

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Thursday, March 17, 1988

They're Having A Party!

They're having a party up at Morehead City next Thursday night. Ya'll are invited to help say—a la Robin Williams—"Goodbye, Red Tide!"

Barring a party of our own (but we don't have a civic center like the Crystal Coast), there couldn't be a better way to celebrate after four very long and gloomy months shared with an unwelcome stranger named, of all things, "ptychodiscus brevis." That sounds more like a short, fast dance than a lingering bloom of red stuff that shuts down oyster and clam beds, costs people money and makes them sick, one way or another.

To make the party even more attractive, fishermen and their families hit hard by the red tide will benefit.

Tickets are \$10 (or more if you like) and can't be bought anywhere around here. But you can call one co-sponsor, the Division of Marine Fisheries, toll-free, at 1-800-682-2632 8 am.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday. Or just show up at the door.

The partying starts at 4:30 p.m. with snacks, drinks, entertainment and door prizes, continues from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. with a fish fry. At 9 p.m. the band starts up.

And who knows? It might just be the Blue Oyster Cult.

Beach Water Is Tasting Much Better

A few years ago, a vacation at the beach was kind of like a trip to Mexico—you were guaranteed a good time as long as you didn't drink the water.

While that is starting to change, it's going to take a while longer for Brunswick County water to gain the confidence of upstate visitors like the ones my wife and I entertained recently.

They hadn't been in the area longer than an hour when their prejudice surfaced.

"And what would you like to drink with your meal?" the pretty waitress at a Calabash restaurant asked the couple dining with us.

The wife, who had earlier told us she was on a diet, was having a difficult time deciding on a beverage to go with the platter of fried shrimp, french fries, cole slaw and hush puppies she'd just ordered.

"I'll just have water," the dieter finally replied, apparently having determined that the calories she'd save on the drink would justify indulging on the food.

Her husband—a tall, lanky fellow who's never dieted in his life—ordered a cola. My wife and I asked for coffee and tea.

But when the waitress turned to leave our table, the dieter suddenly remembered where she was.

"No, wait!" she exclaimed. "Is your water any good? I can't stand beach water."

"Yeah, that's why I got a cola," her husband added. "The water's terrible down here."

Having grown accustomed to the water in Calabash, where we live, it took me a couple of seconds to understand their concern. But the waitress, who evidently was used to comments of that sort, was quick to correct our friends.

"Our water is good," the waitress politely stated. "We have city water here."

"Well, I'll have a diet cola anyway," our visitor told the waitress.

Although I was somewhat embarrassed by my friends' attitudes, I must confess that I used to be a beverage bigot, too.

After being raised in the mountains, I even had second thoughts about wetting my toothbrush with local tap water during the first couple of months we lived here.

I kept the bottled water industry in the black, spending more money on water each week than on milk. Our kitchen started to look like a plastic jug warehouse.

I even made my mother-in-law, who lives in the mountains, promise to bring us a few gallons of water before I'd let her come visit.

But I eventually discovered that Brunswick County water—the "city" water mentioned earlier—is as good as almost any other kind, although I'm sure some folks will disagree.

Rahn Adams



It also helped to find out that the distilled water I'd been guzzling came from Burlington and not some cool, clear mountain spring.

So having finally become a true local who drinks the water, I was really proud of myself—until my wife and I dined in Myrtle Beach, S.C., not long after our friends' visit.

"Excuse me, miss," I called to the waitress. "My unsweetened iced tea tastes funny."

"There ain't nothing wrong with your tea," she said wearily. "That's just the beach water we use to make it."

"Oh," I responded, suddenly feeling like a tourist again. "Then I'll have a cola instead—a diet cola."

They Can Do That, Little Flycatcher

"Whoa. They can't do that—can they?"

That was our first reaction last week to an advertisement that came into the office, offering payment for locally-harvested Venus flytraps.

To our amazement, we learned that these days it is legal to harvest Venus's flytrap in North Carolina—provided one works within a few simple guidelines which we'll get into later.

Last we had heard, digging up flytraps from in the wild was against the law. We thought Venus's flytrap—a rare, carnivorous bog plant native only to an area within about 75 miles around Wilmington—was still under special protection as a potentially threatened or endangered species.

The ad set off a flurry of phone calls to a variety of places—the district attorney's office, the Wildlife Resources Commission and the N.C. Department of Agriculture.

Marge Boyer, a plant ecologist in the N.C. Department of Agriculture's minuscule plant conservation program (which cares for rare plants), told us, "It can be collected."

"We looked at it and found out how much of it there was and how it was reproducing. While it is found naturally in only a small area, we found out it was doing quite well where it was. We don't think it needs legal protection."

Venus flytrap can be harvested, but there are some simple guidelines to follow if you plan to do so: 1) You must have a collection certificate

It happened to me again the other day.

I had just finished eating a wholesome, nutritious meal at a local major fast food restaurant, and I was prepared to do my lawful duty of dumping what remained on my tray into the trash can when I was suddenly greeted by an unruly pile of waste.

If you can imagine it, this mess of other people's food leapt out of the can and onto my tray.

And it wasn't the first time this had happened.

But why is it that the cans in fast food places are always overflowing?

I invariably see employees change the trash liner every half hour and those are pretty big cans. It should take a good while to stuff one of those suckers. So why is it that you always have to struggle to get your trash into the can without touching something sticky?

You may ask where all of this is leading. Well, have you ever heard of a sniglet?

A sniglet is a word or phrase used to describe an object or situation for

Doug Rutter



which there is no word or phrase.

For example, an "ignisecond" is the overlapping moment of time when the hand is locking the car door even as the brain is saying "My keys are in there!"

To get back to my original thought, it is my opinion that there exists no situation on earth that deserves a sniglet more than the one described above.

The term "canjested" could therefore be used to describe the feeling of utter frustration and violence which often accompanies the act of dumping trash at a fast food restaurant.

That brings another thing to mind.

What would you call those convenient little containers used to package the real beef burgers at all fast food joints?

Since the idea behind those small wonders of technology is keeping the meat fresh and hot, the name "neothermo-beef box" might be appropriate.

But because they also serve admirably as french fry holders, something like "later lodge" or "fritter shack" could work just as well.

Or maybe we should just keep it simple and call them "burger beds."

How about a sniglet for the fear experienced when attempting to open a package of chocolatey cupcakes without having 99 percent of the icing stick to the darned wrapping paper.

The term "plastolickaphobia" might be a winner.

And couldn't the term "infogrit" be used to describe the dirt and grime which accumulates on the tip of every finger while reading a newspaper.

A sniglet which I use quite often is

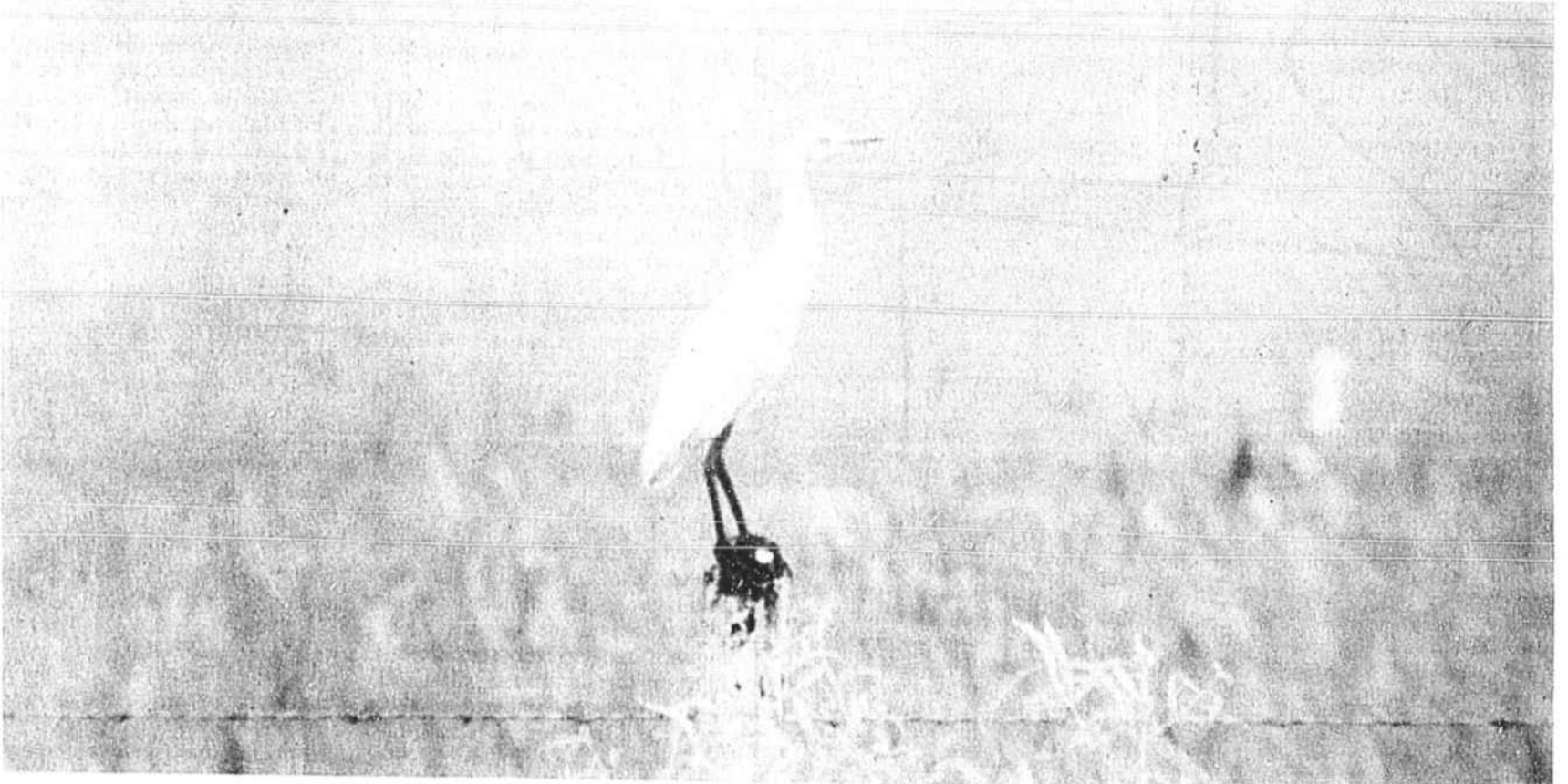
"motocough." This describes the strange sounds made by any vehicle, particularly mine, after the motor has been turned off. Although lately these noises have sounded more like "motohacks."

What it all comes down to is that there are thousands of objects and situations out there that have no identity. Sniglets can provide some direction and shortcuts in day-to-day living. If not, they certainly make you think and maybe provide some laughs.

Why, the term "sniglet" is a sniglet itself. Although don't ask me to explain it.

One other object which I feel is deserving of a sniglet but has stumped me is the tiny mechanism which is the key to any stereo system kit, but is missing in 99 percent of them.

If you readers have any suggestions for this one or any other interesting sniglets, feel free to drop me a letter. I'd be happy to look them over and possibly include them in a future column.



CATTLE EGRETS are about 20 inches tall and have yellow bill and legs.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

Cattle Egrets Have Returned To The Area

Cattle egrets have returned to our fields and roadsides. This 20-inch white bird can be seen chasing insects or standing around with cattle. The yellow bill and yellow legs distinguish the Cattle egret from other herons and egrets. In spring the breeding plumage shows some rusty-buff markings along the head, neck, and on the back. Cattle egrets are relatively newcomers to America, arriving in Florida in the early 1940's. Since that time, they have spread all across the country and are now found in Alaska. Cattle egrets now outnumber all other herons and egrets in our country.

One of the mysteries of bird life is why this central African bird was content to remain settled in its



Bill Faver

habitat for hundreds of years and then begin to migrate in the late 1800's. It crossed the Atlantic, 1900 miles, to arrive in Dutch Guiana (now Suriname) in South America in 1877; it extended its range to South Africa in 1884, and to North Africa, Spain, and Asia in 1916. By 1946, Cattle egrets were found in Australia. By

1952, they were identified along the Atlantic coast. By 1977, they were in the mid-west and in Alaska by 1981. Now they are on every continent except Antarctica.

Cattle egrets feed on insects and are not limited to habitats adjacent to water as are the other herons and egrets. They feed along with horses and cattle, catching insects stirred up by the moving animals or standing on the backs of the animals to pick off flies and ticks. This symbiotic relationship is helpful to both the birds and animals. Nests are usually located in established rookeries with other egrets and herons. Nests will contain two to five eggs. Cattle egrets will fly up to 20

miles from the nests to feed during the day. Sometimes this feeding is accomplished by following a tractor and plow to find the grubs dug up along the way!

These birds seem to migrate when the insect supply begins to dwindle. Cattle egrets fly to southern Mexico and Central America and return to our area in March and April.

Cattle egrets joined the English Sparrow and Starling as "exotics"—species not native to our area. As far as we can tell, Cattle egrets are helpful insect eaters and area welcomed addition to our birdlife in the Carolinas. Watch for them along the roadsides and fields in Brunswick County.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bring Big-Spending Politicians Back To The World Of Reality

To the editor:

Two items in the same March 8 issue of the "Washington Times" prove that our Capital "D" Democracy official lack the judgment necessary to deal with the problems of our times.

The lead paragraph of one item reads: "The inmate population at the year-old 594-cell Prince George's County Correctional Center yesterday reached a record high of 1,003, and officials say they are taking steps to contend with the problem."

The lead paragraph of the second item shows how the county's chief executive, Parris Glendening was deluged with it: He was brandishing a Soviet AK-47 assault rifle at Maryland legislators, lobbying for a proposed new law which would add five to 20 years to the sentence of any drug dealer who carried or used a gun while engaged in any facet of drug traffic and doubling that if the weapon was a machine gun or a hand gun with a silencer.

The political theatrics were generated by the fact that the AK-47 was only one of 140 weapons seized from drug dealers in the past nine months there and the concern that dealers now use guns "to settle their business disputes."

The C. "D" D. state's attorney says "Numerous apartments are now being turned into armed camps. Some residents have told us they have been kept awake, literally all night long,

by sounds of gunfire."

Brunswick County citizens need to know that in this Maryland County of very liberal politics and big government spending the new jail facility there was designed to add only a couple hundred cells more than the old jail accommodations which were overcrowded by hundreds at the time of building decision . . . and following the experience of the District of Columbia whose statistics were still wet on the blotter, the judges, temporarily freed of logistical limitations, quickly filled up the new jail to overflowing.

In addition, this new "state of the art" structure cost in excess of \$43 million (and proved to be escapable anyway) . . . or about \$72,000 per cell or \$43,000 per prisoner at overload capacity.

Now \$72,000 will house at least three or four decent citizens very well, even around Washington.

And if the police can't penetrate apartment fortresses and root out the gun wielding dealers with superior firepower and brainpower and save us from some of the tedious Democracy procedures tending to overflow our jails, one wonders how any new laws will help.

But given some few successes, the future influx of drug-related prisoners will require the release of other criminals (doubtless eager to get into the big money drug business (See LETTERS, Page 6-A)



Susan Usher

from the state; 2) you must have the permission of the property owner if digging plants from other than on your own land; and 3) you must be aware there are some places in Brunswick County where the plants cannot be legally harvested. These include 14,000 acres of state gameland and the Nature Conservancy's Green Swamp Preserve, according to Charles Raines, master officer in Brunswick County for the Wildlife Resources Commission. The gamelands begin about one mile west of Supply on N.C. 211. They're marked by signs along the perimeter. The Conservancy's area is also off N.C. 211, some miles farther west, adjoining the gamelands.

Raines is concerned—and given past local problems with flytrap poaching on public and private lands—that once the ad gets out, "they'll be on everybody's property," with or without permission, whether or not it's legal.

While currently of the opinion that the flytrap doesn't need protection, the ag department does want to keep up with how many people are harvesting it, as well as other plants

that are popular with collectors and therefore potentially vulnerable.

That's where the "collection certificate" comes in.

It costs a mere \$1, according to Gene Cross, a nursery inspector for the agriculture department. It can be ordered from the Plant Protection Section, N.C. Department of Agriculture, Raleigh, NC 27611, Attention: Al Martin, Eastern Area Supervisor. It asks for basic information such as name, address, and the types of plants you intend to collect.

The data is monitored by the nursery inspectors and updated/renewed regularly.

Asked if there had been applications from Brunswick County, Martin replied, "Oh, yes."

He noted that if the office were to be flooded with collection applications, or if there were other evidence of over-collecting, the department might consider giving the Venus flytrap special protection again.

Meanwhile, the little flycatcher's on its own.

What Is Wrong With Us?

To the editor:

If I served as a representative in the Congress of the United States, I'll be damned if I wouldn't feel ashamed if I sent money by the millions all over the globe, and left blind veterans of our wars to beg for help through the Blinded Veterans Association. What is wrong with us?

Earl L. Markland
 Calabash