



# The NEW BERN MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
IN THE HEART OF  
EASTERN NORTH  
CAROLINA  
5¢ Per Copy

VOLUME 3

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, MAY 20, 1960

NUMBER 8

We couldn't help feeling sorry for the unhappy jurors who were summoned to serve during the civil term of Craven Superior court this week, listening to the terrifically dull doings that inevitably dominate a civil calendar.

Thanks to Perry Mason, who sees to it that there are no moments of monotony on his popular television program, some citizens may get the notion that it's fun to have a ring-side seat when His Honor raps for order.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Admittedly, the criminal calendar does have a bit of entertaining testimony now and then for the morbidly curious, who take a sadistic delight in watching less fortunate humans squirm in misery and embarrassment.

Murder trials are always assured of a good audience, but even these grim proceedings play second fiddle to the sure fire attraction that a case involving sex affords. Robberies, unless the defendants are prominent, don't cause much of a commotion.

But when it comes to civil cases, often centering around property disagreements, there's less than nothing to keep a bored jury awake. Who, except the parties directly concerned, can get excited over the place a property boundary should be?

As if the subject matter itself isn't dull enough, it becomes even duller when couched in legal language that is as far over the head of the average juror as the star on a Christmas tree is from the grasp of a fascinated tot of two.

Having sat in boredom as a newspaper reporter at some of these trials, we're firmly convinced that the twelve men and women in the jury box are bewildered more often than not. Yet, it is to their remarkable credit that they usually come up with the right verdict, if the case gets as far as a jury decision.

We're all in favor of the jury system. It is one of the fundamental privileges that a Democracy guarantees us. However, it is doubtful that the trial of involved civil cases—packed with technical terms and statistical data—is a matter for juries to wrestle with.

The presiding judge, if worthy of his office, is far more qualified to rule on the right and the wrong in such instances. His wisdom may not surpass that of each and every juror, but through training and experience he has the capacity to absorb the facts and govern himself accordingly.

Getting back to Perry Mason, we wouldn't be at all surprised if Solicitor Bob Rouse of Farmville breathes a little prayer each night that Perry will stay out of his judicial district.

As things now stand, the Solicitor—or District Attorney—does right well in Craven Superior court. He loses a case every now and then, but think what a nightmare it would be for Bob if he lost them all, as do those prosecutors who are forced to match wits with this Mason fellow.

Unfortunately, justice moves at a rapid pace only on television. It moves fast enough on the Perry Mason show to get all the drama in, and still leave plenty of time for commercials. By contrast, the snail's pace of a real life courtroom scene is enough to drive everybody to distraction.

All of which contributes to the countless delays, continuances and discarded suits that plague the courts of North Carolina, and every other court in America. Under the present system, there doesn't seem to be a satisfactory solution.

Haste makes waste, you've often been told, and nothing as serious as a trial should be skimmed over.



SPRING SERENITY—"I'll yearn not for the rolling plain, or mountains to the sky, as long as I can know the joy of rivers flowing by." New Bernians are a lucky lot to have

scenes like this at their very doorstep. Following in the photographic pattern of his camera-talented parents, John R. Baxter, Jr., caught this view for a Mirror mural.

## New Bernians Take Collapse Of Summit Talks in Stride

Nikita Khrushchev's insulting tirade against Ike and the United States in Paris this week came as no surprise to New Bernians interviewed by The Mirror in a sample survey here.

Without exception, those queried gloomily admitted that they have felt for months the summit conference was doomed to failure. What did startle them appeared to be the suddenness with which the Soviet premier lashed out.

"I knew he would come out swinging with both fists," a typical citizen reasoned, "after that plane incident gave him a perfect propaganda weapon. What I didn't figure was just how soon it was going to happen after the bell sounded."

Serious though the matter was, many local citizens obviously shrugged it off as "just one of those things". Perhaps it was a case of whistling passing the graveyard, but such individuals seemed to be more annoyed and disgusted than they were frightened by the turn of events.

Despite the general pessimism here, there was agreement in all quarters that Ike's trip to Europe should have been made. "The world is too small for this or any other nation to draw itself within

If you had to choose between slow dragging justice and fast speeding justice, you would be better off with the former.

As for jury duty, no New Bernian should try to dodge his or her responsibility. Even so, we're glad we weren't imprisoned in that jury box this week.

a shell," one New Bern woman told us. "We've got to face the music, even though the notes are sour."

The consensus of opinion in this peace-loving city by the Neuse and Trent is that the United States bungled the spy episode rather badly. Chief complaint heard here stemmed from the way the story was officially distorted, before the truth had to be admitted.

"It's sickening," one New Bernian said, "when the rest of the world gets the impression that our nation is trying to pitch another nation a curve. It wasn't the spying that damaged our prestige necessarily, but the way we trifled with the truth."

Those interviewed by The Mirror this week had no illusions about the prevalence of spying among all nations. "Khrushchev's indignant and holier-than-thou blasts against the United States aren't very convincing," a mild-mannered but well-read little old lady told us. "There are bound to be spies everywhere nowadays, and it would probably scare us out of our wits if we knew how many Communists there are working at Cherry Point, Camp Lejeune, Fort Bragg and other military bases."

Among other things, the verbal attack that President Eisenhower was subjected to when he arrived in Paris brought sympathy from even his bitterest critics here in New Bern. Like members of the Senate and House of Representatives in Washington, local citizens forgot for the moment that they are overwhelmingly Democratic in their politics, and sided with the Republicans in what they considered a non-partisan situation.

Although the events in Paris could hardly be termed a step in the right direction for world peace, none of the New Bernians queried said they thought this particular uproar would bring the threat of war closer to inhabitants of this woefully disturbed globe.

As one man put it—"There's a lot to the old proverb that a barking dog never bites. You can say as much too about a couple of tomcats quarreling on a backyard fence. As long as the situation remains in a talking stage, there's always a chance to avoid actual war."

If war should come, and with it the probable passing of all peoples from the face of the earth, New Bernians are convinced that it will occur accidentally. "No nation," they say, "would be foolish enough to start a war deliberately, but a slip up can be just as disastrous."

Time and again, as we made our sample survey, a New Bern citizen would tell us that the plane incident of recent days over Russia could have triggered such a war. "Supposing," a teen-ager reasoned, "that the Communists had figured the plane was carrying an atomic or hydrogen bomb. They wouldn't have waited to start an attack of their own, especially if those in authority lost their heads in the excitement."

Such were the sentiments and the reactions here, as the summit conference came to a sudden and bitter end. Most New Bernians apparently felt that President Eisenhower did about all that could be done under the circumstances. It was generally agreed that Khrushchev's demands for an apology from the President, plus guaran-

teed punishment of those connected with the spy incident, had been suggested simply for maximum propaganda effect.

Everyone locally agreed that the dramatic happenings of recent days were well covered by the press and television. Never before, perhaps, has the public been better informed on a news story that vitally concerned it.

Summit conference or no summit conference, the doings abroad didn't slow up political candidates in these parts. Scrambling hither and yon, like a bevy of June bugs exploring the wonders of a watermelon rind, they were smirking and working from early morning until late at night.

Charges and counter-charges were being hurled openly and privately, but for the most part there wasn't nearly as much smearing and mud-slinging showing up on the surface as has been the case in some of the campaigns waged here in the past.

Whether a last minute flurry might change this remained to be seen. However, voters aren't quite so easily swayed by such tactics as they once were. They aren't overly concerned over one candidate's personal dislike for another candidate. And, no matter who wins, they won't expect wonders when he goes into office.

It has been a rather disconcerting week in many respects, but Dame Nature did her best to help matters. As she always does in due season, she made May as glorious as ever. Even if the summit conference got called off, we're glad that Spring wasn't cancelled, in New Bern and the world at large.