

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Edward M. Sweatt and Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Publishers
 Edward M. Sweatt.....Editor
 Lynn S. Carlson.....Managing Editor
 Susan Usher.....News Editor
 Doug Rutter.....Sports Editor
 Marjorie Megivern.....Associate Editor
 Eric Carlson.....Staff Writer
 Peggy Earwood.....Office Manager
 Carolyn H. Sweatt.....Advertising Director
 Timberley Adams, Cecelia Gore
 and Linda Cheers.....Advertising Representatives
 Dorothy Brennan and Brenda Clemmons Moore.....Graphic Artists
 William Manning.....Pressman
 Lonnie Sprinkle.....Assistant Pressman
 Phoebe Clemmons and Frances Sweatt.....Circulation

PAGE 4-A, THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1992

Commissioner's Statement About Tourists Unfounded

Regardless of how you feel about governments helping to support chambers of commerce, there's no defending the comments about tourism made by Holden Beach Commissioner Jim Fournier in a recent public meeting.

Fournier was quoted in this newspaper several weeks ago as saying, during a debate over the chamber's request for town support, "I don't get anything from the tourists except aggravation. I know the tourists are here when I see trash in the canal behind my house."

Although the commissioner has probably been taken to task by nearly every business person he's encountered in this community since his statement was published, we feel the need to join the chorus.

Tourism, like it or not, constitutes a hefty chunk of this community's economic foundation. It is a clean and cost-effective industry that has unarguably been very good to many Brunswick Countians, in both direct and indirect ways.

The little "aggravations" Brunswick County's year-round residents endure during the tourist season pale beside those of neighboring resort communities which have not protected their family atmospheres as scrupulously as the South Brunswick Islands did. Those of us who have lived and made a living in those other communities never ceased to be amazed at just how "laid-back" the tourist season is in the South Brunswick Islands.

As for the trash statement, it would go without saying that, if you're looking for places to criticize for their debris and litter, there are more obvious places to look than around rental cottages.

Most of the year-round residents of this community, ourselves and perhaps even the commissioner included, first came to love Brunswick County as vacationers. By the same token, many of us who have been fortunate enough to find a way to settle here permanently, and to support ourselves while doing so, have tourists to thank for making it possible.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pier Manager Responds To Writer's Complaint

To the editor:

Understandably, there has been some dismay concerning the newly-enacted policy of charging admission to everyone using the Holden Beach Fishing Pier. This change is not meant to alienate any of our customers and friends.

The primary concern is for the safety of those using our pier. We feel that by charging this nominal fee it will help eliminate the overcrowding and repeat traffic on the fishing pier and decrease the chances of anyone being injured.

Another deciding factor is that with the rising cost of operating and maintaining a business of this nature, we find this to be a suitable alternative to raising the price of fishing tickets at this time. We feel that all who enjoy using this facility should share in its upkeep, not just the fishermen.

In response to Mrs. Phillips' letter (June 4 issue) let me add that most of the better things in life do have a price tag, but we sometimes tend to forget this when someone else is paying the bill.

Forrest G. Whitley, Co-Manager
Holden Beach Fishing Pier

Adults Setting Poor Example For Players

To the editor:

Are we going to be another Whiteville? Teeball should be a learning experience for our kids, a game which contains sportsmanship.

It's terrible when adults can't control their childish actions in front of our kids. Hopefully, next year the board members and coaches will have the common sense to handle these situations at meetings and not in front of our children.

I enrolled my child to learn sportsmanship and how to get along with others, not to watch adults fuss in front of the dugout.

Let's get real! We don't even keep score. Who wants to accuse someone of trying to cheat with 5-to-8-year-olds.

I would like to thank Homer Andrews for the many years of service to the Shallotte League. His continued leadership and dedication to our children is an example that I would like my son to carry with him if he continues in baseball.

Kaye C. Mattingly
Supply

Poor Sportsmanship Displayed Each Year

To the editor:

I have been involved in Shallotte tee-ball for four years. Each year it has been my unfortunate experience to see at least one coach, if not more, display not only poor sportsmanship, but also some very immature behavior.

Each time I have been tempted to remove my child from the field. But because of remarks from other parents concerning my poor sportsmanship if I reacted to the coaches' atrocious behavior, I have remained silent.

This year the teams my son has played on have had mature coaches. However, last week my husband stood within three feet of the tee-ball coordinator as she argued with a coach during a game over something petty. My husband heard the coach say it was neither the time nor place for the discussion. For teams of children and their families were in the vicinity of the dugout and heard parts of the argument.

I was not only offended that this discussion took place in front of all these people, but also while the coach's game was in progress.

I urge everyone with a sincere concern for young people to become involved with Little League sports. But if it your way of showing yourself or living out your childhood again, please remain at home and allow us to enjoy our children while they are still young.

Cheri Shaggs
Shallotte

(Letters Continued On Following Page)

The Scariest Sport In The World

Lynn Carlson



Most people's fears have some basis in reality—flying, public speaking, taking the glass elevator to the 72nd floor of the Peachtree Tower.

I have a friend (the same one who has a sweatshirt proclaiming "I Survived Catholic School") who has to breathe into a paper bag to keep from hyperventilating when he's in a room with a nun.

I'm afraid of teeball. I had a panic attack when I read our letters to the editor from moms incensed at the carryings on of teeball coaches. My palms sweated, my heart palpitated, my throat constricted. Then I had a flashback.

My mind raced back to that hot summer evening in 1973 when it happened, right in this very county, and on assignment for this very newspaper.

I was a freshman in college, a news major in the heady era of Watergate, the glory days of investigative journalism when all my 9,000 peers in "J-school," as we called it, were chafing at the bit to get out in the world and work for \$67.33 per week gross.

My job for the summer was doing whatever My Father The Publisher said. This week I was to fill in for the *Beacon's* then editor and one-man news staff, who allegedly had

sprained his back. (I believe to this day that he just wanted a vacation and knew this was the only way he'd get one.)

Among my tasks was to check on the progress of the two hot issues of the day—whether a county hospital would be built and whether the county seat would be moved. (I assume you know how those turned out.)

I was also assigned to do a photo layout on The Baseball League for Male Toddlers, the precursor of today's liberalized but apparently not yet civilized game of teeball.

Mind you that I was a brash 19-year-old whose journalistic idols were photographer Annie Leibovitz and writer/reprobate Hunter Thompson. I saw every assignment as a chance to capture one of the great human truths to be presented in print with dazzling brilliance.

Imagine my horror when the woman in the orange double-knit shorts and pink sponge rollers grabbed my head with both hands, turned me toward a squirming clutch of uniformed boys and said in a non-nonsense tone, "Take Jason's picture." (I was reminded of her years later when I saw the movie, "Throw Mama From the Train.")

Okay, I rationalized, I guess she's just a really, really proud parent. "Which one of you is Jason?" I asked. Most of them said, "Me."

I shot a few pictures while being similarly accosted by half a dozen more parents. Then I sat down to watch the game, which consisted largely of adults arguing and spitting and cussing each other while the kids looked alternately bored and perplexed.

Those on the field kept forgetting their positions and the fact that they were supposed to keep their gloves on. Those on the batting team were crying, either because it wasn't their turn next or because they were going to have to bat at all. Those on both sides kept forgetting to pay attention.

I survived that game, vowing to claw my way to the top and become an editor so I'd be able to assign other greenhorn newshounds to cover teeball.

I kept that vow and have never again covered the game. But I forgot one important prerequisite to being able to avoid it altogether. I bore a son.

When he decided to play teeball a decade or so ago, I relented. In a moment of profound weakness I agreed even for my newspaper to sponsor the team.

I was fine for a few games, until my son came up to the tee one day, eager but a little nervous and looking for all the world like he just walked out of a Norman Rockwell painting. I heard the evil screech of a grown woman: "Don't worry. He ain't no good. He can't hit." I never saw who it was, but my mind conjured up the horrific image of Old Spongy Head.

I cursed. I argued. In my blind rage, I may even have spat. For the next few weeks, I exceeded even an editor's recommended daily allowance of Roloids.

The season passed, and my son eventually abandoned team sports for surfing and the saxophone. I never tire of sitting on the beach, marveling at his grace and determination. And, believe me, though band concerts can be grueling, the odds of survival are pretty good.



Answers To Hard Questions Aren't Simple

Susan Usher



Were the newspapers that gave their readers information about the jurors in the Rodney King-police case in Los Angeles serving the public good, simply doing their jobs or sensationalizing an emotion-charged situation?

Information about the jurors was kept confidential during the trial by judge's order, but afterward was part of the public record—available to anyone, including reporters, who cared to go to the courthouse and retrieve the data.

Most of us in America, unlike our forefathers and some more recent immigrants, cannot conceive of a system of government in which this and other information, or even a trial itself, might be cloaked in secrecy.

But ready access to that information raises questions about its responsible use.

What information about the jurors should have been printed? What responsibility did the newspapers have to the jurors? to readers? to the broad issue of a constitutionally guaranteed free press? Are they responsible for how their readers use the information that goes into print?

These are questions still being debated. Staffers at newspapers that did or did not print the names—and their counterparts at newspapers that may someday have to deal with a similar situation—argue over the ethics involved in the decision.

Several jurors spoke on the record following the trial. Others went out of their way to avoid commenting on their pivotal role in what appears to be a case for the history books.

Some newspapers and wire services printed nothing about the jurors. The *Los Angeles Daily News* went to the opposite extreme, reporting details such as the jurors' hobbies, marital status and political positions.

Most newspapers landed somewhere in between. Some printed names, ages, hometowns. A few printed occupations. A handful went

of withholding the names.

Others may have been caught up in the heat of competition, of oneupmanship, simply trying to have more information, though not necessarily better information, than their nearest rival, to win the implied contest of who had the most complete coverage.

Contrary to what most of the general public thinks, I've never known a general newspaper that deliberately sets out to sensationalize a story, either to sell papers or for any other reason. But any newspaper, or other news medium, at one time or another, is subject to losing its perspective in the pursuit of fresh information, new "angles" on subjects people are talking about and want to know more about.

And editors, like everybody else, arrive at their decisions by different paths of reasoning. As follows, editors asked in a *Washington Journalism Review* article to explain their newspaper's position had wide-ranging answers. Compare their responses below to the earlier summary of what they actually printed.

Managing Editor Jane Amari of the *Daily News* felt strongly on the subject. "America has never had a secret system of justice," she said. "I think readers have to know if the police officers were truly judged by a jury of their peers."

The answers aren't always so easy to come by. I've wondered myself what my choice would have been in the heat of the trial. I've been a juror on a tough case and I like to have my own privacy protected. At the same time I'm a newspaperwoman who believes strongly in giving readers information and sparking their desire to think, do further research and draw their own conclusions.

The police officers' acquittal was a landmark decision; how the jurors' arrived at their decision was important and readers deserved to know the why and how if it

But did they need to know at that very impassioned moment? How important were actual names of the jurors as opposed to general profiles? What about the potential "chilling" effect of that disclosure on citizens' willingness to serve as future jurors?

Certainly the jurors' privacy was violated, invaded. In America, the land of the free, is that one of the prices we're expected to pay for a republic?

These people, unlike candidates or elected officials, didn't deliberately thrust themselves into the public arena. Like most of the reporters who pursued them, they were simply doing their job the best way they knew.

At some point the media's role must have turned into harassment from the perspective of the jurors, especially given the numbers of reporters involved.

Still, I can't help but think that most of those same 12 jurors would have been looking for answers to some of those same questions in their hometown newspaper if it were another trial of that significance that didn't involve them.

Several editors who ran the information say that if they had the decision to make again, they would do things differently, either not running the information at all or waiting and running it at a less inflammatory time.

Most today, at least, would probably agree with Bob Rawitch, executive editor of the *Times*' Ventura County and Valley editions.

"What is gained by running the names (during the inflamed situation) except asserting that we have (that) right?" he asked, reserving the paper's right to run the information at another time.

What indeed? That's the question editors, reporters and readers must ask of themselves. The answers don't always come in vivid primary colors.