

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Holden Beach Planning Board Loses Leader

The Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Board lost an irreplaceable member last week with the resignation of Charlotte Nolte.

Charlotte formally stepped down from the planning board last Monday night due to health problems—a bad heart.

One of Charlotte's good friends told me the other day that Charlotte had a virus a few years ago that settled in her heart.

She suffered a heart attack earlier this year, and now it looks like she needs a heart transplant. She's moved to Virginia to be with her daughter.

Charlotte will be missed on the planning board, and she'll be missed in the community if she is unable to return. She lives just across the canal from me, and she's the kind of person you love to have as a neighbor.

Charlotte was first named an alternate member of the planning

Doug Rutter



board in July 1986. Town commissioners appointed her as one of the board's five regular or voting members at the end of 1987. Her fellow board members thought enough of her to elect her chairman in July 1989 and again in 1990.

It was only fitting that the Holden Beach Board of Commissioners accepted her resignation with regret last week and agreed to send her a letter of appreciation.

I know resigning from the planning and zoning board was one of

the toughest things Charlotte ever had to do. She loved serving her community, and she was good at it.

As many good people as there are at Holden Beach, I haven't met anyone who cares more about the island and is willing to work to make it a better place to live than Charlotte.

Sid Swarts, who has been on the planning board since 1985, put it well. "She was one fine lady," he said. "She really had the interest of the island at heart."

As planning board chairperson, Charlotte was the picture of confidence. She had a gift for focusing tightly on specific issues without losing sight of the big picture.

Charlotte always allowed everyone to speak their mind. Of course, she knew when to interject her own opinions, and was never afraid to let them be known. It seems she always knew the right thing to say and how to say it.

Charlotte is a petite woman. Like a child seated at the adult dinner table for a Thanksgiving feast, she often appeared too small for the plush upholstered chair reserved for the mayor and board chairmen in town hall.

But when Charlotte lifted and dropped the gavel to start a meeting, she left no doubt who was in control. She commanded attention and respect.

Charlotte was a master at bringing complex issues to tidy conclusions. In short, she defined the role of a chairperson.

As a resident, I was more than happy to have Charlotte representing my interests on a board that will help determine the future of Holden Beach.

Her resignation has left a void in the community. The person who follows her as planning board chairman will have big shoes to fill.

If It Helps Our Schools, Speeders Should Pay More

At a time when everybody's whining about state budget cuts, it's good to hear one clear idea on how to raise more money for local schools.

Starting next month, persons with usually good driving records who happen to end up in court for speeding can still plea bargain charges down with the district attorney's office, only they had better bring a \$100 bill to court with them.

Beginning May 15, such plea bargains on speeding charges will result in a \$49 fine plus court costs of \$51. Now, defendants are given a measly \$10 fine and are allowed to scoot home.

Since he took the oath of office in December, District Attorney Rex Gore has introduced several changes to help make the court system more efficient, such as starting court at 9 a.m. instead of 9:30 a.m. and by having assistant district attorneys more accessible before district court actually begins to discuss cases with defendants.

The latest change is yet another wise move on the part of the DA's office. Speeding charges are often reduced for persons who have good driving records to facilitate handling of cases in district court.

Good attorneys also know that it's a bargaining chip for their clients who want to avoid stiffer insurance premiums in the future. Raising the drivers' fine under such a plea agreement from \$10 to \$49 makes sense. We hope the judges who hold court here will support this move.

All money collected in fines by the court system goes directly to the local school system in the county in which it was paid. Thus the additional money will go directly to the school system, hopefully to benefit students.

If drivers don't want to pay more, they don't have to.

They can choose to avoid plea bargaining altogether and pay the \$10 fine instead, plus have the original charges forwarded to the poor insurance companies who just might raise someone's premium.

Drivers with previous records will still be treated as always, as criminals.

So there's no reason for anyone to whine over this idea.

Volunteers Are Appreciated

Volunteers are wonderful.

If you haven't taken time already to thank the ones you know, next week offers a good opportunity to do so. Across the United States communities will be observing National Volunteer Week.

Voluntarism is cooperation in action, people reaching out to make a difference—for the better—in their communities. Volunteering draws individuals together, creating a sense of community that helps overcome the differences among us and helps us focus on the values and concerns we share.

Take a moment and think how your life might be different if it were not for volunteers.

We would have:

- No ball leagues for children;
- No Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts;
- No county spelling bee;
- No local rescue squads;
- No local fire departments;
- No home-delivered meals for shut-ins;
- No Sunday School classes or Vacation Bible Schools;
- No drug-free after-prom party;
- No Easter egg hunts;
- No Shriners' Hospitals for burned and crippled children;
- No free eye exams or glasses for the sight-impaired;
- No shelter for battered women and their children;
- No tutors for adults who cannot read;
- No free clothes or food for the poor;
- No blood from the American Red Cross; and
- No recycling centers...

The list goes on and on and on because volunteers are literally the lifeblood of society as we know it. Volunteers give their time and energies for many different reasons, but the result is the same: a better world to live in.

So, please, take a moment and thank the volunteers you know.

And if you're not already "helping out," look around and find something you can do for others. If you don't know where your skills or talents are needed most, the Volunteer and Information Center will be glad to help steer you in the right direction.

To quote the Town of Leland's latest newsletter, voluntarism "is America at her best. If that doesn't make you proud, nothing will."



BARBOUR
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CAROUNA CARTOONS

I TILLED THE GARDEN,
I MULCHED THE ROSES.
I MOWED THE LAWN
FOR THE THIRD TIME
ALREADY - NOW WHY
WAS I SO ANXIOUS
FOR SPRING TO ARRIVE?!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ordinance Can Be Overturned Or Changed

To the editor:

It was a pleasure to receive the Beacon on time this week. For months the news has been history.

Secondly, as a Holden Beach property owner, I would like to comment on Doug Rutter's articles regarding the security lights on Holden Beach. He certainly has given this subject excellent coverage. He is a neighbor to be proud of.

The "Welcome to Holden Beach Thief Sanctuary" editorial cartoon should win an award.

The headlines, "Varnamtown Proposes To Brighten up with Security Lights" is outstanding and smart, while Holden Beach lights come down.

There are a lot of Holden Beach property owners who are steamed over this ordinance. I agree: (Why should we change what lured us here?) He is absolutely right.

I think Mrs. Bryant (commissioner) needs a full time job to keep her busy so she will stop dictating to us what we can do on our own property. I think she forgets our taxes keep Holden Beach healthy.

Why doesn't she and Mayor Tandy do something for the property owners, like more beach accessways—especially for the canals and a bike trail? How come the east and west ends have beach access at the end of each street? Most of the beach accessways were lost to the grandfather clause. I don't know how they think we got to the beach all these years. Who would be so foolish to buy property where there was no beach access? No one wants to sell required footage for an access, so what do you do when town hall won't help you?

Getting back to the security lights. If Mrs. Bryant had a problem

on the west end with lights shining in here windows, why didn't she settle it with her neighbors and leave us alone? Why doesn't she promote sewers on the island so we can eat our shellfish from the canals and rivers? No, we have to protect the turtles.

I have been at Holden Beach since 1952 and I've never seen a turtle on the streets. Just because we are not year round residents doesn't mean we don't deserve some consideration. If it wasn't for property owners renting and collecting the tourist tax, where would the extra money come from? Unless she owns rental property she doesn't contribute to the tourist tax nor the economy.

We lose property owners every year to nearby beaches because of our stupid ordinance. Thank you, Doug Rutter, for a job well done. Let's hope this ordinance can be overturned or changed in the near future with some new commissioners.

Josie and Melvin Kirsch
Durham

Need To Feel Safe

To the editor:

My husband and I have bought a second home on one of the Shallotte area beaches. We have been to the beach about every third weekend all during the fall, winter, and spring. We are usually joined by our four high school and college-aged children, each of whom always brings at least one friend. These young people enjoy going out together on Saturday evening. On several occasions they have tried to play pool or video games at the local beach and mainland gamerooms, only to be

met with crude comments and threatening overtures from young local men and women who work and "hang out" in these establishments. As a result, our family now goes into the Little River or Myrtle Beach areas to spend our evenings out.

Regarding your recent articles in the April 4th Beacon, pages 1A and 9A on attracting new businesses and trade dollars to this area, it is our opinion that welcome centers, stores, bowling centers, game-rooms, etc., will be of little value in attracting tourists unless they are made to feel welcome and safe in these local establishments, especially at night when most tourist dollars are spent.

Sylvia A. Scott
Winston-Salem

Keep Column

To the editor:

As a non-resident property owner at Ocean Isle Beach, I have been a subscriber to your paper for several years. My primary interest is keeping up-to-date on fishing activity as it is my primary area of interest at Ocean Isle.

Quite frankly, I have been very disappointed in the past with the coverage your paper has given to fishing, and I have expressed that disappointment via previous letters.

Now I feel compelled to let you know how delighted I am to see that you have finally gotten someone to provide fishing information who knows the difference between a menhaden and a pogie.

Good job! Let's hear more information from the Milliken report.

Rube McMullan
Marietta, Georgia

Tradition Born?

To the editor:

The West Brunswick High School Juniors, Seniors, and their guests responded enthusiastically last April by attending a chemical-free all night celebration for a very important event—Prom Night. Local communities alerted to the reality that injury and death statistics for teens peak on these occasions, launched ambitious efforts to provide safe and appealing options for celebration.

West Brunswick High School gave its support. Local media cooperated to spread the word. Scores of volunteers, both students and adults, did the leg work. Restaurants, grocers, and distributors donated refreshments. Cash donations and prizes flowed in from citizens and merchants in an open-handed show of support.

For students who attended the "WBHS After Prom 1990," and all those who contributed in any way, there are good reasons for pleasure in the successes of last spring. Memories were made, and it may not be too soon to claim that a tradition was born.

Plans are well under way for "WBHS After Prom 1991." There will be new opportunities to demonstrate, in a hearty spirit of fun, that the West Brunswick High School community places great value on young people. Those who wish to learn more about "WBHS After Prom 1991" please contact Barbara Campbell (754-9474) or Patricia Poulos (754-7493).

Laura Stone
After Prom 1991 Committee
West Brunswick High School

Don't We Teach Spelling Anymore?

Call me a fanatic, but I think the local schools should be paying more attention to spelling. Teaching it, that is.

I have nothing against encouraging students to write freely, expressing their ideas without worrying whether every word spelled correctly—as long as they go back and address spelling in the process of editing their work. And so long as they are actually learning how to spell as they go. I'm not sure our students are learning how to spell.

Why am I ranting about this today?

Because I went to the county spelling bee last Thursday night.

The spellers were supposedly the best of our school system had to offer in grades five through eight, having won classroom and grade-level bees in the schools before advancing to the county championship.

Though nervous, they handled themselves pretty well in front of a crowd. I was really proud of every one of those 15 youngsters' efforts, and their willingness to put themselves to the test of competition.

Susan Usher



However, their overall ability as spellers was lacking. They were good, but far from excellent. Even the best of the best, Leslie

Myrie, will need to study very, very hard before he heads to Washington, D.C., for the Scripps-Howard National Spelling Bee if he wants to last past the third round.

They tried hard Thursday night, but it was apparent that most of these young spellers didn't know the basics, the fundamental rules and patterns a speller can fall back on when dealing with unfamiliar words. They had trouble relating the sounds they heard pronounced to likely letter combinations. They didn't show a grasp of common root words that

could have made the difference in correctly spelling an unfamiliar word.

There are a lot of things these kids learn that kids their age didn't learn 15 or 20 years ago. That's fine, but I'm not sure this new knowledge better equips them for the real world.

In personal and job relationships, communication skills such as writing are extremely important. Dictionaries and spell-checkers are good resources, but spelling is a tool students need to master if they are to truly express their ideas accurately.