

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweatt and Carolyn H. Sweatt .....Publishers  
 Edward M. Sweatt .....Editor  
 Susan Usher .....News Editor  
 Terry Pope and Dori Gurganus .....Staff Writers  
 Doug Rutter .....Sports Editor  
 Peggy Earwood .....Office Manager  
 Carolyn H. Sweatt .....Advertising Director  
 Timberley Adams and Cecelia Gore .....Advertising Representatives  
 Dorothy Brennan and Brenda Clemmons Moore .....Graphic Artists  
 William Manning .....Pressman  
 Lonnie Sprinkle .....Assistant Pressman  
 Tracy Smith .....Photo Technician  
 Phoebe Clemmons and Frances Sweatt .....Circulation

PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1992

## Bypass Speed Trap's OK As Short-Term Solution

Drivers, beware: The State of North Carolina aims to turn the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte into a speed trap.

The state Highway Patrol, the state Division of Motor Vehicles enforcement units and the Shallotte Police Department will be teaming up to crack down on motorists who speed, run red lights and otherwise violate the rules of the road.

They hope that doing so will reduce the odds of another accident or high speed "crash," as Secretary of Transportation Tommy Harrelson termed it at the dedication ceremony Friday for the new Southeastern Welcome Center, which overlooks the bypass. Rep. David Redwine has been advocating the same approach in recent weeks.

Such a speed trap may quite unpopular with tourists or through travelers taken by surprise, but that's too bad. It's one of the few helps available as the community waits for word on whether the state will build an overpass at the site.

However, making this strip a speed trap will be a short-term solution at best, because those agencies are unlikely to commit personnel to that intersection indefinitely.

Certainly, the state can't build an overpass at every grade-level intersection that is the site of a fatal highway crash caused by driver error, and no one is asking it to do that.

But the U.S. 17 bypass—N.C. 130 West intersection should qualify as an exception, with its combination of heavy school commuter traffic, commercial traffic and tourist traffic.

Such a dangerous combination makes it difficult to believe that at one time the state DOT was advocating erection of stop signs only, and those just for traffic on N.C. 130.

The state DOT is now studying the need for an overpass at the intersection.

Whatever the outcome, we must recognize that highway safety isn't the state's sole responsibility. While tougher law enforcement may be a good incentive to change some bad habits, we as drivers must answer for the decisions we make while on the road.

At the same time, there are possible changes in the law that might help make all Tar Heel intersections safer. In some other states, but not in North Carolina, it's a violation if any part of a vehicle is in an intersection when the light turns red. Here, if any part of a vehicle is in the intersection, the driver's OK under the law. Advocates for such a change argue that the existing rule encourages North Carolina motorists to gun it, to speed up at the sight of a yellow light, instead of cautiously proceeding through the signal at normal speed or coming to a stop.

Changing the law is an idea our legislature should seriously consider. Enforcing traffic laws firmly and consistently would help even more.

Meanwhile, local residents need to keep the pressure on for an overpass for the bypass.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### What Is It Going To Take?

To the editor:

As most of us know, Feb. 14 was the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Southeastern Welcome Center on Highway 17-bypass. As I stood there with my two small children, I felt many people there avoided the subject of highway safety, but only revered this Welcome Center as a propaganda for money.

My question is, what is it going to take to get an overpass to protect our valuable citizens of Brunswick County? Many of these high officials stated that the Welcome Center would bring money into our community with more tourists visiting seafood restaurants, local beaches and golf resorts. Money is nice, but how many of the local Joes will even benefit from this? Are we trying to put a higher emphasis on money than on the quality of human life?

It seems to me that the much needed overpass is being tossed aside and disregarded by state officials. They are saying that studies are being done and that money is a problem. I'm sure that somewhere in the state of North Carolina, there is money to help build this overpass.

As for the small group of students from West Brunswick High School, they all deserve a huge applause. They showed concern not only for themselves, but for their entire community. I was glad to see that they exercised their right under the Constitution of the United States of America, which gives us "the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." I believe that all of us as citizens of this community should take some bigger steps to exercise our right to petition government and put the pressure on them to realize the importance of an overpass.

All citizens of Brunswick County are aware of the dangers of Highway 17-bypass and take extra precautions on that road, but will tourists in their holiday daze do the same? We can not educate all tourists to drive safely on this deadly road.

A student from West Brunswick High School asked the question: What is it going to take for an overpass to be built? Will there have to be a school bus loaded with students or a government official killed at this intersection before anything is done? A good question asked, but what is the response from the government?

Ilah Beth Zetlemoyer  
Supply

#### Conspicuous By Their Absence

To the editor:

An ad in the Feb. 13 edition of the *Beacon* indicated that a total of 15 business/professional establishments responded financially to the annual appeal by the Calabash Emergency Medical Service.

Among those conspicuously absent from the list were eight golf courses, 15 restaurants, four banks and savings and loans, 3 builders, eight Realtors and dozens of retail stores.

It is a crying shame that those who take from our community cannot give something back. They would be the first to object to a government-

(See CONSPICIOUS, Following Page)

## There's A Certain Feeling In The Air

Do you feel it? That sense of anticipation? That sense of being on the edge of something big?

At lunchtime today, Sweetpea was curled up in a flower bed sunning, surrounded by a mass of blooming daffodils. That's right, daffodils. Yellow flower-heads on slender green stems, bobbing in the breeze.

It looks a bit like spring at our house. Come March there may be nothing left in bloom, unless our azaleas jump the gun like they did a few years back.

We've got big fat robins pecking for worms, though the only green in the lawn comes from about 22 different types of weeds. They're doing very well this year, thank you, especially the runaway red clover.

Both the Hino azaleas and the flowering pear are jam-packed with

Susan Usher



buds, which could mean either gorgeous blooms or early disaster, depending on the weather over the coming weeks.

The mockingbird's back at the catfood bowl, as big and sassy as ever. This week he was joined by a nasty-acting bluejay.

Nosey the cat sits right there on the deck, watching the birds take turns at the catfood dish. She couldn't care less, unlike her buddy

J.R.

True to her namesake, J.R. is a rascal. But she's not always too bright, thank goodness. She hasn't figured out, for example, that if she's sitting directly under the bird feeder, the birds are not coming to dinner. Every morning she's out there, always hopeful. But the minute she turns her back, the yard and feeder fill with tiny birds of all kinds as well as a few of the big guys.

Here and there a gladiolus is poking up from the ground. In the wildflower bed the clover's going crazy, overtaking and smothering the few flowers that are trying to bloom. The clover doesn't know it, but a tiller is in its immediate future, though a little on the late side.

Like J.R., all of nature seems to be full of hope and anticipation right

now. You can almost feel a humming of the earth, as if a big motor were about to roar into life. The weatherman might not agree, but it's beginning to look a lot like spring.

Even Don and I are beginning to stir a little out of our midwinter near-hibernation. We've been out raking leaves, trimming pampas grass and digging holes for trees and shrubs, as have most of our neighbors.

February and March are known for their nasty, volatile tempers. But all it takes to make them bearable are a few, spectacular days that look, feel and even smell like spring. The kind of days that send us shopping for fertilizer, seeds and bulbs. The kind of days that give us hope of better days ahead.

Hang in there; spring's just around the corner. I can feel it.



## It's Still A Deal Compared To Other Areas

New state figures indicate Brunswick County will continue to grow in population, but not quite as fast as once expected.

What does the revised projection really mean? Is the county losing its appeal? Maybe not, for there are several ways you can look at the numbers.

Our coastal county now stands at around 54,000 in permanent resident population, up from around 35,777 in 1980. Think about that. Ten years ago, roughly 19,000 of the people who now call Brunswick County home, your neighbors and friends, were not even here.

The 1990 U.S. Census listed the county's population at 50,985, though local officials say about 4,000 people went uncounted.

But these figures are more than just numbers. They determine Congressional seats plus state and federal funding levels. For some years, the state and federal governments have worked together to provide counties with a set of population projections to use for all types of planning purposes.

New figures were received in October from the N.C. Council of Governments that made County Manager David Clegg do a double

Terry Pope



take and Planning Director John Harvey cry foul.

Someone has definitely gotten cold feet when it comes to predicting how many people will continue to choose Brunswick County as home in the next 20 years. The state has actually lowered its expectations of county growth.

It had estimated a permanent population of 75,500 by the year 2000, but now thinks only 66,171 people will live here by then. It had also predicted a population of 97,100 by the year 2010, but now thinks only 79,866 will live here at that time.

The figures raised an eyebrow or two on the Brunswick County Planning Board.

N.C. Administrative Code developed by the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission mandates use of these revised state figures in plotting land use for urban and suburban develop-

ment and determining capacity for bridges, roads, water, sewer, drainage, hospital beds, classrooms and whatever.

The 1992 Brunswick County Land Use Plan must lower its expectations of growth for Brunswick County if it wants to hold true to the figures. The plan will be developed by the planning board and the consulting firm of Glenn Harbeck and Associates throughout this year.

Depression, recession and economic hard times. We know business is down nationwide, but North Carolina is still an important destination for migrating retirees and persons who find the beaches a paradise. Brunswick County is a very big destination point and most likely will remain so.

In fact, the county was featured in an article called, "New Age Arriving With New Retirees," in the January 1992 issue of *North Carolina*, a magazine for business, industry and the professions in the Tar Heel state.

According to the article, the N.C. Department of Human Resources' Division of Aging estimates that at least 27,000 to 40,000 retirees relocate to the state each year. A study conducted by a UNC-Greensboro professor focused on two counties:

Carteret and Brunswick.

The study concluded that half the people retiring to Brunswick County bought a house when they arrived, and more than half of those houses cost between \$100,000 to \$250,000, with about equal proportions below and above the \$150,000 range.

Other figures also paint a brighter picture for Brunswick County's future growth, whether we're talking about retirees or newcomers of all ages. However, the county has no choice but to use the new figures released in October, no matter how depressing they may appear to local developers or how ridiculous they may seem to county planners.

"Not only do you have the weather that attracts people to Brunswick County," said Pat Fox, president of the Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors, "but taxwise, North Carolina is a deal compared to other areas."

Improved roads and lower taxes will likely continue to bring residents to the county in the next 10 to 20 years. If the state builds the roads to Brunswick County, then the people will come, she said.

All in all, while the figures are not devastating, they are worth keeping an eye on.

## Are You In Our 'Who's Who' File?

Many of you may not know it, but there does exist a Who's Who Directory of Brunswick County residents.

A Brunswick County Yearbook, you might call it. The graduating class of the past ten years or so.

It's called the "thumbnail file" here at the *Beacon*, a three-ring binder full of tiny photographs of local newsmakers.

As I recently flipped through the clear plastic pages of photos showing just people's shoulder and head areas, I realized that here I held something of a reference source for recognizing faces in this community.

Imagine hundreds of smiling mugs in one notebook! All of you out there who have been photographed for the *Beacon* surely don't think that we'd throw away your picture!

Think again. Why, of course, it stays here on file what seems like forever, which is probably more like a few years.

Dori Cosgrove Gurganus



Yes, I know what some of you looked like with that old haircut.

This is demonstrated by the two thumbnail shots of Congressman Charlie Rose we have. One shows him looking slightly younger, with darker hair, while another more recent shot shows him a little more "mature," shall we say.

Naturally we don't use older photographs of people, but there they stay in the notebook, showing a person's different hair styles over the years, or other physical changes.

Some of you are in our collection because you made the dean's list at a

local college, or you may have completed basic training in the military.

Still others are faces that we see almost every week, such as Rep. David Redwine, County Manager David Clegg or Brunswick Community College President Michael Reaves.

No matter what you've done to get yourself into the news, you can be sure that I and the other news staff flip past your photo several times a week.

That may horrify some of you who don't like your particular photo. Since I'm new to the area, sometimes I'll look up a person's thumbnail to find out if I would recognize that person, or to ensure that I will when I meet him or her for the first time.

It's also a good source to demonstrate the accomplishments of local residents.

Where else in this county can you find a list of award winners, election winners, outstanding employees and

beauty pageant queens?

Even people who have not performed good deeds, such as the occasional criminal, are featured.

But for the most part, everyone is in this notebook because they've done something special, no matter how spectacular or humble.

Mayors, fire chiefs, ministers, ladies auxiliary presidents, business owners and high school sports heroes are all here to testify that Brunswick County residents don't just sit back and let the world pass them by.

### Write Us

The *Beacon* welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. The *Beacon* reserves the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to *The Brunswick Beacon*, P. O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.