

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweatt and Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Publishers  
 Edward M. Sweatt.....Editor  
 Susan Usher.....News Editor  
 Rahn Adams & Doug Rutter.....Staff Writers  
 Johnny Craig.....Sports Editor  
 Christine Ballou.....Office Manager  
 Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Advertising Director  
 Sue Barefoot & Timberley Adams.....Advertising Representatives  
 Tammie Galloway & Dorothy Brennan.....Typesetters  
 William Manning.....Pressman  
 Brenda Clemmons.....Photo Technician  
 Lonnie Sprinkle.....Assistant Pressman  
 Clyde and Mattie Stout, Phoebe Clemmons.....Circulation

Page 4-A Thursday, December 15, 1988

## Shopping From Santa's Letter Bag

Susan Usher



One of the things I like best about the Christmas season, at least here at the Beacon, is the stack of letters to Santa we get each year from local elementary school children.

From the first batch of carefully lettered notes that begin, "Dear Santa," I can tell right away what items are "hot" each Christmas. There's no need to call area merchants; I get it straight from the consumers, the kids.

Over the years, letters to Santa have remained essentially the same, though as a nation we're perhaps a little more selfish or greedy than forty or so years ago.

While researching the subject at a former place of employment, I found

that back in 1944, children who sent letters to Santa at "The News Herald" in Morganton wrote (in perfect English!) on topics such as world peace, a coat for their grandma, a bike for brother, candy and oranges and nuts for everyone, and of course, the best of everything for

themselves and their parents.

Some of the letters asked about the Claus family and the reindeer; many others made pleas for the needy of the world.

Kids are still asking for gifts for their immediate families and themselves.

This year, of course, the most common refrain may be, "I want a Nintendo." Repeat three times.

Scoters and trampolines are back in style in '88, and bikes and Barbies have never gone out of style. And some "Cabbage Patch" kids and babies are still popping up in Santa's letter bag. Anything associated with "wheels"—from Hot Wheels to tricycles to four wheelers—is a good

bet. Also safe for Santa's bag is most anything with "turbo" in the title, or Atari.

Kids' tastes are getting more expensive every year. If Don and I were parents, I'd be frightened by all the pressure. "No, we can't afford it" and "Why not X instead?" would be our own refrains.

It's nothing for kids to want—and expect to get—a TV, VCR, telephone, stereo, computer and camera of their own.

That's incredible. How much we take for granted. As another generation of Moms used to say, "Think of all the starving children." And not just in Africa.

## We Need To Give

BY BILL FAVER



There is the old story about two women overheard at a shopping center during the Christmas season. They were discussing the commercialization of Christmas and how busy they were with activities. One was heard to remark, "Why, even the churches are getting into it, with all the programs, and pageants, and bazaars!"

I hope what she meant was the churches were beginning to succumb to the commercial pressures of Christmastime. Of course, she could have meant the churches were beginning to be a part of Christmas.

Historians tell us the celebration of Christmas as a holiday event predates the birth of Christ and was centered around a midwinter festival. Most of our hanging of the greens, use of mistletoe, holly and decorations had little to do with the Christian people. The Christians adopted these rites and customs and adapted them for use in homes and churches.

This bringing of nature into our homes during the winter months is an old, old custom; it reminds us with color and fragrance of the world outside.

Gift giving, too, is an adaptation. The churches remind us of God's gift of Christ as our Savior. We express our response through gifts to family and friends. We also have expressed our response through gifts to those in need of food and clothing and friendship. This year, with the earthquake devastation in Armenia, train wrecks in London, explosions in Mexico City, and the homeless in most of our cities, we have first ample evidence of those in need.

Most of us would like to help, to give something in some way to make life more meaningful for people caught in such devastation. Some of us feel guilty about the excesses we practice when there is real need to be met. We also feel helpless when our little efforts are compared to the enormity of the problems. We end up leaving it to others, to the governments, to world relief organizations. Maybe that's what should happen.

But we need to give at Christmas. We need to express our love and our caring for our loved ones. We need to share of our bounty with those who have needs we hopefully will never experience. We need to support agencies and programs aimed at protecting our environment and our health. They need our support and our caring. We need to give because it shows our values and puts our lives in perspective. We need to give because it makes us better people as individuals and a better people as a community.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Broadcast Told Only Half The Story

To the editor:  
 Dec. 8 I saw WECT-TV's news broadcast about my employer, Ocean Trail Convalescent Center of Southport.

I found the information as presented to be extremely misleading and unbecoming to the news media as a profession.

Allow me to express the unstated facts; facts on which I am quite qualified to elaborate, being an RN with six years experience ranging from ICU and ER to director of nursing.

When Ocean Trail hired me in September they had experienced an extensive loss in nursing personnel.

A loss that is indeed reflected in their licensure evaluation.

There was one 7-3 LPN, two 3-11 LPNs, one 11-7 RN. Then myself and two nurse managers. Hardly an adequate staff. Each day was a struggle. Since then we have fully restaffed.

The variations between acute care (hospitals) and long-term care (nursing homes) are significant. Hence, we still have a way to go educating staff about the specifics of gerontological nursing.

Implementation of plans is in progress to complete the necessary changes. You will find, if you look closely, a dedicated staff striving to carry out the necessary corrective measures.

The WECT news broadcast only told half of the story.

Robert D. Meek Jr., RN  
 Rt. 5, Shallotte

### Clarification From Church

To the editor:

Prior to the recent election, in a candidate profile, published in this paper, it was stated that Chris Chappell was a member of Bethel Primitive Baptist Church. Subsequently, an article titled "Correction" was published pointing out that Chris Chappell was not a member. This article appeared to have been published under and by authority of the church.

Because of the statement in the correction, we feel clarification is in order.

First, the correction was not published under or by authority of the church.

Second, even though Chris is not a member of the church, he has attended our church and his family attends often. We are pleased that Chris and his family feel this is their church. Further, we feel this clarification is in order because we are afraid the article may have left the impression that non-members are not welcome in our church. This of course is not true.

Chris and his family and others in our community are welcome, yes in fact invited to attend our church and worship with us.

We have a warm, loving and caring church and wish to clarify any misconception which may have resulted from the correction article.

This clarification approved for publishing by the membership in regular conference on the 11th day of December, 1988.

Mason H. Anderson  
 Church Clerk  
 Shallotte

### Adams' Column Draws Praise

To the editor:

I would like to thank Rahn Adams for his column in the Dec. 8 issue: "We're Lucky Some 'Heels' Are Willing To Serve."

I don't think that there is an emergency service volunteer in this county that can't agree with me more.

Greg Faulk  
 Emergency Medical Technician  
 Firefighter  
 Sunset Beach Volunteer  
 Fire Dept.

### Keeps Informed

To the editor:

It's a pleasure to receive your well-written paper every week—even though it takes a while to get all the way to California.

I especially enjoy your coverage of all the communities in Brunswick County, and I feel I am well informed when I go back to the area (about four times a year).

Best wishes to your staff for a happy holiday season.

Ken Earnest  
 LaMesa, California

## Dear Santa: Please Don't Bring Me A CD Player

I must be getting old and set in my ways, but I've had it with modern technology—personal computers, video-cassette recorders, compact disc players, the whole works.

Ever since I was a tyke, I've liked gadgets. Even now, I'm one of those guys who always drags the little lady into the electronics store at the shopping mall but never buys anything. My wife has come to understand that it's a deep-rooted addiction of sorts.

While most kids my age played with G.I. Joe dolls, mini-bikes and BB guns, I got my kicks years ago by tearing apart junked tape recorders, cameras, radios and record players that were supplied by a family friend whose father-in-law was a garbage collector. We had connections.

I always prided myself in the fact that I owned almost as much equipment as my storybook hero, junior sleuth Brains Benton, had in his secret crime laboratory. Whether or not my contraptions actually worked didn't matter. Half the fun was tinkering with all the little knobs, wires and screws without getting shocked.

And over the years I've tried to keep up with technology. My parents bought me a cassette tape recorder one Christmas, after I took my portable reel-to-reel model apart one too many times. Another Christmas I got one of the first pocket cameras on the market—which made me feel one up on Brains Benton, since he didn't have a "spy camera" like mine.

The old tube radio that blew out on me during an after-bedtime, under-the-covers "surveillance" of an Atlanta Braves baseball game eventually was replaced by an AM transistor radio that had an earphone jack for secret listening.

And the single-speed, monophonic record player—the one that used to play my yellow Roy Rogers records like a charm but later chewed up my "Hey Jude" 45 after the tonearm broke—was chucked in favor of the console stereo my folks bought in the late 1960s.

Since my parents liked the Beatles less than my old record player did, I rarely got the chance to listen to my rock'n'roll records. But I've heard every Chuck Wagon Gang song pressed in vinyl, and I can still do a fair impression of Andy Williams

Rahn Adams



singing "Alfie." Years later when I started working part-time after school, my first couple of paychecks were spent on a stereo of my very own—and a set of headphones, since my parents were still paying the power bill and didn't think much of "wang wang" music in the first place.

Until I moved away from home and started paying for my own electricity, a new LP was added to my record collection almost every payday. I also bought two stereo tape decks—cassette and reel-to-reel—to record albums that I didn't want to risk scratching. I was in gadget heaven.

The predicament I'm in now, though, is that my stereo system is on its last legs. Sure, I could let gizmo fever get the best of me and ask Santa for a compact disc player, but what would I do with my 200 scratch-free LPs? No one needs that many Frisbees.

I also don't like the idea of being forced to buy these supposedly indestructible compact discs, since records are being phased out just as eight-track tapes were a few years ago. No matter what CD lovers say, nothing sounds better than the album that didn't get sun warped when you left it in your parked car outside the mall last August—that is, if you've ever heard one that did warp.

Besides, if I give in to CDs now, I'm sure I'll eventually ask St. Nick to replace my cheap IBM-incompatible computer with a more expensive model, buy me a video-cassette recorder that doesn't eat every other tape, and trade my manual 35mm camera in on one of those automatic jobs that does everything except count to three.

I hate to admit it, but Santa's checkbook and I are fed up with progress. That's enough to make a gadget junkie cry.

## Alma Mater Wants More Money

It seems like only yesterday that I was talking about the giving season. Hard to believe it's been a year already.

No, I'm not referring to Christmas. I haven't even started to think about that yet.

I'm talking about the annual fund drive at my alma mater, Lock Haven University. You may recall that I successfully avoided donating to the LHU Foundation last year after sitting down and coming up with some pretty darn good excuses.

After all, I had only been working a few months and really didn't know where I was headed. I also didn't have any money sitting around collecting dust at the time.

Well, here I am a year later with a little more security and a little more money, desperately searching for a few innovative excuses to turn down the place where I spent four of the best years of my life.

This comes from a person who was never any good at turning people down. I recently paid one dollar for a bumper sticker for some unknown cause and have been known in the past to purchase small stuffed raccoons to benefit others. It seems I'm always looking out for everyone but myself. Anyway, I think you get the idea.

This year, LHU has taken a new

Doug Rutter



approach in its request for money.

They mailed me an attractive brochure detailing the goals and accomplishments of the school and how the foundation makes all of that happen. It talks about all the "new campus energy" and stuff like that.

The bottom line, however, is still the same. The foundation wants money, and it wants as much as its graduates are willing to give.

As if it really matters, the school also offers its valued alumni several ways to contribute.

In addition to mailing off a check and enrolling in the appropriate club, the foundation offers personalized methods of giving which they have so aptly have included in a comprehensive "Planned Giving Program."

Options include making a pledge and asking the foundation to bill me later in the fund year. That's out of the question. If I don't have the money now, I have to believe it would be asking for trouble to make a

pledge. That's sort of like buying a refrigerator on credit without having the money to buy it in the first place.

I also could check the box indicating that a corporate matching gift is on the way or that one is being sent by my employer. But for better or worse, I value my job too much to do something so foolish.

Including a little something in my will for the foundation is another option I have to pass up. I don't even have a will.

Naming the foundation as a beneficiary in my life insurance policy is also out of the realm of possibility because I don't have life insurance. (By the way, that's not an open invitation for all you insurance agents out there. And I don't want a will, either.)

The only practical thing to do, then, is to write a check or decide not to give altogether.

And since I really can't come up with any workable excuses, I guess I can give a little something for student scholarships. Besides, I've always wanted to fill in that little box in my checkbook for tax deductible donations.

For just a \$1 contribution, I can become a member of the famed Bell Tower Society. I don't know what it means either, but it sure sounds impressive.

## My Most Eventful Christmas Eve

BY JESS PARKER

Brunswick County Veteran Service Officer

My most eventful Christmas Eve occurred in 1957. I was at sea on an early warning radar picket station in the North Pacific. Generally the duty was boring but on this occasion the Russians decided to visit the picket line.

During the noon meal we experienced the first fly-over by Russian aircraft. For the rest of the day and into the evening we became a regular target. In the late afternoon our station rotated and in transit we became involved with a Russian intelligence trawler.

As the two ships closed we took action to pass at 10 miles, but he would not allow the separation. When we changed directions he would adjust to stay on collision course. Finally our skipper signalled intentions to proceed on a steady course and speed. The Russian had to back emergency to avoid the knife-edged bow of a Destroyer Escort.

A high state of nervous tension permeated the ship coupled with the sadness of yet another Christmas Eve away from home. The Russians departed at 7 p.m. and we attempted to return to normal routine. There was no success at normalcy—the games, bull sessions, etc. kept erupting into temper flareups.

Taps were sounded at 10 p.m. but no one went to bed. Throughout the ship sailors were sitting or standing involved in what we knew as the 12-mile stare

(distance to the horizon). All unseeing eyes were turned to the south with thoughts of Christmas Eve preparations at Pearl Harbor.

I finally turned in at 11 p.m. and was just beginning to doze when word was sounded that an unidentified target was closing from the north. As the leading radarman I came boiling out of the rack, heading for Combat Information Center (CIC).

The weather had picked up and just as I went through the compartment hatch the ship rolled. The deck was wet, and I slid against a sharp edged angle iron. (Later the ankle was diagnosed as broken). Somewhat bloodied, wet, and in pain I faced a raucous CIC watch. The target had been identified as Santa Claus.

I must admit the willingness to shoot Santa out of the sky. Cooler heads prevailed and the sleigh was allowed to continue on its mission. Word of my transit to CIC made the rounds, tempers cooled and merriment could be heard throughout the ship. The crew went to bed, some to hide tears for yet another Christmas Eve away from home.

That was 1957. This is 1988. Christmas Eve is near. Let's all try to meet the 12-mile or 1000-meter stares of yet another Christmas Eve away from home for many soldiers, sailors and marines.