

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## Alternatives Are Harder To Address

Brunswick County got good news of sorts this week: State investigators essentially ruled out septic tank effluent as a significant source of pollution in Lockwood Folly River following a survey of the area.

The bad news is that it would have been a lot easier for us if septic tanks had been the cause. Why? Because the rules and regulations are already in place to address malfunctioning or improperly installed septic tanks; they can be fixed.

Redress won't come as easily for some other possible sources of pollution. Several environmental groups and the state shellfish sanitation division are convinced that the main culprit, or at least a major one, is general nonpoint source stormwater runoff—rainwater and the pollutants it washes from rooftops, parking lots and other developed areas.

Regulating this type of runoff is tough enough just along the shoreline, but regulating it throughout the river's drainage area, or catchment basin, will take land-use regulations that currently don't exist, either on the county or state level, for much of the affected area.

On the other hand developers and others argue, also convincingly, that areas much farther upstream, even upstate, are the culprit.

Chances are if polled we could check "all of the above."

They're certainly right in saying that drainage from land under cultivation—be it a cornfield or a timber plantation—dumps sedimentation, fertilizer nitrogen and other chemicals into waters that work their way to the coast. But while the CAMA permit is a basic regulatory tool for development in the 20 coastal counties, with effective lobbying in Raleigh both the timbering and farming communities managed to gain exemption from its authority.

That leaves few existing tools for addressing some of the pollution sources noted above.

Conservation measures included in the latest federal farm bill encourages farmers to protect wetlands and not farm erodible land. However, the federal agency administering the program also forgives the farmer who "accidentally" cultivates such land.

Early next month Brunswick County leaders should be getting some answers—theories at least—as to where the pollution in Lockwood Folly River is coming from and what local, state and federal governments can do to reduce or stop it.

Then it will be up to them to chomp the bit and do whatever is within their power to protect our important water resources.

And it will be up to use to make sure they do. When they get up the nerve to remind us, "Hey, isn't this what you asked us to do?" we'd best not complain, whether we live on the river or 30 miles inland.

## Lessons Can Be Learned If We Choose To Listen

I've decided that Brunswick County hasn't even begun to tap its number one resource yet—a form of wealth that will always be available but will always be overlooked to a certain degree.

In my opinion, our most valuable resource isn't the natural beauty of our unspoiled beaches. It isn't the score of championship golf courses that dot the tourism maps. It isn't even the kind, subtropical climate with mild winters and invigorating summers.

What this county has most to offer its people isn't something that attracts vacationers by the thousands and tourism dollars by the millions. In fact, Brunswick County doesn't even have a corner on this particular type of wealth, which can be found anywhere in the state, nation and world.

The resource I'm referring to is the unique insight that older citizens can share about their community, if only we younger folks slow down enough to listen—keeping in mind that "older" and "younger" are relative terms, of course.

There's much to be said for progress—moving forward with our sights set on building a solid future. But what about the lessons of the past? What about the advice on living and working together that we can glean from individuals whose wealths of experience are richer than our own?

Over the past few years, I've particularly enjoyed hearing my grand-

Rahn Adams



mother's tales about the horse-and-buggy days and my grandfather-in-law's stories about the Depression years—times when people were considered "successes" if they simply earned honest livings and kept their families fed.

Nowadays, though, it seems that success is something one can never attain. We've become such an ambitious society that I wouldn't be surprised if "good, better, best" has been shortened to "better, best" in our English books. Just being good doesn't seem to be good enough anymore.

But maybe times haven't changed that much after all. Maybe our blind ambition isn't so much a reflection of modern society as it is a shadow of every generation's failure to recognize—until too late—that wisdom really does come from experience.

Last Wednesday I was fortunate enough to interview 80-year-old Samuel A. Sue, who retired this week as the county magistrate in Leland.

## Mother Nature's Playing Tricks Again

Mother Nature's playing tricks on us again, but I'm not complaining—yet.

When Don and I got married friends in Southport gave us a beautiful hibiscus. It bloomed and bloomed that first summer, then we bedded it down for the fall as recommended by a local plant-tender. But a hard freeze got it.

We bought another, knowing it wouldn't be the same, but also knowing we would still enjoy its bright red blooms the size of saucers.

This year, after an early nip blackened the tips of the hibiscus, we broke down and bought a large planter. We rearranged the furniture in our cottage and made room for the hibiscus in front of the sliding glass doors in the kitchen. It's been bloom-

Susan Usher



ing like crazy ever since, first a bloom a day and now even two or three each day. We love it; it's the reverse of Christmas in August!

But this winter, so far at least, that hibiscus might have made it even if we'd left it outside. A "jet stream" is keeping some of that Arctic weather away from here, which is fine with me.

In our yard, flowers that last year disappeared in late November are still hanging on, a little scraggly perhaps, but there: the verbena, the alyssum, even a few gazanias. The Italian parsley is multiplying rapidly, enough I've had plenty to share.

The nicotiana was still blooming at Christmas, and by golly the azaleas had as many blooms in December as they had last April. A few coreopsis have popped up here and there, as well as a few flowers I can't identify. Don and I even moved some volunteer impatiens and tomato plants inside, where they're prospering nicely.

Being a summer and sunshine person, I can't think of anything nicer than glimpses of spring in mid-winter.

Last week came the nicest surprise of all: daffodils started popping up in a bed near the back door, where it's plenty warm. I took a blossom or two into work and the neighbor's puppy chomped some of the others, but what blooms are left are beautiful, full of the promise of spring.

All around our yard, buds are swelling on trees and shrubs, and that gives us pause.

Don's mom tells us that you always pay for the weather you get. And I've no doubt pay day will come for the beauty of this "false spring." When true spring comes, our yard may look a little sparse. And we won't be surprised if there's a local shortage of blueberries, peaches and other such crops that will have been literally nipped in the bud.

But that's later. Right now we're going to keep enjoying this beautiful weather and hope you are also.

### LETTER

## Name, Town Were Wrong

To the editor:

Winning the N. C. Oyster Festival logo contest was an honor and thrill for me. I anxiously awaited your newspaper so I could share the announcement with my family, friends and colleagues in my home town of Fayetteville.

While we all have a great sense of humor, nevertheless, it was rather disheartening to have my honor reflect on Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

My husband, children and I were educated in Cumberland County Schools. For the last ten years I have lived and worked as a teacher's assistant in Hope Mills, N. C. (Cumberland County). My husband and I were actively involved in PTA for three of those years. Our children represented Cumberland County in various school-related activities.

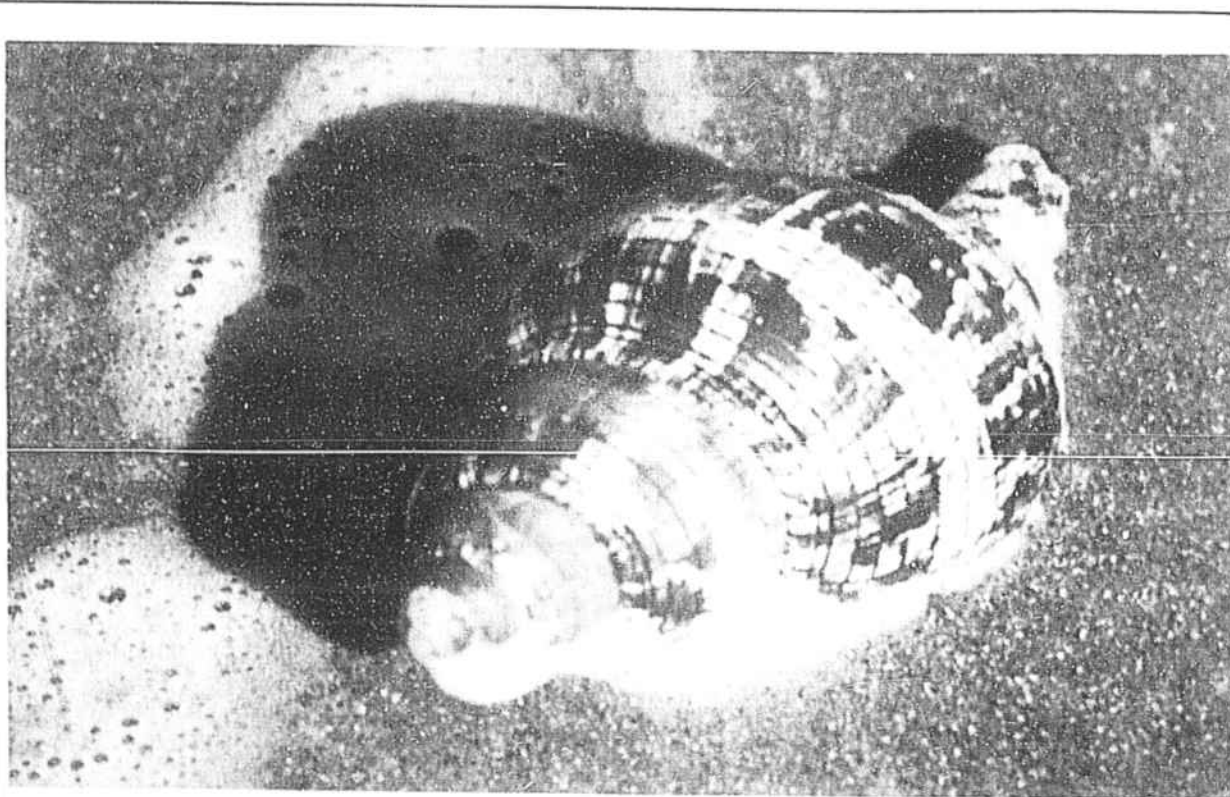
Although we wouldn't mind sharing with Mecklenburg County, it is the teacher assistants in Cumberland County wearing shirts with a logo I designed.

My family and I enjoy Long Beach and its surroundings, and we look forward to making it a permanent part of our lives. The N. C. Oyster Festival logo contest provided an opportunity to help achieve this goal.

Donna M. Young  
(not Long)  
Long Beach

### 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.



TULIP SHELLS are among the most colorful we find. PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

## The Tulip Shells

BY BILL FAVER

Some of the most colorful shells found on Brunswick County beaches are the two tulip shells we occasionally find along the high tide line. The larger of the two, the Tulip Shell or "True Tulip," carries the scientific name *Fasciolaria tulipa*. The smaller, which is more abundant, is the Banded Tulip, *Fasciolaria hunteria*.

Both tulips have strong, thick shells. They are spindle-shaped like the Florida Horse Conch, which is a member of the same family of shells. The True Tulip is smooth except for several narrow spiral grooves below the opening where the surface is wrinkled. The Banded Tulip is entirely smooth. In size, the True Tulip is larger, growing to 10 inches long and 4 inches wide. The Banded Tulip is much smaller, about 3 inches long and no more than 1½ inches wide.

The True Tulip can vary in color from pinkish-gray to orange-red with brown spots and broken spiral bands of a brownish color. The Banded Tulip can be cream to bluish-greenish-gray to orange-brown with widely separated thin brown unbroken spiral bands. The animal inside the Banded Tulip is black with white speckles and the operculum used to seal the animal in-

side the shell is horny and brown.

Both species live in grassy and sandy bottoms from the low tide line to well offshore and in sounds and bays. Range of both is from North Carolina to Florida to Texas and in the West Indies. The Banded Tulip is found also in the Bahamas and Yucatan.

Egg capsules are formed from a pore in the front end of the female's foot. Several dozen eggs are placed in each capsule as they are formed and the capsules are attached to a rock or shell. Most of the eggs are unfertilized and become food for the young snails when they hatch after about a month. Capsules of the Banded Tulip are smooth, about one inch long, and are laid in clusters, sometimes six inches in diameter. Rachel Carson, in *The Edge of the Sea*, writes "egg cases of the Banded Tulip shell remind one of the dried seed pods of a flower, a cluster of thin, parchment-like containers borne on a central stalk . . ."

Both species are aggressive predators in the sea community. Slow and deliberate in their movements, the tulips feed on other snails and some bi-valves. They, in turn, are eaten by the Florida Horse Conch.

The tulips can be found following rough seas after a storm. Look for them along the high tide line or just at the water's edge when the tide is out. Live shells should be returned to the sea, although they probably will not live. You may want to place one in a pan of sea water and sand and see if it will emerge from the shell.



FAVER

## Super Bowl Hype Is Out Of Hand

The time has come for the true football fans of America to put their big feet down and stop all of this pregame hype for the Super Bowl.

Quite frankly, it's getting out of hand.

Not only do the two weeks leading up to the Super Bowl border on unbearable, but the two-hour pregame show is just a repeat of everything that has come before it.

Each year, it seems there is more and more pregame hoopla to digest. However, Super Bowl XXIII between the San Francisco 49ers and the Cincinnati Bengals takes the cake.

Personally, I can stomach only so much analysis of the players, coaches, season records, field conditions and weather. And the endless features on Bengals running back Elbert "Ickey" Woods were not worth the effort. I'll agree that his shuffle is neat, but there's only so much you can say about a man named Ickey.

In all of its glory, hype took on a new meaning this year with the advent of the Diet Pepsi Talent Challenge. This "talent show" featuring NFL stars was hosted by Ahmad Rashad and John Candy, a comedy team that will undoubtedly keep us laughing for many years to come.

I ask you, though. Are things so bad that we need a handful of overgrown athletes entertaining us before the biggest single sporting event of the year? I think not.

Philadelphia Eagles defensive end Reggie White is a great football player who earns a healthy salary.

Doug Rutter



There is no reason for Reggie to lower himself by doing his impressions of Rodney Dangerfield and Muhammad Ali.

Unfortunately, I read last week in USA Today that the ratings for the Talent Challenge were so good that more have been planned for other major sporting events.

I can just picture it now—Larry Bird doing a song and dance for millions of television viewers before the seventh game of the NBA Championship. Almost makes you want to put your foot through the ol' boob tube, doesn't it?

And how about that halftime show with Elvis Presto in 3-D? That was the cheapest stunt to boost viewer ratings I've ever witnessed.

I honestly felt embarrassed for NBC Sports. I do wonder, though, how much they paid Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula to wear those crazy shades.

The worst thing about all of these nonsensical frills is that they almost made the game itself anticlimactic.

In fact, if it weren't for the great football game last Sunday, I think I would have vowed right then and there never to watch another Super Bowl.

Don't get me wrong, though. Not everything associated with this year's big game was a downer.

For instance, I rather enjoyed all of the new commercials. And I think "Bud Bowl I" lived up to its billing, even though Bud Light owner Spuds McKenzie may have been disappointed with the outcome.



Aluminum cans are worth money. It pays to keep America clean.