



NAMED FOR ROMAN EMPEROR AUGUSTUS, August is the month of summer flowers and vacations.

'Sweet August Doth Appear'

BY BILL FAVER

One of the signs of growing older (I am told) is that the time passes swiftly. Here it is August and it hardly seems to me summer has begun, except for the temperatures and the crowds of people.

August has always been special as that last month before school starts again, though most places begin now in mid-to-late August. It is the last chance for families with children to travel and spend vacation time together.

In August the flowers are blooming, peaches are ripe and watermelons are plentiful. Corn on the cob is a favorite with backyard cookouts.

Summer birds are active in early morning and late afternoon but take it easy in the mid-day sun. Some birds begin to migrate southward, but most will wait a little later to begin that journey. People, too, seem to want to take it easy in August. In most countries in Europe, August is

FAVER

Photo by Bill Faver

the month for vacation.

R. Cambe Miller has written some lines about August:

*Fairest of Months! Ripe Summer's Queen
The hey-day of the year
With robes that gleam with sunny sheen,
Sweet August doth appear.*

This little poem reminds us we're in the midst of summer and all it has to offer us. I've not thought of August as the "hey-day of the year" exactly, personally reserving that for April or October, but I can understand the meaning. It is somewhat of a milestone, a richness of fruiting, a lull before the harvests of fall and the changing of another season.

Robert Burns gives us some good advice about August and any other month:

*Come, let us stray our gladsome way
And view the charms of nature,
The rustling corn; the fruited thorn,
And every happy creature.*

What better time to take his advice than the month in which "sweet August doth appear"?

N.C. LEGISLATURE, 1993 An Entertaining Session Ends

BY PETER HANS

It's Friday, July 23, 1993. As the final 24 hours of the 1993 legislature session turned from morning to afternoon to evening and back to morning again, a surreal atmosphere enveloped the Legislative Building.

Tousled hair, loosened neckties, popcorn spills, fraternal friendliness, and snoozing on the yellow couches were the norm. When the sun rose, many legislators had already left in search of airplane flights or decent slumber. Major pieces of legislation had been passed during the night, often with little or no debate, as the products of last-minute deals and power posturing. Somehow this strange scene really isn't out of the ordinary—if you consider it in the proper context.

Legislators, just like the out-of-state business "buffaloes" so popular with headline-hunting governors these days, respond to incentives. In the case of the 1993 "long" session of the General Assembly, widespread fatigue and even a bit of homesickness didn't seem to suffice. Despite attempts to wrap up legislative business by the first of July, the end of the month came amidst seemingly endless wrangling about a host of important issues.

Only the prospect of jetting off to San Diego, for a conference of state legislators, finally motivated lawmakers to adjourn. That's why the 1993 session might best be characterized as "hurry up and wait"—or, perhaps more accurately, "wait and hurry up."

You can only understand the N.C. legislature by knowing its personalities. Issues matter, of course, but this is politics and you can't follow the game without a scorecard:

■**The freshman class.** Fifty-three legislators entered the hallowed halls this year, nearly one-third of the 170-member body. Some first-timers adopted the deferential "sit-here-and-don't-speak" mindset of stereotypical freshmen. Others were more vocal, such as Sen. Leslie Winner (D-Mecklenburg), Rep.

Richard Moore (D-Vance), Rep. Robin Hayes (R-Cabarrus) and Rep. Gene Arnold (R-Nash).

■**House Speaker Dan Blue (D-Wake).** Now here is a man who makes up his mind. Blue suffered early from bad press when he gave two of his staff members 25 percent pay raises but recovered in time to file gubernatorial veto in the round basket despite Gov. Jim Hunt's best lobbying efforts. He demonstrated a similar stonewall resolve on the lottery (against) and universal health care (for), a characteristic either to be admired or maligned depending on your point of view.

■**Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight (D-Dare).** Blue's counterpart across the hall fared well by most standards. He won accolades for his behind-the-scenes push to review campaign finance statutes, expand the open meetings law and lower the blood-alcohol driving limit.

■**Sen. George Daniel (D-Caswell).** Basnight's profile was somewhat overshadowed by statewide-aspirant Daniel. He seemed to spark a controversy-of-the-week and overextended himself by sponsoring a health care bill, the lottery, workers' comp reform, and a costly new judicial district for his home county all while chairing the Senate Appropriations committee. Daniel's enemies began predicting his demise, but in the words of one senator, "anyone who can raise a quarter of a million dollars for a legislative campaign isn't dead yet."

■**Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker.** The much-touted fight between Senate Democrats and Wicker never quite materialized. His modest but affordable plan to pool small businesses together to boost their health care purchasing power won widespread support.

■**Republican legislators.** Senate Republicans are a collegial bunch whose small numbers and years on the back row have taught them to pick their battles. A generational and philosophical divide splits the House

GOP caucus between "young Turks" led by Minority Leader David Ballmer (R-Mecklenburg), moderates who occasionally vote with the Democrats, and old hands who are generally content to act grumpy and eat candy at their desks.

■**Gov. Jim Hunt.** Wilson County's favorite corporate attorney/farmer found the legislature to be a different animal than it was in his first two terms. Lawmakers are more independent and willing to criticize the chief executive. In one poignant moment, Rep. Martin Nesbitt (D-Buncombe) made candid remarks about how the governor "cornered" legislators into approving a \$35 million auto training center.

Yet, despite the glitches, Hunt's agenda (child-care programs and reshaping the state's industrial recruitment policies) was enacted largely intact. The bottom line for Hunt and his legislative liaison, Jim Phillips: We may not have a fan club, but we got what we came for.

All in all, it was a session without a defining theme. Much of what happened was predictable: Lobbyists holding wine-and-cheese receptions, the Capital Press Corps occasionally ruffling the ink-sensitive feathers of legislators, visits from Vice President Al Gore and the UNC-Chapel Hill basketball team, a mostly ignored efficiency-in-government study, and the traditional display of colorful golf-course clothing. Let's hope next year's short session will be as entertaining.

Peter Hans is research fellow at the John Locke Foundation, a Raleigh-based public policy think-tank.

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Vic Gillispie lives at Holden Beach, in the beautiful South Brunswick Islands of North Carolina. Living on the beach affords Vic an inexhaustible supply of scenery for his coastal, lowland and marine art paintings.

All of the seasons are exciting at the coast, but none more exciting than the beach season, which runs from as early as Easter to as late as the beach festivals the latter part of October.

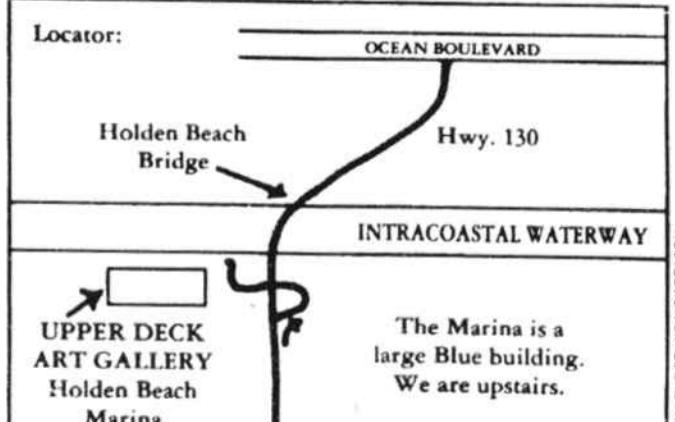
Vic's new painting invites you to get a cup of coffee and enjoy an early morning at the beach. The Beacon says, "The fish are biting!"

With his love of the outdoors and a desire to preserve some of the beauty we often take for granted, Vic has created paintings for Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited, the N.C. Oyster Festival, Hospice, Museum of Coastal Carolina at Ocean Isle Beach, Boy Scouts of America, U.S. Open King Mackerel Tournament, South Brunswick Islands King Classic and Homes for the Homeless. His paintings are included in museum, corporate and private collections all over the United States.

Vic uses egg tempera, dry brush watercolor and acrylics to create representational paintings of the places he loves. His work is represented by Upper Deck Art Gallery at Holden Beach on the Intracoastal Waterway.

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