

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## We're Glad You're Here

Welcome to spring in the South Brunswick Islands, a favorite time of year for Brunswick Countians and for our friends from other places.

To these friends we extend a warm invitation: Visit with us, worship with us, and share with us appreciation of a "home" rich in variety, in opportunity and in the natural beauty of its places and people.

Whether a first-timer or a regular frequenter of our shores, pull up a chair and stay a while. We hope the enclosed Easter edition of *Island Living* adds to the pleasure and enjoyment of your visit.

It's our way of saying, "We're glad you're here."

## One Thing Led To Another In Court

District Attorney Michael Easley stood, looked back at the courtroom full of jurors and addressed Superior Court Judge B. Craig Ellis. Next on the court docket was another defendant who had entered into a plea bargain agreement with the DA's office, thus avoiding a trial.



Terry Pope

"Your honor, before we get started, I'd like to remind the court that this is the last case we had anticipated being a jury trial this week," he added. The jury had served its duty for the week and would be receiving a check for \$12 a day for sitting in the courtroom.

In fact, although the jury was called and reported to court on Monday morning at 9:30 a.m., by Thursday morning there had been no trial cases held in Brunswick County Superior Criminal Court for the entire week. All of the defendants had either pleaded guilty, had their cases delayed or made a plea bargain agreement with the DA's office.

The whole week was strange, but the jury was thanked just the same for serving its duty—by sitting and waiting on cases that were never called.

"Sometimes, the jurors' presence at the courthouse can move cases," Judge Ellis said, "whereby the defendant will voluntarily plea cases. Whenever folks do come in and see the jury is ready, they will enter into a plea arrangement rather than face trial."

To give you an idea of how strange of a week it was, there was no court Monday except for a roll call of those defendants present. On Monday morning, while on her way to court, court reporter Sylvia Edwards was injured in a car accident on N.C. 211 near Supply, fracturing her knee and left ankle. Court reporters are scarce specimens in the 13th Judicial District.

Court does not go on without a court reporter—not even pleas can be heard and no arraignments can take place, usually the first action taken during any Superior Court session. The only ones who actually accomplished something Monday mor-

ning was the Brunswick County Grand Jury, who added another strange element to the Superior Court docket.

They unveiled the Brunswick County interagency drug squads' investigation into drug deals in the county by handing down indictments against 22 defendants on 66 charges for selling and distributing marijuana and cocaine.

The indictments were the result of an investigation dating back to June 1984, the largest drug investigation in 19 years in Brunswick County. What better time could one pick to present the cases to the Grand Jury but on this strange week in March?

It wasn't your usual report from the Grand Jury. It was the Grand Jury who had been working hard Monday while most attorneys wandered around the courthouse like they were lost, as though they were visiting the place for the first time in their careers. There was plenty of free time on everyone's hands.

On Tuesday, a substitute reporter from District Court began filling in while the pleas were accepted. The arraignments were held and several not-guilty pleas were entered, giving reason to believe that at least one trial by jury would take place during the week. Court seemed back to normal again.

When the jurors were dismissed to go home or back to work Thursday morning, several had smiles on their faces. They would not be called again for duty for another two years, the judge said.

It may take that long before we see another week of Superior Court that can match last week's strange version.

## Scholarship Goes Begging

A scholarship to Brunswick Technical College for a veteran or a veteran's spouse or child pursuing a vocational course of study is going begging for lack of qualified applicants.

Only two students have approached the Brunswick County Veterans Council, which sponsors the scholarship. Neither met the eligibility requirements, according to a council news release.

Members reaffirmed at a March 26 meeting not to consider applications that did not meet previously established criteria.

Each application must include: 1) a written statement which introduces and states the educational goals of

the student; 2) a copy of the veteran's separation papers or other approved documents that show honorable service; and 3) information on the veteran's status in the council.

A veteran must submit his or her own separation papers whether or not eligibility could occur from a parent's prior service.

Preference will be given to Council members and their families.

Funds for the scholarship are granted for four consecutive quarters of study and cover tuition and mandatory fees.

If the student does not maintain standards for completion for the course, the Council reserves the right to revoke funding.

## TRAPPED IN GEORGIA

# No Money, No Makeup, Just Friends



Susan Usher

We were paddling down an open channel blasted out of the wilds with dynamite. It was March 1980, the Okefenokee Swamp. We were on one of those trips that sometimes changes lives, the kind you still remember five and 10 years later.

Our group of 16 strangers was determined to see and hear all that we could in our short time there. We had come equipped with field guides, film, bug spray, rainsuits and a change of wool socks. No wallets, no charge cards, no makeup. Eager students we were, but we didn't know just what lessons the trip held in store.

We were almost immediately overwhelmed by the unexpected: beauty. Few of us had thought a swamp could be beautiful. Threatening, yes; dangerous, yes. But beautiful? Yes. From the tiny red carnivorous sundew still dripping in the morning light to the rich smell of humus.

It was wintry back in Morganton. But around us the Okefenokee was coming alive with sound and activity: animals crawling out of their muddy homes on the bottom, water lilies and marshmallows blooming furiously in a canopy of yellow and white; tadpoles wiggling into adulthood. Spring had arrived.

Disturbed by the passing of our canoe, two half-asleep alligators sharing a log in the sun slid quietly into dark amber water so calm it looked like smoked glass. Images doubled so clearly it was hard to tell which was real.

Overhead a tall egret stood quietly near the top of a bald cypress. Deeper inside the swamp we would later see huge flat nests at the tops of other trees.

We waited in awe at dawn as a flock of the birds left their nesting area to feed. Just at dusk an owl would visit our campsite.

We poked gingerly at a swamp snake curled in a nook of this scrawny little tree on a hummock in the middle of the channel. He was sick and probably dying.

A male chameleon, throat bursting with red, hitched a ride from an overhead limb as Jake and I paddled along. In the water we saw the outline of another snake winding swiftly our way—a cottonmouth, we guessed.

We'd been told the swamp was light on snakes, mosquitos and 'gators this time of year. Yet we saw plenty of them, or so it seemed.

Stripping off long-sleeve jackets and rolling up our shirtsleeves, we didn't worry. It was a sunny March day in the Okefenokee Swamp, "Land of the Trembling Earth."

Home of Pogo and friends.

Turning back toward camp, we encountered an Outward Bound group traveling the St. Mary's River, fighting the stiff wind that made our return trip a breeze.

That night we pitched tents on an island in the middle of the swamp where a "platform" for travelers had been erected. Up early, we canoed all the next day, with newly assigned partners. We were getting to know and like one another. My day's companion was a retired school principal twice as gutsy as me and nearly three times older. He knew how to handle a canoe.

Mist lay low to the ground, heavy and flat. All the wildlife that had filled the air with grunts, snorts and calls the day before had disappeared. In their place was nothing but rain, drizzling steadily, finding holes in the seams of our green rain ponchos. My elderly partner never complained as we canoed and sang, sang and canoed.

Damp and exhausted, we returned to a meal of homecanned sausage, wild mushrooms and rice only to find a rip in the side of our tent from top to bottom. My tentmate—usually not the scatterbrain that I am—had left trail mix in a knapsack, a feast for a wily raccoon.

While we were more interested in the less often seen armadillo, the swamp was full of roving raccoons. (We avoided them, for it was among the Okefenokee's raccoon population

that the rabies threat now spreading to North Carolina began.)

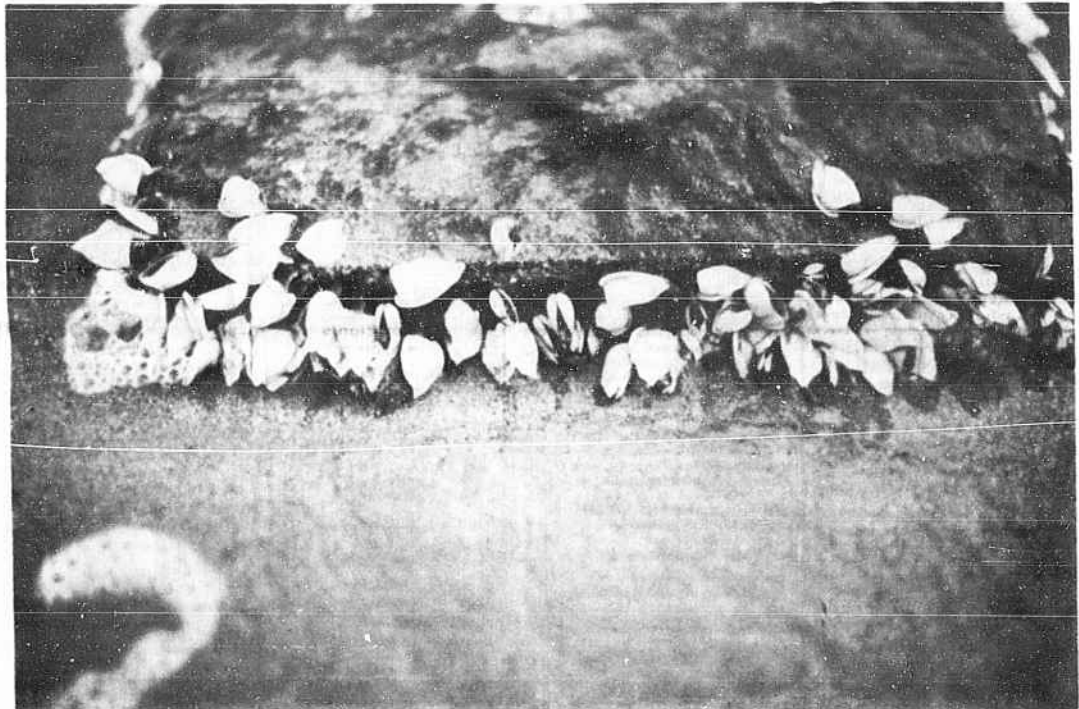
On one island where health officials had captured raccoons, injected them with vaccine and released them, we also saw vestiges of the timber operations that had almost destroyed the swamp as we know it before it became a federal preserve.

As happens in late March, the drizzling rain got colder and colder. Waking at dawn icy cold, we looked out the tent flap to a world of white. That's right. It had snowed in the Okefenokee Swamp.

Moving as quickly as we could with eight canoes weaving behind our Western Piedmont Community College vans, we headed toward the foothills of North Carolina and home—only to have our journey interrupted in Augusta, Ga.. Several bad accidents had forced the closing of the Savannah River bridge. We were trapped, broke, with no papers, no money.

Luck was with us. For two days we holed up in the warmth of a Day's Inn. Our 71-year-old principal had ignored packing instructions. With his senior card, we got two rooms—one for the guys, one for the gals—and all the free coffee we wanted. We nibbled on leftovers, ran up long-distance phone bills on other people's numbers and cried over old movies on Channel 11.

The bonds formed that week are still strong after five years. If it snows again before Easter, you won't get any complaints from me.



## Gooseneck Barnacles: Active And Passive

Some marine species are active in that they roam in seas, bays and marshes in search of food. Others are passive and stay in one place waiting for food to come by them. The gooseneck barnacles are a combination of active and passive, for they attach themselves to ships, pieces of lumber and debris and then are carried miles by currents or trade routes.



Bill Faver

Goose barnacles, or gooseneck barnacles, have little resemblance to the more common acorn barnacles we find on pilings, rocks and other places around the shore. Most goose barnacles live on the deep sea bottom, but some wash up on our beaches attached to ocean debris.

These "stalked barnacles" have an elongated body within a shell made of two halves each with several plates. The body forms a stalk about an inch or more long and fastens by means of a glue-like substance. Barnacles characteristically stand on their heads and stick their feet out to bring in the food. Six pairs of legs divide into curling jointed branches at the end

and resemble feathery plumes.

Since the goose barnacle attaches itself and gets a free ride all over the world, it is not considered to inhabit any particular place but is always a visitor wherever it washes ashore. Those we find have stalks about an inch long, but in some parts of the world the stalks may be up to about a foot long.

One story from Medieval England is that the barnacle goose hatched from these goose barnacles. Since the migratory habits of these geese were unknown, it was assumed they developed almost overnight from the barnacles found in the area. Evans as late as 1678, Sir Robert Moray dissected a goose barnacle and reported to the British Royal Society

that "the little bill, like that of a goose, the eyes marked, the head, neck, breast, wings, and tail formed, the feathers everywhere perfectly shaped and blackish in color, and the feet like that of other waterfowl." Such imagination gave these barnacles their name, and many years passed before the notion was dispelled that these shells broke open and geese flew away.

Watch for pieces of driftwood and floating timber riding the waves as they wash ashore. Examine them carefully for goose neck barnacles stretching out their slender stalks to feed. And if you find them, you might just look around for some geese overhead!

## How to keep your child away from drugs.

Anything there in a swirl of devil might help. But unless they have your home. It's no walk in the park.

What can you do? Learn to recognize the symptoms of drug abuse. Look for taking grades in school. And avoid bad behavior. But most important, help your child of communication open with you. Encourage them to tell you if they get offers of drugs. Show them you understand about peer pressure and how tough it is to walk away. Teach your children to resist offers of drugs with a simple no.

For the booklet, "Parents: What You Can Do About Drug Abuse" write: Get Involved, P.O. Box 1706, Rockville, Maryland 20850.

Help your kids to just say no.



Take this to heart

Have your blood pressure checked.

WE'RE FIGHTING FOR YOUR LIFE

American Heart Association