

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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This Is Your Chance To Speak A Litter Bit

This is your chance, maybe the only one for a long while—your chance to tell the county that litter is a problem here and that there's something county government can do about it.

Or, if you can possibly believe litter is not a problem, they need to hear from you also.

This opportunity has come up rather suddenly, too quickly for many groups to get the word out among members. But there's still time to act, to speak out, as concerned citizens.

Tonight (Thursday) at 7 p.m. Brunswick County Commissioners are holding a meeting—described in an advertisement last week as an official "public hearing"—concerning the county's litter problem. The hearing will be held in the Public Assembly Building at the Brunswick County Government Center. Guest speaker will be Sarah Humphries, director of Onslow Clean County and a trainer for Keep America Beautiful Inc., the national organization with which the Jacksonville group is affiliated. She spoke to commissioners 1½ years ago, at which time they promised to have her come back and speak to community groups, with the idea of gauging local interest in starting a countywide anti-litter effort. Apparently this is that return visit.

A lot of private individuals and community groups are working quietly on the county's litter problem, but these efforts are generally in the nature of clean-ups along specific streets and in specific neighborhoods.

Few of the groups are working together; partly because one organization typically doesn't know what another has planned. It doesn't have to be that way, as Ms. Humphries will explain tonight.

It doesn't matter that some county officials won't even admit publicly that Brunswick County has a "litter problem;" those of us who drive the roads and walk the beaches know better. It does matter that county officials to date haven't recognized the importance of litter as it relates to the county's public image and to its citizens' self-image.

As it addresses other concerns regarding solid waste disposal, Brunswick County needs also a long-term approach for dealing with litter: An ongoing campaign to educate and inform the public; to recognize those who work toward cleaning up and beautifying the environment; to help instill pride in community; and to provide the leadership needed to help coordinate the efforts of individuals, schools, organizations, business and government.

You can help county commissioners decide just how pressing a problem litter is in Brunswick County—and whether the county is going to take the lead in addressing that problem.

Those who can't make tonight's meeting should write—not just call—their commissioner(s) immediately and go on the record regarding litter. Address your letter to Brunswick County Commissioners, P.O. Box 249, Bolivia, NC 28422.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Who Should You Contact For Help?

To the editor:
 As a resident and taxpayer of Brunswick County, I must say that our county commissioners and county department heads are very unprofessional and discourteous to their constituents and residents.

After numerous letters and phone calls, never has anyone had the courtesy to return a call or reply by mail.

It is a sad day for all Brunswick residents to have these types represent us and work for our county. Do they know who they work for? Do they remember who elected them? I guess not!

If you have a problem, who should

you contact for help and direction... I guess not our elected or county officials.

Dick Gibson, President
 Carolina Shores North
 Home Owners Association

Time For Move

To the editor:
 Have had a good winter in Florida and enjoyed our Beacon every week as usual. Now it is time to head home to North Carolina. Please change the address on our subscription from "Sunshine Key" back to Holden Beach.

James & Ruth Athey
 Holden Beach

I Believe It Was Beginners' Luck

Doug Rutter



The practice field of West Brunswick's hunter safety team was my destination two weekends ago.

After writing a story on the team and the Wildlife Commission hunter safety program in general, I needed an action photo to go with it.

So I drove out Old Shallotte Road (for the first time in my life) and, amazingly enough, found what I was looking for.

When I first arrived, the archery team was practicing.

To say the least, my previous experiences in archery were quite limited. Although I had witnessed some fancy shooting at the Brunswick Big Buck Archery Shoot just one short week before, my personal relationship with bow and arrow had never really gotten off the ground.

Like most of the kids I grew up with in suburban Philadelphia, I didn't

have much experience shooting a bow.

A couple of us did have those Chief Sitting Bull Bows. You know, the kind that shoot plastic arrows and break after two days of wear and tear.

But you couldn't really consider anyone in my neighborhood a threat with one of those things. Half the time the arrow went backwards or only flew 10 feet.

And the big foam target we aimed for barely had a scratch when it was finally stowed away in the bowels of

our basement. In fact, those arrows probably did more damage to the blades of my father's riding lawnmower than the target.

Anyhow, after snapping some pictures of the archery squad in action, we all packed up and headed out to the skeet shooting range.

Now if you can imagine my knowledge being very limited in the line of archery, believe that it was almost non-existent when it came to skeet.

The only thing I knew about skeet shooting was that you yelled "Pull!" when you wanted a skeet to take off. (I never understood why that one word induced those birds to fly, but I would have felt stupid asking anyone.)

I did learn two things about the sport by watching the first person shoot. First of all, those skeet fly a lot slower than I thought. And second of

all, those guns are a lot louder than I thought.

After I had taken a few more pictures, Wildlife Enforcement Officer Fred Taylor asked me if I wanted to take a shot.

Almost instantly, I flipped back through the pages of my memory, frantically searching for some moment in history when I had experienced anything similar to shooting skeet.

I came across a few times when I had fired a friend's B.B. gun. But those targets were just sitting there asking to be hit, and I was never very good at that anyway.

I also recalled that I had been in my share of water pistol fights. But then again, I came out on the losing end of those more often than not.

And after watching various members of the skeet team shoot down five in a row or take out two at the same time, I was somewhat intimidated. I guess I'm like most people in that I don't relish the thought of making a fool out of myself.

I politely declined the offer, but had this strange feeling I wasn't going to get out of it that easily.

I was right. A few minutes later, Fred pulled the ear plugs from his head, picked up a rifle and glanced my way with the funniest grin on his face.

"Come over here, Doug," he said. It was too late to back out now. The team members started hootin' and hollerin' and there was absolutely nothing I could do. I was doomed. I was destined to look like an idiot.

Tentatively, I put down my camera bag. (For a moment, I thought of jumping inside it. But that would have been the wimpy way out, and I didn't want anyone comparing me to George Bush.)

Before I knew it, Fred had placed an unloaded rifle in position and we were taking aim on a real live skeet.

After the trial run, he loaded the gun and again placed it in the crook of my shoulder so the kick wouldn't knock me over.

Then, in the space of about two seconds, my whole life changed. Everything came in flashes. I took a deep breath, yelled "Pull," watched the skeet fly about 50 feet, gradually get a line on it, squeezed the trigger, felt the kick, tried to focus my eyes and asked if I hit it. Yes.

I can only describe the feeling as utter astonishment bordering on disbelief. It was like the feeling you might get if you were blindfolded and threw a basketball behind your back from half court and nailed it three times in a row.

I was so amazed that I wasn't even excited about it. The only words I managed to get out were, "That was a real thrill."

One team member remarked that I had good form, and I had to laugh. I believe it was just a case of beginner's luck.

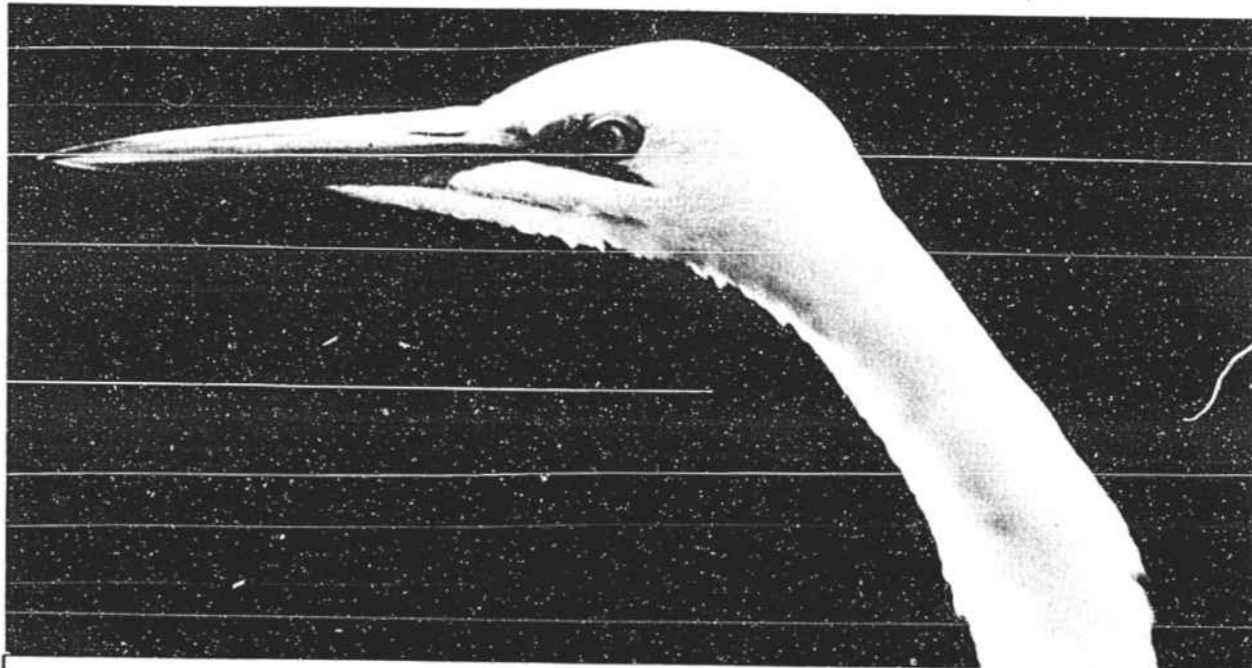


PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

SOMEDAY we may have to "take a number" to enjoy our natural areas.

Take A Number!

BY BILL FAVER



in line!

Recently I was thinking about how crowded beaches can become and how recreational facilities can become overrun with people. I expect when that happens, we will have to wait in our cars for a place to park, and then, take a number in order to gain access to a place on the sandy shore. It is almost to this point in places like New York, Atlantic City, Southern California and South Florida. Our number would prob-

ably be good for only a few hours, so that we might move along to make room for those who had the next numbers. Such a horrid thought is not outside the realm of possibilities.

Numbers would probably be required for such places and the most popular national parks and national seashores. The vastness of Cape Hatteras National Seashore in winter could become an overcrowded assemblage of refugees from Washington, Norfolk and other large cities. Maybe it would even become a lottery—buy a number and hope you can win a place on the beach!

Let's just hope this never comes to be! Hope that we will be spared such crowds and such inhuman treatments as having to "take a number" to use our beautiful beaches. But we need to do more than hope alone. We need to work to see that adequate areas are provided and adequate facilities are constructed to care for those who come to our beaches. Leave the "take a number" approach to the offices and the bureaucrats!

Black-Eyed Susans Are Perennial Hit

Susan Usher



When you think of wild flowers, what flower pops into your mind first?

For me, it's the tall, cheerful black-eyed Susan—and not just because we have our name in common. As a child, the borders of the fields beside our house south of Shallotte were filled with these sun-loving flowers. My sisters and I would pick them for scraggly-looking bouquets, stuffing them into the brown ceramic jug that stood on the maple bookcase, perhaps adding a few of the tiny, long-stemmed bluets that seemed to always be in bloom at the same time.

And black-eyed Susans were excellent choices for playing "He loves me, he loves me not," as we tore away one showy yellow petal after another. Left was what appeared to be a dark center, but which was really a cluster of many tiny flowers. Later, there would be seed—like sunflower seed, but a lot smaller. I

never tried to eat one, as much as we loved sunflower seed.

This spring, it was exciting to learn that the black-eyed Susan has been named the state's "Wild Flower of the Year" by the North Carolina Botanical Garden and The Garden Club of North Carolina Inc. They and garden clubs across the state will be promoting black-eyed Susans for cultivation in home gardens and landscapes during the coming year. And the Eggert household is doing its part.

Some Rudbeckia fulgida seeds are already coming up in a small flat in the east window, and will soon be ready to move outside. With luck, there will be bright, tall yellow flowers blooming behind the silver-dust for years to come.

And last Wednesday, a long-awaited envelope from the Botanical Garden arrived, with a brochure and a small packet of seed. Free seed. Three kinds of black-eyed Susan seed to keep the garden bright from midsummer through fall: Rudbeckia hirta, the native black-eyed Susan of my childhood, and the more civilized Rudbeckia fulgida var. sullivantii—the official Wildflower of the Year, and some R. fulgida var. fulgida tossed in for a longer growing season.

Maybe, with plants in our gardens, those gaily-waving flowers along the roadside won't seem quite so temp-

ting to stop and pick—or dig.

The sponsors call it "conservation through propagation."

You, too, can plant your own black-eyed Susans, courtesy of these two sponsors. Write to "1988 Wild Flower of the Year," North Carolina Botanical Garden, University of North Carolina, Totten Center 457A, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, or call (919)967-2246. Enclose a self-addressed legal size stamped envelope. Additional seed are available for special projects, such as community beautification efforts, parks and the like.

Don't drag your feet: Response to the 1988 wild flower project has been so positive that, as of February 1988, 5,000 free seed packets and brochures with information on cultivation and germination have been distributed.

What a nice idea. And, as the garden folks say, "Good growing."

Time For A Visit From G.H. Rabbit

Rahn Adams



I don't know why, but for the past couple of weeks, I've had old friends on my mind a lot and one in particular.

Maybe it's the sight of buds and blossoms on a clear, cool morning; the sound of crickets, tree frogs and countless other little boogers at night; or just the sweet smell of springtime in the air that reminds me of my pal.

It doesn't take much prompting to get most folks to come see me, mainly due to the natural beauty of the South Brunswick Island's splendid beaches. But a visit from this one good, old buddy—who I'd think would be champing at the bit for a vacation—is long overdue.

I imagine he's been kind of preoccupied lately, though, with Easter right around the corner. Although he's busy year-round, his job really

keeps him hopping this time of year.

His name is G.H. Rabbit, and he works as the mascot—err, communications specialist—for my hometown's frequent anti-litter campaigns. His initials stand for "Good Habit," but he prefers "G.H." because it sounds more professional.

He's so popular there that his picture is on every garbage can downtown. I expect him to run for mayor someday, and he'll probably

win—as long as he doesn't get overconfident about his many accomplishments and let someone overtake him in the mayoral race.

He especially has a way with kids. They turn out in droves whenever "Hoppy," as they fondly call him, makes an appearance at a city park. They're only a little less excited when he visits them at school.

Hoppy's main duty is to instill community pride in folks of all ages. He wants them to be proud of their town's and county's appearance. But he also works hard at simply reminding people where to toss their trash.

He's the first to admit that it's a never-ending battle to fight litter, and he would probably agree that Brunswick is a good example of a county that may be winning some battles but is losing the war.

Over the past couple of weeks, I've

noticed that in many parts of Brunswick County it's hard to appreciate the wonder of spring simply because highway trash is a more overwhelming sight than the trees and flowers that are blossoming.

U.S. 17 and other heavily-traveled highways here often look more like obstacle courses than roads when the pavement is littered with cardboard boxes, paper bags, drink cans and refuse in general. I'd rather dodge 10 dead 'possums than one bottle or can. Dead 'possums don't roll around in the road, and they're biodegradable besides.

Hoppy probably won't appreciate that remark, having had more than his share of close calls while crossing the road to pick up litter. But as he always says, "It's a dirty job, but somebody's gotta do it."

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