The 1960s: Editor as His Own Cartoonist

As news editor of *The Pensacola News* at the beginning of the 1960s, I focused on the Cold War, The Bomb, President John F. Kennedy and East-West tensions, with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Chinese Premier Mao Tse-tung as the Communist menace. So too was Cuban revolutionist Fidel Castro, who embraced Soviet communism and imported Soviet missiles aimed at the United States.

There was Kennedy, assassinated in Dallas in 1963; the sweeping butter-and-guns Great Society programs that mired Lyndon Baines Johnson in the Vietnam quagmire; Barry Goldwater conservatism; Alabama populist George Wallace trying to be president; the comeback and Watergate downfall of Richard Milhouse Nixon, who we endorsed twice; then after Watergate we called for his resignation.

By 1966, as editor-in-chief, I hit more state and Pensacola-area issues: better West Florida highways; completion of Interstate 10 as promised by Governor Haydon Burns (1965-67); the turbulent, comedic years of Governor Claude Roy Kirk Jr. (1967-71), shaking up the Tallahassee Democratic establishment, trying to be Nelson Rockefeller’s presidential running mate; and defying educators during the devastating 1968 teachers’ strike that would eventually open the door to collective bargaining. Dubbed Claudius Maximus, Kirk ignored cabinet members and throttled legislation. Senator Goldwater, speaking at Pensacola Junior College, symbolized West Florida’s growing Republicanism; many Pensacolians bemoaned big government but feared Pentagon military cutbacks.

One-man, one-vote reapportionment drained the Pork Chop Gang power from the more urban Florida Legislature. The 1968 Constitution allowed Escambia County to validate home rule, but in 1970 voters rejected consolidation of city and county government and an appointed school superintendent. The bitter defeat foreshadowed two more failed efforts to enact charter county government and and change to an appointed school administrator.

The University of West Florida (1967) began the promising era for preserving Pensacola’s historical landmarks, developing the cultural arts, building a tourism industry with the new Escambia Promotion and Development Commission that the News Journal advocated as a city-county expansion of the Municipal Advertising Board. The new Westinghouse plant at Laura Point in 1967 heightened hopes for more industrial expansion.

I pushed for the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board (1967) and the creation of the Pensacola (Seville Square) Historic District. More than forty cartoons on Gulf Islands National Seashore supported preservationists against developers and anti-government opponents who preferred local control of Santa Rosa Island. We pushed for city beautification and preserving heritage trees after the Cervantes Street oaks were removed amid loud protests. Cartoons emphasized port and bayfront development, the governmental center, arts council and a modern cultural center.

Student violence of the 1960s boiled into a climactic community confrontation at Escambia High School in the 1970s; the school nickname Rebels and the school’s Confederate battle flag were abandoned in a healing compromise. Discontent and student unrest stained the nation’s college campuses as Vietnam war protests seized the emotions of the ‘60s generation.

Polluted Pensacola Bay and Bayou Texar and overbuilding along Carpenter’s Creek fed appeals for an environmental cleanup. The News Journal exposed Escambia commissioners taking free meals daily at the county prison camp—a “dirt-road politics” caricature prevalent into the 1990s.

The county administrator became a precarious position in the uncertainty of ever-present Pothole Politics.

Selection of popular Reinhardt Holm as mayor in 1967 lessened City Hall friction between progressives and others influenced by the strong city employee lobby. The respected Holm, advocate of the national seashore and a leader for historic preservation and economic expansion, died of a heart attack his first year as mayor.

Long a civic leader and city councilman, Holm set a high standard for dignified leadership that would be upheld by future leaders like Eugene Elebash, Warren Briggs, Barney Burks and Vince Whibbs, who served fourteen years and was designated mayor emeritus.
I'll be around.
Nikita Khrushchev chose Berlin, in Soviet-controlled East Germany, as his flash point of the Cold War. In August 1961 the Russians erected a concrete and barbed-wire barrier down the middle of the city, cutting the Western sector from the Eastern zone. Only war would remove the symbol of the West's helplessness. And East and West played the deadly spy game.
Nikita Khrushchev,
Premier, Soviet Union

Mao Tse-tung
Communist China

Jawaharial Nehru
of India

Peace and Prosperity

NIKITA

MAOIST CHINA

EARLE BONDEN
In 1963 President John F. Kennedy visited the Berlin wall, supporting the freedom seekers, declaring "Ich bin ein Berliner" ("I am a Berliner").
Revolutionary Fidel Castro toppled Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista in January 1959; the Soviet threat haunted the last days of the Eisenhower Administration.
His serenade sounds great
But the service is lousy.

Cuban Economy
By 1960 the situation in Cuba deeply troubled President Kennedy. Castro seized American property, nationalized the nation's major industries, cozied up to the Soviet Union and turned the island into a police state. Cuban refugees flooded into South Florida. The Communist hammer and sickle symbol began casting a shadow over Florida, only ninety miles north—right on America's doorstep.
Sittin' on top of the world

Russian Communism

Fidel

Cuba

Earle Bonden
Even Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviets were unsure about the mysterious Mao Tse-tung in the 1960s.
YOU CAN TEASE HIM BUT DON'T RILE HIM!
President Eisenhower had secretly ordered the training of anti-Castro refugees living in Florida for an assault on Cuba. In March 1961, CIA Director Allen Dulles urged the new president, John Kennedy, to set loose the clandestine force on the island nation.

The Bay of Pigs invasion was a fiasco. While eight Cuban-piloted B-26 bombers fired on Castro's airfields, the dictator rounded up thousands of suspected dissidents, ending hopes for an uprising. On the night of April 17, 1961, fourteen hundred troops landed on the island. But Castro sent 20,000 Cuban regulars to block the drive inland. By nightfall of the third day, the Cuban exiles were still trapped on the beaches; Castro had won, embarrassing the Kennedy administration.
November 22, 1963 was a date Americans can never forget. The assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in Dallas shocked the nation. These cartoons reflect the ever-present evil that can strike a nation. On that day, after the 1:00 p.m. bulletin of the President's death, I replated the first four pages of the first edition of The Pensacola News for an Extra. In less than two hours after his death, more than 5,700 copies of the News extra were sold on the streets of Pensacola.
Following the Dallas tragedy, Texan Lyndon Baines Johnson, former majority leader of the Senate and President Kennedy's vice president, assumed the national leadership. Kennedy's New Frontier turned to LBJ's Great Society and a mountain of social legislation with massive spending programs that echoed into the 1990s.
President Johnson deftly used his persuasiveness on Congress to enact his sweeping Great Society programs—despite opposition from conservatives, including Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. One outspoken opponent to his aggressive civil rights policies was George Corley Wallace, who had become governor of Alabama in 1962. Known as the “Fightin’ Little Judge,” the Clayton, Alabama populist was chiefly known for his strident, stand-in-the-schoolhouse-door resistance to school integration. The onetime Golden Gloves boxer was a law-and-order disciple who promised to restore states’ rights.
Chief Justice
Earl Warren,
U.S. Supreme Court

Johnson-Goldwater debate, 1964

United Nations
Ambassador
Adlai
Stevenson

Navy
Admiral
Hyman
Rickover
Lyndon Johnson was determined to achieve a victory in Vietnam, but the more he tried with more troops the deeper the southeastern Asian quagmire, the longer the American casualty list and the louder the protests on college campuses and elsewhere across America.
Increasing criticism over Vietnam led President Johnson on March 31, 1968 to announce to a surprised nation that he would not seek re-election.
Senator Everett Dirksen (R-Illinois)

Mao Tse-tung of Red China

U.S. STAND IN VIET NAM

VIETNAM

NOW HE SEES ME, NOW HE DOESN'T

MY, WHAT A BIG BACKBONE YOU HAVE?

ASIAN REDS
COME! LET US REASON TOGETHER.

U.S. BUILDUP IN VIETNAM.

Robert McNamara
At Cape Canaveral, the American space program boosted the Florida economy and rocketed the American spirit in the 1960s. By 1969, the many space adventures reached a record success. From the moon on July 20, 1969, came strong and historic words from American astronaut Neil Armstrong: “Houston. Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.” Americans took justifiable pride in the towering technical achievement.
Senator George McGovern

The nut fringe left and right

Hasty legislation, riots, anarchy, racial extremism

Those who really believe in America

Critics
DEMANDS OF THE AUTOMOBILE

POLITICAL PROMISES

FOUR-LANE HIGHWAYS

ESCambia ROADS

NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Earl Bowden
Jacksonville Mayor Haydon Burns served only two years as governor (1965-67), often talking about building West Florida roads. His shortened term began the new cycle of gubernatorial elections separated from presidential election years. Constitutionally Burns was eligible to run for a second term; he lost to Robert King High. Republican Roy Claude Kirk Jr. was on the horizon.
In 1968 the Florida Legislature submitted and the voters ratified three amendments which combined to give the state an almost new Constitution. The first lieutenant governor since 1889 was appointed, the Legislature would meet annually and a significant package of conservation laws led to Florida's environmental policies in the 1970s.

By 1972, judicial reform had unified the courts into a state system, ending Justices of the Peace and municipal judges. Judges ran without a party label. Governor Reubin Askew became the first governor elected to successive four-year terms; by 1974 the Legislature enacted collective bargaining for public employees and created the ethics commission to oversee public officers and employees. Reapportionment under the one-man, one-vote ruling would end the tradition of North Florida rural counties dominating the Legislature.
The Many Images of Governor Claude Kirk (Claudius Maximus) 1967-71
"Running? Naw, just selling orange juice!"
During the 1959 legislative session, the issue of inadequate funding began plunging Florida's school system into a crisis of factionalism, triggering the nation's first statewide teacher strike in February 1968. Governor Claude Kirk battled the education lobby; protestors denounced the Republican governor. No event during the turbulent Kirk administration excited more passion. The aftermath of the crisis was chaos. Student radicalism and federally mandated school desegregation in the early 1970s led Florida Governor Reubin Askew and legislative leaders to repattern Florida's educational leadership.
Even though the *News Journal* always vigorously supported public education, including property tax millage increases to provide quality education, the striking Escambia County teachers met daily to condemn the newspaper for its opposition to the walkout. The *News Journal* opposed the unionism that would follow in the continuing chaos.
Escambia county was spared the major disruption that plagued many southern school districts over racial integration, but Escambia High School became a potential powderkeg over its southern nickname, the Rebels, and the use of the Confederate battle flag as its school banner. The News Journal joined with community leaders, black and white, to defuse the controversy. I was part of a team that urged legislative leaders, including Senator W.D. Childers, to step aside and allow the Escambia school board to seek a compromise; a new school spirit came with a new name.

University campuses in the 1960s and early 1970s, including Florida State University, were targets of disruptive student protests and rebellion, centering on the political quagmire of Vietnam that brought down President Lyndon Johnson and troubled the administration of Richard Milhous Nixon.
Richard Nixon achieved one of the most startling political comebacks in American history in the turbulent campaign of 1968. Defeated by John F. Kennedy in 1960 and a failed candidate for the governorship of California in 1962, Nixon resurrected himself by helping rebuild the Republican Party after the Goldwater loss to Johnson. He and Spiro Agnew emerged victorious over Democrats Hubert Humphrey and Edmund Muskie and the American Independent candidate George C. Wallace. The News Journal endorsed Nixon, then called for his resignation after Watergate.
More than twenty thousand people enjoyed the first "An Evening in Old Seville Square" on August 25, 1966, beginning a proud Pensacola tradition. Planned by the Junior League of Pensacola and the Pensacola Heritage Foundation as a "picnic on the green" to support Pensacola's historic preservation program, the popular evening was a major cultural event of the sixties and seventies as the Seville Square Historic District evolved. Seville Square became popular for festivals, including the Great Gulf Coast Arts Festival. Revived for the Galvez Bicentennial Celebration in 1981, the "Evening" continued on the Fourth of July. The Fiesta of Five Flags adapted many of the "Evening" features in the eighties and nineties.
In 1968, I began a News Journal editorial campaign to persuade Florida legislators to designate Scenic Highway as a state scenic parkway. Legislation in 1973 made the roadway officially Scenic Parkway, but its preservation remains a constant crusade, like retaining the city's natural beauty, especially its many heritage trees.
The four-laning of Cervantes Street in the late 1960s threatened the many oaks that partially canopied the major traffic corridor (U.S. Highway 90). The protest failed to save the endangered trees, but Mary Turner Rule and other preservationists helped inspire the city's first heritage tree preservation ordinance.
The old county politics in the 1960s permitted environmental mistakes on Santa Rosa Island and the Escambia county mainland, and fed the resistance to Gulf Islands National Seashore by developers and elected politicians.
PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL SEASHORE

ESCAMBA'S ELECTED OFFICIALS

RESTORATION OF PENSACOLA HARBOR FORTS

DESIRES OF THE COMMUNITY

ESCAMBA COMMISSION

GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE

INTERIOR DEPT.
While the Escambia County Commission and the Santa Rosa Island Authority endorsed the national seashore when the National Park Service announced its plans in 1968, officeholders refused to transfer any county land on Santa Rosa Island to the National Park Service. The State of Florida offered Fort Pickens State Park and the Navy agreed to transfer its land on Santa Rosa Island and Perdido Key. But the seven and one-half miles of county land between Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach were essential for Congress to authorize the national seashore.
The 1968 Congressional hearing on Gulf Islands National Seashore in Pensacola galvanized a small but vocal and an influential group of seashore opponents, including WCOA radio station owner J. McCarthy Miller, chairman James Lay and the Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce seashore task force, lawyer and chairman George Rourke of the Santa Rosa Island Authority, land developers and political conservatives—all charging "federal land grab." They stymied local action for another year.

Commissioners had 22,000 pro-seashore petitions by 1969; they voted to transfer the seven and one-half miles of Santa Rosa Island to the National Park Service. But the Santa Rosa Island Authority objected, claiming jurisdiction.
In June 1970 the Florida Legislature restructured the Santa Rosa Island Authority, and gave Escambia commissioners the authority to transfer the seven and one-half miles of Santa Rosa Island to the National Park Service. And to clarify Escambians' wishes on the seashore, commissioners authorized a straw vote on the national park for the November 3, 1970, general election.
Escambia County voters, who rejected a charter for consolidating city and county government, an appointive school superintendent and a seven-member school board in the November 1970 general election, voted overwhelmingly for the transfer of seven and one-half miles of Santa Rosa Island to the National Park Service. The official vote was 22,264 for transfer, 12,619 to retain the land in local control.

“This is for the American People! The seashore will put us on the national map!”

The House of Representatives passed the seashore bill on November 10, 1970; the Senate unanimously agreed on December 22. And during Christmas week, in one of the dying Congress’ last acts, the 91st Congress passed the GINS bill on December 28. President Nixon signed Public Law 91-660 on January 8, 1971.
By the twentieth anniversary of Gulf Islands National Seashore in January 1991, the park was attracting from five to nine million visitors in Florida and Mississippi. In less than a decade, the National Park Service had restored and stabilized Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas, the Spanish water battery San Antonio and the Barrancas redoubt in Pensacola harbor and Fort Massachusetts on Ship Island in the Mississippi Sound. The first visitor center on Davis Bayou at Ocean Springs, Mississippi, alarmed Floridians who had to pressure Congress for the Florida headquarters and visitor center at Naval Live Oaks Reservation, delayed until 1988 due to the cost-saving tactic of Reagan administration Interior Secretary James Watt. The park service built the Santa Rosa day-use beach facility between Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach and improved Rosamond Johnson Beach on Perdido Key. Seashore opposition vanished, but not political controversies over SRIA leasing policies and less-than-quality development of Pensacola Beach.
As northeast Pensacola developed with new housing and commercial development in the 1960s, the once pristine Carpenter's Creek flowing into Bayou Texar suffered from declining water quality. The pollution-choked waterways fueled appeals for an environmental cleanup.

In the county, Escambia commissioners stubbornly resisted the increasing needs for county zoning and land-use management.
When the *News Journal* reported that Escambia County commissioners had their own table for daily lunch at the county prison camp in the 1960s, the freelading ended. Such abuse of public stewardship fed the News Journal’s editorial appeal for home-rule reform—first, supporting consolidation of city and county governments; then, charter government.
Despite political resistance, the city's Municipal Advertising Board became the Escambia Promotion and Development Commission to broaden efforts to recruit new business and industry and build a tourism economy. And county commissioners finally saw the benefit of hiring a county administrator.
MODERN CULTURAL CENTER

PENSACOLA CULTURE

APATHY
AGINNERS
NO COORDINATION
EMPIRE-BUILDERS
PENSACOLA'S FUTURE

INDIFFERENCE

PENSACOLA CULTURE AND THE ARTS
LACK OF FACILITIES
LACK OF MONEY

PENSACOLA ARTS COUNCIL

UNITED APPEAL
Kirk, says GOP on the go.

Conservatism in Northwest Florida.

You know who.

Florida Democrats.
EARLE BOWDEN

CITY OF PENSACOLA

STAGNATED WATERFRONT PLANS

LACK OF COORDINATED LEADERSHIP

PENSACOLA WATERFRONT

PENSACOLA WATERFRONT

HELP

EARLE BOWDEN
Boxing gloves symbolized the often-divided Pensacola City Council that conducted the “midnight firing” of progressive City Manager Homer Reed and argued over placing fluoride in city water. Councilman Kenneth Kelson, later chairman of the Escambia County commission, became known as “Dr. No” resisting municipal progressives. I editorially described the council as a “Comedy of Errors” after the Reed firing.

But the City Hall climate changed; a new council of business leaders selected councilman Reinhardt Holm as mayor in 1967. President of Pensacola Home and Savings Association, Holm supported Claude Kirk for governor and Barry Goldwater for president and was chairman of the Escambia County Local Government Study Commission that developed the city-county consolidation proposal.
The death of Mayor Reinhardt Holm (1967) saddened Pensacolians. The Escambia School named a school for the son of a Norwegian immigrant and one of the city’s most popular civic-minded leaders.
LACK OF COORDINATED PLANNING

DOWNTOWN PENSACOLA

THE POLITICAL CROWD

PENSACOLA'S COMMUNITY NEEDS AND DESIRES

CITY-COUNTY GOV'T CENTER

NEW SPIRIT OF PENSACOLA

EARLE BOWDEN