



Neither Rain...

... NOR SNOW...

... NOR LACK OF MONEY...

Opinion Page

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweatt and Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Publishers  
 Edward M. Sweatt.....Editor  
 Susan Usher.....News Editor  
 Rahn Adams & Doug Rutter.....Staff Writers  
 Johnny Craig.....Sports Editor  
 Christine Bailou.....Office Manager  
 Cecelia Gore & Susan Barefoot.....Advertising Representatives  
 Tammie Galloway & Dorothy Brennan.....Typesetters  
 Brenda Clemmons.....Pressman  
 Lonnie Sprinkle.....Photo Technician  
 Clyde and Mattie Stout, Phoebe Clemmons.....Circulation

Page 4-A

Thursday, January 14, 1988

## You've Got To Have Hi-i-gh Hopes

Our hopes were so high as we came tumbling into work Thursday morning; the first snowy freckles had just begun to swirl into town.

"It's snowing! It's snowing!" Advertising Rep. Sue Barefoot got a little excited, to say the least, shrieking as she stormed out the back door.

Those of us in the news room smiled, but not with a great deal of enthusiasm. We knew we'd have to be out in it, at least for a while, along with all those other crazy drivers.

It was fun telling the guys about beaches in snow, but they didn't get to see it for themselves. Instead they got to watch as drivers waited and waited, then crept over the high-rise bridges behind the salt truck. Ten-



Susan Usher

sion headache No. 8,001.

Where was the enthusiasm of childhood? While driving along N.C. 130 to Holden Beach, the road did look a lot like the mud cupcakes my sisters and I used to make—very dark, a little damp, iced with a "sprinkling" of sugary-looking white sand.

But that's about it.

And once again, the gamblers at the board of education lost when it was their turn at the weather wheel.

Thursday dawned fair but cold, at 6 a.m., so the buses rolled on in. By the time the roll was called and homework collected, it was snowing. Then, by the time all the buses had been gassed up, the snow had eased to mere flurries.

But by the time most of the youngsters had eaten their lunch, it was sleeting—hard, just in time to cause problems when classes were dismissed at 12:30 p.m.

By 1 p.m. co-worker Chris Ballou was trying to cross U.S. 17 and pick up our lunches. Before she could get

back, the office had officially closed for the day and Rahn, Doug and I were plotting our strategy: i.e., how to cover the storm 1) without a horse and sleigh or lens hoods; 2) without endangering our lives or that of others; and 3) without getting out in it except as absolutely necessary.

We wanted the snowy wonderlands of childhood dreams; we got, well, a lot of ice and headaches.

Still, for a moment, there was that special excitement, that little pressing burr of suspense. Sometimes, expectation is the next best thing to a dream deferred.

After all, we've got to have hi-igh hopes.

## Demand Return To Hazard List

It's not too early for Brunswick County residents to renew their lobbying efforts for a return of the county to the N.C. Division of Forest Resources high hazard list.

On the request of a former board of commissioners, a former state representative and the district's current state senator, Brunswick County was removed from the list around 1982, for reasons that had nothing to do with public safety or fire hazard levels. It had to do with local development efforts.

Last summer, several events forged reminders of why the county belongs back on that list, including a 5,000-foot high column of smoke that choked visitors who stepped out of their beach cottages, set off fire alarms in residential areas of Shallotte, took the blame for a three-car crash west of Shallotte that sent two people to a the hospital with serious injuries, and in general, made life miserable for weeks for a significant group of people.

Some of the problem was coincidence: atmospheric conditions combined with long-term controlled burning by several paper/timber companies and with burning associated with new development. The smoke level could have been lessened if several paper companies had not scheduled controlled burning simultaneously and if a land-clearing fire had been better controlled.

While it might not have been possible to prevent an overload of smoke, there is something the county can do to lessen the likelihood of it happening again in the summer of '88.

Commissioners can ask to have the county placed back on the high hazard list; so can Rep. David Redwine or Sen. Soles.

Starting this month, three seats on the board of commissioners and both Redwine's and Soles' seats come up for election. It's a good time for them to show some sensitivity to the general public.

In a "high hazard county"—the state has 18 of them—a permit is required to burn in or within 500 feet of a wooded area regardless of the time of day the fire is started. And a special permit is required to burn debris, stumps, brush or other ground-clearing materials on five or more continuous acres when the material is placed in piles or windrows. That applies regardless of how close the burning is to woodlands.

To obtain the permit, the owner must establish acceptable factors such as wind direction, air conditions and quantities of material to be burned.

That's not too much to ask, or even to demand.

## Whatever Happened To Foghorn Leghorn?

Saturday mornings just aren't like they used to be.

The old Bugs Bunny, Road Runner, Daffy Duck and Porky Pig cartoons aren't televised anymore. And that represents an extreme miscarriage of justice against every youngster in America, including myself.

Looking through the television section the other day, I came across programs such as Lady Lovely Locks, Popples, Muppet Babies, Care Bear Family and Pound Puppies. The Saturday morning list goes on and on, but I think you get the idea.

All of these cartoons have two things in common: they have no entertainment value whatsoever and they are all trying to represent and promote various products. You simply cannot find a TV cartoon anymore that isn't associated with a doll, stuffed animal or board game.

Here's the scenario—kids watch Gummi Bears on television and before you know it, they can't live without the real thing. Each modern-day cartoon, I would estimate, accounts for retail sales of about \$50,000 a year (batteries not included).



Doug Rutter

Whatever happened to broadcasting cartoons for the sake of entertainment? Cartoons of the 1980s, including the sci-fi weekday afternoon variety, are not entertaining.

I know what you're saying. Cartoons are not aimed at entertaining humans once they pass the age of 12 or 13.

But I still get a good laugh every time the networks slip up and put an old Woody Woodpecker rerun on the air. So I believe age has nothing to do with whether the shows are funny or not.

And while I truly believe the older shows are the cream of the crop when it comes to comedy, I must add that many programs also delivered a sub-

conscious message to young children whether they were aware of it at the time or not.

Wile E. Coyote (faminus hungrius), the eventual loser of every prank he ever pulled in his desperate attempts to catch the Road Runner, is unfortunately a thing of the past. He never got his just reward while the show aired. And despite getting blown to smithereens an average of 2.3 times an hour, I admired him for trying his hardest. There's something to be said for persistent effort.

Daffy Duck, who was perhaps the frailest creature ever to have his own television show, almost always avoided physical harm with quick-thinking and charm, proving that brawn does not always win out over brain in the ever-violent cartoon world.

And who could forget Elmer Fudd, the ultimate hunter who always caught a snag when he came across the "wascally wabbit" Bugs Bunny. Elmer, like the coyote, never got what he rightfully deserved, but his never-say-die attitude was a fine ex-

ample for the impressionable children he entertained over the years. He was often portrayed, both figuratively and literally, as an "all-day sucker," but he never let it get him down.

So it can be said that these fictitious characters not only entertained children, but also displayed various characteristics which are considered admirable in human beings. They all served in some capacity as role models for millions of children who grew up on television during the 1970s.

Incidentally, my all-time favorite cartoon character was Foghorn Leghorn, the clever rooster who outweighed every other barnyard animal, including that dumb old farm dog, by at least 50 pounds. He always seemed to get the best of that "sly" fox no matter what the situation.

And even while I'll probably sit back this Saturday and watch "Real Ghostbusters," I'll know in the back of my mind that there is no substitute for real humor or real television.

## Everyone Needs A Winter Hobby

A couple of weeks ago I finally discovered a new hobby that is sure to keep me twiddling my thumbs during the cold winter evenings ahead.

For about a month, my wife warned me that I was begging for a bad case of post-holiday blues if I didn't hurry and find an enjoyable pastime to occupy my interests outside of work.

She knew what she was talking about. For the past five Januarys, she has seen me trudge home from work, plop down on the sofa and vegetate in front of the television until bedtime.

And since I would bite my fingernails and complain all the while about being bored stiff, my wife



Rahn Adams

decided to put her foot down this year.

"You wouldn't be so tense if you'd find yourself a good hobby," she said. "Why don't you start collecting coins?"

That particular hobby didn't appeal to me, so I nixed the idea by

showing her the stack of bills that had to be paid.

"I'm not going to waste my hard-earned pennies by sticking them in little coin-collecting books—not with all these bills due," I exaggerated.

"Well, since we live near the beach, what about seashells?" she suggested. "It wouldn't cost anything, and it would give us both something to do."

"We'll hunt for shells on the weekend, and you can clean them and arrange our collection on weeknights," she stated. Her mind was made up.

So on our occasional weekend jaunts to area beaches, we began combing the strands for seashells.

My wife picked up only pretty, perfectly-formed shells, while I seemed to be attracted more to the shards that she referred to as "worry shells."

As we strolled down one beach, she explained that I could "worry better" if I held a shard in one hand and rubbed its smooth, concave surface with my thumb.

That was all I needed to hear. I'd found my hobby—one I could rely on to.

It didn't take long for me to discover that worry shells differ in appearance from beach to beach.

At Wrightsville Beach, the shells I found were large, boldly-colored and strong—metropolitan worry shells to handle the hustle and bustle of nearby Wilmington.

On an excursion to Pawley's Island, S.C., I found a small, white shard with a delicate lace-like design. Folks on Pawley's Island apparently don't have much to worry about.

I haven't found a definitive worry shell from the South Brunswick Islands yet, but I'm sure it'll be a combination of the two types just mentioned. And half of the fun will be hunting for it.

I'm glad I have a hobby, because now my wife can't complain when I trudge home from work, plop down on the sofa and rub my worry shells as I watch TV.

## Wouldn't It Be Great?

Wouldn't it be great if any time you didn't care for the service or advice rendered to you by a professional, you simply didn't have to pay for it?

Doctors would go out of business and so would plumbers. And maybe even engineers and fortune tellers.

But that's what happens daily when lots don't measure up to state septic tank requirements. It doesn't matter how long the county sanitarian was on the scene, how many trips were made and tests run, or even if he called in back-up help from the county's soil scientist or a district supervising sanitarian. If the lot doesn't meet the requirements for a septic tank and the county can't issue a permit, the disgruntled, unhappy property owner at least gets his money back, even if he can't build on the lot or persuade the previous owner to take it back.

On that premise the money must have been paid for a slip of paper, not for a service rendered. And that concept goes against standard fee structures. Most building permit fees are based on the number of trips or inspections that must be made, not whether the permit is issued.

The refund procedure was adopted by the health department because it was the only way at the time to get the

political entity known as the board of county commissioners to even allow the department to charge for a septic tank permit like other counties do. At least this way, the thinking went, the county could recoup some of the cost incurred in providing the service.

However, making refunds costs money and ties up labor in several departments.

Arguments exist against charging at all for the permits, of course. The state requires the service be provided; there are those who therefore think the state should foot the entire bill. Never mind that the county is simply—and reluctantly—an arm of state government, and that it is Brunswick County residents who benefit when a soon-to-fail septic tank doesn't go in on the lot next door.

Brunswick County Board of Health members are going to be looking again at the septic tank permitting system.

Maybe they'll find a way to streamline the refund process. While it might be extremely unpopular with the new interpretations of septic tank rules, they could stop making refunds and let the property owners who receive the service pay for it, permit or no permit.

**HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO**  
**THE BRUNSWICK BEACON**

POST OFFICE BOX 2558  
 SHALLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28459

**For Award-Winning News Coverage**

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY MAIL:**

In Brunswick County	\$ 7.50	Sr. Citizen \$ 6.50
Elsewhere in North Carolina	\$10.00	\$ 9.00
Outside North Carolina	\$12.50	\$11.50

**Complete And Return To Above Address**

Name .....

Address .....

City, State .....

Zip .....