more formal note and the wedding began to get complicated.

We added my mailing list to his list, and then threw in some of my parents' friends for good measure. The post office will love us for sure.

Becky's gown, an Usher design from London (that's right!), was hanging in the closet: a challenge to lose back the two dress sizes I've gained in 5 1/2 years. By Christmas we

knew it was hopeless; I'm the sort of person who eats when happy, nervous, sad, whatever. I'll be doing good to stay my current dress size.

So sister Carol and I hit the pattern books. She'd made her own wedding dress and my sister Jean had made hers, but I had no intention of doing so. After all, they like to sew.

We found two likely patterns, but wanted ideas for fabric and trim. We stopped at a favorite store. There, hanging at the end of a rack, visible from the front door, was the dress, with a surprisingly affordable price tag. I put the tea-length ivory lace on lay-away and splurging, tossed in a matching hat.

We'd started out with two bridal attendants, but the number grew to four, and now there's a distinct possibility of 5 1/2 (more on this later). We ordered the fabric anyway because it takes six weeks to get here and there's a lot of sewing to be done.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Federal Holiday Will Be Worth Every Penny**

To the editor:

Referring to your editorial, "How Should We Honor King Appropriately?", don't worry about Dr. King, he is getting his just rewards and "despite the jibes at his personal life and unproven charges of communist connections," I would feel really good if I could match his record when I go to meet my maker.

The federal holiday for Dr. King can best serve to remind the nation that after all that has been said and done, after the so-called progress that has been made, we as a nation have yet to come to grips with the "cause" of our nation's greatest problem. There is a lot of work to be done on all sides.

Whites must come to realize that being white or near white does not within itself make them superior to all blacks. Blacks more so than whites must come to realize that they cannot lay claim to being of the black race and the human race; that is contradictory.

Blacks must learn to forgive and forget the past and accept whites on an individual basis. There is a lot of black and white friendship, but they are afraid to practice their friendship socially. Economics and a lack of

courage may play a part in this.

Once we get over this problem, we should then be able to accept the greatest truth: that there is and always will be "one God, one mankind, and one religion," and no power on earth can change it.

When this comes about, Dr. King's holiday should be moved to Sunday, with friends coming together to worship, fellowship and celebrate the making of a dream.

And therein lies your monument. In the meantime, push for the federal holiday. It will be worth every penny.

Robert Gore  
Shalotte

That is when I first heard of "Miss Rowena."

She was dedicated to her family, her church and her community. When there was sickness and sadness, she was there with food, medicine, clothes or flowers. She was present when there was joy and gladness. She was a strong, stately lady wearing her beautiful print dress, washed, starched and ironed to perfection.

Her children, Hilda and Floyd Jr.

are kind and caring—ready with a helping hand in time of need. Fruit of a good mother.

We knew in time of trouble we could rest much better when "Miss Rowena" was on our case. Our community is saddened by her death. We are all healthier and wealthier because "Miss Rowena" has walked by our side.

Mrs. Coyet H. Gray  
Supply

**A Look At Succession**

One of the interesting happenings in nature is how an abandoned field will begin to grow broomsedge, fennel, and other vegetation. Soon some pines may begin to grow and shade out a portion of the field, making it harder for the grasses and shrubs to survive. Then hardwoods, which need the shelter of the pines to get a start, grow and eventually crowd out the pines. The process of field succession reclaims the land to the wooded state it was in prior to being cleared as a field.

Last week, my wife, Catherine, and I got a lesson in field succession. We drove to Dillon County, South Carolina, in search of her great grandmother's grave in the old Murchison Cemetery. A cousin had told her about where it was located, though he had been there years ago. We inquired at several roadside stores and searched several old cemeteries with no success. Finally, we stopped to visit a lady who had known Catherine's mother and she said she could show us how to get there, but couldn't tell us! We picked her up and drove down a dirt road to Sweet Swamp near Clio and ended up at the edge of a grain field. No cemetery as she remembered it was in sight, but a young farmer pointed out some large pines way across the field and told us there were some old tombstones there.

A short hike brought us success. We found the Murchison graves—all grown over with trees, covered with leaves, some broken and some fallen over. There were few small shrubs, so when we got to the iron fence surrounding the stones, it was fairly open beneath the trees. Later, with



Bill Faver

leaves on the trees, we would have missed it altogether.

Nature not only reclaims the remains as "ashes to ashes" and "dust to dust," but nature tries to reclaim the surface as well. In a few more years, unless some family members decide to cut some trees, restore some graves, and do some stone repairs, nature will have taken over completely and there will be little left to find. Such is nature's way of reclaiming and recycling.

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