

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Why Not Annex Like Other Towns Are Required To Do?

The Town of Calabash is putting undue pressure for special treatment on State Rep. David Redwine and Sen. R. C. Soles Jr. Anxious to move forward with a long agenda, Calabash leaders want Redwine and Soles to help the town circumvent existing state laws regarding annexation. They want to bring several large areas into the town limits as fast and painlessly as possible.

Areas targeted include Marsh Harbor Golf Links and Marsh Harbor Yacht Club, Hunter's Trace and Saltaire subdivisions and Carolina Shores Resort, as well as the local fire department and post office.

Their goals are certainly worthwhile; it is the means by which the town is trying to achieve them that is in question.

Calabash wants to eliminate unincorporated "pockets" within the town left after the merger of Calabash and Carolina Shores, square off its boundaries, and most important, increase the tax base enough (by about 32%) to make it easier for the town to extend services without forcing a substantial increase in the tax rate. Calabash wants to position itself to provide those services before the demand for them reaches a critical point. Existence of "pockets" could complicate extension of such services to incorporated areas.

But a worthy end doesn't necessarily justify the means. Calabash's situation isn't unique; it certainly isn't the only city or town with "pocket" problems. And state law already provides two uniform ways for towns to annex adjacent areas.

One method is voluntary. In general, adjacent landowners petition and the town either agrees or doesn't agree to take in the proposed area. This is the fastest and least expensive way to accomplish annexation.

The second way is called involuntary. It allows a town to annex an adjoining area without the consent of those being annexed as long as the area itself meets certain standards of urban development and the town promptly provides major municipal services to the area. Both are reasonable expectations and are intended to show whether the area annexed will benefit as well as the area doing the annexing.

In general the town must first adopt a "resolution of consideration" at least one year before it can begin the procedure. This is to give the areas targeted some warning of the town's plans. The resolution is good for two years and then must be renewed.

Second, the process requires a study with result exhibited for public examination, a public hearing, adoption of an annexation ordinance and then a delay before the annexation actually takes effect. The town also has to send every property owner in the target area personal notice of the hearing by first-class mail. The law also provides that if water and sewer services are to be provided then trunklines and mains be under construction within one year after the effective date of annexation.

This process takes time—more time than Calabash wants to invest at this point. Instead, they are pushing Redwine to introduce special legislation to take care of the incorporations during the 1991 session.

Redwine is right in what he suggested to Calabash officials last fall. He recommended Calabash annex the areas through the normal process if it can be done that way. If not, he said special legislation could (not would) be an option.

Should Redwine and Soles agree to the request, or more accurately, demand, made by Calabash Commissioners, they will be setting an uncomfortable precedent. They would have to make the same concessions to every other town in their districts with similar problems.

Introduction of such a local bill could—and probably would—rekindle debate in the state legislature regarding annexation. Back in 1983 most local exceptions were eliminated. After much argument and compromise, the state "standards and services" law was changed to better reflect the concerns of those who were being annexed against their will. The odds are slim that the legislature is anxious to take up the question again any time soon.

If the areas at Calabash can be annexed the normal way—no matter how long it takes—then that is the way it should be done, even if the areas have to be annexed in smaller than desired chunks. It may be slow, it may be painful, but it's the right thing to do.

If for some reason the areas cannot be annexed under the regular laws, for instance if they do not meet the definition of "urban," then town officials ought to say why not. Then, and only then, might their situation warrant special consideration.

Fishermen Can't Give Up On River

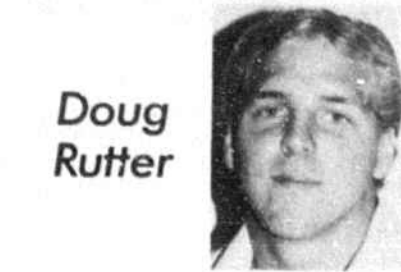
I never thought I'd see the day that Brunswick County's commercial fishermen would give up. I never thought I'd see them roll over and die without putting up a real fight.

But that's just what has happened. The Save Our Shellfish organization, which formed about two years ago to battle pollution in the Lockwood Folly River, has all but dissolved.

That's a shame. Not just for the fishermen who were involved in SOS and make their living gathering clams and oysters in Lockwood Folly. It's a shame for their grandkids, who may never get to taste a fresh Lockwood Folly oyster—the best oyster around.

The river's battle with pollution has been well documented in the pages of this newspaper. Pollution has strangled the river over the last decade, forcing the state to gradually close sections of the river to shellfishing.

Save Our Shellfish, also called SOS, formed in September 1988, about a month after the state shut down the last remaining section of Lockwood Folly. So far, state officials haven't been able to tell us where the pollution comes from.



Doug Rutter

They just know that the water samples show a lot of bad bacteria.

SOS went on the warpath for about a year to save the river. They grilled state officials and politicians, looking for simple answers to their complex questions. But after a while, the fishermen became discouraged when they didn't see any results.

"People just lose interest when they see you're not getting any place or they think you're not getting any place," said SOS President Annie Smigiel. "They figured they should get everything done in a couple of months, and that's not the way it works."

I'm no genius when it comes to the workings of big government and politics, but I believe in the old saying about the squeaky wheel getting

the oil. I've seen it put to the test many times.

I think Annie agrees with that philosophy. "It takes time and patience," she said. "If they give up on it, they're lost from the beginning. It's something you have to keep after."

Annie and the other SOS officers know that the people who yell the most will get what they want. One loud scream might get somebody's attention momentarily, but it takes years of yelling to keep their attention.

You've got to yell and yell and yell some more before most politicians will hear what you've got to say and try to do something about it.

SOS got the attention of politicians and state and federal government workers. SOS got the attention of David Redwine, Charlie Rose and other elected officials. SOS got the attention of all of the environmental division chiefs in state government.

The problem is, the fishermen stopped screaming. And when they did, the politicians and government employees stopped paying attention. They walked away and started listening to another group of people who

were yelling just a little bit louder. Despite all of the pollution that has found its way into the Lockwood Folly River over the last 10 years, the river often shows signs that it isn't dead.

Every once in a while, the river will clear itself of pollution, and the fishermen will be back in business. Is the Lockwood Folly trying to tell us something by battling this pollution tooth and nail?

Maybe the river is telling us that it isn't ready to call it quits. Maybe the river is saying that the best is yet to come.

The Lockwood Folly River certainly hasn't given up on the fishermen. And the fishermen shouldn't give up on the river.

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.



Paper Or Plastic? Does It Really Matter?

It's too confusing to go shopping these days. You have to be an environmental expert.

You're trying to figure out the important issues. You can't figure out which pair of pants fits best. You decide to go with the chicken tenders rather than the hamburger. You decide to switch brands of cat food and hope that the critters don't notice.

But the most confusing part is when the sales clerk looks you in the eye and asks, "Paper or plastic?" The bag, that is. What will you carry your new purchase in, just long enough to get it home? Society is forcing us to think environmentally correct (EC) whether we want to or not.

So what will it be, paper or plastic? And which will you recycle? Which can be recycled?

Tough choice. There is supposed to be an EC answer to the dilemma. The recycling phase has muddled the picture for me. You can recycle paper and you can recycle plastic. Are foam containers categorized as plastic? Why do they even give you a choice if one is better than the other?

Being environmentally correct is supposed to help protect the environment, our ozone layer, rain forests, mountain vegetation from acid rains, shellfish from storm water runoff pollution, our lakes and

streams from cancerous chemicals and our endangered species from disappearing off the planet.

I'm not sure if we have been given enough of the answers to make EC decisions on our own. I doubt if the majority of people can tell you the environmental difference between paper bags and plastic ones.

Some companies have stopped making foam products that used chemicals damaging to the environment. I'm assuming that those products have been cleared from the market by now by those companies for obvious reasons: to improve relations with pressure groups; to avoid product boycotts; to avoid lawsuits from consumer agencies; and to win favor with EC supporters, or the influential people, like rock stars and actors, whose endorsements can make or break an industry.

According to a news report that drew national attention last month, McDonald's fast-food hamburger

chain has decided to replace its polystyrene foam hamburger cartons with paperboard containers. I thought the answer I had been searching for would be in this story, somewhere. The reaction to the McDonald's decision has me even more confused.

I read an editorial in a state newspaper last week that said the move was seen as an environmentally friendly one, but some experts disagree on whether the pros of using paper outweighs the points for plastic.

Trees die. That was one of their points. The other anti-paper arguments were: To make a paper container, it takes three times the final weight of the product in raw wood than do polystyrene foam containers. It takes an equal amount of petroleum and up to 21 times as much additional chemicals to make the paper container. Two hundred times the power and six times the cooling water are required to make the paper ones and 300 times the volume of waste water is produced in the paper process.

Also, the writer adds, more importantly paper containers cost more to manufacture and they get soggy. Because paper containers are usually coated, they aren't easily recyclable. Polystyrene containers are easily recyclable.

However, paper is biodegradable

whereas polystyrene is not. Plastics are often swallowed by sea creatures who mistake it for jellyfish, causing the creatures torment and slow death from digestive failure.

It was once a beautiful sight to see the thousands of Carolina blue and white balloons released over Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill at home football games. That was until this year. The helium would carry the balloons up and away, drifting them off into the clear blue sky as the team roared onto the field.

Environmental experts were successful in getting the 52,000 plus fans to think EC. The balloons, they said, were landing in lakes, killing fish and polluting the forests. No balloons are passed out at the stadium now, except those sold in the parking lot which bear a paper note tied to each balloon warning of the environmental dangers of releasing them.

I followed the crowd, but somehow I felt conned into doing so.

Getting people to think EC doesn't really give us all of the answers. I'd like to come up with one quick line that says it all so I can tell the clerk with some degree of confidence which kind of bag I'd like to carry home with me. But I still haven't figured out which bag is best.

Paper or plastic? Beats me.

Catalogs Surefire Cause To Smile

It's January and that means we can expect two kinds of mail at our house: 1) sweepstakes entry forms and 2) gardening catalogs.

Don and I used to eagerly play the sweepstakes dream game, licking and pasting on all the little stamps and cut-outs and telling which house or car we'd like to receive. Dutifully we put them in the mail and waited, dreaming of how we'd dispense of our first million when, not if, we won the jackpot.

That was until we added up the postage one year and realized we had wasted \$30.



Susan Usher

Last Thursday we looked at the first four post-Christmas sweepstakes mailings with something just short of loathing. We've finally decided that if we wait for Johnny to

mail us our check, we could be waiting a long, long time.

The gardening catalogs are another story. They offer immediate gratification as well as the potential of greater rewards later.

Here are dreams that a person can turn into reality on their own, without relying on chance. The odds are considerably better: you're gambling only on the weather, insects, disease, varmints and the amount of money available to pour into a hole in the ground.

In return, the catalogs open doors for everyone. Dreamers can

fantasize all winter long, circling and clipping and visualizing the perfect flower or vegetable garden.

Planners can make all the lists and timetables they'd like. Designers can sketch as many garden plots as they choose. Scientists can devise home-grown experiments with new seed varieties, soil amendments or pest controls.

Astrologists can schedule plantings and weedings by the moon and stars. Organic-minded gardeners can compost, mulch and companion plant to their hearts' content.

Through gardening—all of us

can feed our families better and more cheaply, get plenty of exercise and reduce stress.

And we children can play. I'm not a "serious" gardener like my sisters and their husbands. Piddler is a better word. Don enjoys watching. Teasing, he will sometimes say I call it gardening just to have an excuse to dig in the dirt like a child. He's probably right.

Whether you're a dreamer or a canner or a child at heart, those gardening catalogs offer a winning ticket. You don't have to wait for your "ship" to come in.