



PLANTS are not just sitting there. They are busy at work!

Photo by Bill Faver

Are Plants Just Sitting There?

BY BILL FAVER

When we look at many plants they just appear to be sitting there. They don't seem to be doing much.

There may be a new leaf or a blossom or some movement caused by a breeze, but for the most part, they seem inactive.

Most plants are stationary and don't move around like many animals. Parts of the plants may move in response to changes in their surroundings, and some flowers and leaves close completely at night.

Plants may appear inactive, but all the time they are feeding and growing, respiring, getting rid of wastes, and sensing and adapting to changes in their habitat. Plants grow by building up new living materials as seeds grow into adult plants, just like acorns become mighty oaks. Most plants continually repair damaged and worn-out parts of themselves. When a branch breaks, the tree grows callous tissue to seal off the wound and protect from infection. Plants are continually producing new individuals to replace them when they die.

As plants carry out their life processes, they use

chlorophyll to capture energy from the sun. Through the process of photosynthesis, which means "making things with light," plants can use the energy to build complex energy-storing materials called carbohydrates, made up of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. They get carbon and oxygen from carbon dioxide which enters through the leaves of plants, and hydrogen is obtained from the water which enters through the stem. Other nutrients are absorbed by the roots of plants.

The plant grows and builds up materials to help it carry out its life processes and to support and protect itself. Plants also store energy to be used later. This appears in the form of seeds, bulbs, and tubers. New materials accumulate in cells as the plants grow. The cells enlarge and divide, and the number of cells increases. In most plants the cells remain attached and the plants get bigger. Some divide into new plants.

So that plant is not just sitting there! There are many complex and exciting things happening as the plants grow and bloom and form seed and finally die. They give us life-sustaining oxygen. They convert from carbon dioxide. They give us cooler air from the respiration taking place in their leaves and the shade from their branches. They give us detail and beauty and enjoyment as we share space together on Planet Earth.



FAVER

When You're Mad As #\$\$@% And Won't Take It Anymore

It doesn't take a Rhodes Scholar to recognize that the so-called "little people" are not long to follow their leaders in sheep-like submission. Having spoken out, spoken up and spoken loudly as to what they want, from public education to national health care, they are furious over the cold shoulder they've gotten in return from administrators, boards and other influential officials.

To quote a popular play of the '60s, "We're mad as #\$\$@% and aren't going to take it anymore." This reaction is in evidence all the way from the Ross Perot presidential campaign to a recent petition instigated by Brunswick County people protesting the local school system.

It's great, of course, that the electorate is paying attention to its own governance and is energized enough to take action. Getting petitions signed and presenting them with fanfare at public hearings demonstrates a degree of involvement. Rushing to the Perot bandwagon via talk show protestations and letters to editors are similarly encouraging signs of raised consciousness and the stirrings of citizenship.

However, there's a lot more to genuine involvement than words, however impassioned, and petitions, however many signatures are obtained. There is a matter of being thoroughly informed and taking the time and energy to get inside the problem.

As School Board Chairman Donna Baxter pointed out, those initiating petitions "demanding" certain school board action should attend a few meetings of that board, research the "facts" they disseminate, in other words have facts and reason on their side, along with the

Marjorie Megivern



emotional fervor.

This admonition applies on the national scene, too. It's easy to be seduced by the Ross Perot mystique; he's not your run-of-the-mill politician, a real accolade in a time when we fundamentally distrust all "insiders." His view of government belonging to the people has an intrinsic appeal; we see ourselves ruling the country through electronic town meetings and Perot attentive and responsive to our every wish.

What do we really know, though, about his ability to lead in what has to be a political enterprise? How will he make decisions that must be his alone? The matter demands further information-gathering in an objective way, setting aside the emotional attraction of his candidacy.

There's a good local example of an effective movement by "the people" to get something done. As recently discussed in a story about a Pilot Club leader, Sherry Roseman, a handful of Brunswick County women were determined to bring the 911 emergency system to this county. They did a lot more than carry

placards and appeals to one meeting or write a couple of letters. Their approach was a fact-based, intense and persistent one and it involved sitting for hours at many, many meetings, repeated letters and phone calls to the seats of power. It took years of not giving up and it was ultimately successful, though others got much of the credit.

This is the only route to responsible government "by the people." It's not very glamorous and it's no quick fix, but it's the only way that works to bring about real and long-lasting change for the better.

Petition-signers and all you other "concerned parents and citizens" out there who want a better education for Brunswick County children: ask yourselves if you are willing to devote tremendous energy and time to reading, writing, sitting in meetings and hard thinking about your goals.

If the answer is "yes," more power to you; let the demonstrations begin!

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A Young Man's Brush With Greatness

The other night I saw an old David Letterman rerun with an audience participation bit called "My Brush With Greatness" where little people like you and me tell about their amazing chance encounter with some big person like Andre the Giant or Oprah Winfrey.

It got me thinking about my own incredible tale of being in the presence of a really famous person, which I would tell you about right now except it would leave a big white space where the rest of this column should be. So first I'll tell you about some other great brushes of mine and others.

For example, imagine the stories the head guy of Japan can tell about the time he had to brush the greatness off his pants after none other than THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES keeled over and tossed tempura in his lap.

Speaking of laps, my dad had a genuine brush with greatness as a youngster in Quincy, Massachusetts. He got to sit on the famous lap of none other than Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly across the Atlantic and almost around the world. My dad went on to become a Navy aviator, while Amelia probably went on to become the main course at a South Pacific luau.

None of my own brushes have been quite that great, but you'll probably be impressed with the big one I'm going to tell you about later.

I'm not sure greatness brushes count if you pay for them, but I

Eric Carlson



could give you lots of those in the field of popular music. I've seen the Rolling Stones five times, the old Allman Brothers a dozen times and the Grateful Dead about 10 times. I've seen George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Janis Joplin, The Jefferson Airplane, Miles Davis, B.B. King, Ike and Tina Turner, Johnny Cash, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Bob Marley. I even saw Liberace in Vegas.

You golfers out there will be impressed to hear about the time my dad took me to the U.S. Open as his personal attack-dog autograph hound. He would aim me at famous golfers who looked to me just like all the guys he hung around with (funny pants and all) and I would get them to write their name on a note pad, which Dad was evidently too embarrassed to do himself.

Not only did I get an Arnold Palmer, a Jack Nicklaus and a Gary Player, but I even scored a Johnny Carson. At my tender young age I was too scared to go near Howard Cosell. In fact, I still would be.

I remember Dad scolding me for

going off on my own to get an autograph from some unheard-of Mexican guy named Lee Trevino.

If you know anything about modern art, you might be impressed to know that I once played chess with Roy Lichtenstein. He beat me. Then he had lunch with Lee Radziwill while his son David and I went surfing.

I had one other brush that wasn't too close, but it was pretty great. Waiting at a traffic light in Manhattan one time, I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw none other than John Lennon, in his round sunglasses and big cap, chewing gum and bobbing his head up and down to some song on the radio. I went straight and he turned right.

So now it's time to tell you about my real "Brush With Greatness."

There I was, standing on the pit wall of the U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen when my friend nudged me and motioned toward my right. I turned and looked into the bluest eyes you ever saw. The eyes of Cool Hand Luke. Of Hud. Of "Fast Eddie" Felson (the colorized version).

That's right. It was Paul Newman, dressed in his snazzy race driver suit and standing just inches away.

Suave young bon vivant that I was at age 17, I struck up the following conversation:

"Hi, Paul Newman," I said.

"Hi, kid," he said.

Pretty impressive, eh?

MORE LETTERS

P.O. Complaints Unnecessary

To the editor:

Having lived in the Brunswick area only 11 years, I don't pretend to know what is best for this rapidly growing area. I have read with interest all the pros and cons concerning the new post office in our area of Sunset Beach.

In the May 28 issue of The Brunswick Beacon there was a letter by Elaine Mello asking a few of the same questions that have been coming into my mind. Where were all the people who are objecting now when talk of the need for another post office in this area first began? Was it taken for granted that the new post office would be built in the same small town that did not need two such federal places of service (federal being the operative word)?

The complaint raised by someone a few weeks back—that the tourists would no longer need to use the Shallotte post office, thereby causing a loss of income to the local business area—is very much off the mark. Very few tourists coming into this area needed to go into Shallotte for that reason, since Little River was just as close or closer.

An even better reason to seek another post office was the terrible traffic congestion around the Shallotte area. This congestion has been a terrible problem most of the years we have been here. We, for one family, hated to make a trip to the business area around the post office for just that reason.

The dentist, insurance office, florist, business supplier, lumber company and even the places across the street must have suffered in their business income for the simple reason that it was too much hassle just to get to their places. We, like many others I'm sure, went somewhere else if we could.

If all the grumbling and complaining was replaced by efforts to entice the populace back into their places of

business, there would be a better outlook in all areas of this lovely, slow-paced place in the sun!

We have seen great changes take place in the past ten years, but nothing has bothered us as much as hearing the petty complaints of small minds of a few people who want nothing to change their small world. Give the rest of us a chance! This end of the county is growing very rapidly, and you cannot stop it. Why not work for the good of all concerned and make this area of Brunswick County the place of friendliness, love and goodwill it is advertised to be!

Irene Parker
Sunset Beach

Mom Protests Coaches' Behavior

To the editor:

My 5-year-old cannot enjoy playing tee-ball because of nitpicking coaches of other teams. Our team is being harassed by other teams because of a grudge against our coach.

If you have a problem with our coach, wait until after the game and take your problem up with the coach. But when you have a problem with our coach and you take it out on our kids, that's when I have a problem with you.

We need more dedicated coaches like Homer Andrews. He's out there to teach the kids the basics and good sportsmanship—not who wins or loses.

We need to get our priorities straight and remember we're out there for the kids.

Phebie McLean
Shallotte

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