

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Delay In Delivery Was Unfortunate

The snafu at the Shallotte Post Office last week that delayed delivery of the *Beacon* to subscribers in Supply, Bolivia, Winnabow and Leland was unfortunate. Hopefully, steps are being taken to avoid it happening again.

Some who were not affected might think we reacted too harshly to the events; that we took radio spots just to embarrass the post office. Not so.

The radio spots were to inform subscribers in the northern part of the county of the delay in delivery and to explain why their newspaper would not arrive on time.

The radio spots were ordered after the phones at the *Beacon* office had been ringing all morning Thursday with a number of Supply subscribers saying they had called the Supply Post Office and were told to call the Shallotte Post Office since the newspapers had not been received from Shallotte. When subscribers called the Shallotte Post Office, they said they were told the *Beacon* had not delivered the newspapers to the Shallotte Post Office.

All the while subscribers were being told this, those newspapers were in a buggy on the end of the dock at the Shallotte Post Office, where they had sat for over 24 hours. We discovered this only after we went to the post office just before noon to inquire about the papers. We walked to the back porch of the post office with Ron Reaves, the second in command at the PO, and the papers were right in plain view for anyone who had passed them in the past 24 hours to see. He was as surprised as we were angry at the discovery.

Only then did we decide to air the radio spots, when we knew hundreds of other subscribers would be calling—a lot of them having to call long distance.

We regret that some postal employees who had no part in the delay were offended by the radio spots which said the delivery was caused by incompetence on the part of the U.S. Postal Service. The spots were not meant as a blanket indictment of postal service employees. The commercial message was written in a hurry in order to get it on the air as quickly as possible to let our subscribers know what to expect.

This delay was not the every-week problems with which we have had to learn to live. This was not a case of a newspaper being placed in the wrong box. It was not a case of a bundle of newspapers being put in the wrong mail sack or routed in the wrong direction. Each week we have a number of subscribers who fail to get their paper for some unexplained reason and others who complain that the newspaper is delivered late.

This was a case of a buggy with hundreds of copies of the newspaper, addressed, bundled and sacked for delivery to subscribers, just as they are 52 weeks a year. They were placed on the back porch of the post office before 10 a.m. Wednesday. They did not have to be sorted at the Shallotte Post Office. All that had to be done was load them on the proper truck headed for post offices north of here. The truck came and went, but the newspapers remained on the dock.

It is difficult to imagine anyone overlooking a buggy 3½ by 2½ feet, and three feet tall, heaped high with newspapers, for over 24 hours.

Mr. Reaves personally delivered the newspapers to the proper post offices after they were discovered. That meant some subscribers with post office boxes got Thursday delivery, but it was too late for rural route delivery that day. However, we appreciate his efforts, his subsequent investigation, and his assurances that steps have been taken to prevent the same thing from happening in the future.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time To Do Something

To the editor:
 I am writing to you about the problem we, the citizens of Brunswick County, are facing with the Hwy. 130 bypass.

How many more lives is that intersection going to take before the D.O.T. (Department of Transportation) does something about it? Next time it may be a school bus. What then? Will they say that an overpass is still not feasible?

Or would they think differently about building an overpass if it was their relatives who died such a horrible death?

I think it is time we do something about this hazardous intersection. Maybe we should form a committee called "Citizens for Public Safety" and take the problem not only to the D.O.T., but to our senators and governor as well.

Dana Cook, Shallotte
 (The writer is a sister of Misty Carmichael, the 16-year-old student who was one of two fatalities in the Nov. 1 accident at the intersection of Hwy. 17 bypass and 130.)

Make Flu Shots More Available

To the editor:
 Last week a neighbor and I went to the Brunswick County Health Department to get a flu shot for the \$4 fee.

There is a list of requirements and information on who should get the flu shot that is given to you; the next to the last one stipulates: "People wishing to reduce their chances of catching the flu."

It would seem to me that includes everyone. Yet my neighbor was denied because she wasn't 65 or older (she's 63) and doesn't have a chronic illness. But she doesn't want the flu either!

New Hanover lets anyone get the shots for \$5.
 Jeanette Martin Rt. 3, Supply

(More Letters, Following Page)

So What Do I Really Think About The SAT?

A Brunswick Community College student came by the other day, asking questions as part of research project she's conducting for an education class.

She wanted to know what I thought about the SAT, the Scholastic Aptitude Test. High school juniors and seniors take it because most schools in the southeastern United States use SAT scores as part of their freshman admission criteria. How much emphasis they place on the scores depends on the school, as does the minimum acceptable score. Acceptable scores can range from around 550 at some schools to 1,100 or more at others.

In some ways it was a frustrating interview because I had answers to offer, but not necessarily to the questions she asked.

"Should students be made to take the SAT?" What students? I wondered: All? Or just those who want, or might want, to go to a college that uses the SAT as one of its admission decision factors? Or does she mean should colleges stop requiring it, period?

Another question asked about the SAT as a measure of a student's educational achievement. Problem is, I don't think that is what the SAT does.

All it is supposed to be, or so I've been told, is just one indicator of how well a student might perform in a collegiate academic setting. NOT how well they might do in life, or how successful they might be in business, or even how much they have learned in high school.

Another question asked what

Susan Usher



could replace the SAT as a measure of a student's education. Problem question for several reasons, starting with the fact that it doesn't measure "education."

A high score on the SAT relates more to a student's reading rate, reading comprehension level, test-taking ability, vocabulary, degree of exposure to a broad range of ideas and information, and to a lesser degree whether his or her class finished the Algebra II text the year before.

If you've never heard of something, it's harder to rapidly read a passage on it and answer questions about it. That's partly why we hear so many complaints about "cultural bias". Some backgrounds are more limited than others; others rich and varied, but simply different.

But given the college setting to which the SAT is a stepping stone, perhaps the questions aren't so silly. A "good" college student needs to read fast and have excellent comprehension of what he or she reads, have a broad vocabulary and know how to use it, be able to derive relationships from clusters of information, and be able to apply basic mathematical concepts.

The real question should be, "How much does being a traditionally "good" college student or having a "good" SAT score have to do with real life?"

The student researcher also asked if there are ways to prepare students for the SAT. My answer: You spend your entire life up to test time preparing for the SAT, but you can't cram for it the week before.

The year I first took the SAT, many of the kids from my school didn't even have time to finish it. Most couldn't read fast enough, or had to read something over two or three times before they understood it.

There are things schools can do that help prepare students for the SAT whether they realize it or not. While temporarily attending seventh grade in the New Hanover County Schools, I was lucky enough to have a teacher who gave weekly reading comprehension/reading rate drills and tests. Everybody showed improvement under her self-paced program.

At Shallotte High, I had an English teacher who took the trouble at least once a week, sometimes more often, to do short drills at the start of class using the types of vocabulary and reading comprehension problems found on the SAT. She also had us take the New York Regent's Exam, with North Carolina questions substituted for those relating to New York. Anything to put us more at ease with standardized testing and to help identify our strengths and weaknesses.

We also had an opportunity to

take one year of Latin in ninth grade, great for building vocabulary and in figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words. People joke about Latin being a "dead" language, but it sure shows up frequently as part of our "living" languages.

This student researcher also asked if I knew of anything that could replace the SAT as a measure of a student's education. Not, not as a measure of education; but yes, as a measure of a student's ability to handle college and college level work.

As far as I'm concerned you could leave off the SAT as a criterion for college admission. The other factors traditionally used—academic achievement, private interviews, recommendations, etc., work fine. I certainly hate to see a student not considered because an SAT score was one point too low or something like that.

If we had to have a substitute for the SAT, though, then the only thing I could envision would be too costly and too time-consuming to do on a mass basis: Give every student being tested a research topic and access to an excellent resource collection such as is available at any good library. Give them a certain number of hours to conduct research and to write a paper in a supervised setting. Evaluate the paper on content as well as mechanics and also evaluate their ability to locate and effectively use a variety of resources. No copying from an encyclopedia allowed.

But that would probably be no more realistic than the SAT we're using now.



Sometimes, When It Rains It Also Pours

I sent my family into shock last week by buying my first Christmas present for 1991. It has to be a record—so early.

I think I've figured out what put the Christmas spirit into me in mid-November. Usually, I wait and wait until the last week, or the last minute. Only that came back to haunt me two years ago.

Remember the record snow storm when more than a foot of snow fell, and suddenly we had our first white Christmas here in Brunswick County? I had planned to finish up shopping on Christmas Eve, but somebody got left out that year. They never let me forget it either.

Last week was a pretty good time to do some shopping. I had spent Saturday night in 37-degree weather, with a windchill factor of 11 degrees, getting soaked from head to toe by a miserable rain while watch-

ing my Tarheels take a beating from Clemson in Chapel Hill.

Leaving the stadium alive must have given me the Christmas spirit. I had gone prepared—t-shirt, sweater, hooded sweatshirt, winter coat, raincoat, hood, thermal socks, thermal underwear, jeans, rain pants, gloves and a trash bag to stick my legs into.

That's an idea I stole from another faithful fan at the last game where it rained. Keep in mind, too, that umbrellas are outlawed inside the

stadium—they block everyone's view and are more trouble than good in a sporting environment. So true fans have to come up with innovative ways to stay dry.

From all of that clothing, my shoulders were sticking out like the Incredible Hulk's, and walking in a moonsuit would probably have been easier. But I drove three hours to see a game that's on national television, where fans are usually rowdy and the smell of an upset is in the air. Or was that the giant pretzels baking downstairs?

But eventually, the rain still got to the body, with the hands and feet the first to go numb. The waterproof ski gloves I bought last year have yet to dry. The wind was blowing at gale force, beating the rain against the faces of me, my brother and my father, true fans to have sat through what we battled.

The whining started about the time the Clemson team scored its second touchdown. Just get me back to the car. Somebody, please roll me back to the car, and let that heater be working.

I lasted as long as I could, three quarters of the game, and then it was all downhill, for both me and the Tarheels, 21-6. It was to the parking lot and onto Interstate 40 for the long ride home.

I must have promised a bunch that night, for when the cobwebs had cleared I went Christmas shopping last week—seven weeks before Christmas. I returned with a gift and only bought one thing for myself.

I also returned with a 36-inch lighted Santa Claus to sit on the front porch this Christmas—maybe not a practical purchase, but I've always wanted one. And why not? I survived.

Terry Pope



Sick And Tired Of Being Just That

If there's one thing I hate about this time of year, it's coming down with a cold or flu.

Now, don't get me wrong; I love fall and all the colors the leaves change to this time of year.

I enjoy cooler weather and wearing turtleneck sweaters. In fact, I welcomed the move north to Shallotte from Georgia. All of the factors involved in autumn are great.

Except getting sick.

I've been sick all week, and now I'm ready to start complaining about it.

Feeling lousy isn't any way to go through life, even if it is only for a few days. And it's starting to wear down my normally bright and sparkling demeanor, turning me into

the Sniveling Creature.

I've been going to bed at 7:30 most nights, and yet I've been keeping my husband (and myself) awake with my coughing and sniffles.

I'm no fun to be around, I'm moving as fast as oatmeal, and I'm sure my physical appearance hasn't improved. Let's face it, sick people

can sure put a damper on a good time.

"Is it just me or is it about 130 degrees in here?"

Then 10 minutes later, "Could someone turn up the heat?"

"Could you repeat that? My ears are stopped up!"

I think I heard my husband calling lawyers to ask if his wife's hacking cough is suitable grounds for divorce, or maybe it was just the general delirium I've been in all week.

Co-workers here at the *Beacon* see me coming and hold up crossed fingers as if to ward off a vampire, or insist that I leave.

Now, how's that supposed to make a poor, sick person feel? Actually, pretty good.

There's nothing better than to be allowed to go home and go back to bed, especially when you're falling asleep on the computer keyboard anyway.

Ah, yes, back under the covers where I belong!

I even went to see a nice doctor, and he gave me some nice antibiotics and nice decongestants.

Unfortunately, I don't feel very nice yet, but I'll keep taking the medicine and try to keep away from all those healthy, fun-loving people out there.

I just hope the medication kicks in before everyone decides to put me out of my (or their) misery.

And, oh boy, winter's chill is just around the corner.

Dori Cosgrove Gurganus

