

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1991

Teamwork Has Its Advantages

For better or worse, more and more Brunswick County's present and especially its future are being affected by decisions made in surrounding counties: how they deal with the challenges and opportunities related to growth or the lack of it.

We've seen it make a difference in everything from mobile home permits to siting for industrial development, to the political factors that come into play in routing a connector from I-40 to U.S. 17.

It is to Brunswick County's benefit to get involved in efforts to address common problems from a regional perspective, from solid waste disposal to better preparing our current workforce and future workforce for the changing labor market. We have little to lose and much to gain.

Hopefully we've learned some of the pitfalls to watch for from our previous experiences in organizations such as the Lower Cape Fear Water & Sewer Authority.

We know that Brunswick County needn't always be on the begging end of the stick; we have assets of our own as well as needs. We are not "the poor folks across the river" as the county has been painted so often in the past.

We may not always come out of each game with the winning hand, but in the long term we should benefit from helping to create a stronger southeastern North Carolina.

The opportunities are there. In our opinion, Brunswick County has an obligation to its people, to its taxpayers, to at least explore the potential for cooperation in ventures such as the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's proposals to help bring a regional focus to area planning efforts and to help strengthen area schools; as well as common concerns being raised by the Council of Governments and the Rural Economic Development Center.

One of the latest regional efforts, the I-40 Association, offers a great deal of potential for Brunswick County. In turn we have expertise and resources valued by other member communities.

Learning to work together, to give and to take, could well make a difference in how successfully Brunswick County handles the challenges of the coming decade.

While no one wants to see Brunswick County lose its emerging identity, neither can we afford to forget that there is strength in numbers.

You're Not Safe Walking To The Mailbox

Had it been summer, I might have been barefoot.

I have been known to step out to the mailbox with no shoes, battling the gravelled driveway and debris with roughened soles—for by late summer one can nearly walk on glass with bare feet.

But it was mid-November, dark and cold last week—tennis shoes and socks weather—and I had a bill that needed to get to Detroit.

With the red flag raised on the mailbox I turned to head back, but in the corner of my eye I saw something reflecting light on the ground by my feet. It was stranger than the normal stuff thrown from car windows, something that wasn't supposed to be there.

Of course, I picked it up and headed to better light where my mouth gaped open when I actually saw what it was. An ugly, sick feeling hit the bottom of my stomach as I showed the object to my parents and found a safe place for it in the bottom of a trash container. I wished that I hadn't even touched it with my fingers, but I had—that part was over.

Terry Pope



For in my hand was a used hypodermic syringe made for injecting drugs. The hundreds of things that race through your mind at a time like that did, especially after having just heard a few hours earlier the terrible news about basketball star Magic Johnson having the HIV virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a fatal disease. Johnson announced that he has HIV, but didn't indicate how he may have contracted the virus.

HIV is acquired through unsafe sex practices or by transmission of blood or body fluids. Sharing of needles, or syringes, can spread the HIV virus, which is why the disease is rampant among intravenous drug users.

The needle on the syringe that I found lying on the ground beside my mailbox had an orange safety cap over the needle. I had picked it up by the other end anyway. In the back of my mind, there in the dark, I thought it was a syringe, but my brain wouldn't tell me for certain because I'm not familiar with such medical supplies.

But those types of things are not supposed to be lying around where people or children can pick them up or perhaps step on them. Paper, beer cans, bottles and hamburger wrappers are more common, but still should not be tolerated.

Then curiosity got the better of me. Perhaps there were more. Where in the devil did it come from?

I went armed with a flashlight back to the mailbox to search for clues, missing Prime Time Live to play Columbo.

I found two more. Both had been used and the needles capped. I didn't dare touch that part.

In rural Brunswick County, this isn't supposed to happen. So don't think it funny that I didn't know

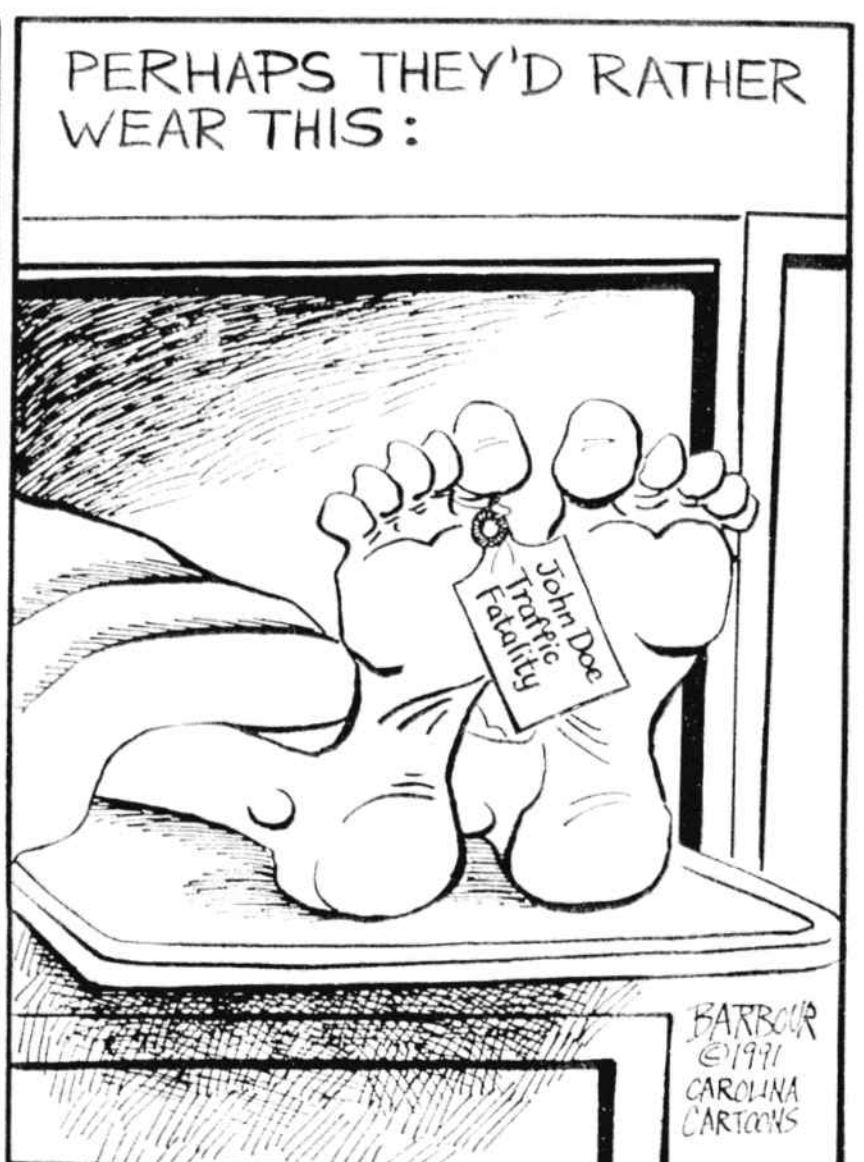
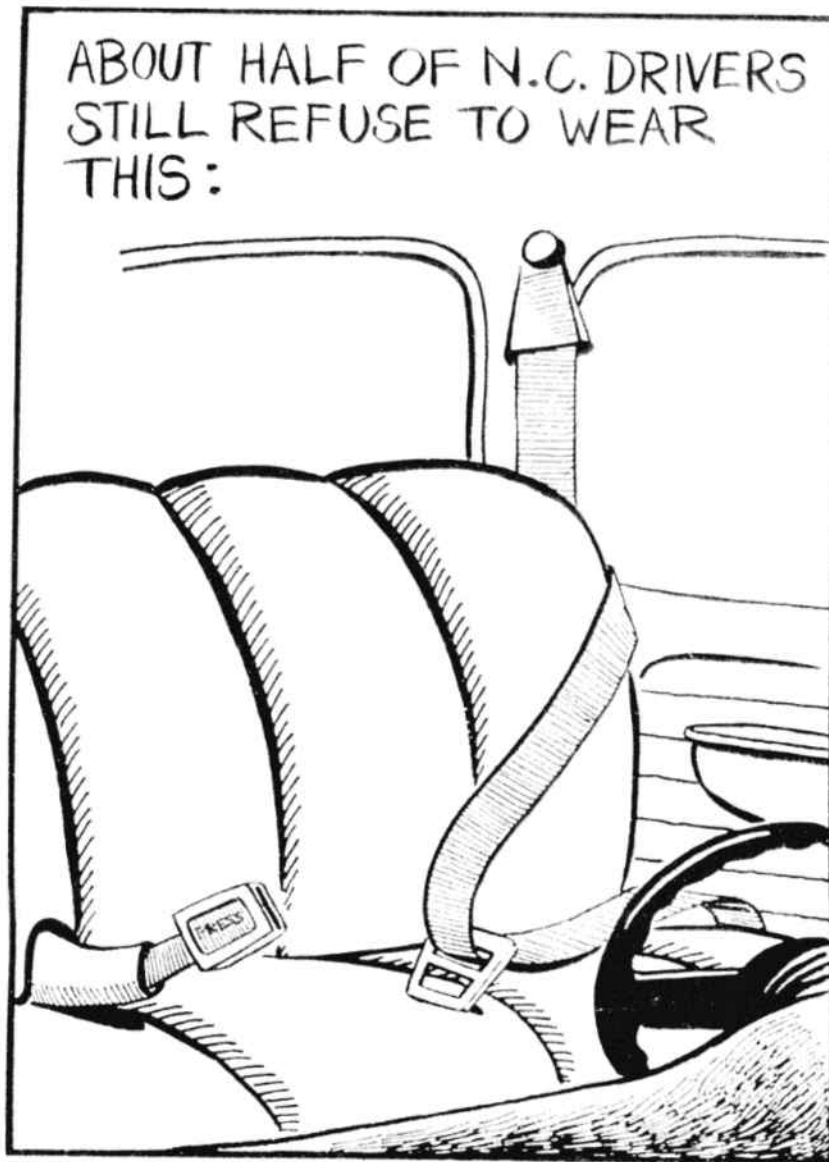
what to do. In the darkness of a cold, November night, there I was searching around the mailbox with a flashlight while flinging my arms to scare away the cats that had followed me out to the highway. Madman on the loose in Maco.

But the real madman was the person who neglected his or her duty to properly dispose of these potentially deadly needles. I have no idea where they came from—if they were for drugs, insulin, heroin or whatever, or if the owner was a drug abuser or diabetic, HIV positive or negative. I'm just glad that I found the syringes before a child or animal picked them up.

As I write this, I haven't had time to search the area by daylight in case there are other syringes or more debris lying about. Confusion turns to anger.

Such irresponsibility can be deadly. And to think, I could have been barefooted.

It just pays to be very, very careful, even when you least expect it—to protect yourself from someone else's stupidity.



Kids Shouldn't Be Scared Of Halloween

From what I've heard since relocating to Brunswick County, I apparently worship Satan if I recognize Halloween as a holiday.

All my childhood I dressed up each Oct. 31 as a variety of different characters and went door to door asking for candy. Now I'm informed that I was worshipping Satan all along.

Why didn't someone tell me that my belief in God had come to an end?

Does this mean that I can't put a decorated Christmas tree in my house this December since that custom began over a thousand years ago as part of a pagan European tradition?

That's about as logical as saying that dressing up as a vampire or a ghost or even the devil himself is the same thing as glorifying him.

And that Easter Bunny!

He's got to go! A rabbit has nothing to do with the remembrance that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

When I remember the chocolate bunnies and candy eggs I ate as a child, I wonder exactly when my belief in God vanished.

Was it the Tooth Fairy, perhaps, who took it away?

No, I don't think so. I know that I believe in God, and nobody can tell me otherwise.

What I don't understand is when a group of people can tell a school system what to do when it involves religion.

I thought we lived in a country where the church was not supposed to become involved with government activities.

Even though this country was founded on the basic belief in God, I still know that the government can't tell us what or how to believe.

That's another basic American idea.

When students at Union Primary were not allowed to wear traditional (i.e., ghost, devil or vampire) costumes for the storybook costume contest at school a few weeks ago, it made me angry.

If I had been a parent with a child attending that school, I would have had to talk with the principal.

I would have liked that principal to explain just why my child couldn't dress up like a vampire as part of the fun of Halloween, especially if the school was allowing all the other kids to wear costumes.

I know somebody whose child attends Union Primary, and she said that it was because of the pressure from some other parents about this devil-worship idea.

How can a school, a governmental institution, be influenced by a group of parents who think that Halloween is Satan worship?

If they thought it was too scary for the younger kids, I can understand that bit of reasoning. But there's no logic in saying that wearing a ghost costume means that the child believes in Satan.

If people in this community want to tell themselves and their children that trick or treating is akin to devil-worship, that's fine.

But I would hope that they would not try to pressure other children into thinking or wondering the same thing.

If parents teach their children to love and praise God, then they probably will.

And wearing a scary costume at Halloween will not change that.



Dori Cosgrove Gurganus

Gold Makes A Very Nice Accent Color

There's a nasty rumor circulating that West Brunswick High is out to change the school colors.

It's a rumor I'm glad to help kill, since we of the Class of '71 at Shallotte High School had a small role to play in helping choose Kelly green and white as the colors for the new western school.

We were not the last class to graduate from Shallotte High School, but it was our class of about 130 seniors, and our peers at Union High School and Waccamaw School, who participated in choosing the colors and the name of the school mascot for the western district school. Principals, students, teachers and even parents were involved in coming up with suggestions, narrowing the selection and then actually coming up with a recommendation.

In doing so each school had to give up its own identity, something that was painful at the time to accept. Our colors, our mascots, weren't allowed on the list. It had to be something new, something that the students who followed us could all develop an allegiance to.

At the August 18, 1971, meeting of the Brunswick County Board of Education, colors and mascots were approved for all three new county high schools: Kelly green and white for the Trojans, western area; Carolina blue and white for the Cougars, southern area; and navy blue and gold for the northern area.

Apparently the North Brunswick mascot, Scorpions, was adopted later.

Since then West Brunswick students and boosters have developed that hoped-for allegiance and loyalty to their colors and their mascot.

Unfortunately, a third color slipped in and gradually started taking hold. Some people became quite fond of it as well.

Contrary to what some community members and even some West Brunswick High School graduates might believe, though, gold/yellow is not one of the high school's official colors.

From the accepted "accent" color used to highlight uniforms, signs,

Susan Usher



and as signs or other items need refurbishing around school. I'm all for it. A school's colors are part of its tradition and should be respected, not adulterated or diminished.

West Brunswick has no "official" accent color as such, so no one should have been surprised when a touch of navy blue showed up in a press box sign. Then again, maybe the school should have an official or at least standard accent color for the sake of consistency.

Look at what has happened at South Brunswick High, where the colors now appear to be navy blue and silver, not Carolina blue and white. I never heard of any vote being taken by the student body there or the county board of education. But voila, new colors.

That prompts another question to debate over coffee some morning: If it ever wanted to, does one of our

county high schools even have the authority to change school colors?

After all, the original decisions were made by the Brunswick County Board of Education. Any change would, in effect, be an overriding of a board decision. That's supposedly a no-no.

A qualifying factor: Who else could have made the final choice that first time around? At the time, administration, staff and faculty of the new schools had not been chosen, or at least publicly announced.

The question might become important if those who feel strongly about gold being part of the colors at West Brunswick High want to make it permanent.

As for me, I kind of like the original Kelly green and white and am glad to see the school begin re-emphasizing this combination. And gold does make a nice accent color, doesn't it?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Comment Angers The Jones Family

To the editor:

We are writing this letter in reference to the comment made by a "gentleman" on WWAY-TV 3 Nov. 5. He said, "Brunswick County Commissioners are a bunch of crooks!" That statement has made us and our family very angry. You see, our father just happens to be District Two County Commissioner Jerry Jones.

Our father is one of the most honest, hardest-working men in this county. He served as mayor of Shallotte for over five years before stepping down after he was elected to the commissioner board. During his term, the town of Shallotte grew to what it is today. Shallotte is a town of many businesses and growth. Mrs. Sarah Tripp is carrying out her duties as mayor in the same honest fashion.

Our father has never stolen, never been bribed, or been in jail a day of his life, so how could this "gentleman" make such a statement?

Dad does a lot of work for the community that takes him away from the family a lot. But we respect our father and understand his job. There have been a few missed football, basketball and baseball games during our childhood by our father, but we always understood.

We just thought it was time for us to speak up. The commissioners of this county are doing one heck of a job. If people would let the commissioners do this job and stop complaining, they would get a lot more accomplished in this county.

Mark Jones
 Kyle Jones
 Shallotte

Build The Lifesaver

To the editor:

We have just lost two of the most important things in the world—lives. When will the D.O.T. wise up and build an overpass on 130 across 17 bypass?

Please stop construction of the

four-lane and take some of this money and build this most needed lifesaver.

There is no need for anyone to lose another loved one at this light. The overpass should have been built before this route was ever opened.

Arthur L. Wright
 Supply

Smith Remembered

To the editor:

Would like to have the many people reading your well-published newspaper know I am one of the fortunate people who got to know Steve Smith.

I walked beside him, enjoyed talking with him and was favored to see his gentle, warm and peaceful smile.

The world is a better place because Steve Smith walked in it.
 Mrs. Coyet H. Gray
 "Aunt Wren"
 Supply

(More Letters, Following Page)