

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## It's That Time Of Year

It's that time of year again—winds are up, rains are down, and Brunswick County's starting to dry out. Wildfire season has arrived.

If one needs more proof that it's time to be concerned, there's a ban on burning in effect in Brunswick and adjacent counties, and no rain in the immediate forecast.

Traditionally woods fires have been contained by working with boundaries such as ditches, roads, open fields. But, as more and more people build homes and businesses in Brunswick and adjoining counties, those rules don't work as well as they once did. More "interface" is created between woodland and development. With the increased threat to lives and structures, the urgency of the situation heightens also.

Thursday afternoon—before the burning ban was imposed by the North Carolina Forest Service—the service and local volunteer firefighters battled woods blazes in Ash and Supply communities.

The fire in Ash imminently threatened homes and businesses. The Forest Service and local volunteer fire companies quashed it quickly in an impressive joint effort. While two plows cut a line around the fire and a vintage contract airplane dropped chemical retardant from the air, volunteer firefighters from three departments stationed themselves around homes and businesses, pouring on water to stay the approaching flames.

Tactics used to fight the Prospect fire, going at the same time, were more traditional. In a thinly-habitated rural area north of Supply, the fire burned approximately 70 areas before containment, but posed no immediate threat to lives or structures. In this joint effort, volunteer firefighters worked to prevent the woods fire jumping the roadway and spreading to another area.

What does all this mean? That there's a genuine need for caution and common sense when handling fire.

Prevent wildfires: Instead of tossing out matches or grinding cigarettes into the ground, dispose of them properly. Use a barrel with top grate when burning outside and clear around the barrel several feet. Don't leave fires unattended and keep a rake, shovel and water hose handy. Don't burn on windy days.

When burning, stay within the laws: Check with the Forest Service towers at Bolivia, Shallotte or Maco on whether a permit is needed, and whether a ban is in effect. The best conditions to burn in, according to County Ranger Miller Caison, are days when the winds are light, the temperature is low and the humidity is high.

And, report all wildfires and careless burning to the Forest Service as well.

## You Can Make A Difference

Last year, of the 55,000 people who died in North Carolina, only 600 were organ/tissue donors.

Yet, in North Carolina alone, there are 150 to 200 people at any given time who are waiting for a donated cornea, and for the transplant surgery that offers the hope of sight. They may wait nearly three months, because too few people take the time to become organ donors in North Carolina.

The situation is similar all across the country, where more than 150,000 people will be hoping for a "miracle" this year. More than 100,000 adults and children with serious burns will need skin grafts, 2,000 will need bone marrow transplants, 7,000 will need kidney transplants and more than 3,000 will need corneal transplants.

How do you become an organ/tissue donor? It's simple, but you do need to go one step farther than simply having it noted on your North Carolina driver's license that you are an organ donor. First, you need to talk to family members and make them aware of your intentions and desires. Second, you need to obtain and carry an organ donor card. These are available free of charge from several sources, including local Lions Clubs and Carolina Organ Procurement Agency (COPA). COPA has a 24-hour, toll-free, statewide information line, 1-800-252-COPA. Call and a card will be in the mail tomorrow morning.

COPA is one of three organ procurement organizations in North Carolina. Serving the eastern part of the state, it was formed by Duke University Hospital, East Carolina University School of Medicine and North Carolina Memorial Hospital. Charlotte Memorial Hospital and Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem have their own procurement centers.

Seriously consider becoming an organ donor; talk it over with family members and your family doctor.

Each of us can make a difference; the organs and tissues of even a single donor can help many needy people.

## 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 2558, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.

## In Search Of The Perfect Bug Spray

Rahn Adams



sand flies instead of seagulls on their logos.

Spending our first spring on the coast, my wife and I encountered the tiny pests for the first time just over a month ago when we decided to play a little tennis. "A little tennis" was right, since I spent more time swatting bugs than tennis balls.

"What are these things?" I screamed across the net to my wife. "They're eating me alive!" She gave me a skeptical look and

prepared to serve despite my pleas for help. "Oh, quit whining," she replied. "I don't hear you complaining when you're winning."

She had a point—actually several points because I think she was ahead in that game, 40-Love. Needless to say, I threw in the towel shortly thereafter and literally headed for the showers.

A few days later I was attacked again as we went for what was supposed to be a leisurely Sunday morning stroll down the street to a nearby newsstand. It was Dec. 7, 1941, all over again, and I was Pearl Harbor.

"Stop jumping around so much," my wife scolded, as she helped slap the no-see-ums off the crown of my head. "You're going to get us both run over."

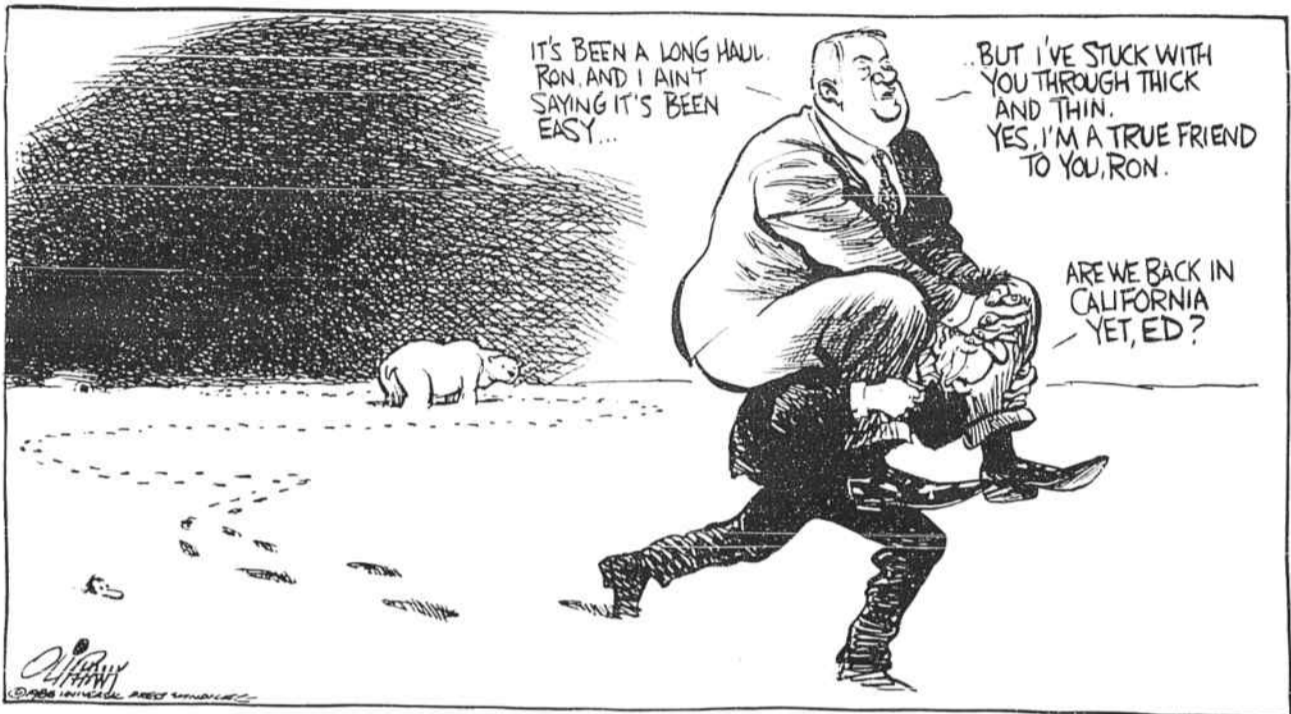
Right then, getting hit by a Winnebago would have put me out of my

misery. My wife, though, had everything to live for because, as usual, she wasn't being bombarded by kamikaze sand flies.

I decided then and there that if it was a fight they wanted, I would give it to them. It was war. Unfortunately I had to go out and buy some ammunition before I could get off a few shots of my own.

Even though wearing smelly bug repellent is almost as bad as putting up with the pests it repels, I bought two cans of a popular brand the other day—two cans, because the company will send me a free baseball cap if I mail in the proof of purchase seals.

I haven't had a chance to try it out yet, but I figure if the repellent doesn't work, I can at least use the cap to block the little devils' landing pad.



## Kids Ask The Darn'est Things

Doug Rutter



I've always heard that small kids tend to ask some pretty difficult questions.

But you know how it is, you never really believe those old wives' tales until you're actually thrust into a situation in which they are apt to come true.

I was thrust into such a situation last week, when I talked to a group of third-graders at Waccamaw Elementary School about my job at The Brunswick Beacon and the many complexities of how a newspaper comes into being each week.

(Incidentally, I recently learned from a very friendly, yet unforgiving crew of bus drivers that Waccamaw Elementary is not located "in the sticks," as I stated in a previous column. It seems the school is "in the country." I stand corrected.)

Anyway, I said I was thrust into this situation, but in reality, it was one of those circumstances where I semi-volunteered. To say the least, my heart really wasn't in it when I made the arrangements.

But like a trooper who could have persevered the toughest boot camp drill sergeants and maybe even Ollie North, I went through with it.

After talking specifically about my

job for a while and then about the newspaper business in general, I opened the floor to any questions.

Admittedly, I was half expecting a lot of blank looks on their faces and some silence to go with it, so I was prepared to have a newspaper scavenger hunt if they seemed uninterested.

Much to my surprise, however, I was faced with a barrage of the most basic, yet fascinating questions from the mouths of these youngsters.

Relating to the world of journalism by watching television shows and movies, a lot of these kids wanted to know what it's like to run around all day like a maniac, pushing and shoving people to get the information we need to write a story.

I tried to tell them that reporting is generally a gentle occupation, with most days consisting of several hours

on the phone and several hours in front of the computer terminal. It's not all undercover investigation a la Woodward and Bernstein.

Not only did those statements shatter their concept of the stereotypical news hound, it left some doubts in my mind as to whether the television series "L.A. Law" accurately portrays the legal profession.

The big minds of these little kids also wanted to know how we find out about all the shootings and murders and fires and car wrecks and other tidbits we feature on a weekly basis.

Well, I thought, another good question which I never would have thought to address in my little speech in a million years.

We have a scanner in the office, I told them, and we also have a reporter call the people who keep records of these things. Other times, I explained, folks just call us and tell us what's going on in the county.

These kinds of questions went on and on. They wanted to know it all. The toughest one was, "How do you know what questions to ask?"

I told the students that it's sometimes difficult to ask the right questions and often times we have to

go back and ask more questions. But like anything else, it's something you learn as you go along.

As the morning wore on, I realized that I was learning as much about my job as these kids were. Being a reporter on a daily basis, I had forgotten how complex the newspaper business really can be.

This was the first time I have visited a classroom to talk about what I do and I hope it's not the last. I went from being a half-hearted volunteer to a reporter eager to spread the word of his profession.

The best part of the whole deal, I think, was that I learned to make pressman's hats. The kids also learned, but I think I had more fun with it than most of them.

Even though some of the students may have been disappointed to learn that reporters aren't always racing around like decapitated chickens or kicking and scratching to get to the front of the interview line, I really had a good time giving these kids a feel for the reality of the newspaper business.

Whether they learned anything listening to me is hard to say. Anyway, I certainly learned something from them.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Shallotte Board Should Hire Qualified Fire Chief

To the editor:

From your April 14 paper, I see as usual the Shallotte Town Board, with their crone fire chief, are at it again. Instead of hiring a professional fire chief and letting the town develop a fire protection service worth having, they have come across the idea of purchasing aerial equipment.

Now if these people were talking about a \$50 mistake, as taxpayers, we could ignore their ignorance, but when they are talking about equipment which usually has a price tag of \$200,000 plus, I for one think it is about time something is done. To me \$200,000 is a whole lot of money to put out for protecting buildings that may be built!

Now the department does need to update their old 1954 pumper. But, if the town does not update their water system, and clean what they have, even a new pumper with the gallon capacity needed for the present fire protection load will be of little use.

The volunteers of the past have saved this town over \$300,000 a year in salaries and benefits, but this town board ran most all of them off and now has a department of mainly town employees.

It's a good thing we haven't had

any large fires because I don't know how the policemen are going to fight fire and evacuate people or handle traffic all at the same time. Nor do I see how the water department people are going to help with the water problems and try to be on the hoses too.

If this board continues with their arrogant and ignorant mistakes we will not only keep paying for their arrogance in lost volunteers, but will have an additional \$200,000 to pay to boot. This is also in addition to higher insurance payments, because the two most important items to the rating bureau is the water system, and the number and training of the firefighters, and our hydrant system is deplorable, and the number of firefighters is still below the state minimum. So, if we did have the buildings requiring an aerial truck, which we don't, such a truck would have little effect on the town's rating.

It may be of interest, too, to the people of this town who have fire insurance, to note that the rating bureau rates volunteers at 1/3 per paid, which means that it takes three volunteers to count as one paid member, and even though the town employees are being paid as employees, they do not count as paid

firemen.

And, should they be, there will have to be quite a few changes made to bring the remains of this department up to the OSHA standards required for a paid department.

So, if this board is truly interested in the citizen's safety and pocket-books, they will hire a National Fire Protection Association qualified chief officer. This will not only provide them with an expert from afar, since they scorn the local people, but will also be someone to insulate the future volunteers from the town board so they can serve their fellow citizens without being publicly abused for doing so by the board.

Susan Arnold  
Shallotte

### Members Of Congress Out Of Sync

To the editor:

These bits of not-so-trivial trivia may be of interest to your readers.

It is interesting to note that Senator

Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) is the sixth and final member of Congress to end his 1988 presidential bid, giving further credence to what is becoming conventional wisdom in Washington: sitting senators and congressmen just don't get presidential nominations anymore.

According to a bipartisan group of political experts surveyed by Roll Call, the newspaper of congress, the reasons mainly have to do with Washington itself.

"Members aren't nominated because their focus is so exclusively Washington," said Doug Bailey, a consultant and publisher of the Presidential Campaign Hotline. "They're not where the people are, they're not in sync with the public at large."

Only one member of congress has been nominated for president in the past 24 years, and he got clobbered.

Did you ever wonder the political leanings of brainy people? The statistics as compiled by the Joint Center for Political Studies in the new Congressional District Fact Book are fairly conclusive on the matter: nine of the ten congressional districts that have the highest pro-

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