



BEACH PROMOTION—Drawing a bead on festivities planned for May 8-16 is George Green, chairman of the North Carolina's Feast of the Pirates at Wilmington. With Green is Queen of the Pirates, Susan Casper. The public-participation, beach promotional activities are expected to draw large crowds to Wilmington area beaches.

State Troopers Have No Alternative But To Speed

RALEIGH—Why the high speed chase? The question is frequently asked of State Highway Troopers and other law enforcement officers who drive at high speeds on the streets and highways of North Carolina to apprehend law violators.

According to State Highway Patrol Commander, Col. Edwin C. Guy, the answer is a simple one. "There is no reasonable alternative," he says, "unless, of course, we are prepared to turn our streets and highways over to the lawless element in our society."

In the opinion of the patrol commander, people who become irate and curse police when a high speed chase ends in tragedy should ask themselves a number of questions. Why is the guilty driver trying to outrun the pursuing police car? Who is this person who is willing to risk his own life, the lives of his passengers and the lives of other motorists to avoid arrest—usually at least on the surface, for a minor traffic law violation?

Guy lists some of the possibilities:

(1) The fledgling driver who is afraid of being "grounded" by his parents if he gets a "ticket."

(2) The youngster trying to prove his maturity by being immature—who wants to boast to his friends that he outran a "cop." (He seldom does).

(3) The problem driver who knows that one more conviction on his driving record will cause him to lose his license.

(4) The driver who has had his license suspended or revoked because he has already proven that he is a menace to other drivers on the highway.

(5) The psychotic or drinking driver who simply thinks he can outrun anything on the highway and get away with it.

(6) The person driving a stolen car.

(7) The criminal who knows that arrest and identification will lead to charges more serious than the traffic offense.

Critics of the high speed chase invariably ask, "Why doesn't the police officer simply get the license number of the offending vehicle and make the arrest later, or radio ahead to set up a roadblock?"

"It isn't that easy," Guy says. "Getting a license number is difficult in a high speed chase situation and, more importantly, it doesn't establish the identity of the driver. We can't arrest a car. We must know the driv-

er. Regardless of the seriousness of the offense, if we trace a license number to an owner who refuses to admit troopers and other law enforcement officers who drive at high speeds on the streets and highways of North Carolina to apprehend law violators.

"With regard to the roadblock, the officer who sees the offense is frequently miles from assistance by other officers and, since he is already in contact with the offender, he is the obvious person to make the arrest. Another consideration is that roadblocks are not without danger to the responsible motorist."

The patrol commander contends that "the really important thing that critics of the high speed chase don't consider is that if we establish a speed—be it 75 miles an hour or 100 miles per hour—at which we will stop pursuing, then the law violator will drive above that speed, knowing that he will be allowed to escape and avoid arrest and prosecution."

Guy suggests that the decision to become involved in a high speed chase is not made by the police officer. "The officer doesn't want to chase, but he is sworn to uphold the law. The decision to flee is made by the law violator. He is the one the public should blame when a high speed chase ends in tragedy."



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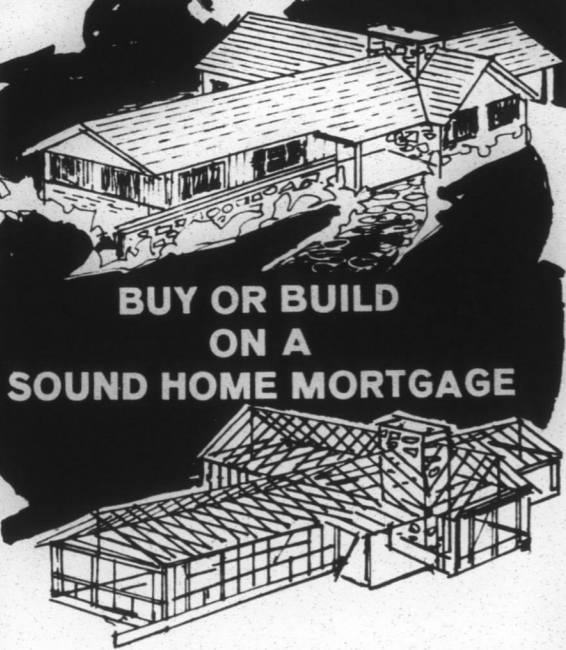
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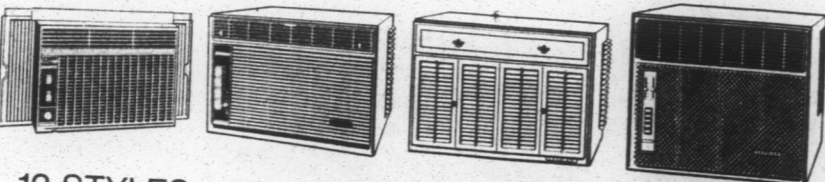


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