

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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United Way Is More Than Just One Man

Most of us have tendencies to throw out babies with bath water whenever something arouses our moral sensibilities.

As a result of vilifying one person who has behaved abominably, we like to convict his entire family, all close friends and even the pet dog.

That may happen with William Aramony, the national United Way president who evidently treated company money like a fistful of confetti. He was equally careful about spin-offs, consultants and cushy jobs for relatives and friends.

The "informality" of his management has been denounced, he has resigned, and a scrupulous Kenneth Dam has done much as interim president to correct the abuses.

But we'll probably continue to connect Aramony and United Way as though they were equal commodities. The years of service to human beings this organization has provided nationwide is apt to be sidelined, as we hold every local organization suspect, simply because of one man.

It will be a tragedy if we cannot make the distinction between individual corruption and a network of helping volunteers that stretches across America but also shows up in Brunswick County. Pete Barnette, Cathy Swaim and Gladys Wagenseil are only three names among dozens in this county alone who work for small, incorruptible salaries in order to take our contributions and turn them into food and literacy and safety for our unfortunate neighbors.

If we insist on withholding our United Way gifts, convicting the local effort as guilty by association with William Aramony, the damage will be done to those who are mostly powerless and voiceless and who rather desperately need our help.

As we absorb the scandals, the evil, the greed and corruption that pour out of the evening news, from Washington to Wilmington, let's be very careful to aim our anger at the right person. Hopefully, we won't throw out the baby of neighborliness with the bath water of one man's abuse.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keep Shallotte PO Intact

To the editor:
 As a lifelong resident of Shallotte, I have seen our town prosper into one of the most outstanding retirement and recreational areas on the east coast.

Newcomers have added new ideas and friendships to our town and have helped boost the town both economically and socially.

The time has now come for you to help us "oldtimers" speak up and be heard. We need to keep the town of Shallotte post office intact and keep its identity as the main branch with very little change in operations.

I remember the dedication day of the Shallotte post office. I represented Boy Scout Troop 506 and presented the first American flag to the facility. The old post office simply moved three blocks north and we were so proud of its modern design, ample parking spaces, easy access to the street, and convenience for shoppers in town.

Yes, I realize the new post office in the Seaside area is needed. However, it should be a branch of the town of Shallotte post office and serve as a convenient service to our friends in that part of the county.

I cannot understand why the postmaster for the town of Shallotte would move his office to this facility which is 12 miles from town? Why is it that banks have no problem with this concept? There is at least one branch of almost every bank in town at Ocean Isle, Holden Beach, Calabash, and Seaside.

But we all know where the main branch is in Shallotte and it keeps its identity. We must ALL give a last ditch stand and keep the Shallotte post office operations and postmaster at home where they belong.

Jimmy Marshall
 Shallotte

Varnamtown Is Praised

To the editor:
 In this modern, high-tech, fast-paced world we live in, it's real comforting to know that the community of Varnamtown really understands the meaning of "love thy neighbor."

During the past few weeks I have come to know a woman by the name of Chris Caudill. No, I do not know her personally and have never met her, but I feel like I've known her all my life. If we had as many "movers and shakers" in every community as Varnamtown, this world would be by far a better place to live. I have never seen the outpouring of love and compassion and giving of oneself as I have in the events this community has brought about in such a short time.

The "Reach Out for Chris Caudill" button that I received at the yard sale will be worn by me until this lady has her bone marrow transplant.

I like Varnamtown. I've always known where it was; even knew a few people who lived there, but I never knew its people could convince me that Varnamtown is richer by far than any exclusive resort I could dream of.

Want to find out for yourself? Come out to the next fund-raising event. You'll see.

No, I am not a Varnam, nor do I live in Varnamtown, but I sure wish I did.

Sandy B. Coffey
 Holden Beach

Wild Flowers Disappearing

To the editor:
 We moved here from Kansas in July of '89. The first spring we were here we enjoyed just driving down the roads and looking at the beautiful jasmine, wisteria and other wild flowers along the roadside.

There were beautiful clusters of jasmine in the trees and wisteria vines going up into the trees 50 to 75 feet.

Now you can drive down old Georgetown Road, 904 and even Highway 17 and they have gone in and cut all the trees, run over every piece of jasmine, wisteria and other beautiful wild flowers just for another

(See LETTERS, Following Page)

This Doesn't Seem Like An Election Year

For some reason, it just doesn't seem like an election year to me.

Sure, there are posters and billboards around. And both political parties have held their annual conventions. Politicians are making rounds at cookouts and gatherings before the May 5 primary.

Some have spent big money on advertising and billboards. Some incumbents are running scared.

The presidential race isn't exciting. Democratic candidates are fighting like kids, trying to tattle-tale on who smoked marijuana or held parties where drugs were present. George Bush hardly raises an eyebrow.

I can't put my finger on it, but even here in Brunswick County, closer to home, to me it just doesn't seem like the political season has arrived. I don't intend this as a negative comment on the candidates themselves, for there are some outstanding and brave citizens challenging for local seats.

How do I know when the political

Terry Pope



season has arrived? It's like the feeling you get when you suddenly realize that Christmas is right around the corner.

At the Democratic convention last week, delegates politely applauded a speech given by fiery Ray Walton, who blasted Republicans left and right.

Only about 50 people attended the Republican convention in March. That's a lot of turnout based on previous years. Three Brunswick County commissioners whose seats are up for election are not even running.

Maybe I'm just suffering from the

same case of doldrums that plagues politics as a whole. A strong protest vote opted for two-year terms for school board and commission seats in Brunswick County last November.

Protest votes also gave Democrat Paul Tsongas a good showing in the New York presidential primary, and he wasn't even in the race. It is also making a 1996 candidate out of Republican Patrick Buchanan.

People have taken a shotgun approach to politics, to vote against incumbents and old ideas. Only its victims will include some good guys, too.

The report card has been so poor for Brunswick County Schools lately that I wonder if people have just lost hope of finding solutions? Given up in despair? Or don't care?

And is it a case of the people getting what they asked for with the two-year term deal? Are candidates already feeling the pressure?

Petitions circulating throughout Brunswick County last week were

gathering names of persons supporting the independent presidential campaign of billionaire H. Ross Perot in an attempt to have him added to the November ballot in North Carolina.

He needs 68,000 signatures in the state. Considering the attitude of voters today, that won't be a difficult task. That's just two percent of the state's registered voters, which must be certified and submitted to the N.C. Board of Elections by June 26.

At the Brunswick County Board of Elections office, the number of registered unaffiliated voters increased by 233 voters from October 1991 to April 10; Democrats gained 679 voters and Republicans gained 651.

But by proportion, those 233 voters who don't wish to be affiliated with either political party represent a much larger gain. Perhaps it is the mood of the people.

Maybe I have reason to feel the way I do this election year.



You're One In A Million, Uh-Huh!

You've seen the ads: A super-cool Ray Charles advising, "You got the right one Baby."

Ray's been helping hype Diet Pepsi with its 100 percent "Uh-Huh" special ingredient.

Until the other day I hadn't paid much attention to the marketing campaign. After all, I'm a Coca Cola drinker, from way back.

But Ray and Co. managed to get my attention.

Rushing home the other night for a quickie supper before heading out to a cover a town council meeting, I saw a box on the back deck, in front of the door. That sparked my curiosity, because neither Don nor I was expecting anything by way of UPS.

A few minutes later, the answer was in hand: An invitation to put my diet Coke aside for awhile and try Diet Pepsi. Added motivation to do so: a free case for sampling. That's right. Susan Usher Eggert is one in a million. One of a million diet cola

Susan Usher



drinkers targeted to receive 24 free cans of Diet Pepsi!

It was kind of exciting. I mean, think about getting \$15 of free soft drinks delivered to your home. Even a loyal Coke fan would have trouble turning down free beverages. Specially if he or she is a tightwad like me.

Then my husband and I started trying to figure out what questionnaire or coupon I had filled out-what piece of paper had told the people at Pepsi I drink diet colas (and NOT Pepsi).

The Diet Pepsi came with a catch-a survey I'm asked to fill out and return, telling the folks at Pepsi what I think. Four simple questions: What did I think about getting the free case of Diet Pepsi as a way to sample the product; what I think 100 percent "Uh-Huh" is; how many cans or glasses of soft drinks are consumed weekly in our home; and the clincher: How has my cola behavior changed as a result of sampling 24 cans of free Diet Pepsi. Am I switching brands? Do I still prefer diet Coke exclusively? Or am I beginning to drink more Diet Pepsi, but still drink diet Coke too.

I'll have to be honest with the surveyors. Since I haven't finished the freebies (it may take a while), I truly am beginning to drink more Diet Pepsi.

Tell you the truth, I was beginning to feel a little smug about being "one in a million" to someone other than my mother.

That was until Don called my brother-in-law Robert in Roxboro.

Robert is a true Coca Cola man, a longtime employee of the company, extremely loyal to its products, and gives Don and me a hard time any time he sees another brand of soft drink in our home-no matter what was on sale at the store that week.

His home probably has more Coke paraphernalia per square foot than the company museum in Atlanta. No kidding. He collects anything and everything relating to Coke. If the company gave a loyalty award, Robert Eggert would get it, hands down.

Robert listened patiently as Don related the news, then promptly put things in their proper "Coke" perspective.

"Uh-huh," he said. "That's the only way they can get rid of their products-giving them away."

Spoken like a true "one in a million" Coke man.

Spring Means Dirty Knees

Well, I've completed my annual rite of spring. Sore leg muscles and dents in my knees testify that I have participated in the great American "Plantout" that thrills all right-minded people. Yes, I planted a garden!

Everybody, of course, looks forward to this wonderful, creative, outdoor experience...well, everybody but me. The truth is, I hate gardening. I've decided to come out of the closet and confess it. Not only do I loathe and despise football, but I am supremely bored by gardening, so there goes my certification as a really good person.

It's good to admit it, though, that the raking, hole-digging, planting, weeding and watering hold no charms at all for me. Obviously something is missing in my gene pool because I do not share the primal urge to get down on all fours in the dirt. I have never found any charm or peace or fulfillment in it.

However, every "coming-of-spring" season I have a curious lapse of integrity. It happened two weeks ago on one of those balmy days

Marjorie Megivern



when little green shoots appeared on the trees, birds chirped, and the air was alive with sweetness. I had a strange compulsion. The world was so glorious, I felt the need to do something creative about it.

No, going inside and baking cookies wasn't quite right, though that's a favorite activity. It must be something done out of doors today, I thought!

Aha! I had it! I'd plant those bulbs and seeds that had been cluttering a closet for weeks. Months ago, in a wistful moment of longing for spring, I had ordered them from a seed catalog, one of those with vivid color pictures of unpronounceable beauties. Weeks later, my fer-

vor gone, the cursed things arrived, a dozen little plastic envelopes filled with ugly, knobby things. I shoved them aside and tried to ignore them, but that collection of unborn flowers haunted me.

On this heavenly April day I remembered and retrieved them. This was exactly the right way to participate in spring! Eagerly I located a trowel and rake and got busy in the little alcove that passes for my garden.

Winter's leaves and pine straw were forcibly removed and old bulbs inadvertently dug up and flung onto the mound of debris. Finally, the garden path was ready for new life. I dug little holes and plopped in the seeds, without any instructions about how to do it. Probably the holes were too shallow and those seeds have long since been washed into my neighbor's yard.

Anyway, as I grew uncomfortably warm and tired and sore, everything got immersed in the earth. (Why did I order so many?) I smoothed the dirt over them, stood up (with diffi-

culty) and smiled smugly, self-righteously to myself. I had planted a garden!

I'm glad it's over with and I don't plan to do any more about it. If anything comes up, I'll let you know, but regardless, that afternoon's activity did something therapeutic for me. Not that gardening is a healing activity, but the FACT that I did it makes me feel acceptable to the rest of the human race.

Viva la Spring! Take over my chores now, God, and send your rain and sunshine. I've done my part.

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.