

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Appointments To Regional EDC Can Make A Difference

Brunswick and surrounding counties stand to benefit a good deal from the extra attention and effort that this region will receive from the new Southeastern North Carolina Economic Development Commission.

A special thanks for pulling this project together is due Rep. David "Butch" Redwine. The commission represents an opportunity to improve the quality of life and prosperity of this region we call home.

Now Southeastern North Carolina residents need to do our part to make sure the EDC lives up to its potential and ours—starting with appointment of the initial 15 commission members. Three will be named by the governor, two by the lieutenant governor and 10 by the legislature (5 recommended by the leader of each house).

The commission will have a lot of leeway in setting its own direction. That's why these first appointments are so important. If members come on board burdened with a preconceived agenda, we all stand to lose. Wouldn't you rather have members on that commission who truly care about the region as a whole, who are willing to examine its diverse needs, and who are willing to work together?

Cooperation means working together toward a common end and purpose and for mutual benefit: win/win. A board stacked with representatives of a particular county, industry or interest isn't to our advantage. Too many times in the past we have been short-sighted. While the immediate benefits might be tempting, ultimately that strategy hurts the region and future attempts at cooperation.

We haven't had a strong history of cooperation even within the boundaries of Brunswick County, much less across county lines. The same is true across this entire region of independent-minded people.

But the times they are a'changing, and more and more we see the value in cooperation across turf lines. To thrive, or even to survive, we must learn to cooperate when and where it is to all parties' advantage.

Economist Lester Thurow has written, "The economic game that will be played in the twenty-first century will have cooperative as well as competitive elements...The world's common environment will require cooperation if it is to be livable for everyone."

Tell your legislators. Let's seek a commission willing to do its homework from the grassroots up—to listen, to honestly inventory assets and weaknesses, set priorities and act as a catalyst to help get done whatever needs to get done.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pair States Opposition To Martin-Marietta's Rock Quarry Proposal

To the editor:
 We are strongly opposed to the rock quarry proposed by Martin Marietta Inc. to be situated near Southport. We base our opposition on the following reasons:

■The majority of the land proposed is surrounded on three sides by small creeks which serve as headwaters for the larger Walden Creek. In addition to these creeks there are hundreds of acres of marshes, branches and smaller streams. All of these areas serve as a nursery for birds, marine and land animals. It is a fragile system that would be damaged by the digging and blasting that are part of the activities by such a quarry.

Concerned citizens for our environment, fishermen (pleasure and commercial), and tourist-related businesses would feel the negative results from such a quarry. If you have travel led 140 just outside Wilmington at Rocky Point you have seen what an eyesore such a plant is.

We sometimes take for granted as residents, the beautiful natural resources that surround us, not to mention the millions of dollars brought into our county by the visitors that come to enjoy our beauty and recreation. Surely this alone would be enough to oppose this endeavor.

■One of the potential problems would be the effect on our water table. Persons knowledgeable in the study of water tables indicate that a substantial problem could occur with such digging activities. Some authorities believe that the headwaters of the tidal creek could be affected to the point of drying up as could numerous springs in the surrounding areas.

■Massive amounts of dust, noise and vibrating from the use of dynamite is certainly a negative aspect of a limestone quarry. Homes on N.C. 87 and the Bethel Church Road community are subject to blasts 500 feet from their back door. Martin Marietta can come this close and still be within the law as indicated by a Martin Marietta spokesman. Many of these families have small children and this would be a danger to them as well as a health problem to people who suffer from allergies related to dust.

■The final reason for opposition is the geographical location for this site in regards to traffic. The gravel will be shipped to Wilmington via N.C. 87 and Myrtle Beach via N.C. 87 and or N.C. 211. Every one of our school children attending South Brunswick - Middle and High Schools travel this route by bus or car, five days a week, ten months a year, from the communities of Oak Island, Sunset Harbor, Midway Road, Highway 211, and Southport.

Hundreds of trucks carrying rock will be entering Highway 87 and will add to the already dangerous problem facing that road now. Buses and cars from the Bolivia, Winabow and Town Creek communities will also meet these trucks traveling to and from school.

We simply cannot accept that the few jobs and tax revenue generated by this plant justifies putting people and homes at risk. As concerned citizens of Brunswick County we must join together to protect our wildlife, river system, and most important the citizens. We urge everyone to contact the county commissioners and state representatives to let them know we will not accept this project.

H. Dwayne Price
 Patricia S. Price
 Southport

(More Letters, Following Page)

Author Sings Those Wedding-Bell Blues

It was, after all, the wedding season. Inspired by that and a friend's unrelated gift of two bottles of French champagne, Eric and I went to the Henderson County magistrate's office early one Friday morning and tied the knot. I called my office and said I wouldn't be in that day—I was going on my honeymoon.

We didn't tell a soul except the young doctor I had convinced the night before to sign the necessary medical form without doing any blood tests. The doc and I both worked at a community health center; I pleaded that if we had to go through the lab, the nurses would make a big, embarrassing fuss and the news would be all over the clinic in five minutes tops.

We stopped by Walmart and bought a couple of \$2.96 wedding bands in case we needed them for the ceremony. As it turned out, we didn't. It took longer to round up a couple of witnesses (two probation officers hanging around in the back room) than it did for the disinterested justice of the peace to read our "vows," collect our ten bucks and fill out the paperwork.

Afterward, we walked to the deli down the street and ate breakfast before leaving town. Eric had to be in Charlotte by noon on business, so I spent the afternoon in a hotel room alone, watching the rain pour over Trade Street and hoping we hadn't just fixed something that wasn't even broken.

Lynn Carlson



It was a far cry from the multi-thousand-dollar, eight-bridesmaids-and-500-guests nuptial extravaganza that is NOT every gal's dream. But it suited me just fine. After all, there's no such thing as a perfect wedding.

Ask Margaret Bigger, author of a 90-page paperback entitled, appropriately, *There's No Such Thing As A Perfect Wedding*, and subtitled "True wedding tales, odd, funny and disastrous."

Bigger, who lives in Charlotte, had no idea her idea would strike such a chord, but it has. She's been making the talk show rounds, chatting with the likes of Jenny Jones and Vicki Lawrence and gathering new wedding stories all along the way. People have been buying the book like there's no tomorrow, mostly to give for bridal shower gifts.

Here are a few of her stories: ■"Preacher, I think I'm going to faint," whispered the knit-browed bride, while the soloist was singing two-thirds of the way through a formal service.

"No, you're not," he replied in a low voice. "Just bend your knees and take some deep breaths."

She obeyed but grew whiter. "Preacher, I'm going to throw up," she said.

"Faint!" he barked.

■The mother-of-the-bride was extremely nervous. She stopped in the ladies room one last time just before her turn to enter the sanctuary. Soon she was headed down the aisle, her long pink gown flowing as she walked with all eyes upon her. In her hand, she was clutching a roll of pink toilet paper. Her pink clutch purse was still in the ladies room.

■The bride was quite a fine soloist and elected to sing at her own wedding. After their vows had been made, she turned and gazed into her beloved's eyes while she sang, "I'd rather have Jesus..."

Bigger loves to talk weddings. She called to tell me about an upcoming autograph session in North Myrtle Beach, and I was hesitant to tell her my favorite wedding story—about the bride and groom I knew who managed to spend their wedding night in jail.

"I know you get tired of hearing these from everyone you talk to," I said apologetically.

"Absolutely not," she shot back, following up by sending me a review copy of her book with a note and this post script: "I can't wait to get more facts on your 'wedding night in jail' tale!"

There's No Such Thing As A Perfect Wedding has been such a hit, she's collecting anecdotes for Volume 2. Her richest material comes from preachers, Biggers says. She doesn't use brides' and grooms' names because if she did, the revelers would surely clam up.

I'm going to write Biggers and tell her the whole jail story, though it's probably too raunchy for her to use. Maybe I'll share this—my favorite clean wedding story—too.

My sister was given a bridal shower by a group of very sweet, very straight-laced Baptist matrons. One of the dreaded "shower games" was Advice for a Long Happy Marriage, in which the older women shared pearls of wisdom, written on little strips of pink paper, with the bride-elect, who would read them aloud.

We modern young women, forced to endure this arcane ritual out of love for Brenda, cringed as the elders' advice flew in the face of all our liberated ideas.

"Always get up before he does and put on your makeup." Oh, yeah, right...

"Every night, set out his clothes for the next day." When pigs fly...

And on, and on, and on, ad nauseum.

Then she opened this one: "Never go to sleep angry... Sit up all night and pout." I don't think anyone but my sister and me caught the twinkle in the eye of the most proper little blue-haired lady in the room.



Watching Your Rights Go Up In Smoke

It's hard to imagine a more glaring example of elected representatives circumventing the public will as a favor to a special interest group than the mandatory smoking bill nearing passage in Raleigh.

That's right, mandatory. At the request of the state's all-powerful tobacco industry, the legislature is about to require that smoking be allowed in all public buildings and many private businesses, whether the owner wants it or not.

Even restaurants—those with more than 50 seats—will be forced to set aside at least 20 percent of their capacity to accommodate people who wish to exhale smoke into the air while other people eat.

In other words, a health-food restaurant where no customer has requested an ashtray in 10 years would be required to allow a table full of cigar smokers to fire up stogies in a crowd of vegetarians dining on tofu and bean sprouts.

Lawmakers are going so far as to prohibit town and county governing boards—the elected officials closest to the citizenry—from enacting any local smoking controls that are more restrictive than the state law.

Forget for a moment that we are talking about smoking here. Imagine if the legislature issued a similar edict regarding, shall we say, the minimum lot size for building a home.

After all, most representatives come from places where the typical subdivision lot is half an acre. Suppose they decided to apply that standard statewide? How many lots in Brunswick County's mobile home

parcs or beach towns would qualify for the 20,000-square-foot minimum?

Or what if a coalition of city dwellers, animal rights activists and gun-control advocates pressured enough legislators into a ban on hunting in North Carolina? How long would it be before the state house was surrounded by camouflaged protesters and packs of barking deer hounds?

The legislature doesn't normally bully towns and counties into accepting a statewide standard on issues that are best decided at a local level. Of course, when it comes to real estate or hunting, there are powerful interest groups that would run them out of town if they attempted such meddling.

In the case of the mandatory smoking bill, it is the lobbyists who are calling the tune while the legislators dance like water on a hot griddle. Money (as in campaign contributions) talks. And in the Tar Heel State, tobacco money shouts.

Most of the numerous opponents of this law feel a person has the right not to be exposed to "second-hand smoke." They bring to the argument convincing evidence that this legis-

lation poses a significant danger to public health.

Personally, I'm not that bothered by second-hand smoke, having been around it all my life.

My mother smoked cigarettes (until she got cancer). Lots of my friends smoke. And I've had some great times in blues bars and pool halls and jazz clubs and coffee houses and poker games where a haze of blue smoke is a natural part of the scene.

One of my favorite forms of relaxation is to rock back on the porch with a cool drink in hand and classical music on the headphones while watching the sun set through the swirling, aromatic smoke from a hand-rolled lonsdale (Partagas, Te-Amo or H. Upmann, if you're making a Christmas list).

But I wouldn't think of lighting a cigar in someone's living room, at a restaurant or in a supermarket checkout line. Because a lot of people don't like to smell burning leaves in closed spaces.

Those people should have the right to avoid that smoke. And anybody who wants to prohibit smoking throughout his or her restaurant should have that right also. Smokers would either have to wait until they leave before lighting up or find another place to dine.

On the other hand, a restaurant owner should also have the right to run his or her place of business without providing a smoke-free section. Non-smokers could either put up with the smoke or find another place to dine.

Government buildings are another

matter. They are built and operated with taxpayer money and citizens should have the right to use them without needlessly endangering their health.

Which is why more and more local governments are putting up "no smoking" signs in their buildings and discussing ordinances to regulate tobacco use in other public places. These laws and policies normally undergo a period of lengthy discussion and debate by citizens' committees and elected boards and at public hearings.

But the cigarette industry and its legislators don't want us to decide this issue for ourselves. They figure that all those "no smoking" signs in tobacco country might send the wrong signal to other states considering even stricter regulations.

Too bad. If the Brunswick County wants to open a debate on a local smoking ordinance, it should have that right. Maybe such a law would pass. Maybe not. But the people who live here should have a say in the matter.

When this bill passes, we will only have until October to decide the issue for ourselves. After that, the state will decide for us.

The Brunswick County Board of Health is forming a committee to determine whether we want to accept the state's standard or set our own. They want opinions from a cross section of the population: merchants, workers, retirees, restaurant owners, restaurant customers, even tobacco farmers.

If you're interested, call the health department.

Eric Carlson

