



April 2006 Newsletter

Should Lady's Island Voters Support The School Referendum?:

On May 20 an election will be held with only one question on the ballot. Will you, the Beaufort County voter, authorize the School District to increase your taxes to support borrowing \$43.7 million to relieve crowding in the Bluffton area schools and finish construction of the north area (Seabrook) high school?

Specifically, if approved, the money will be used to build 1 new elementary school (\$16.2 million) and a middle school (\$23.5 million) in Bluffton and provide additional funding for the north area high school (\$4.0 million). If approved the cost to the tax payer will be \$36 per year for every \$200,000 of appraised value of one's home according to District Chief Financial Officer Phyllis White.

This is such a difficult question being posed to the voters, especially for those on Lady's Island. As a community, Lady's Island has led the way in searching for alternatives to guide growth in a responsible manner. It has worked together, both as a community and with the City of Beaufort, to insure growth does not overwhelm our infrastructure. At the same time, we have worked for planned, future construction and funding of additional roads and schools to avoid reaching an infrastructure crisis. Yet in spite of our best efforts our high school and elementary schools are rapidly reaching a point of being seriously over crowded. Herein lies the rub. Admittedly, our roads and schools are nowhere near as bad a Bluffton (and hopefully will never be). Simply stated the reason for the present Bluffton problem is that since 1998 the elected leaders of Bluffton have annexed over 30,000 acres and authorized sufficient development to allow their population to grow from about 3,500 residents today to approximately 47,000 by 2020. This population growth, according to the Southern Regional Plan, will require 7 new schools and 174 additional acres at an estimated cost of \$125 to \$135 million. There is no question they do have a crisis.

So even though our own elementary schools have reached or exceeded their capacity we are being asked to vote to increase our taxes to build additional schools in the Bluffton area because they have reached a crisis point (as a result of poorly planned growth). Having said this and recognizing that life is not fair, this is a question of providing enough classroom space for the children of our county. Is it difficult to vote to increase your taxes for new schools in Bluffton when there are children of this community attending classes in mobile classrooms – yes. Is it the right thing to do as a responsible citizen of Beaufort County – yes. If this referendum passes, there will be another one right behind it. Hopefully, in the following referendum the School District and School Board will include "well thought out" relief for Lady's Island (another elementary school?) and at that time the voters of Southern Beaufort county will remember your support of their children on this upcoming referendum.

To provide you an opportunity to express your opinion on this subject the April LIBPA website (www.libpa.org) survey question is:

On the upcoming May 20 School Funding Referendum which request you authorize borrowing \$43.7 million to build new schools (1 elementary, 1 middle and additional funding for the north area high school) how will you vote?

Yes

No

Do not intend to vote!

The School Crisis In Bluffton:

If priority of funding and construction is to be given in the forthcoming School Referendum to the Bluffton area in the form of 1 new elementary school and 1 new middle school it is appropriate that the Lady's Island voter be aware of the rational for such prioritization. Following is a comparison of individual school capacity versus enrollment for Lady's Island public schools and those in the Bluffton cluster.

SCHOOL	CAPACITY	ENROLLMENT	VARIANCE
Beaufort High School	1,324	1,680	+356
Bluffton High School	1,051	1,217	+166
Lady's island Middle School	897	679	-218
H. E. McCracken Middle School	786	993	+187
Lady's Island Elementary School	420	413	-7
Coosa Elementary School	540	642	+102
Bluffton Elementary School	575	854	+279
Okatie Elementary School	532	710	+178
M. C. Riley Elementary School	672	664	-8

It can be seen from the above data that Bluffton Elementary and H. E. McCracken Middle School are in a state of crisis due to overcrowding. The data also would appear to support construction of a third high school north of the Broad River. But just because Coosa Elementary School and Lady's Island Elementary School are not in as bad a shape as the schools in Bluffton should not preclude steps being taken to insure they never reach that point. The need for the upcoming school referendum is evident from the numbers in the above chart. If we are only going to address the worst overcrowding situations, Bluffton Elementary and Okatie Elementary merit priority in the forthcoming referendum. The tough question that begs to be answered – what next?

Editor's Note: The source of the data contained in this article regarding capacity of individual schools is the Dejong Study. The current enrollment figures were provided by Mr. Tom Hudson, Communications Officer for the Beaufort County

Island Notes:

Affordable Housing Grant. LIBPA member Frank Gibson, who in addition to being President of Lowcountry Insurance Services also is a developer, recently received a \$30,000 grant from the Beaufort County Affordable Housing Task Force. The money was provided with the understanding that Mr. Gibson would build 3 duplexes (6 units) on Stevic Court and keep the initial purchase price in the \$125,000 range per unit. With the grant were provisions to insure the units were not quickly resold for a much higher price. Stevic Court is located approximately one mile from the Sams Point

Road intersection just off of Holly Hall Road on Reeds Road adjacent to the new housing development (Nickle's Place) presently under construction.

Improved Boat Landing. Included in the Beaufort County 2006 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is \$300,000 for the redesign and modernization of the Brickyard Point Boat Landing. The project will include reconstruction of the boat ramp, a new floating dock and a redesigned parking lot. The 2006 CIP has been reviewed and approval recommended by the Beaufort County Planning Commission. Once approved by the County Council the projects will be completed. The boat landing is the only project for Lady's Island.

No New Library for Lady's Landing. There is included in the 2006 Beaufort Capital Improvement Plan \$5 million for the construction of a new library. Although there was consideration given to locating the new library on Lady's Island the Library Board of Trustees recommended that the facility be located on St. Helena in the vicinity of Penn Center. Sandy Stephan, a representative of the Library Board of Trustees, recently met with the LIBPA Board of Directors and presented the rational for this recommendation. From her presentation it was obvious that although it would be nice to have a new library on Lady's Island, our neighbors on St. Helena do have a more urgent and valid need for one.

Condominiums on Lady's Island. Rumor has it the new owner of the marina property on which Ollie's is located and the adjoining properties leading to Lady's Landing will, in the near future, be the subject of intense development of 4 story condominiums. The truth is that no plans have been submitted to either the City of Beaufort or the County Planning Department other than the original Marina Planned Unit Development. There probably is truth in the portion of the rumor that the property will be the site of condominiums in the future. As to whether the developer chooses to go

into the City or stay in the County (marina is in the City, other property in the County) will not significantly affect the design of the buildings since both have similar design standards.

LIBPA To Sponsor "Meet The Candidate" Social Event:

With the arrival of spring and this being an election year LIBPA will sponsor a "Meet the Candidate" social event at the Sheriff's Camp on Chowan Creek Bluff on Saturday, May 20 from 3 PM to 5 PM. This will be an opportunity for our members to meet the candidates for various offices in a less formal setting.

LIBPA will provide the drinks and food (hot dogs and hamburgers). Since this is the same day as the School Referendum Election hopefully everyone attending will have an "I voted" sticker on their shirt or blouse. At the present time the two Republican candidates for County Council (Mark Generales and Paul Sommerville) and the candidate for School Board (Rich Tritschler) have indicated plans to attend.

Please plan on joining us and bringing a guest.

(Webmaster's note: See articles from the two candidate at bottom of newsletter.)

Membership Report: by Sherrie Little

Our membership stands at the highest number (265) in the history of our organization. Before the celebration in regard to membership begins, there remains the nagging question of unpaid dues and how many are an oversight and how many are intentional.

A glance at the list of those who remain in the unpaid status finds many names that are long time members for who it is simply an oversight and, we are sure, will send in their dues upon receipt of the second notice. The remaining names are newer members both business and residential who, for a variety of reasons, we know from experience may or may not choose to renew their membership. In the next few days a few of you will receive a second notice regarding payment of your LIBPA dues. Please take the time to write the check and return it in the envelope provided. Starting in May, we will personally call those we have not heard from in regard to membership dues. In June the membership roster will be adjusted to show only those in an active 2006 status. To the majority of you who have already paid your 2006 dues – thank you.

Whitehall Plantation Development:

Recently representatives of LIBPA have received queries from potential investors regarding the Whitehall Plantation project. According to literature provided to the potential investors the project is to be developed by Aslan, a Louisville, Kentucky based company which develops upscale coastal resort communities consisting of single family residences, condominiums, retail, commercial and often times, marina components to deliver a complete living experience. Currently the company is either in development or under construction on approximately \$2 billion in projects

Mr. Wyman Marshall of Aslan, who has recently joined LIBPA, provided the above information regarding his company and also confirmed their intention to develop the Whitehall property. He indicated that at the present time they are in the initial naming /brand phase for the project and have yet to finalize anything in regard to design of the project. When they reach the point that a preliminary design for the development of the property is available he has offered to attend one of the LIBPA monthly meetings and share their concept with the community. Mr. Marshall indicates that they are "very excited about working with LIBPA and the Lady's Island community, and know that this development will be amazing." We look forward to working with them and appreciate their membership in LIBPA.

The Expanded Home Business District - Phase II:

The Expanded Home Business District on Lady's Island consists of an imaginary line 500 feet directly back from the DOT right of way line on each side of the widened portion of Sams Point Road. It is a type of zoning that is unique to Lady's Island and has been successful in promoting the renovation and transformation of older residential units into commercial office space. There has not been a negative impact on residents of homes next to those modified into commercial uses due to the fact businesses allowed in this district are specifically limited to "low intensity" uses.

The evolution of this district is now going into the next phase, which is the removal of existing older homes to allow sale of the property and construction of new buildings. There is also a limited amount of undeveloped property in the district which also could support development. So logically, the next phase of development in the Expanded Home Business District will include both renovation of older homes and construction of new buildings. These new buildings must present a residential appearance to conform to the general nature of the area, can consist of 2 stories, have a maximum footprint of 2000 square feet (size of lot permitting), and a maximum height of 35 feet.

With the added cost of both land and construction will come pressure to increase the types and general nature of the commercial uses allowed in the buildings. The Lady's Island Community Preservation Committee, which was responsible for establishment of the Expanded Home Business District and reviews request for such changes, has indicated that any change in the present authorized uses which would have a negative impact on residential neighbors or increase the traffic on Sams Point Road will be opposed. So the question facing potential developers of property in the Expanded Home Business District is to determine if sufficient market exist for the authorized uses to make construction financially viable. In some cases, with the prices of homes at an all time high on the island the answer may be a return to residential use, which is authorized.

Pathways Connect: by Bob Stoothoff, President, Pathways Connect

Many of you are aware of the sidewalk project that is being accomplished on Wallace Road and Sunset Boulevard. The mile and one half, five foot wide blacktop path is the result of a cooperative effort between the Sunset Bluff Neighborhood Association and Pathways Connect, Northern Beaufort County's cycling and pedestrian advocacy group.

In addition to the Sunset Bluff project Pathways Connect is currently involved in the following additional projects. It should be noted that each of the projects are part of the County Trail Plan which was designed by citizens in cooperation with a consultant about three years ago.

- Working with a Meridian Road neighborhood committee to make another path a reality along Meridian Road from Sea Island Parkway to McTeer Bridge.
- Working with Beaufort County Parks and Leisure Services (PALS) department, to develop a five mile trail within the Burton Wells Park.
- Pathways Connect and Greater Bluffton Pathways continue to work with the Friends of the Beaufort Rail Trail to advocate for the development of a trail within the railroad right of way.

Of course the many needs for safe walking and cycling in our community is painfully slow due to the lack of available funding. Hilton Head Island had devoted more capital in their budgets, and obtained grants to complete their facilities. The rest of Beaufort County must rely primarily on grants and SCDOT road projects which results in very slow progress. Even though it may be slow, we celebrate every step of progress and ask the community to continue to support efforts to obtain the facilities necessary to safely walk and ride to schools, shopping, recreation and leisure activities. Although our progress may not be as fast of we would like, with your help and support we are making progress. To each of you who have supported our efforts a very sincere thank you and to those of you who are considering joining us, please call 522-3969 (Bob Stoothoff) for more details.

Lady's Island Navy Federal Credit Union ATM Well Received:

Navy Federal Credit Union local manager Bill Knepp, who is also a Lady's Island resident, struggled for over a year to obtain a good site for locating a Lady's Island automatic teller machine (ATM). The increase in the number of military families on Lady's Island combined with NFCU's desire to make the service available to their members was the justification for the ATM. Since being placed in operation last September the ATM has averaged between 4,000 and 5,000 transactions each month. Mr. Knepp asks that a special thank you be extended to all of the NFCU customers who use the ATM for keeping the general area around it so clean. LIBPA appreciates Bill's recognition of the large number of military families who chose Lady's Island as their home and his efforts to provide the service of a Navy Federal Credit Union ATM for their use.

10 Fastest Growing Businesses On Lady's Island:

In 1981, when LIBPA was first organized, Lady's Island was home to 76 businesses. Today, we have 427 businesses on the island with an annual gross revenue of over \$165 million. For the last 5 years Lady's Island has enjoyed an average growth of 30 new businesses each year. The requirement to have business license in the unincorporated area of Beaufort County was established in 2000. The data produced by this program has provided a clearer picture of the business community on Lady's Island. Based on this data, following is a list of the 10 fastest growing types of business on Lady's Island in the last 6 years. The chart shows their present number and the amount they have grown since 2000. They are ranked by the number of businesses increased.

Type of Business	Present Number	6 Yr Increase
Contractors/Construction	108	+77
Accountants, Engineers Lawyers, etc.	65	+55

Business/Home Services	47	+34
Personal Care Services	22	+9
Miscellaneous Retail	19	+9
Eating & Drinking Places	15	+8
Health Services	17	+6
Amusement & Recreation Services	7	+5
Real Estate	27	+5
Educational Services	7	+4

With an average of 185 houses being built on the island each year for the last decade, it should come as no surprise that the construction trade would have the largest increase in the number of new businesses. That 55 lawyers, accountants, engineers and similar professionals have chosen Lady's Island as the location of their business is very significant to the long term future of the island. Factors that contribute to this increase in the professional service sector is the quality of life available on the island, the quality, choice and close proximity of schools combined with a potential client base of 24,000 (combined population of Lady's Island, St. Helena, Dataw, Harbor and Fripp Islands) plus the City of Beaufort (13,000). There will come a point, due to running out of undeveloped land, when the home construction business on the island will experience a decline. However, based on the existing data Lady's Island will continue to be the location of choice for an increasing number of professional services. This will be true only if we can retain a high quality of life and schools on the island.

Community Preservation Committee Report:

The Lady's Island Community Preservation Committee met on March 20, 2006 at which time the following cases were considered with the results as indicated.

- A request from a property owner of 5 acres in the Expanded Home Business District (which consist of 500 feet on both sides of the widened portion of Sams Point Road) to expand the types of authorized commercial uses in the area. The committee recommended disapproval in view of the potential for increased traffic on Sams Point Road if expanded commercial uses were authorized.
- A request from a property owner of 2 adjoining lots in the Expanded Home Business District to combine the lots to fully utilize the allowable 500 feet. The committee recommended approval.
- A request from a property owner to rezone his property (approximately 2 acres) on Meridian Road from Community Preservation to Redevelopment District to allow increased density. The committee recommended disapproval but advised the applicant that he could apply to the Beaufort County Council via the Beaufort County Planning Commission for such rezoning. However, in such case the Committee's recommendation of disapproval would accompany the application.
- A representative of the Beaufort County Public Works Department briefed the committee on the County's long range plan to close the Drop Off Center located at the intersection of the Sea Island Parkway and Airport Road. At the present time an active search is underway to locate and purchase property (minimum of 5 acres) near the center of Lady's Island for a new Drop Off Center similar to the one on St. Helena.

The Community Preservation Committee is established by the Beaufort County Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance, consists of representatives of the Lady's Island Community, and is advisory in nature. Property owners or developers can schedule meetings with the committee to discuss/review rezoning request or prospective developments through Ms. Carol Tank, Beaufort County Community Preservation Planner (470-2728).

First Impressions: by Carlotta Ungaro, President of the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce

Since coming to the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce in early January, I have experienced delightfully warm weather and an equally warm reception. Bob Stoothoff with LIBPA was one of the first people I met through the Chamber and he is a great asset to both of our organizations.

The first thing that hits you about the area is its incredible physical beauty. From the marshes, beaches, trees, historical structures to the beauty of fresh local shrimp on your plate, the natural and historical assets are unparalleled.

My second observation is the higher-than-normal participation rate in the government process. For those not familiar with my background, I served as the lobbyist for the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce for almost six years and I have spent countless hours listening to the policy-making process at both state and local levels. In Beaufort County, there is always a good mix at any municipal or county meeting that includes city or county natives and those, particularly retirees, who have moved here from other places. Many attend on or regular basis. I have been pleasantly surprised at how informed, well researched and fact-based the public comment is versus traditional emotional pleas. It is also refreshing when Chairman Newton or Mayor Rauch attempt to provide a civics 101 lesson each week to a citizen who may not understand the sausage-making process of creating policy or why the city can't fix the private road that runs by their property. The experience of policy making is much better in Beaufort than Atlanta, but I must admit I do miss a certain Atlanta City Hall gadfly named Mr. Walker who always sang a rousing round of Amazing Grace at nearly every council meeting.

Many may not believe my next observation... compared to other places I have lived, the Beaufort region has maintained the character of the historic areas while creating a sense of place in the new. You do not find in Beaufort County indistinguishable subdivision after indistinguishable subdivision with rows of shopping centers that all look alike, or worse, half full, in between. From my unscientific "windshield" survey, Bluffton seems to have the highest percentage of chain stores and subdivisions in the area yet it does not have the feel of plain-vanilla suburbia you have in so many other places. Now, I'm not saying everything done has been exactly right... there is always room for improvement... but Beaufort County is a great place and there is good reason we are the fastest growing county in South Carolina. Many people will complain about development coming too fast but I believe that the high public participation I mentioned as my second observation will keep pressure on elected officials to keep growth manageable and at a higher quality than you find in so many fast-growing areas.

These observations I have listed here are the building blocks of a great community. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work here and I look forward to our organizations partnering on programs and issues to grow our businesses on Lady's Island and the rest of the area.

Editor's Note: A special thanks to Ms. Ungaro for the above article which is in response to LIBPA's request that she share her first impressions of the Beaufort area with our members.

Lady's Island Facts:

Spelling of Island's Name: We, who live on Lady's Island, see many variations of the spelling of the name of our island. In 1975 the question of how to spell the name of the island came before the U. S. Board of Geographic Names. Their decision, based on a 1653 Spanish document designating the island as "Islas Dames" and maps with the same name dated 1778 and 1843, was that the proper spelling should be Ladies Island. The board, shortly after 1800, also ruled that apostrophes would be banned on official maps. Therefore, the best that could be hoped for would be Ladys Island. However, in 1981 when a Department of Transportation sign was erected with the name Ladies Island a group of local citizens joined forces with Senator James Waddell, D-Beaufort and got the State of South Carolina Archives Department to research the question of correct spelling of the island's name. The ruling by the Archives Department was that the correct spelling of the name was Lady's Island and in February of 1982 the State Department of Transportation ruled that all signs and state road and highway maps would identify the island as "Lady's Island".

Impact of Home Construction: The National Association of Home Builders recently completed a study that indicates the construction of 100 new homes generates 350 jobs for 1 year, 280 of which are local jobs. Based on that, the 203 new homes built on Lady's Island in 2005 generated 805 jobs for 1 year with 644 of those jobs being in the Beaufort area.

Cost of Services vs. Tax: The American Farmland Trust conducted a study which indicated that the median cost of providing public services, compared to each tax dollar received was as follows:
Residential – Services provided cost \$1.15 for every \$1.00 paid in taxes.
Commercial/Industrial – Services provided cost \$0.27 for every \$1.00 paid in taxes.
Farm/Open Land – Services provided cost \$0.36 for every \$1.00 paid in taxes.

Although the exact numbers may vary by area the principal will remain the same. Residential property taxes do not pay for the services received and the difference must be made up by taxes from commercial property or the general population of tax payers.

Property Taxes: Out of every \$100 of property tax paid to Beaufort County \$78.50 comes from south of the Broad River and \$21.50 comes from north of the Broad River. Of the \$21.50 coming from north of the Broad River \$7.00 (1/3) comes from the Lady's Island and St. Helena area. The largest single payer of Beaufort County property taxes is the town of Hilton Head which accounts for \$57.90 of property taxes out of ever \$100 collected.

The Business Of Real Estate On Lady's Island: by Jerry Marlow, BIC, Coldwell Banker/Keyerling Real Estate
In 2005, for the second year in a row, one out of every three houses sold in the area of Beaufort County, North of the Broad River was located on Lady's Island. Exactly where on the island the sales occurred tends to change each year as developments reach completion and new developments begin. Some areas such as Royal Pines and Telfair dominate the Lady's Island market simply due to the large number of existing homes in these communities. Sales of homes in these two areas accounted for 1/3 of the annual home sales in 2005. Other established communities contributed 1/3 of the total sales with the final 1/3 coming from smaller projects or "infill" type of development. As to the sale of new homes versus the sale of existing homes the number is close to 50% in each category. The following chart provides the total number of sales at each of the major locations on Lady's Island and allows comparison to recent previous years.

RESIDENTIAL UNITS SOLD BY AREA					
AREA	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ROYAL PINES	63	54	53	77	80
SUNSET BLUFF	3	9	14	13	6
PLEASANT POINT	14	13	9	17	33
CAT ISLAND	10	12	12	12	30
MARSH HARBOR	8	3	11	6	14
WALLING GROVE	7	4	8	14	11
COOSAW POINT	0	1	3	10	13
NEW POINT	7	8	6	11	15
CHRISTINE PLACE	12	12	8	6	11
MAGNOLIA COURT	16	21	12	12	24
TELFAIR/ROSEWALK	48	52	60	63	65
ALL OTHERS	84	91	97	94	146
TOTAL	272	282	295	337	448

The above data is derived from the sales reported through the Multiple Listing Services (MLS) of the Beaufort County Association of Realtors.

My Vision For Lady's Island: by Mark Generales, District 7, County Council Representative and Candidate For Reelection

The Lady's Island County Council seat is the only elected position speaking directly for unincorporated Island residents. I believe having someone that actually lives on the Island, someone who experiences Island life as a resident in the unincorporated County and has a strong grasp of the manner in which our governments function is critical at this juncture in our Island's development.

It's hard to believe that it has been almost 12 years since I first set sights on Lady's Island. Debbie (my wife) and I had come to the area at the invitation of Tony and Blanche Trumps to look for what someday would become our retirement home. We were focused on a homesite. We had no intentions of looking for a home, but Blanche thought it would be helpful for us to see what we might eventually build. She was so correct and that one house that we saw – the only house that we saw – has been home to my three children, Debbie and me ever since.

A short four years later I was asked to run for the County Council seat that I presently occupy and for which I am running for re-election. Little did I know what changes were in store for my family and our community. When we moved

to Lady's Island, we were unaware that County Council was deep in negotiations with Del Webb Corporation, the builders of Sun City. Having had job responsibilities in Phoenix years before, I was fully aware of what changes that sort of development would bring to the area. And Sun City is the catalyst that has ushered in a new era for Beaufort County. That said my comments are not to emphasize the negative but a reflection on the reality of the changes facing our area.

And to me, that is what this race is all about – looking at the future and facing the real issues and dealing with them in a manner that best reflects the values and desires of our Island and County residents. A couple of key reality points. First, most of lady's Island is unincorporated County. That means that most everything we need must come from County funds. No one else is going to pay to build our parks, library or any other facility for us.

Today, Lady's Island has almost the same population as our neighbor, the City of Beaufort. Lady's Island residents and businesses pay more in property taxes to the County than all the residents and businesses in the City. Yet, Island residents must drive to the City for many of our needs. As Lady's Island moves forward, more of the needs of Island residents should be available on the island. So, providing public infrastructure is at the heart of a County Council member's responsibility. Parks, roads, libraries, law enforcement, drainage, land management – all weigh heavily. So how do I view these issues as they relate to our area? Let's get to a couple of particulars.

The County has been, and is currently in the process of seeking to procure 25+ acres to create an active park that our kids and adults may use for soccer, baseball and so many other activities. The cost of buying land, creating the ball fields and community buildings is expensive and this is why I have opposed providing County funds to pay for the City's Waterfront Park construction. The \$1.5 million the County gave to the City over the past 3 years could have funded the park we so badly need. It is doubly hard to look back on the decision to give the City that money when the Mayor recently announced the City ended last year with a \$1.6 million surplus in the City treasury. Lady's Island children still have no park to play ball in.

The addition of Crystal Lake Park to the core of downtown Lady's Island will be significant. Located where Butler Marine is currently, this Park will serve the needs of Islanders for generations to come. But once again, the County is short on funds and one of my priorities is to ensure the Park is developed during my next term.

Lady's Island residents have been paying library impact fees whenever a new building is constructed or added to. The long term vision is to have a facility on the Island to serve residents so they don't have to drive over the bridge into Beaufort to use a library. Keep in mind that this issue is important when you note that Beaufort High, Lady's Island Middle, Lady's Island Elementary, Beaufort Academy, the Montessori School, St Peters, Sea Island Presbyterian, Coosa Elementary are all Island schools that could use a library close to them on our side of the River. Once again, the money needs are great and it is my hope that we may couple several funding sources to meet this need.

A last comment for this piece - as an Island community, the issue of roads creates a great challenge. For several reasons, I have opposed the building of the Northern Beaufort by-pass which includes construction of a third bridge at the northern part of the island. At the heart of this is Sams Point Road – the only road we have room for on Lady's Island –Sams Point was expanded by DOT to serve the growth on Lady's Island for the next 20 years. Placing a bridge on the north end of our Island would do many things. It would immediately add 12,000 cars per day to Sams Point Road. The rural northern end of Lady's Island would be gone forever. Middle Road would need to be widened to four lanes. While the City has pressed for the bridge solution to their downtown traffic issues, no further funds should be spent on this project until an impact study on the effects of the bridge on Lady's Island residents and roads is funded and completed. Completing another span parallel to the existing McTeer Bridge may be part of a solution along with intersection improvements at the intersection of Highway 21 and Highway 802. But the real answer is a traffic impact study for all of Lady's Island – something I will be pressing for during the Northern Regional plan study and the re-write of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Our challenges are many. 50 million baby boomers started turning 60 on January 1 of this year. They represent the demand side of a cycle that includes limited land, water access and resources (supply) at both the private and public level. How we deal with this supply/demand quotient will dictate our future. We have the ability to control much of the change that is being thrust upon us. But as I said at the outset, I believe having someone that actually lives on the Island, experiences Island life daily as an Island resident coupled with significant government experience is critical. I hope you agree.

As I See/Saw It: by Paul D. Sommerville, Candidate For District 7 County Council Representative

My memories of what is now District 7 (Lady's Island, Dataw, Cane Island, Distant Island, St Helena Island, Coosaw) goes back to the late 1940's and early 1950's when these pristine areas were largely undeveloped, rural, agricultural, seafood oriented, laid back, stately homelands occupied mostly by multi-generational families who shrimped, crabbed, clammed, fished, raised okra, tomatoes, squash, collards, cucumbers, rutabagas, corn and other delights for canning as well as current consumption.

I can well remember wagons pulled by a single mule that used to traverse the original Lady's Island bridge (completed circa 1922 and replaced circa 1965 by the current bridge). Those wagons were captained by old black men unimpressed with the trappings of modernity such as automobiles. They would systematically drive through each driveway. Each wagon contained a pleasant sounding bell that announced its arrival and as the wagon entered each driveway, the captain would announce in an authoritative voice: "mater, fish, okra" or whatever may have been the seasonal delicacy. In fact, our Sunday dinner menu was predicated on what these industrious small farmers brought on Saturday afternoon.

For those of you who do not remember the 1922 bridge, it creaked and swayed in the slightest of breezes. As children, young Beaufortonians such as I loved to challenge each other to actually be on the bridge during a wind to see if we had the right stuff to endure the creaking and swaying. I tell you, Ichabod Crane had nothing on us when it came to swashbuckling bloodcurdling excitement.

The Beaufort Water Festival was much more of a local event. Yes, we had the Blue Angels and a military parachute team and boat races, but a great deal of the competition was pure local. The Beaufort Ski Club, of which I was a member for many years put on many events such as ski jumping and pyramids of Beaufort's fairest. If you can believe it, my then 80 year old grandfather and I had a "grandfather/grandson ski act" in which we skied around the downtown area together on slalom skis with my grandfather displaying a banner that read "Mr. 1882". In fact, Pat Conroy chronicled a 1957 event in his novel, Prince of Tides, in which my grandfather skied from Beaufort to Savannah and back on a slalom ski with me and other family members driving the boat. But I digress...

A lot has changed about Beaufort in the past 50 years and more change is coming, ready or not. The number of new houses completed on Lady's Island seems to have leveled off for the moment at about 200+/year but growth continues on St Helena and other island locations. Tourists attracted to our beaches, waterways and lifestyle continue to increase. The current daily vehicle count on the McTeer and Woods bridges hovers at slightly under 40,000. Traffic regularly backs up on Carteret Street and Ribault Road in addition to the 802/21 intersection and other locations on and off the islands. We have been talking about a northern by-pass for over 30 years. Now there are several other notions being discussed about just where a 3rd or even 4th bridge should be located. We are currently awaiting the results of an \$87,500 origin destination traffic study/survey done by the county in March of 2005. The results were expected in August, 2005 according to the Beaufort Gazette on March 29, 2005. Hopefully, this study will give us some meaningful direction on just where a 3rd bridge should be located. No matter what location is ultimately selected, someone's ox will be gored and there will be controversy. As your councilman, I will look carefully at the recommendations and proceed to have town hall meetings with all district 7 residents who will show up and I will not cast my vote until every one of my constituents has been heard.

The issue of annexation/incorporation is one that must ultimately be decided by the residents of Lady's Island in a referendum. I own a house on Lady's Island (Sam's Point Road) but I do not live there so I will not be voting on that issue. I personally don't see enough tax base, particularly commercial, to support a separate municipality, but that is just my opinion.

School funding is always a hot topic at any point in time. Now is no different. A northern high school has been approved and funded. It will be built. Bluffton schools seem to have the greatest classroom shortage. Some are proposing splitting the school district north and south of the Broad. What I can say is that as your councilman, I will work diligently to develop and maintain a civil working relationship with the school board. I see the school board/county council relationship in much the same way I see the county council/municipalities relationship. If we don't maintain good working relationships in both of those areas we are not serving our citizens. As we (county and municipalities) struggle to find ways to preclude growth from overwhelming our quality of life, infrastructure, environment and budgets it is time to join forces in seeking solutions.

As I said in my last article, egos must be checked at the door. I will work with the new school board to ensure that what money we do ask from the taxpayers improves the education we provide to our children. Our public schools are our future. Period! With a responsible school board, a responsible school administration and a responsible county council we can improve our public schools in ways that make sense for the entire county. One thing we haven't heard a great deal about lately has been re-districting. I expect that debate to begin soon. My method of dealing with this or any other

debate is to open up the schoolhouses and the churches and bring in the citizens, put the children in the next room and let the airing begin. I cannot imagine a good decision on an important issue being made any other way.

Editor's Note: This article is in response to an invitation by LIBPA to each candidate for District 7 County Council Representative to share their views in regard to annexation, incorporation, school funding and the third bridge to Lady's Island.