

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Two-Year Terms Better For Voters

One can make a case for both sides in the two-year versus four-year terms for county commissioners and school board members.

But what voters need to keep in mind Tuesday when they cast their ballots is that four-year terms are better for politicians and two-year terms are better for voters.

A special county-wide referendum Tuesday will decide the issue, which makes this election even more important than usual.

Some see the referendum as a Democratic Party plot to shorten terms after Republicans were elected to all the seats on the county board of commissioners and to two seats on the school board.

However, party politics has nothing to do with our favoring two-year terms. Two years is long enough to elect a Democrat or a Republican to the board of county commissioners or the school board.

Elected officials of both parties will tell you that four years are necessary. Many of them contend that it takes the first two years to learn the job and the next two to accomplish their objectives. If that is the case we need to elect more competent people to office who can begin to work right away to accomplish their objectives so we can evaluate their progress after two years and re-elect them if we agree with what they have done.

Then one hears that four-year terms allow public officials to make unpopular decisions without fear of being defeated because the public forgets after a few years. If ever there was a reason to vote for two-year terms, this is the one.

Elected officials have a duty to provide leadership when it is necessary for the public to take a bitter pill like a tax increase or other unpopular proposals. If politicians cannot convince the public to follow, they have to decide whether to change direction or swim against the tide of public opinion and risk defeat.

No doubt all elected officials would do a better job, regardless of the length of terms in office, if they thought more about doing the job right and less about being re-elected.

With two-year terms there is a remote possibility of complete turnover at one time on these boards. If the entire board is doing a poor job, the possibility might not be so remote, but if that is the case the entire board might need to be voted out. The county no doubt would survive. It has in the past when this happened.

Naturally, running for office every two years takes money. It takes no more, however, to run the first time and those who are elected and do a good job more than likely will need to spend less and will garner financial support from the public for their re-election campaign.

Unfortunately, the special referendum ballot does not provide for setting different length of terms for the school board and county commissioners. Although we favor two-year terms for both, it is more important that county commission terms be shortened again to two years. County commissioners, with the power to tax, need to be on a short leash and more accountable more often to voters.

If members of the State House of Representatives and the United States House of Representatives are elected only to two-year terms, then surely our county can be governed by a board elected every two years.

Those who do a good job will get to stay longer. Those who don't, won't. That's the way representative government is supposed to work.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

People Are The Most Important

To the editor:

Recently some people in our county have shown a remarkable interest in drug education. After having been involved in drug education and counseling for over 15 years, I would like to share some thoughts and opinions on drug education.

In the 60s and on into the 70s drug education focused primarily upon the pharmacology of drugs and showed scare films such as "Reefer Madness" and "PCP." The philosophy seemed to have been one of "educate and scare." Some expressed concern that we were teaching how to use drugs and that scare tactics didn't last very long.

From lessons learned, it was then stated that drugs weren't the problem, that drug abuse was symptomatic of underlying problems such as poor self esteem, inadequate decision and communication skills, lack of value clarification, poor social skills, irrational belief system, and inadequacy in dealing with one's feelings.

Major emphasis was placed upon feelings because most drugs are psychoactive in that they change how a person feels. Since emotional growth is critical at a young age, drugs have devastating effects upon the emotions of children. When drugs are used to deal with such feelings as anger, resentment, boredom, depression, etc., the child never grows up emotionally.

It is extremely important that parents become actively involved in the program. In part this is related to the child growing emotionally and developing life skills. Unless the family is involved in a meaningful way, the child may start to feel that others don't understand them which may lead to feeling alienated or viewing other family members as "not being with it."

It seems that most children from families who have very rigid lifestyles respond well in a supportive facilitated environment that encourages spontaneity and autonomy.

So, it seems that we talk more about people than drugs in a drug program, for after all isn't it the people who are most important?

Anthony Clemmons, Shallotte

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The Road Was Paved With Good Intentions

Several months ago, I told Brunswick County Planning Director John Harvey that I was tired of writing about the county's new subdivision ordinance. A final draft was adopted by county commissioners last week (somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 pages long), and I am still tired of writing about the thing.

It had been kicked around by different boards of commissioners since April 1981. A new one was ordered then, and planning staff went to work on it. But they were told in December 1981 to stop.

The present board of commissioners pulled it from the vault last year and was determined to pass it. They ordered the planning board to rework it, to hold public hearings and workshops on it until it became something that people could live with.

In what I thought was perhaps the final story on the monster last week I made a mistake. It's a mistake that needed correcting. I know I must have confused a lot of people who were following the fate of the ordinance, as I was confused myself.

Terry Pope



Commissioners were probably left scratching their heads Wednesday morning as well when the newspaper hit the racks with a headline that stated, "Paving Requirement Eliminated In Compromise With Developers." Inadvertently, that didn't exactly relay a very clear picture.

Hopefully, the story in this week's paper will clarify the outcome of the drama that unfolded last week, when commissioners approved, 3-2 the ordinance they feel is needed to monitor the growth of this county. I've done the best that I could in explaining the final changes regarding controversial street requirements that were a part of the ordinance ap-

proved last week.

Commissioners Frankie Rabon and Gene Pinkerton said it was not a document they felt residents and local developers could live with, so they voted against it.

Since last December, the most debated item in the new ordinance concerns road standards in new subdivisions. Should local developers be required to pave streets in new subdivisions, or is a base of coquina sufficient?

The standards on roads had been tossed back and forth like a hot potato from the planning board to commissioners and back to the planning board again for months. I'm afraid last week's story implied that commissioners had backed down from paving requirements entirely when they eliminated N.C. Department of Transportation standards for private streets.

But the story stopped short of explaining that in place of DOT standards were adopted local standards for private roads, which require six inches of coquina and 1 1/2 inches

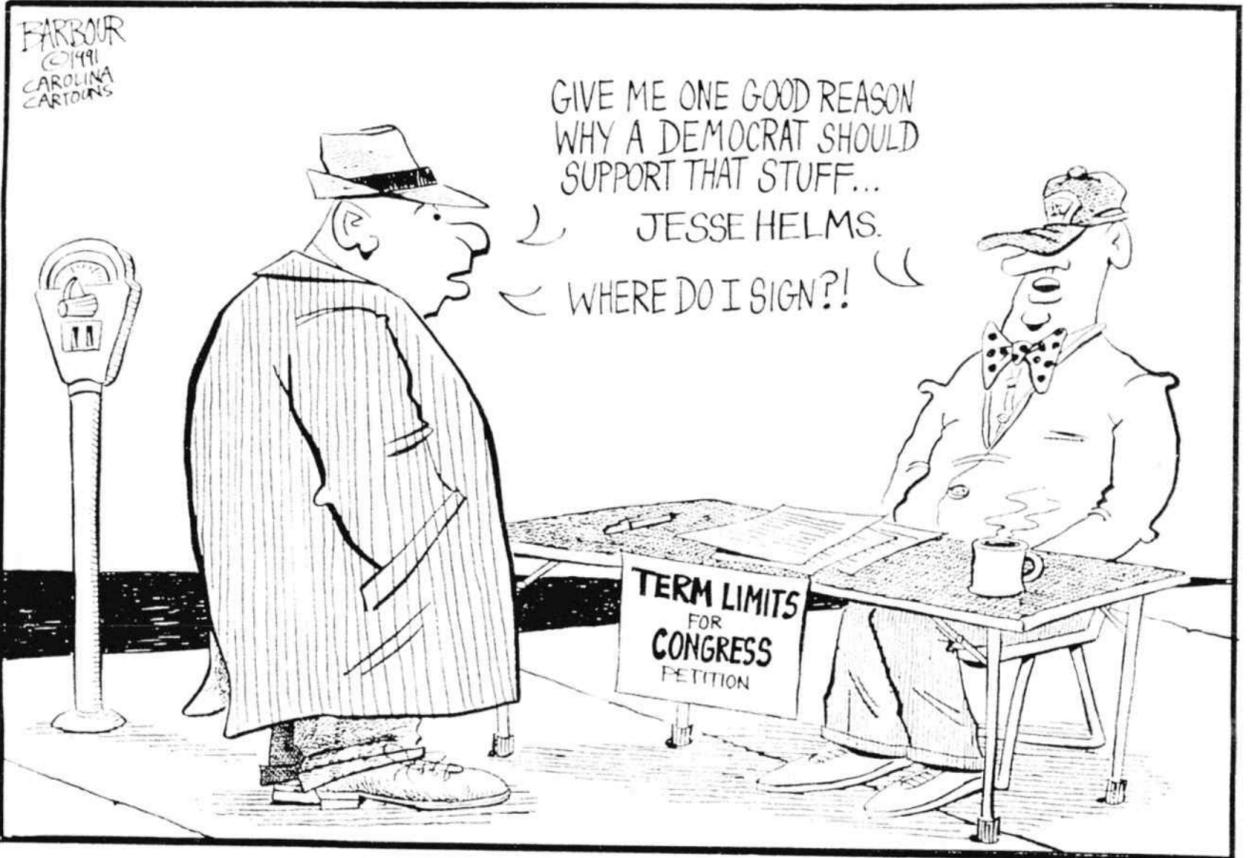
of asphalt on all private streets within new subdivisions, regardless of how many lots are served.

What should have been inserted into the story was a simple, but missing, paragraph explaining that, yes, DOT standards were dropped, but that paving was still required under the local standards inserted.

I'm a person who hates to make a mistake, but when I do I won't go around looking for excuses. When you're in the news business, truth is important. Some information that I gave last week may have been in error, but it's what I thought were the facts at the time.

Unfortunately, a missing paragraph can paint the wrong impression and confuse matters tremendously. The end result here was that the wrong message was delivered to local developers and consumers alike. Commissioners, who serve as representatives of both groups, were placed in an awkward position.

It's not what I intended. Pardon the pun, but the road was paved with good intentions.



There's A Better Way Than Spanking At School

It's just a matter of days before it becomes a matter of policy that local schools will no longer use corporal punishment as a means of disciplining students.

Under a state law that allows local school boards the option of allowing it or not allowing it, Brunswick County Board of Education members are expected to opt for a gentler approach, adopting a policy at their Nov. 4 meeting that bans bodily punishment. The policy had first reading earlier this month.

Corporal punishment. That's a big word for something most of us know simply as "spanking," as in putting a paddle to the rear-end of a child who has misbehaved. A parent's prerogative, yes, but for schools? Not these days.

During my school days—not all that long ago—paddlings were a matter of course at Shallotte High School (grades 1-12). It was standard procedure with some parents that if you got a paddling at school, another awaited you at home. For some reason, it was mostly boys who got paddled, though certainly some of us girls misbehaved just as badly.

Susan Usher



I'm not talking about simple raps with a ruler across the fingers by a classroom teacher, though I can remember one particular teacher with a very long reach who broke a student bone or two with a yardstick. He was the talk of the high school.

Sometimes a teacher actually did his or her own spanking in those days, right in front of the rest of the class.

But when we think of paddling most of us think of the long trip to the front office. There, bent over a chair or desk, or simply holding onto one's ankles, the blows came from a thick wooden paddle, sometimes enhanced with holes said to make the sting even worse.

I don't know; I never felt the

weight of the principal's paddle, though I'm sure there were days when both my teachers and principal were sorely tempted. My mother preferred a fine, leaf-tipped switch.

Fear of the paddle is a deterrent to misbehavior for many students, but I'm not sure that fear is an emotion that needs to be associated with attending school. It seems counterproductive.

Frankly, I'm glad to see our state's view toward corporal punishment changing. Until the General Assembly acted earlier this year, North Carolina had the distinction of being the only state in the nation that did not either ban corporal punishment outright or give its local school systems that option.

In North Carolina an estimated 33,000 children a year typically received a spanking, paddling or slapping at least once during the school year. That's beginning to change now, and none too soon.

Think back. Your best teachers probably didn't need corporal punishment in their bag of tricks. They had other ways of motivating students and managing classrooms,

usually tied to changing a kid's attitude. The same is true today.

The change in policy doesn't mean school staff cannot use force to intervene in student fights or to protect themselves, that kind of thing. It simply means they can't use bodily punishment to discipline kids.

But what about the few teachers who prefer the paddle and have come to rely on it or threat of it to maintain order in their classroom?

They're just going to have to learn from their peers other ways to manage. If you've been in a classroom lately or have a school-age child, then you've probably heard about or seen some of the ideas in use. A lot of teachers have a reward system that combines positive reinforcement—tokens that can be exchanged for privileges or prizes, with peer pressure—where one student's behavior and performance affects rewards earned by the entire work group.

Sure, it may be like dangling a carrot in front of a mule, but that's the whole idea, isn't it?

Hurrah for a better way!

So What Do You Think Of The Tomahawk Chop?

What's your opinion of the tomahawk chop?

What do you think of that crazy chopping motion developed by Atlanta Braves fans to root for their hometown heroes?

Do you agree with American Indian leaders who see the chop, and the chant that goes along with it, as derogatory and something that makes light of a sacred religious ritual?

Personally, I think the chop and chant are just good, clean fun. The chop gets the crowd involved in the game, and it's so much cooler than the "wave."

The Braves rags-to-riches story this season had everybody's doing the chop. Ted Turner and Jane Fonda were spotted doing the chop during a playoff game a couple weeks ago.

I even saw a group of West Brunswick Trojan fans doing the

Doug Rutter



chop at a recent football game. I'm not sure if they were rooting for the football team or just listening to the Braves game on radio.

Anyway, I think Native American leaders blew this one out of proportion. Do they honestly believe people are doing the chop and chant to make fun of the American Indian? I don't believe it for a minute.

Native American leaders have also taken the opportunity to point out that they are the only ethnic group with sports teams named after them.

(I guess the Notre Dame Fighting Irish don't count.)

But why haven't we heard about it before now? The Braves were playing baseball before I was born, and this is the first time I've ever heard of a complaint from the American Indians.

And why are they just pick'ing on the Atlanta Braves? What about the Cleveland Indians and the Chicago Blackhawks and the Kansas City Chiefs and the Washington Redskins?

At least the name Braves gives the impression of a strong, noble group of Native Americans. I would think Redskins is much more derogatory.

If we change the name of the Braves, Indians, Blackhawks, Chiefs and Redskins, others would have to be changed as well.

Let's start with that football team in New Orleans. I seriously doubt

that all of those Saints really fit the description.

The Giants, from New York and San Francisco, would have to come up with something different. They might offend people who have the condition known as gigantism.

Even professional ice hockey would have to come clean. What would British royalty think of the name Los Angeles Kings?

I think you get my point. And like I said before, I think the tomahawk chop is just good, clean fun. Nothing more, nothing less.

Besides, Atlanta Braves fans have been through a quarter-century of misery. Their players have been bungling ground balls and striking out since the days of Lyndon Johnson.

In their moment of glory, the last thing those fans should have to worry about is some stupid chopping motion.