

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

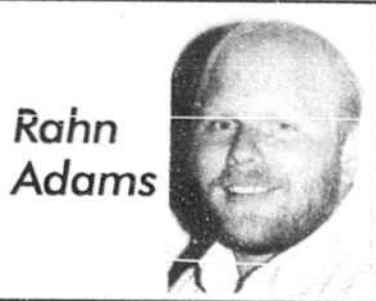
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## Thank Goodness, Someone Tries To Keep Me Honest

I've always enjoyed receiving letters from readers, as long as they have nice things to say about what I've written. That's only natural. Anyone—even a lowly journalist like me—would rather get a pat on the back than a kick in the seat of the pants.

But for the past couple of weeks, I've been getting mail here at the office from a thoughtful critic who apparently is determined to keep me honest in my occasional babblings about political issues. While I don't always agree with his positions, I appreciate his attempts to show me the errors of my ways of thinking.



Rahn Adams

I am, after all, a prolific letter-writer myself. If I have a choice between talking to an old friend on the telephone for a few minutes or spending a couple of hours writing them an eight-page letter, you'll find me banging away on the typewriter until the wee hours of the morning. My wife fusses at me sometimes, because I often labor over letters and then never get around to mailing them.

I've also zipped off a letter or two in my time to well-known folks who I'm sure couldn't have cared less about my opinion or praise or plea for advice. Being a frustrated novelist in what little spare time I have, my favorite targets for "fan letters" are famous authors whose works I admire. I'm proud to say that my writing has been read by some of the world's greatest authors' secretaries.

The authors themselves may not write back, but at least I get a cheap thrill out of "chatting" with them for an hour or so at my typewriter; mailing the letter, with that instant of regret as the envelope drops into the out-going mail slot; and expectantly checking the post of five box every day for several weeks, like a child waiting for delivery of the secret decoder ring he bought with six cereal box proof-of-purchase seals.

My new pen pal, however, not only writes me letters, but he also sends me books, newspaper clippings and copies of letters he writes to other newsmen. Ordinarily, I wouldn't comment on most of the work-related mail I receive, but the last line of my friend's latest "carbon copy" letter to me is well worth sharing: "Journalists learn how to write and be ignorant at the same time." Sure did catch my attention.

Even though the correspondence itself wasn't addressed to me, I've got to admit that what little hair I have left tried to bristle when I read that closing sentence. I can take being called a "dirty, rotten, two-faced, yellow-bellied, egg-sucking so-and-so"—as I was called the other night on the telephone, in so many words—but I draw the line at being called "ignorant." Misinformed, maybe. But not ignorant.

Whether I've always been successful at it or not, I feel as though a good newsman should operate much like a camera and simply serve as an instrument to record as clear a picture as possible of whatever news event he is covering, whether it's a heated county commissioners' meeting or a tragic traffic accident or a knock-down, drag-out political race. The trick is being able to keep the camera lens in focus.

I mentioned politics again because my friend—a conservative Republican and ardent Jesse Helms supporter—takes me to task just about every time I write something positive about Democratic candidates or negative about Republicans in this column. What incited his latest round of letters were my recent remarks about Democratic U.S. Senate candidate and local District Attorney Michael Easley's "Clean Campaign Commission" proposal.

In that particular column, I noted that Easley should forget the commission and just buy himself a pair of elevator shoes to lift himself "out of the muck Helms will be raking" in the U.S. Senate campaign, assuming Easley can defeat former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gant and other pretenders for the Democratic nomination. I based that comment, in part, on what I saw happen in the 1984 senate campaign between Helms and former Gov. Jim Hunt.

Besides being the most expensive political campaign up until then, the '84 race was an embarrassment to the state, and both candidates were to blame. Although I'd like to see some solid proof, my pen pal maintains that Hunt started the mud-slinging match and then let the news media do his dirty work, while Helms was honest enough to pay for his own negative advertising.

"Add to which the history of political campaigning is replete with negative campaigning, smears and gratuitous personal attacks," my pal wrote. "Where were you when the Democrats were running against Sen. Goldwater? And where were you in my college journalism school when the professors had nasty things to say about Sen. Robert Taft every day?"

To answer those two questions as honestly as possible, I was a five-year-old kindergarten student in Zion, Ill., when Barry Goldwater lost the 1964 presidential election—and I didn't lose a wink of sleep over it, by the way. I don't rightly know where I was in the 1940s when Taft—known as "Mr. Republican," according to my encyclopedia—was building a conservative mold in Congress for Helms to fill 30 years later.

But I do know my whereabouts in the fall of 1986 when Democrat Terry Sanford defeated Republican Jim Broyhill in that year's senate race. Negative campaigning wasn't an issue in that election. As I recall, the turning point in the campaign—at least where my then undecided vote was concerned—occurred during a statewide televised debate.

I know where I was in the fall of 1988 when Republican George Bush did a lot of talking about furloughed murderers in Massachusetts and water pollution in Boston Harbor and "a thousand points of light," which ended up being equal to the number of holes that the GOP blew in Democrat Michael Dukakis' reputation. Of course, the press also took more than its share of potshots at Dan Quayle.

And I know where I was a few months ago when two researchers from a marketing firm associated with Helms spent hours going through back issues of *The Brunswick Beacon* to dig up everything they could find about Easley and his wife, Mary. Seems to me that if we journalists are so ignorant, a better place to have found some cold hard facts about our district attorney's performance would have been at the Brunswick County Courthouse.

But then, what do I know about politics? I just write about the subject every so often to keep from feeling left out at mail call.

# The Hurry-Up-And-Relax Syndrome

As I've said several times before, it's no easy task coming up with a sizzling hot topic for my column week after week.

Many thoughts bubble up from the recesses of my mind as I rack my brain each week and try to come up with something that will keep the readers asking for more.

As I racked away last week, the one thing that kept popping into my head was the humorous notion of how some people run themselves ragged all day long just so they can make time to relax when the day finally comes to an end.

You know the type. They cram 16 hours worth of work and play into an eight-hour time span just so they can go home at night and collapse and watch television programs about no-nonsense cops.

I think my inspiration came from a recent article looking back at some of the devices invented for the sole purpose of saving time—such

Doug Rutter



as microwave ovens—and predicting some of the time-saving devices that may be invented by the year 2000, when the average American could have eight hours of leisure time to kill each day.

I'm not the type of person who crams two hours of living into one hour. I usually stay even with Father Time, getting exactly one hour's worth of life out of each hour.

I'm not sure, but this whole "Hurry Up And Relax Syndrome" may have started with fast food. Fast food has been around for a

good while, and for many years it was fast enough for everyone concerned.

But alas, as the years went by, fast food wasn't fast enough for some people. So the fast food restaurants added drive-through service.

This is for people who don't even have the time to go into the restaurant and order the burger and fries. Heck, some of them don't even have time to stop the car to eat. They eat and drive at the same time.

Speaking of driving, car phones take the cake. These things are supposed to save time for people who drive a lot. The idea is these people can conduct business while they're stalled in traffic. Personally, I don't like car phones.

The last thing I want to see when I'm driving down the highway is the person in the next lane talking on the telephone. People tend to get involved in telephone conversa-

tions, and the next thing you know, there's an accident.

Except in a very few instances, car phones are unnecessary. President Bush and Batman should have car phones, and maybe Donald Trump. Everyone else can stop at a phone booth as far as I'm concerned.

A couple of months ago, a salesman called and asked if he could mail me some information on car phones. In no uncertain terms, I told him that I wasn't interested.

But afterward, I wished he had sent me the information so I could see his angle on selling these things. I bet the car phone brochure has a picture of a dashing three-piece-suit corporate executive type cruising down the street in a Mercedes with a phone held to his face. He may even be munching on some fast food picked up at a drive-through window.



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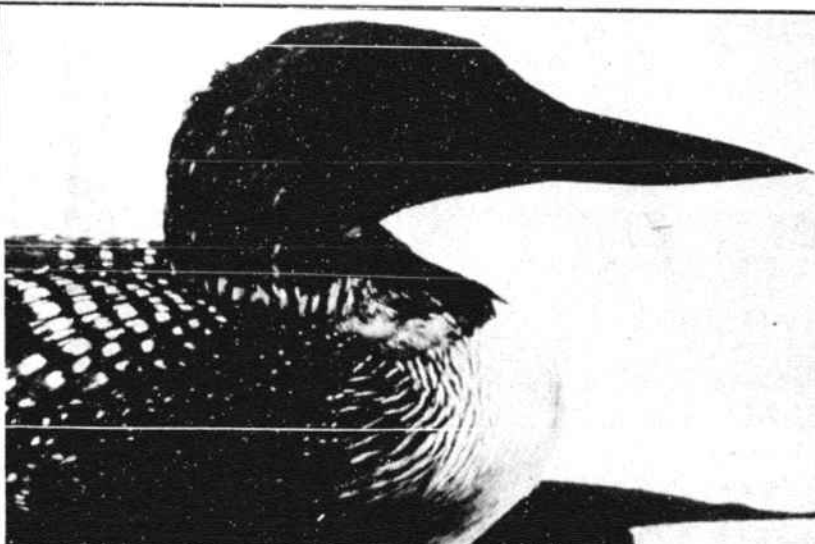


PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

THE COMMON LOON winters along our coasts, but we don't hear the famous cries.

## No Cries For Us!

BY BILL FAVER

Those of us who remember the movie, "On Golden Pond," several years ago will probably remember the cry of the loons. Their cries penetrated the summer quietness of that special place. We have the loon during the winter months, but we don't get to hear their cries when they are along our beaches. We do get to watch their swimming and diving abilities as they disappear under a wave and emerge some good distance away.

The Common Loon is about the size of a goose, 28 inches to 30 inches. It has a short neck and a large, heavy body. The bill is pointed and the head is dark with a whitish ring around the neck. Up close you can see the red eye. Upper parts are dark gray in winter and are black and white, almost a checkered pattern, during breeding season. Underparts are white in both winter and spring plumage. On the water, loons appear almost submerged, with only the head and neck above water.

The bird is a strong flier that can take off only from the water. Since its legs are set so far back to aid in swimming, it can hardly walk on land. Many people see loons unable to walk and assume the birds are injured, but once back in the water they can navigate freely. Loons nest and breed on freshwater lakes and rivers on the northern edge of the United States north to Labrador and Newfoundland. Winters are usually spent on salt water along the southern coasts.

Loons appear in our area toward the end of October and are with us sometimes until May, depending upon the weather. They dive for food and eat fish, crustacea and some water plants.

The cry we don't hear is a yodel-like laughing sound, given frequently in early morning and at night and before a storm. The cry carries far over the water and is one of the most unusual sounds we find in nature. Get to know the winter loons even if they have no cries for us. You may decide you will want to visit them in Maine or somewhere else during the summer to hear them in their best voice!



FAVER

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR More Public Parking Needed At Holden

To the editor:  
In regards to the article in the Beacon on March 8, I don't think Mayor Tandy or the commissioners have any time to pussyfoot around, either.

I think it's high time if the "South Brunswick Island" of Holden Beach is going to be promoted as a great vacation place for people everywhere, the mayor and commissioners should open their eyes to the fact that people don't want to park under the bridge at the waterway and carry chairs, coolers, etc. across a busy highway in 95 degree or hotter weather.

I don't know what kind of public parking places Ocean Isle or Sunset Beach have, but three cheers for Long Beach! Ride up there and count their public parking places on the ocean side. We did!

We bought a place at Holden Beach "across the waterway," of course, since not everyone can live on the island with half of it closed, unless you have loads of money.

I think the real estate agents should stop selling inland property to people unless they tell them first, "You're not wanted on the island."

We brought our 7-year-old handicapped grandson to see the ocean,

rolled his wheelchair across Ocean Boulevard from under the bridge, up the walkway and that's as far as he could go. I think a ramp for the handicapped would be nice; just a short one would do.

We bought a place at Holden Beach because we brought our children there for 20 years for vacation because it was a nice family place with no alcohol sold.

But things have been going down for the past several years and now alcohol is sold on the causeway and other places; the next time the likes of Diane and Hugo come along, look out, Holden Beach, God may not leave you standing.

I think they should spend some of the tourists' money and buy some lots for public parking.

Another thing, not everyone can go to the east end of the island—I meet people from the west end up there all the time. How about a guard house up there to tell the west-enders to stay on the west end? It would amount to the same thing.

As for the immobilizers on people's cars, in my book you can spell that dirty. Keep that up and you'll have no tourists.

Mildred Miller  
Germanton

## Emergency Services Woefully Inadequate

To the editor:  
The board of directors and members of the Calabash Volunteer EMS wish to thank you for your most-informative and well-researched column by Susan Usher, March 8, regarding the problem of "non-emergency" calls that plague the volunteer rescue/EMS services in Brunswick County.

It brought the fact that emergency services in Brunswick County are woefully inadequate to the attention of your readers. In an emergency situation, the best the present squads can offer is Basic Life Support. In our area, 39 percent of the patients we see are older than 64 and are suffering from various chronic ailments.

With a population such as this, all squads are kept busy servicing emergency situations and are no longer able to handle transports to home or other facilities. In the Calabash and Sunset Beach areas, our calls to date have increased 55 percent over last year.

As the column stated, families and nursing homes should provide transportation for doctor and hospital appointments to the people they care for and not depend on local squads for transport.

M. Riedinger, President  
Calabash Volunteer EMS  
Board of Directors  
K. Morfit, Chief  
Calabash Volunteer EMS

### WRITE US

The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. The Beacon reserves the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to The Brunswick Beacon, P. O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.