

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## Sunshine Law Needs Guts

Rep. David Redwine deserves credit for doing his part to try to strengthen the state's Open Meetings law, the statute intended to bring the transaction of the public's business out from behind closed doors and into plain view.

The law allows 19 specific reasons for public bodies to meet behind closed doors. Still some boards persist in meeting privately to discuss business that, by law, ought to be handled in public.

It seems they want to do and say some things they'd rather you not know about. It sounds silly, but sometimes they actually forget they were elected by you to act for you.

However, our local House member voted for a bill that provide some remedies when the violations are deliberate.

The best aspect of House Bill 170 is that it would allow the court to declare null and void actions that resulted when a board met behind closed doors when it shouldn't have, specifically in a violation that the court rules was committed "in bad faith for the purpose of evading or subverting" the intent of the sunshine law.

Of less significance, the bill would allow the parties involved to be penalized up to \$500 each. A criminal fine for breach of trust in a public office would have been more appropriate than a civil fine, in The Brunswick Beacon's opinion.

But overall it's a good bill, one that has been needed for a long while. It's too bad other legislators don't share Rep. Redwine's concern about the citizens' right to follow decisions made on their behalf.

While the bill was approved in the House by a wide margin, it has stalled in the Senate Judiciary I Committee and most likely won't be seen again—at least not before the summer of 1986, when the legislature convenes again in short session.

**That's an outrage, because the current law has no guts.**

A mere slap on the wrist was all the court could do back in the early 1970s when it found the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners in violation of the Open Meetings law in a suit filed by The State Port Pilot and The Brunswick Beacon. The judge issued an injunction barring the board from further violations, with the penalty for doing so a potential contempt of court citation.

The good people of this state deserve a better law.

## Inch By Inch, Row By Row

BY BILL FAVER

One of the good things about living in this part of the world in the summertime is the abundance of good, fresh vegetables.

Tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, beans and canteloupes taste like they should and we pity the millions of people who think tomatoes are supposed to taste like those they get from Florida and California.

We have come to expect the best, but we seldom take the time to marvel at the miracles of plant growth. In his song, "Inch by Inch, Row by Row", Pete Seeger reminds us of the careful process involved in growing things:

Inch by inch, row by row,  
 Please bless these seeds I sow,  
 Please keep them safe below,  
 Till the rain comes tumbling down.

Anyone who has attempted to garden even on a small scale realizes the importance of good soil, adequate moisture, and warm sunshine to release the seed energy and to begin the miracle. Then the sprouting plant needs room to grow and develop toward maturity. Its constant needs for food and water must be met for it to survive. And all along the way are hazards and problems: the wind may blow the seeds away; birds, moles, or field mice may eat them; insects, molds and fungi may attack the young plant and stunt its growth or cause it to die; mice, rabbits, squirrels, and other mammals may eat the plant before it has time to mature; lack of rain may cause it to die; poor soil may not give it the nourishment it needs to survive; hailstorms may beat the plant down; and it could be choked out by weeds overtaking the garden plot.

Chances of survival appear slim even with the best of gardeners. But, when proper care is given and conditions are right, we can expect an abundance from that tiny seed.

Perhaps we should pause at mid-summer on our beaches to say thanks to our many gardeners and farmers who supply the produce stands and grocery bins. Even in a year when the rains haven't "come tumbling down" we can enjoy the fruits of their labors and we can acknowledge with them the miracle of growing things "inch by inch and row by row".



## Mailbag Urges 'Buy American'

Delving into the mailbag after several days on vacation...

"Shame on you!" was all an anonymous writer added to a clipping from The Charlotte Observer in this week's stack of letters. The clipping, only a portion of an Observer Carolinas Poll, addressed the question of imported vs. domestic goods. It was titled "Buy American' Finding Favor With Carolinians."

The sender had attached a clipping of a recent column on my move from a (domestic) Chevette to an (imported) Toyota. Gasp! How could I be so un-patriotic. (I wonder if the import dealers get mail like this?)

The article noted that the idea of "buying American because you are an American" is growing in popularity.



Susan Usher

Whenever possible, I, too, prefer buying American-made products. (I'm so crazy loyal I even try to buy in Brunswick County over New Hanover and North Carolina over South Carolina, even though things might cost a little more. I want the taxes to stay at home.)

Our own local economy has suffered because of textile imports—look at the impact on

Dupont's Cape Fear plant, with its large RIF's in recent years, and the DePoortere plant, where an aunt of mine recently lost her job.

Like the nearly 72 percent majority in the poll, I too would prefer buying a car made by an American company, but like many of them (if the survey had continued) I still bought an import.

I try to be realistic when it comes to large purchases such as cars: When American makers come up with an auto that can truly compete with the imports in all aspects, I'll buy it.

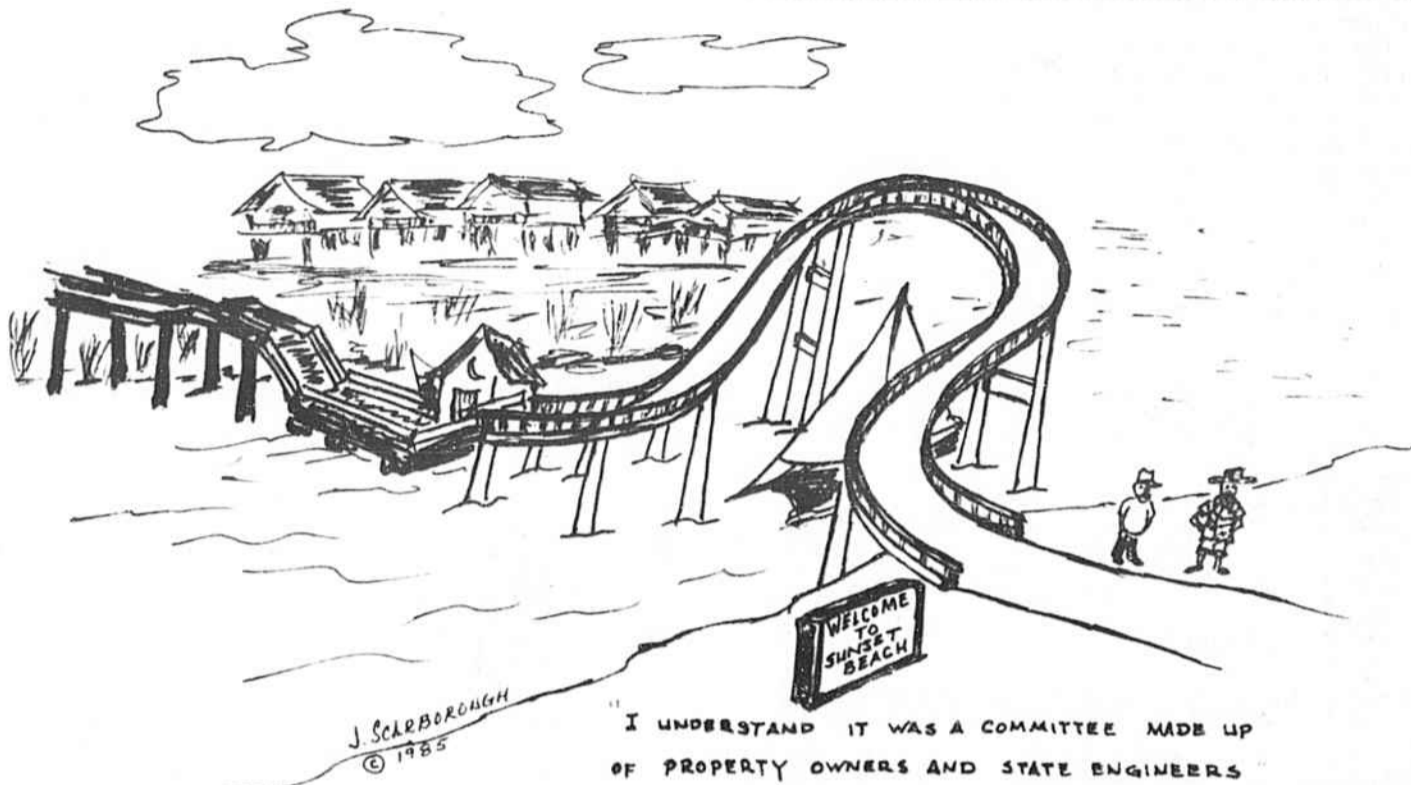
Some of the new '86 models look promising, but I've always been taught not to buy a car it's first year out, to let the maker get the kinks out first. And face it: I had to have a car.

If wanting the most for my money is un-American, maybe I am, at least when it comes to cars.

While my decision to buy a car sounds sudden, it wasn't. I'd been looking for months, reading back issues of Consumer Reports and Consumer Digest, talking with car owners and looking at advertisements to check prices—and resale values. I even sent off for technical information on the products of two major American makers of "affordable" cars.

The only thing holding me back was the sacrifices involved in making car payments. After all, I enjoy eating out, buying books and albums—things I couldn't do if making car payments.

What have I done?



## Pops, Shrills Ended A Long Afternoon

Pop! Pop! Whirl! Shri! The beach skyline lights up momentarily while another pop is heard closer to home. The dogs start barking at the shrills, and they put their tails between their legs from the pops. They don't know what to do, so they start barking and then wait to hear the reactions of other dogs in the neighborhood. They just know that something weird is happening to the sky tonight.

It must be the Fourth of July, but they don't know it. People up and down the beach step out onto their porches to either see the lighted display or to yell, "Shut up!" at their dogs.

Thousands line the streets and waterfronts in Southport and Wilmington just after dark for a much larger, much more exciting, and legal, display of the strange happenings in the sky. Those booms and shrills that fill the beach sky are individuals practicing illegal fireworks displays.

In fact, the use of reported "pyrotechnics" will probably reach double digits on Sunset Beach for July.



Terry Pope

I always get a kick out of hearing Town Manager Wallace Martin's monthly activity reports, when a spark fills his eyes and a smile spreads across his face as he slowly pronounces "pyrotechnics," putting in several accents in the four-syllable word.

"And, we had 14 cases of pyrotechnics during the month of July—or firecracker complaints." I guess pyrotechnics includes all kinds of fireworks, including the kinds that go pop, hiss and shrill as well as the common firecracker, so the term is reliable from a manager's standpoint.

But if fireworks are illegal in North Carolina, then they should also be illegal in other states as well. In North

Carolina, it is perfectly legal to sell sparklers, the first thing that little kids get hooked on. Everyone knows that sparklers only lead to the harsh stuff, like firecrackers and bottle rockets. Who knows what comes next, Roman candles, or "Flowers In Full Bloom" Chinese flaming balls.

No one is concerned about the problem though until the little child is hooked, until they're doing straight "Whistling Jupiters" off the carport or down Ocean Boulevard West. By then, they are really strung out on the gray powder.

It's just too enticing not to travel across the state line to buy fireworks after a nice seafood dinner in Calabash, while you're still in the spending mood. The wide, sandy beaches back at the cottage or condo

are also too enticing.

Following a long day in Southport last Thursday to cover the Fourth of July festivities, I returned home, sat back, and just watched the illegal fireworks display from my porch. It was a far cry from what I would have seen while sitting along the waterfront in Southport, but it was relaxing to be out of the heat just the same.

I thought about how the Holden Beach police would enforce not only the town's ordinance, but the state's law against fireworks as well. On this night, it would be impossible.

After all, it was July 4th, and the dogs couldn't tell a legal pyrotechnic from an illegal one. They just stayed confused all night, listening and barking at the shrills and booms that man finds amusing.

## Calendar Of Events

### Thursday, July 11

BRUNSWICK ARTS COUNCIL Board of Directors meets in the public assembly building, Brunswick County Government Center, with evaluation reports due from program directors, 7 p.m.

HOLDEN BEACH COMMUNITY WATCH meets at the Holden Beach Town Hall for a program on sea turtles, 7:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY MEETING at the Shallotte Point Volunteer Fire Department to discuss Gurganus Cemetery. All those with family members or other loved ones buried in the cemetery are asked to attend, 7:30 p.m.

LONGWOOD COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT meets at Flowers Store, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NIGHT at the American Legion Hut, one mile south of Shallotte on U.S. 17, 7:30 p.m.

### Friday, July 12

GAME NIGHT at the Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department, 8 p.m.

### Saturday, July 13

SENIOR FISH FRY at the Shallotte Senior Citizens Center. All you can eat for \$1, for seniors ages 60 and older, starts at 11 a.m.

CALABASH VFW sells corn on the cob, hotdogs and baked goods at the old Elks Lodge in Calabash, starting at 11 a.m.

GAME NIGHT at the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department, 8 p.m.

### Sunday, July 14

BRUNSWICK COUNTY SWING 'FORE' HEART Golf Tournament at Brierwood Golf Club. Contact Michael Edwards or the Brierwood pro shop, 754-4660, for more information.

### Monday, July 15

CALABASH VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD CORP. holds its annual meeting at the squad building, 10 a.m.

SUNSET BEACH COUNCIL meets at the town hall in lieu of their regular August 5 meeting, 7:30 p.m.

RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for Brunswick County meets in the commission office, Brunswick County Planning Building, 7:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, July 16

SUPPLY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS meet at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. office in Shallotte, 10 a.m.

OCEAN ISLE BEACH Board of Adjustments meets at the town hall, 7:30 p.m.

### Wednesday, July 17

BRUNSWICK TECHNICAL COLLEGE Board of Trustees meets in the board room in Supply, 7 p.m.

SHALLOTTE ALDERMEN meet at the town hall in regular session, 7:30 p.m.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY PLANNING BOARD meets in the planning building conference room, Brunswick County Government Center, 7:30 p.m.

### Brief Notes From Beacon Readers

To the editor:

Please be advised that we have moved and would appreciate it if you can forward our Beacon to the above address. We love your paper very much and can't wait to receive it.

James and Rose Pepey  
 Ronkonkoma, New York

Please note our new address. We look forward to the Beacon each week for news from home.

Jackie and Brenda Redwine  
 Vilas

We enjoy your newspaper every

time we are down at the coast, at our home there. It is so up-to-date with news in that area.

Therefore, I wish to subscribe to The Brunswick Beacon for the news while at our home in Denver, N.C. all year.

Mrs. Robert Vickers  
 Denver, N.C.

Please keep the Beacon coming, I enjoy it very much. Look forward to it each week. Now I have a special interest in Shallotte.

Ralph Stovall  
 Lexington

(The writer is the father of Don Stovall, Shallotte's new chief of police. Editor's note.)

### HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO

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