

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Thursday, February 25, 1988

Voter Registration Data Reflects Regional Trends

If anything reflects the "New South," then it has to be the voter registration figures now being compiled.

Changes over the past four years show some obvious trends. Two significant ones aren't unique to Brunswick County, but are being noticed—and commented on—all across the South.

With the increasing popularity of moving to the Sunbelt—whether to retire or to follow relocating industry—the region is seeing major gains in registration by the Republican Party, with Brunswick County no exception. While it can't be called a "two-party" county yet, the day may not be far off.

Second, along with having predominantly Republican leanings, these Northern transplants to the area are largely Caucasian. As a result, we're seeing a dilution of the potential voting block power of the black community.

When mixed all together in the tumbler we call the electoral process, it's not certain how all the pieces come together. But one thing is certain: times are a'changing and the local political system will have to change as well.

Less and less will the traditional local "boss" system work anywhere in the South. More and more, political parties will find themselves dependent on grassroots organization to develop party loyalties and voter turnout on election day. And while "voter crossover" from one party to another has been fairly common in Brunswick County general elections in the past, both political parties can expect an increase in future elections.

And, as the need for candidates and parties to distinguish themselves from each other grows, another good thing could well emerge—more effort by candidates to demonstrate their leadership, vision and capability to deal with specific issues and concerns facing Brunswick County, rather than simply riding on party coattails.

Write Us

The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. The Beacon reserves the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to The Brunswick Beacon, P.O. Box 470, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.

Sunshine Is Cure For Spring Fever

The calendar must be lying. It says the first day of spring is March 20, but I'm already getting that queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach on sunny days.

I'm ready to pack my thermal underwear in mothballs and air out my Hawaiian floral-print shirts. And if my wife and co-workers are agreeable, I may even succumb to the urge to quit wearing socks. Heaven help them if I do.

I've got it bad—spring fever, that is.

If you've never had this dread disease, it's like the flu but requires a different kind of treatment. The last thing you want to do is stay home in bed, although some spring fever sufferers do drink plenty of "fluids" to ease their pain. I'm looking for a more dependable cure.

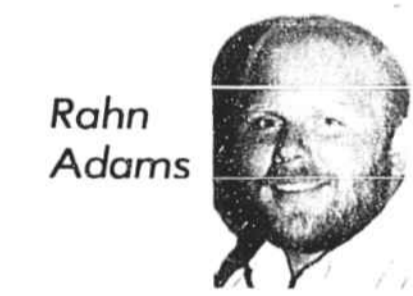
I think I caught the bug this time around from my television set.

Having watched the Winter Olympics for almost two weeks now, I've finally grown tired of seeing nothing but rosy-cheeked skiers, hockey players and ice skaters on the tube. They all act as though they wish winter would never end.

As a result, I've found myself wishing the ABC Wide World of Sports "agony of defeat" curse on them, although a mild case of frostbite would be enough to wipe those cheery smiles off of their faces.

When all you see for two straight weeks are guys in wildly-colored longjohns eagerly whooshing down ski slopes and pretty girls in skimpy skating outfits happily prancing around on ice, it's easy to lose your sanity, especially if you've spent most of the winter huddled up against a heat vent and you're ready for warm weather—not to mention lower heating bills.

The other day, as a last resort, I began taking stock of the signs of spr-



Rahn Adams

ing around me to convince myself that my favorite season is right around the corner.

Right away, I noticed three surefire signs as I drove home from work. The trees were budding; there was still enough sunlight at 6 p.m. to see the buds; and the increased traffic on the road kept me from enjoying the buds for longer than a split second for fear that I'd cross the center line and be steamrollered by a Winnebago full of vacationing Canadians (probably from Calgary).

I found some other signs one day as I spent my lunch break at Sunset Beach Pier. I noticed a handful of folks strolling on the still wet sand as they picked up shells. And near the dunes, a couple were stretched out on a blanket to catch some warm mid-day rays, even though both were wearing long pants and wind-breakers.

It's amazing what a little sunshine will do for your spirits—and I'm not referring to an exotic mixed drink either, although that would explain why bartenders put little parasols in some of them.

But as far as my spring fever goes, the clincher came when I passed the magazine rack at the supermarket and almost sprained my eyeballs trying to look at all of the swimsuit editions at once.

If spring doesn't come soon, I'm not only going to have that queasy feeling—I'm going to need glasses.

It's A Place To Come Home To



Susan Usher

Last Thursday was spouses' night at Lions Club.

The keynote speaker was a past district governor, John King of Wilmington.

As he gave a 20-minute history of Lionism, my mind began to wander, sparked by King's story of an emergency stop at a small country crossroads.

While waiting for his car to be repaired, or so the story goes, he asked one of the older men sitting around the station what made his community important.

"We're a starting place," the old man replied. "Someone from here who has enough drive, ambition and determination can go any place and do anything they choose."

A starting place. That's not a bad thing to be, unless you're a community shriveling on the vine of com-

merce. The words reminded me of the catchphrase that kept me going all through high school: "I'm going to get away from this place and make something of myself. And if I don't come back, fine. There's nothing here for me."

That was almost 20 years ago, not long after CP&L and DuPont had arrived. But opportunities for a liberal arts major were far and few between

here, especially for someone without connections.

Brunswick County was a good starting place, not just for me, but for thousands like me who left to attend schools and to find work elsewhere. Wayne Shew of Leland and Martha "Tootsie" Inman of Shallotte, for example, have made good careers for themselves in California, one in science, one in business. Others have found their future in the military establishment.

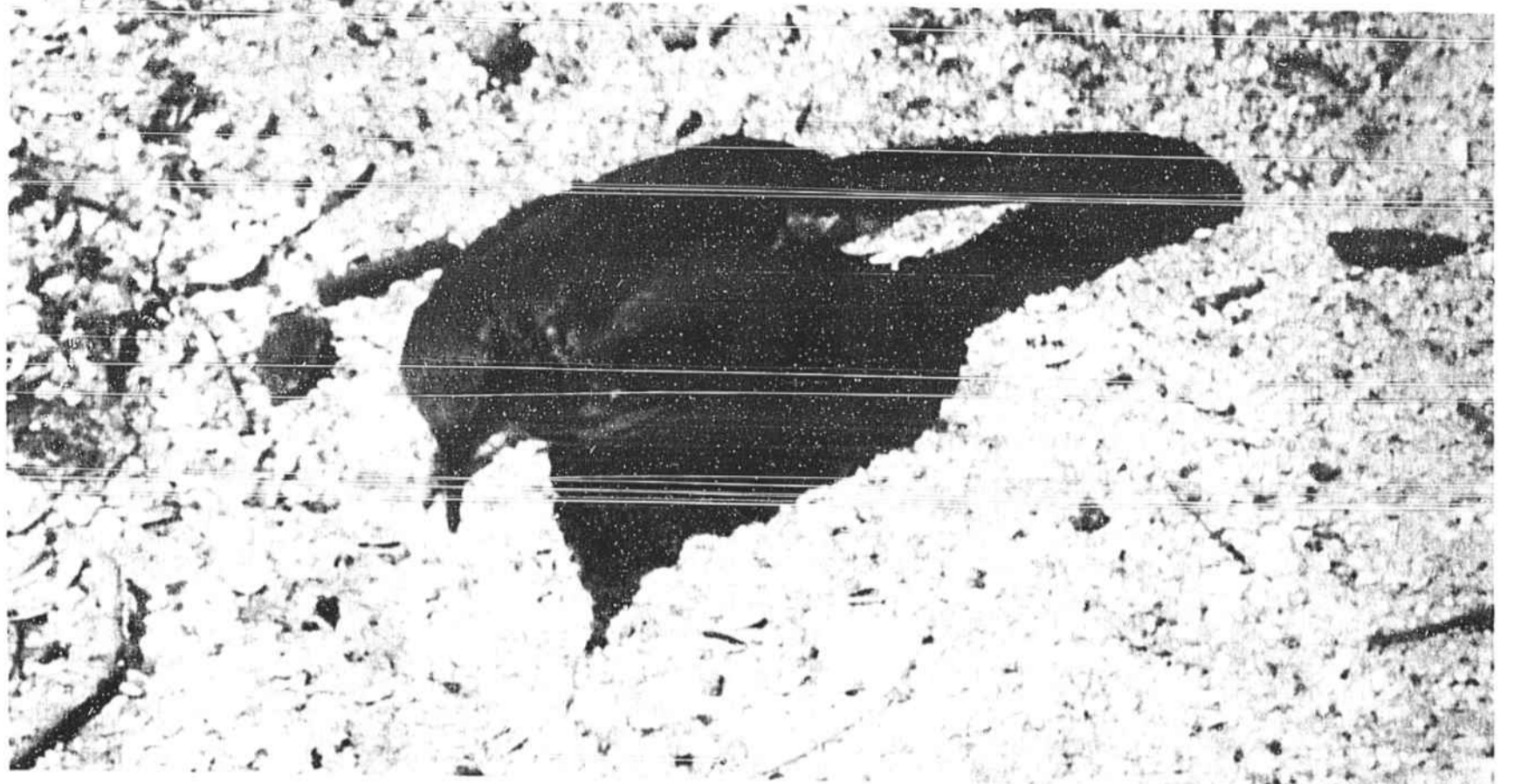
Those who stayed here tended to take their place in family-run businesses, seafood, real estate or mercantile. A great number of local young people end up in nearby New Hanover County.

But in the past 10 to 15 years, though, Brunswick County has seen a new phenomenon—local young people going off to school, then returning

to the county and finding work. Consider Wayne and Judy Tharp of Leland, both UNC-Wilmington graduates who found management-level work in finance, in Brunswick County. She began a credit union from scratch; he has moved up in the finance community.

Some of us go away first, for an education and to start our careers. But as opportunities arise, we're finding our way back, even if it means a change of lifestyle or less money. Some things matter more.

Alan Lewis, a Shallotte native, is making a living as an engineer, myself as a news editor. Look around and see how many county natives are finding, like the newcomers to our area, that Shallotte, that Brunswick County, isn't just a starting place. It's also a place to come home to.



BROWN THRASHERS are found in all parts of the Carolinas at all seasons of the year.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

Listen This Spring For The Brown Thrasher's Song

Within the next few weeks we can expect to hear a Brown Thrasher singing from the top of a small tree. Now is the time when we can see this Blue Jay-sized bird with the heavily striped breast and reddish-brown back.

One of the "mimic thrushes" in our area, the Brown Thrasher sings the songs of other birds like the Mockingbird and the Catbird. The Mockingbird will sing a bird's song three times in a row and the Catbird only once. The Brown Thrasher sings the song twice and this can be a clue to the identity when the bird cannot be seen.

Brown Thrashers are about 11½ inches long with strong legs, a long tail, a slightly curved bill, and a yellow eye. The only similar birds of the



Bill Faver

same color are the true thrushes with shorter tails, no wing bars, and are heavily spotted on the breast, and have brown eyes.

Thrashers are found in all sections of the Carolinas at all seasons. Overgrown fields, hedgerows, woodland edges, and yards of residences are preferred habitats of

Brown Thrashers. They prefer to feed on the ground, scratching among dead leaves for grubs, beetles, spiders, grasshoppers, caterpillars, and other insects. Thrashers also eat seeds and fruits but insects make up more than 60 percent of their food. The noisy "thrashing about" under the shrubs is probably the source of the bird's name. They can be heard when they can't be seen, since they are usually secretive and difficult to see.

Nests are cupped and bulky with several layers of small twigs and sticks, leaves, grasses, paper, string and other soft materials. Fine roots line the inside of the cup and make the bed for the 3-6 greenish-blue tinged eggs spotted with reddish-brown. Nests may be placed within one foot

of the ground up to 5-6 feet and are usually in bushes, vines, or low-growing shrubs. Incubation takes 12-14 days and the young stay in the nest about 11 days. Both parents share in the nesting duties beginning in mid-May and they can raise 2-3 broods each season.

In *The Habitat Guide to Birding*, Thomas McElroy writes, "The Brown Thrasher arrives quietly and often unnoticed. The male may be around for a week or two before he announces the defense of his selected territory from atop a shrub or small tree."

Listen this spring for the thrasher's song and take time to watch very interesting birds as they live their lives among us.

USA's Hopes May Rest With Olympic Curlers

The United States has had its troubles in these XV Winter Olympics.

In fact, it took the almighty Americans four days to get their first medal, which turned out to be just an old bronze.

With the Soviets dominating the first few days of competition, there haven't been too many memorable moments so far for team USA.

You may remember I wrote about the Superbowl a couple of weeks ago. Well, ABC has done another bang-up job with hype in these Olympics. This country has been drowned with hours and hours of athlete profiles and great moments from years past.

But while ABC was leading most of America to believe the United States had a shot at capturing just about every medal out there, I wasn't falling for it.

I learned by watching the Superbowl, which was also supposed to be great, that when ABC promotes something this much, it must be because the actual competition isn't going to be that good.

They've been concentrating a lot on ice hockey, which I don't mind at all. But I do mind the constant comparison of this year's squad to 1980's "Miracle On Ice," when team USA, a major underdog, defeated the Russian Bear and went on to win the gold medal. That was eight years ago, and even though it was a fantastic moment, I don't need to be reminded of it every three seconds.

With USA's losses to the Czechs and Soviets last week, the gold medal in this year's games appeared to be an unattainable goal. In fact, any medal at all would have been surprising.



Doug Rutter

But it really shouldn't surprise anyone that the United States has been taking it on the chin. I mean, besides hockey, look at some of the events in which we are competing.

Can the American coaches and public truly expect anyone from New Jersey (no offense intended) to compete in ski jumping with a guy named Matti Nykanen, a.k.a. "The Flying Fin"?

And how can the United States compete with the European downhill ski teams. Those Swiss are born wearing skis on their feet and crash helmets on their craniums. And the name Pirmin Zurbriggen is pretty intimidating if you ask me.

The luge has also not yielded any American medals. Certainly you remember the luge, that event in which half-crazed individuals lie down on a small sled and slingshot themselves down an ice-laden track at speeds exceeding 70 mph.

It turned out that a 22-year-old East German, Jens Mueller, won that event. But he has been lugging since age eight. (I wonder how long Frank Masley, USA's top finisher, has been lugging. Probably not too long since there aren't any luge runs in Newark, Del.)

In the pairs figure skating competi-

tion, it appeared that any contestant with the letter "v" in his or her name was victorious. The Soviet pair of Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov took the gold, while teammates Elana Valova and Oleg Vasiliev finished second. Given those circumstances, the USA pair of Jill Watson and Peter Oppgaard was fortunate to pick up a bronze medal.

But all may not be lost. I'm pinning our gold medal hopes on the men's curling team, even though curling is only a demonstration sport this winter.

Believe it or not, the USA curlers were 3-1 and tied for first place with Norway and Canada after the first four games/matches. And they have

absolutely no pressure on them.

I hope ABC does something right during these Olympics and shows some of the curling games/matches before it's all over. I think everyone would admit that the thought of one guy sliding a 42-pound rock down the ice towards a small target while his teammates rub brooms in its path is somewhat interesting.

And if the American team does finish near the top of the heap, just think of the economic boom caused by the sale of several thousand "I'd Rather Be Curling" bumper stickers and the hundreds of curling centers which will undoubtedly sprout up out of nowhere. It's kinda frightening.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Open Season Year 'Round

To the editor:

I was very much disturbed, appalled, disgusted and flabbergasted to read of the fact that deputies of Pender County had performed what appeared to be a deliberate act of murder on a 70-year-old citizen of Pender County.

I wondered where was the justification for such an act of violence? According to my understanding of the Holy Bible, Psalms 90-10, the days of our years are three score and ten (70 years). Here was an individual who had already lived the allotted time as prescribed, was in the twilight years of his life, frail, weak, rundown, partially senile and yet two able bodied men were unable to subdue this man

without taking his life.

If my understanding of this incident was correct, Mr. Cromartie was accused of attacking one deputy with a screwdriver. I wonder how much force would have used if Mr. Cromartie had been white?

During my youthful days my father was an enthusiastic hunter and abided by the law of the state concerning hunting season and open season on game. There were certain times of season that he did not hunt or allow his family to hunt because of open and closed seasons.

But it appears that in America, it's open season on blacks year 'round.

Jesse A. Bryant, President
 Cedar Grove Branch, NAACP
 Supply