

Living Together

Some of the most interesting relationships in the natural world are among the species that have developed partnerships as they live together. The term "symbiosis" describes the relationship and comes from the Greek, meaning "living together." There are several types of symbiosis in nature.



Bill Faver

One of these is the commensal relationship where one partner may not benefit, but is not harmed. The classic example of this type is the relationship of sharks and remoras, a small fish that attaches itself to the body of a shark. When the shark makes a feeding kill, the small fish detaches its suction cup head from the shark and feeds on the scraps. After feeding, it will again attach itself and hitchhike its way to another feeding.

A second type of symbiosis is parasitism. Here one partner benefits at the expense of the other. Tapeworms, ticks, leeches, and several other species require a partner, but contribute nothing to the partnership.

Mutualism is the third type of symbiotic relationship. Both partners benefit in this partnership. The cattle egrets we find feeding in the fields of our county in the summertime are good examples of mutualism. In their

homeland of Africa and in our pastures, the egrets move along with cattle. The egrets pick flies and other insects off the cattle. They find a ready food supply with the insects around the animals. Sometimes birds also serve as sentries as they warn the cattle of approaching danger.

In Africa, the wildebeest and the zebras often graze together. They can graze separately, of course, but it is thought they feed together to improve their chances of detecting predators. Wildebeest have slightly developed senses of hearing and smell; zebras have a better sense of sight. Together, they complement each other and improve their chances of survival.

Just why and how these relationships have developed over the years is not easy to answer. But awareness of them can alert us to some of the specialization needed to survive in the natural world.

GOP Issues County Platform Statement

Brunswick County's Republican Party is advocating non-partisan school board elections and widespread reform in local government in a party platform issued Tuesday at the opening of GOP headquarters in Bolivia for the 1988 campaign season.

"We believe that the most qualified individuals should serve as members of our school board, regardless of their party affiliation," the party's first county platform notes.

Signed by all 11 GOP candidates for local public office, the document addresses issues from drugs to jobs to taxes.

It recommends formation of non-partisan study commissions to address the issues of drug control, waste disposal and the essential needs of county government, the first three items on the list.

It also advocates a strengthening of links between the school system and families and a strengthening of school board policies and their application regarding drug abuse, discipline and personnel management.

"The number of county government employees is growing without justification," the platform states. "A planned study of the essential needs of county government, now and for the future, is long overdue."

The platform also calls for: "An 'expert review' of the school system, as well as budget accountability.

"Given the county's rapid population growth, tapping the background and experience of business people

and retirees in the county, regardless of their party affiliation.

•Promotion of county water system growth "in a manner that will be fair to all."

•Promotion of the appointment of "an imaginative and active industrial commissioner" that will work to secure light industry that will not jeopardize the environment while providing well paying jobs and positions.

•Work to "get the maximum value for every tax dollar spent" by eliminating waste and managing efficiently, rather than raising taxes.

The statement is signed by candidates for commissioner Kelly Holden, Gene Pinkerton and Frankie Rabon; for coroner, Larry Andrews; school board, Tom Pope, Bob Slockett and John Watkins; Register of Deeds, Bill Kirby; Clerk of Court, John R. Ramsey; N.C. Senate, Randy Sullivan; and N.C. House, Rozell Hewett.

After noting that when Republicans last controlled the county board of commissioners in 1972, taxes were cut 25 percent, the document adds that "it is time for a change."

"Vote Republican and let us show you what we can do."

In a conversation after the opening, school board candidate Tom Pope added, "Maybe it (the platform) will prompt the Democrats to come up with one."

GOP Headquarters is located just north of the Brunswick County Government Center near Bolivia.

BCC Learning Lab Offers Help At All Levels

BY DOUG RUTTER

The first week of any school year is typically marked with confusion. For some students, strange faces and strange places only add to what is already a stressful situation.

As Brunswick Community College begins its fall quarter this week, some students may find a haven from their hectic schedules and the assistance they need at the college learning lab.

Lynn Ruark, one of three college employees who works in the lab, said, "We're basically here to help the students any way we can." Betty Singletary and Jim Price are the other assistants.

Learning Lab Supervisor Hazel Williams said its three employees are invaluable to the hundreds of persons who use the lab each quarter. "They take a person wherever they are and take them where they want to go."

Despite a drop in enrollment last fall, records show that 455 persons used the learning lab facilities during the 11-week quarter. Ms. Ruark said she expects about 50 persons a week starting this week.

"We do a lot of our work with curriculum students who may be weak in one area and want to improve themselves," she said. Some students will come every day, while others will work some at the start of the quarter until they are confident of their abilities.

She explained that each student can work at his or her own pace in the learning lab and is not subject to any pressure to continue. Each student is encouraged to develop an individual plan and work independently or with one of the assistants.

Curriculum students, however, represent only a portion of the people who have access to the learning lab. Ms. Ruark said it is also used heavily by Adult Basic Education students in preparation for the General Equivalency Diploma exam.

Persons considering returning to school for one course or a degree also use the lab, added Ms. Singletary. "They come here and refresh themselves and brush up on a few things before they go back to school." Along the same line, she said many students use the lab facilities in preparation for placement tests.

In addition to individual instruction, the lab offers audio/visual equipment and a complete set of computer programs covering all basic education areas, such as reading and mathematics, included on the GED exam.

Ms. Ruark said the computer software is very popular among students because it gives immediate feedback. "It's more than just a place to come and learn from books. We try to make it as interesting as we can for the students."

The learning lab is also where students go to take make-up tests in curriculum courses or proficiency exams, which allow students to



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

LYNN RUARK, standing, introduces BCC developmental instructor Betty Aldrich to one of several computer programs offered in the college learning lab which deal with mathematics. The one used by Mrs. Aldrich tells all about fractions, while others teach addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, decimals, geometry and measurement.

receive credit for a particular course without actually sitting through the class.

Although it is part of the college, the lab facilities are open and free to any adult in the community. Ms. Ruark said only a few non-students have used the facilities over the years, mainly because most people are not aware the learning lab exists and is open to the public.

BCC's learning lab has been around since the school was established in 1979. But it was not until earlier this year when all of the college's curriculum programs moved to the main campus near Supply

that the facility was consolidated into one room.

The lab is located in the upper level of the classroom building (C-203), but will be moved into the ALS Building



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when it is completed early next year. Ms. Ruark, who has worked at the learning lab since 1981, said she has received quite a bit of feedback over the years from people who have used the facilities.

"One of the greatest rewards we get is when someone comes in a tells us how much they got out of the lab," she said. "That's what we like to hear."

Ms. Singletary, who has been at the college a little more than two years, said she has heard many people in the community comment on how the lab has helped them, a family member or friend.

Learning lab hours are 8:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Fridays.

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