

MORE LETTERS

Representation Inadequate For Nonresident Owners?

To the editor:
Paying taxes is no easy burden; but paying taxes as a nonresident home owner in Holden Beach is truly frustrating. Most of the home owners are nonresidents, and they have no vote on the issues that directly influence them.

It was my belief that the Holden Beach Property Owners Association (HBPOA) was established to act as a liaison between the property owner and the town government. However, the HBPOA does not have an established forum for obtaining information from its members. Therefore HBPOA, as it exists, cannot adequately represent its members. This must change. The members are not apathetic about how their taxes are spent as implied by some.

Approximately three years ago a survey was sent regarding the use of land in the Town of Holden Beach. Since then there have been no organized surveys. The quarterly meetings that are held represent the only way to listen to the members. These meetings are poorly attended, yet the attendance exceeds the seating capacity. A quorum of only 25 members is necessary to conduct business. Therefore, these 25 members control the HBPOA, which has a membership of approximately 800. It is beyond the scope of imagination to think that this is appropriate. One can argue that more members should attend, but the mere fact that they are nonresidents suggests that they may not be in town for the meetings. This does not imply apathy.

I suggest a forum of frequent organized surveys addressing the many issues affecting the property owners. Once this information is obtained, it should be presented to the mayor of Holden Beach. Recently the executive secretary of HBPOA said that a survey was sent to the HBPOA members, and that there were only 39 replies. This was not a survey asking specific questions, and the low response rate was to be anticipated.

Some issues that need to be addressed are as follows:

■ Why should the Town of Holden Beach spend \$10,000 for advertisements? If the real estate interests think it is necessary, let them pay for it. The town should not be paying for advertisements that have a direct benefit for the realty interests. Remember, this is a "family beach."

■ Why do we have street lights? The town will be paying for these lights and their maintenance. Where is the support for these? The HBPOA should have sent questionnaires to the members to learn their desires and relayed this information to the mayor. The Town of Holden Beach is acting in a vacuum. They do not have any idea what most of property owners want.

■ The issue of private lights needs to be addressed. The beach is beautiful at night. To see the moon light over the water is a naturally beautiful phenomenon. To see the phosphorous glow in the water is breathtaking. All of this will be lost unless strict laws are written to prevent "light pollution." There are houses that have lights extending to the ocean edge and some with lights brilliantly lighting their neighbors. This is neither necessary nor neighborly. It robs us of the natural beauty of the beach, and its effect on the sea turtle is yet to be determined.

These are some questions that the HBPOA should be addressing. The importance of the barbecue picnic is dwarfed by the many significant problems that need to be addressed.

Charles G. Gegick
Greensboro

Deputies Should Get Raises

To the editor:
In response to the cut in the proposed raises for the sheriff's department, it is my opinion they were given a raw deal. They risk their lives to protect us and make

this a better county to live in. They should be given a pay raise.

At night, after working 12 or 15 hours, I can go home and go to sleep knowing they are close by, watching out for things and making sure everybody and everything is safe. When I work later than usual at night, they pass by several times or stop to make sure things are okay. If I get up and go to work earlier than usual, they pass by several times to make sure things are okay.

I'm very proud of the men and women at the sheriff's department. They all do a very, very good job patrolling Brunswick County, trying to protect all of the people in the county.

I'll tip my hat to each and every one of our lawmen and women. They're doing a great job, and I'm proud of every one of them. I know this won't help feed their families or pay their bills, but I hope they get their raise. They all earn it.

Joanne Coleman
Calabash

Marsh Road Opposed

To the editor:

Not much more than a year ago Doug Rutter briefly questioned the development at the 600 West Ocean Boulevard, Holden Beach, along the marsh. (I felt he didn't delve deeply enough). Fill had been added to keep out the marsh in this wetland in order to build.

Now a road is proposed to go through the very center of the marsh. Again, it can't be done without covering or disturbing wetlands. Marsh grasses such as sea lavender and cordgrass (spartina) grow here. At high tide water seeps through the marsh grasses. Great blue herons, egrets, ibises, small blues and other birds nest on Bacon Island.

The marsh contains raccoons, bluebirds, clapper rails, a lone hawk and at least four deer, among other animals. This nursery for shrimp, blue crabs, pearl winkle, mussels, oysters, silversides, spots and other fish and crustaceans is important in the balance of nature. We have a small forest and marsh, a natural area unlike other islands which have destroyed all natural habitats.

Tourists and residents enjoy the crabbing and beauty. To put a road through this community of life and to build there shows Holden Beach Enterprises and the others involved as avaricious and unconcerned about the present or future.

There are alternatives to this unwise, irresponsible development. The owners were once stopped after beginning dredging. It is no more wise to build now than it was in 1970. This marsh and island are already inhabited by animals and native plants, and should stay that way.

Gail Fleagle
Greensboro

Protest Cable TV Outages

To the editor:

I am sure I am speaking for many other cable television "outages" in our area. Cable here is out almost as much as it is working. Just lately, it was out most of Sunday afternoon (June 21) and out again most of Monday morning.

This cable TV administration and maintenance must consist of inexperienced blunders. Like in Washington, let's throw out the dead-wood rascals. Our money for cable TV is being wasted on these people.

All it takes is a report of inclement weather, and the cable goes out.

Something can be done if we formally protest this treatment. We are sick and disgruntled with this cable TV bunch.

Douglas R. Wildey
Calabash

Wanted Alive: One Rana Heckscheri

The "wanted" poster was unlike any I'd seen before. The picture looked like a certain—no, it couldn't be—but it was.

Name: *Rana heckscheri*, a.k.a. "River Frog."

Description: May be spotted as tadpole or frog. Tadpole may be as large as 3 inches to 6 inches, with distinctive dark stripe along edge of tail. Adult resembles bullfrog in size, but has distinctive markings—a darker belly and white spots on lips—that may be indistinguishable to giggers. May appear in large schools.

Last sighted: July 12, 1975, along the Lumber River near Maxton.

Likely whereabouts: Backwaters, pools or swampy areas along streams in the Lumber, Cape Fear and Waccamaw River systems. May appear on surface of water or on aquatic vegetation.

Status: Unknown, may have disappeared from state.

Action requested: If spotted, contact Jeff Beane, Alvin Braswell or Bill Palmer, N.C. Museum of Natural Science, Raleigh, (919-733-7450) to arrange protective custody.

Rana heckscheri, or river frog is a wanted amphibian. At the moment, its fate doesn't look too good.

"We're afraid we may have lost that frog for reasons undetermined," curator Alvin Braswell advised in a telephone interview last week.

The wanted poster is part of a concerted man—er, frog—hunt mounted by the museum and the Nongame Program of the N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission to determine the present extent and range, if any, of this frog that is, at best, rare in North Carolina. The river frog is on the state's list of species of special concern, just below threatened status, which is just below endangered status.

Posters have been up in some lo-

Susan Usher



where existence is already most fragile, at the edge of their range, as may be the case with the river frog in North Carolina. Then it spreads.

If you know a species is in trouble, then you can start looking for causes. That can lead to a determination of how serious the problem is and its possible solutions.

"The thing that scares me," says Braswell, "is when you see the decline of a species and you can't figure out why."

The linkages among all of creation are fragile; what affects one living thing affects others, plant, animal and of course, us. The message is an obvious one.

"Staying in touch with the environment—to me that's a good idea," says Braswell.

So, keep alert for signs of *Rana heckscheri*, the river frog. His fate could be undeniably tied to yours or that of your offspring.

Finding him would provide a bit of hope in a world struggling to achieve some sort of balance.

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Corporate Conservation Crusade Has Successes

BY BILL FAVER

We've seen an increase in what appears to be corporate awareness

of the environment and the need for setting aside space for wildlife habitat. Some of it is, no doubt, done for good public relations following such environmental disasters as the oil spill in Alaska. Some appears to be planned as a diversion from having to deal with the real environmental pollution problems of certain companies.

But, there still seem to be some serious, effective realizations that corporations need to take responsibility for being better environmental citizens.

More than 80 companies have been working through the Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Council to set aside areas for wildlife and significant plant species on lands they own. We hear very little about these efforts, since they don't generate the publicity of corporate greed logging owl habitat. These



Photo by Bill Faver

WHOOPING CRANES are cousins to this Sandhill Crane photographed in South Florida.

Texas and Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge. The company had obtained permission to dredge a waterway to reach a gas pipeline. They agreed to create a 15-acre habitat for the endangered whooping cranes on refuge lands by building a levee four feet high, 48.3 feet wide, and 3300 feet long. Dredge material was pumped in and the outside of the levee was stabilized with interlocking concrete pads.

Company officials worked with environmentalists and biologists to recreate the fragile ecosystem the cranes require. The habitat provides marsh waters with crabs, crayfish, frogs, and fish and allows small islands to form so the cranes can find nesting places.

The new crane habitat will help these endangered birds in making their comeback. The Mitchell Company would have had to dispose of their spoil somewhere, so this project became a cost-effective effort for them. And it is good public relations.

Whatever the reasons for it, we can be thankful—for companies like this who take interest in providing habitat for our wildlife.

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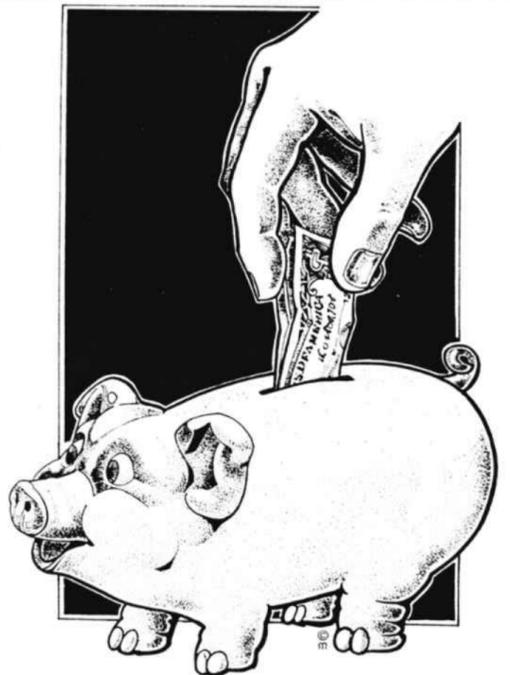
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