

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## What's Good For The Goose...

Tsk, tsk. What have we here? Looks like the Town of Holden Beach is chafing at having to abide by the same rules its residents must live by.

The town's police department has been holing up, temporarily, in a house on Davis Street, near the town hall. The original plan was to renovate the old public works garage as the department's new quarters. But bids came in higher than anticipated and commissioners are balking at the \$60,000 price tag and seeking new bids.

Meanwhile, the town has obtained two time extensions on bringing the house up to state building code and now it wants another break.

Upgrading to code is required the N.C. Department of Insurance when there is a change in use of a structure. But the town wants to know if it can appeal and gain approval for the police department to continue using the Davis Street house without making the required changes.

The town's in a tough spot, certainly, but it's also in the spotlight.

If it expects local residents to comply with the rules it sets and/or enforces, then shouldn't Holden Beach set a good example and get its own "house" in order?

As the old adage goes, what's good for the goose is good for the gander.

## We Can Live Without A Noise Control Law

Not a whole lot of people are making noise about Brunswick County's proposed noise ordinance.

In an attempt to silence neighbors' stereos and loud motorcycles, some residents have asked for a county noise ordinance for years. Some even asked for one to help silence a sewer plant in operation near their homes at Sunset Beach.

That ordinance finally made it to a public hearing last week, but only a few comments were made—mostly opposing the plan. If people had really wanted it that badly, perhaps more than seven people would have attended the public hearing.

Of those seven, four were regulars at Brunswick County Commissioners meetings. They are the ones present in the audience almost every time the board holds a meeting.

Judging from the lack of enthusiasm for the ordinance and the holes it obviously contains, it will no doubt die a slow death on the commissioners' table.

Local towns have noise control ordinances that are tied into their zoning laws. In my years as a news reporter for this paper, I have yet to see a case docketed in Brunswick County District Court against someone charged with violating noise control laws. That should tell you how difficult such laws are to enforce.

Brunswick County is unique in its pattern of development. In some areas, neighbors live in close quarters with a mixture of retirees and young people along the coast. What one neighbor may have a taste for—loud music, parties, motorcycles, and big-mouthed dogs—others may detest.

Yet, in the rural areas of the county homes are scattered. Acreage separates pens holding packs of hunting dogs, persons target shooting and those operating chain saws used to cut firewood. Just ask District 4 Commissioner Frankie Rawn, whose 46 hunting dogs live at the edge of the Green Swamp in rural Town Creek.

Dogs can raise a fuss at times. I have three that I like having around because they help keep an eye on the house. There are also times that I would like to put a sock around their mouths.

With a lame ordinance in effect, Brunswick County's sheriff deputies would spend more of their patrol time getting involved in neighborly disputes and less time investigating actual crimes. Enforcing a noise ordinance is more of a headache that it is worth.

No one wants to be kept awake by loud noises, but the ordinance would bypass the more diplomatic approaches to solving the problem, such as simply asking the neighbors to turn down the sound. Neighbors already feuding could use the ordinance for petty reasons, an attempt to force neighbors to move.

The proposed ordinance would make it illegal for a person, firm or corporation to make unnecessary or excessive sounds—whether vocally, mechanically, or electronically—that disturbs, injures or endangers the quiet, comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of any other person.

Sounds audible at a distance of 50 feet from the building, structure, property or vehicle from which it is emitted or located would be in violation and subject to a \$500 fine or 30 days in jail.

It would apply to animals, combustion engines, chain saws, power mowers, motorboats, motor vehicles, shouting peddlers, hawkers, vendors, drums and other musical instruments.

The problem is that many noises carry beyond 50 feet. A dog's bark can carry that far. Some of those customized car stereos can be heard for miles on the highway. When does a noise become a nuisance?

I agree with District 2 Commissioner Jerry Jones, who seemed reluctant to send the ordinance to a public hearing last month.

His reason: It's a shame that neighbors can't be neighbors today, that they act irresponsibly when someone next door may medically need peace and quiet, that when asked to turn down the stereo they actually crank it up in defiance when learning that there is no noise control law.

Apparently, this attempt at a new government-imposed regulation has failed, but there is a lesson here. Some people are hardheaded and just don't care. Neighbors need to act more neighborly.

## 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.

## Grand Opening Offered More Than One Lesson For Kids

There's been a great deal of fuss made over a group of West Brunswick High School students leaving campus to lobby for an overpass at the intersection of N.C. 130 and the U.S. 17 bypass.

Chances are, there's no one around here who isn't proud of the youngsters for 1) having an opinion and 2) expressing it in an orderly fashion.

But there's also been a lot of misdirected anger. Neither adults nor students should be angry at West Brunswick High School for punishing the students who left school without permission that Friday afternoon to lobby at the Southeastern Welcome Center grand opening.

That punishment wasn't for lobbying or for exercising freedom of speech. It was for violating an exist-



Susan Usher

ing school rule of which the students were quite aware. Schools are accountable to parents for students in their care; students can't be allowed to just walk away from campus leaving the school to bear the responsibility if something happens to them.

If a student chooses to break the rules, he or she should be willing to accept the consequences of that decision.

The lobbying effort at the grand opening ceremony provided an excellent opportunity for a good lesson in taking responsibility for one's own actions, as well as an opportunity to exercise freedom of speech, the right to assembly and so forth.

All our adult lives we face decisions: How to do something we feel strongly about without losing a job, getting arrested or facing some other type of negative consequence. How to work within the system to get things done. Deciding for ourselves when the consequences of breaking the rules are "worth" it. When are we willing to take the chance, to pay the price?

For some adults the weighty question might have been whether to skip work the first day of hunting or fishing season; for others, whether

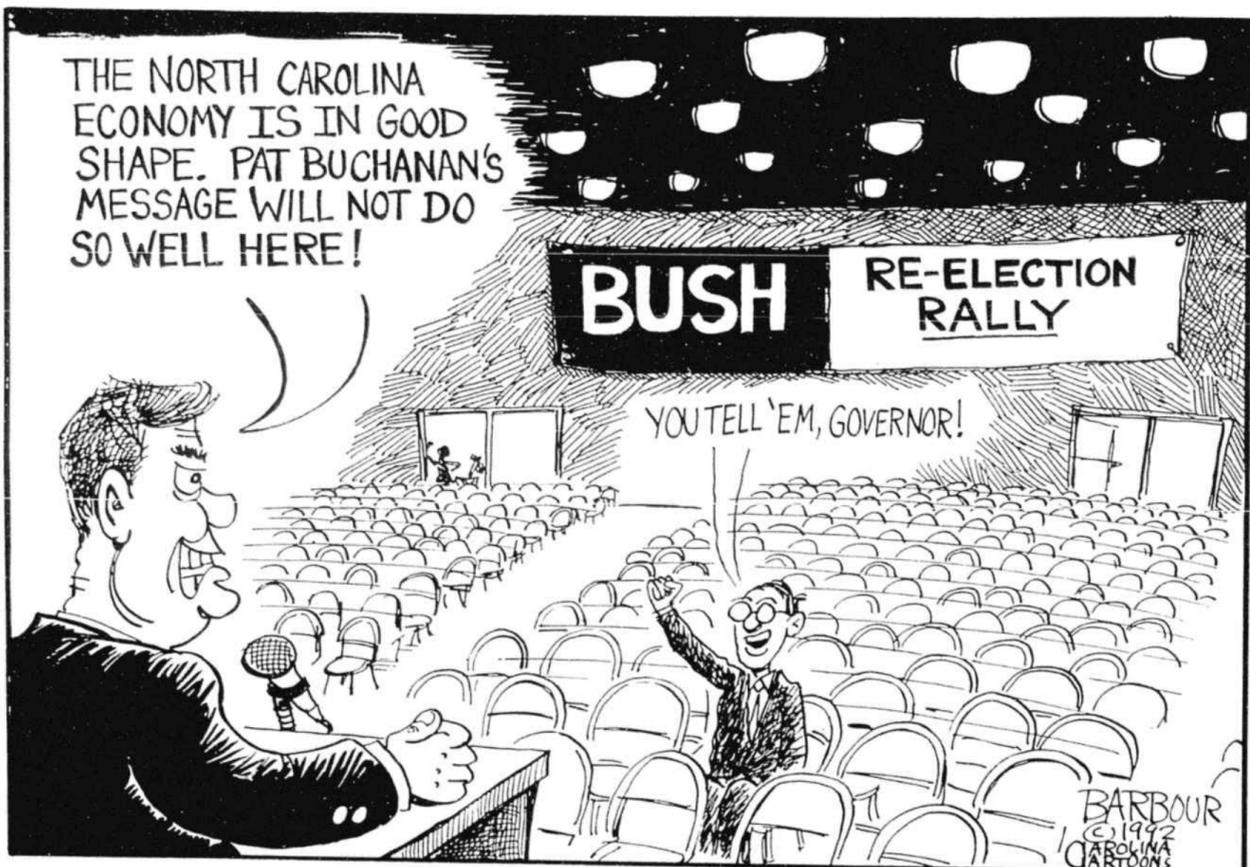
to fight the draft or turn in a coworker who's been on the take.

Some students did plan ahead, arranging in advance with their parents to be away from school that Friday in order to attend the grand opening.

With a little more thought and negotiating with teachers and staff, some students might have been able to turn attendance at the grand opening into a class assignment or field trip. It would have been, I think, a fine assignment for a social studies or speech class.

But West Brunswick did the right thing. It warned students ahead that if the rules were broken, there would be consequences, and then stuck by that.

If that's not a real-life lesson, I don't know what is.



## Student Right Demonstrated Beautifully

Within the past few months, I've seen some strange things on television regarding young adults and their motivation to hold protests.

A group of teens and young adults have banded together in New Jersey to protest their local cable company taking MTV (Music Television) off their package. They are organized, focused, and are stationed at shopping centers getting residents to sign their petition.

Same for a group in Florida. They are also angry that their cable company has dared to tell them they want to watch, and are taking action to have MTV brought back.

Seeing that, I thought, well, at least they're speaking out and taking action about something.

But MTV? Granted, I like watching MTV in small doses to keep up-to-date on the music industry, and from a marketing point of view I think it's stupid to take such a popular channel off the air. But I'm sure that these people's time could be better spent taking action on issues that truly have an impact on our lives.

Like campaigning for their favorite candidate in this pivotal election year.

So, I was absolutely thrilled to hear that students at West Brunswick High School were planning a protest during the dedication ceremony of the new Welcome Center along the U.S. 17 bypass at Shallotte two Fridays ago.

Watching some local news programs that evening, I was also glad to see the coverage at least two stations gave to the event.

Way to go!, I thought. There on my television screen were several WBHS teenagers with signs talking to Tommy Harrelson, secretary of the state DOT, about the need to construct an overpass at the intersection of U.S. 17 and N.C. 130 near the school.

They remained calm, spoke rationally and intelligently and made their feelings clear to Harrelson, who listened and gave them the consideration he would probably have given a fellow adult. The dedication ceremony apparently was not interrupted and everyone had their moment in the sun.

Many scenarios could have taken place at that protest, but fortunately, everyone kept cool heads (from what I saw) and made their points clear.

I feel like shaking the hands of the kids who took the initiative to leave school and speak their collec-



Dori Cosgrove Gurganus

I've seen adults use name-calling, threats and raised voices to get their point across, which usually doesn't do any good.

The students at West Brunswick High who were brave enough to risk punishment for leaving campus are still good kids even though they broke school rules.

But that's really not such a big deal.

Something tells me that the hours spent serving in-school suspension will fade away soon enough, but hopefully the memories of taking a positive stand will last forever in these kid's minds.

I agree that they indeed should have some form of punishment, but I hope these students won't let a simple administrative penalty change their minds about protests they may want to attend in later years.

Remember that you'll continue to be punished if you break the rules, but also consider how important it may be to support your cause.

Please, keep on speaking your minds, especially to government officials.

You have that right, and you've demonstrated it beautifully.

## Letters To The Editor: Gossip Is Problem

To the editor: I am writing in regards to a problem within our community. It is a very destructive problem. I'm not referring to drugs, theft, or vandalism. What I am speaking of is gossip, and I believe that it is spread with more malicious intent than any of the things named above.

I have often heard the saying that words can't hurt you, but I just don't believe there is a whole lot of truth to that statement. There have been more divorces, broken friendships and jobs jobs lost due to rumors.

My question is, have we become that separate as a community? Do we have that little regard for the feelings of our neighbors?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if each

of us could think before we speak? We are all guilty of gossip to one extent or another. "Let he who would change the world, first change himself" (unknown author).

Tammie R. Henderson  
Shallotte

## Keep It Coming

To the editor: This is a response to a letter entitled "Newspaper Comes Too Late" (Feb. 13 issue).

I was given a subscription to your paper by a real estate lady from Sea Trail. I intend to move to North Carolina in 18 months or less. I feel the paper provides me with some insight as to the style of living in Brunswick County.

Inasmuch as I cannot receive your local TV channels, I rely on the Beacon for local news. Even if the paper is late, it is still news to me.

If the lady from Arnold, Maryland, is receiving her paper late, she should be complaining to the post office which delivers her paper. I'll bet her first class mail is late also.

My paper is always in the mail box by Saturday of the week in which it was mailed. I live 400 miles north of Maryland in Connecticut. I realize that things move a little slower south of the Mason-Dixon Line, especially with the postal system in Arnold, Maryland. Please continue my subscription.

Charles Nye  
Niantic, Connecticut

