

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Burst Of Business Activity For Shallotte Trading Area

Three new businesses—a major discount store, a medical services complex and a bowling center—plan to locate in Shallotte.

This burst of activity is a promising sign for the economy of the Town of Shallotte and the entire South Brunswick Islands. It helps re-establish Shallotte as a trading and activity center and offers to fill many of the needs expressed by area seniors in a survey made a year ago. (Those results are elsewhere in this week's edition.)

The decision to locate in Shallotte also affirms the town board of aldermen's decision to stick with its sewer policy of extending service only within the town limits. The board has stuck by its guns even under intense pressure from several area developers.

At least one of the new businesses, Wal-Mart, had considered building outside of town, but reconsidered in light of that policy.

Bravo. Sewer is a service provided by the town, intended for the benefit of its own people. Used wisely it can also serve as a planning and resource development tool: It can be used to attract new industry or business to a district or site. In a refreshing change from what is often the norm in Brunswick County, it puts the town, not the developer, in the driver's seat.

That's important. If Wal-Mart had located out of town it would have paid county taxes and sales taxes, certainly, and a sewer fee if the town had so allowed connection.

At the same time, it would have drawn shoppers away from Shallotte's downtown business area and placed additional financial strains on smaller "mom and pop" stores there. That would not have been good, especially during the transition period associated with completion of the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte.

This way, at least, Shallotte gets something in return. The store's presence downtown should help bring shoppers in. There's a chance the traffic and exposure will help other businesses as well. The same concept goes for the medical complex.

The same is true of the bowling center. Bowling is extremely popular with South Brunswick Islands residents, as results from lanes just south of the state line remind us every week. Having lanes here will add to the recreational options for visitors as well as meeting the needs of year-round residents.

The 1991 season is starting off with a bang.

State Should Rank Needs, Set Budget Accordingly

Let's get our priorities straight as a state.

At the same time state legislators are whacking away at budgets for human services and education, advocates are unabashedly seeking big bucks for some projects that can only be considered frills.

The state is just as bad. It continues to pour money into building roads and bridges and in other projects of questionable priority. These are needs, but they certainly shouldn't be at the top of the list.

The latest of the special requests is a bid for \$4.38 million to help save Fort Fisher.

There are lots of good reasons to support the rescue of the fort from erosion through construction of a revetment. It holds an irreplaceable spot in state and national history. It draws more visitors than any of the state historic sites, visitors who spend money in the area. Protecting the fort helps protect and save our heritage.

The erosion has been going on a long time and certainly needs attention.

But the timing of this request is terrible. Before the state even thinks about spending this \$4.38 million, it needs to invest first and fully in its greatest asset. That isn't the past, but the future: human potential.

Programs that build people, that give young people and adults the skills and values they need to become productive workers and good citizens, should be North Carolina's top priority. All the indicators tell us this, from our young people's low SAT scores to the complaints from industry that new hires simply don't have what it takes to do their jobs.

We have yet to tap the full potential of our community college system in helping individuals prepare for the rapidly changing environment of the workplace. Yet, for the past several years the system has endured horrendous cuts. Those now proposed would send the system back to the dark ages of its beginning. Institutions like Brunswick Community College and the people they serve will lose because of this.

While most observers say the public school system needs a major overhaul, no one has said it needs its budget slashed to pieces in the meantime. Until there's something better devised to take its place, the educational system we have now needs to be adequately funded.

North Carolina needs to get its priorities straight and invest in the programs that are guaranteed to show the biggest return in the long run: those involving people.

If it is important that Fort Fisher be saved immediately, then supporters should convince the state to fund the project in addition to other, more basic requests. Second, both the federal government and private historical groups, should each chip in a large sum of money, since Fort Fisher is supposed to be the highest preservation priority in North Carolina under the American Battlefield Protection Plan.

No matter how unique or how important the site of the fort may be, it is not worth sacrificing expenditures on basics such as education.

20,000 Gallons Of Water A Day Is Deadly

Too much of a good thing can kill you.

It's an argument opponents use to convince regional and municipal water suppliers not to add fluoride to the public's drinking water.

Last month, Brunswick County Commissioners wisely renewed its effort to begin adding fluoride to the county's water supply. The previous board had approved the program in concept, but no one in county government seemed to be excited enough to really push for its implementation.

Health experts say adding fluoride to water strengthens the mineral composition of teeth, especially in young children, making teeth more resistant to acid attacks which result in cavities. Fluoride also helps to strengthen bones and can act as a deterrent to osteoporosis, a disease that causes bones to become brittle with age.

The American Dental Association estimates that for every \$1 spent on fluoridation at least \$50 is saved in the dentist's office.

Brunswick County will apply for nearly \$57,000 in state grants to fund its fluoride program. Water customers may pick up a tab of around 50 cents per year to pay for the chemicals, such a small price to pay.

Terry Pope



Fluoride is most effective when ingested during tooth growth, when the chemical becomes part of the tooth substance. In 1980, the U.S. Public Health Service issued a report it hoped would educate the world on the importance of fluoride.

Its goal was to push for fluoridated water in 95 percent of public water supplies by 1990. Last year, it was reported that only 60 percent of the nation's water systems now have fluoride. The agency now hopes 95 percent can be achieved by the year 2000.

If fluoride is so good for you and is so relatively cheap, why is there resistance to have the invisible warriors pumped into our homes?

I received a letter last week from a Sunset Beach resident who asks the same question. The writer explains how a daughter's dental

problems developed over a five-year period after moving away from a fluoridated water supply.

A dentist advised that the lack of fluoride had a great impact on the child's teeth during her critical years of development. It is an argument that Dr. David McDaniel, a dentist who screens school students in Brunswick County, also made before commissioners last October.

McDaniel said 36 percent of Brunswick County's school children had cavities or severe dental problems when screened in 1989 compared to 13 percent of school students in New Hanover County, which has fluoride in its drinking water. Brunswick County's water expansion project will provide more and more residents with fluoridated drinking water in the years to come.

It is the fear of cancer that has some people swimming against the stream. Safety questions were raised after a study revealed that four out of 130 male rats which received very large doses of fluoride in their drinking water developed a rare form of bone cancer, osteosarcoma.

Interestingly enough, none of the female rats or mice involved in the experiment developed bone tumors during the two-year study conduct-

ed by the National Toxicology Program. Even the researchers were skeptical about the findings.

Why? The level of fluoride at which cancer occurred in male rats was 45 to 79 times higher than normal human consumption through fluoridated drinking water.

A person would have to drink 20,000 gallons of water a day to consume the same amount of fluoride those poor rats were given over a two-year period.

However, opponents are back in full force. Another study to determine the validity of the rat test has been ordered.

Across the country, local governments are once again scared into keeping fluoride out of water until studies are complete. And then there will probably be another study and the debate will continue, on and on.

Dr. Brad Williams, a dentist on the Brunswick County Board of Health, said fluoride appears naturally in well water in the Ash community and throughout parts of Horry County, South Carolina.

Those lucky Ash residents are the only county residents now who are enjoying a good thing and are living to smile about it. No doubt, they do so with a full set of teeth.



You Should Read The Things They Write About Us!

Mint juleps, trinolines, fried chicken, grits. That's the way lots of people visualize the South, especially if they've never visited.

Certainly these items are elements of our past and in some cases, our present. But they aren't the whole wool or fabric, any more than these quotable quotes I'm about to share with you are.

The quotes come from book called *The Traveller's Dictionary of Quotation*, edited by Peter Yapp and published by Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc. My guess is they would be fun while passing through, but I'm not sure they add much to a visitor's first impressions of the region.

From the post-Civil War carpet-bagger era to more modern times, it seems that in the hands of its own writers and others the South has not always fared gently. See how your views today compare with those of others over the past century. What do you think about the South and its

Susan Usher



people? What writer would you quote in trying to describe the character of the region?

Whatever you do, don't take these quotes too seriously, especially if you're a Southerner!

"The South, the poor South!" So mourned John C. Calhoun in his dying words in 1850. An intellectual giant of political life in his day, Calhoun was an ardent nationalist who later became an equally strong advocate of states' rights as he fought to preserve the agricultural way of life in the South.

"A Southerner talks music."

Mark Twain wrote this line in his 1883 work of non-fiction, *Life on the Mississippi*.

"Alas! for the South, her books have grown fewer—she never was much given to literature." Or so claimed J. Gordon Coogler in his 1897 edition of *Purely Original Verse*. (Good thing the likes Eudora Welty, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Flannery O'Connor or Carson McCullers didn't see this quote.)

"In the south, the war is what A.D. is elsewhere: They date from it." Again, that's Samuel Clemens, a.k.a. Mark Twain, speaking in *Life on the Mississippi*.

"We Southerners are, of course, a mythological people." That's Raleigh newspaper man and Southern liberal Jonathan Daniels speaking in his reportorial book, *A Southerner Discovers the South*, 1943.

"The South has preaching and shouting...grits...country

songs...and all of it, all of that old mental cholesterol, is confined to the Sunday radio." That's Tom Wolfe, writing in 1965 in *The Kandy - Colored Tangerine - Flake Streamline Baby*.

"Southerners say that their speech is so measured that, before a Southern girl can explain that she won't, she already has." Trevor Fishlock, 1980, in *American and Nothing Else*.

"And yet, for all its size and all its wealth, and all the 'progress' it babbles of, it is almost as sterile, artistically, intellectually, culturally, as the Sahara Desert." Scorching commentary from H.L. Mencken "The Sahara of the Bozart," *Prejudices*, Second Series, 1921.

"The Old South was ploughed under. But the ashes are still warm." So said Henry Miller in 1945, *The Air-conditioned Nightmare*.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

There Is No Excuse For This Slowness

To the editor:

I have grown up enjoying and appreciating the coastal communities of North Carolina. As a child I visited Wilmington and Carolina Beach. As an adult I have grown to appreciate Brunswick County, and especially Holden Beach.

The people there have always been friendly, while the environment has been void of tall buildings, megacommercialism, and all the trappings that come with them. I have seen this to be a good place to spend vacations and holidays with the family.

My love of this area has prompted me and other members of my family to buy property in the Holden Beach area. My parents, my brother and myself are all absentee land owners. We are a few of the many people who enjoy the beach areas during the warm months of the year.

On March 13 my parents received a phone call informing them that their beach house had been broken into and robbed. This is not such shocking news because when you leave a house

empty for a period of time, you can expect this to happen.

The shocking news is that the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department informed my parents that they had discovered the break-in on Feb. 28. The information was received by the owner 12 days after the discovery. There is no excuse for a law enforcement department to be this slow or lax.

When a family member went to check on personal items that may be missing, it was discovered that no one in the sheriff's department had filed a report concerning the break-in. Once again, there is no excuse for this lack of action. The only positive thing that was done was the locking of a storm door that would keep honest people out of the house considering the front door was damaged beyond use.

The house is not located in a sparsely populated area nor in an area with very little traffic on the roads. It is located on Kirby Road which is traveled 24 hours a day. I make this point be-

cause no one knows when the house was robbed. We suspect much earlier because the electric bill is double the normal amount. No one has been there since November and the winter has not been harsh. The electric meter was read on Feb. 28. Where is the protection?

As a taxpayer of Brunswick County, I am extremely upset with the non-professionalism of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. Can anyone in the department do their job correctly?

I am a school teacher and if I do not perform my job to meet the high standards of my local school system, I will be terminated as my boss sees fit.

I only regret that I do not live in Brunswick County so that I can work hard to remove the non-professionals of the sheriff's department. The voters of Brunswick County must watch their workers of public service jobs and question their effectiveness.

Randall Jackson
High Point