

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## IT'S SPRING!

### The Kites Are Calling

It's spring. I can tell not just because of the pine pollen and the peach blossoms, but because of this incredible urge I've had for about two weeks.

I want to fly a kite, to send a bold, shining missile streaming aloft, straining hard at the line in its quest for independence. To see it bob and duck and swoop toward the briars on wings of wind only to curl back once again toward the sun, climbing, climbing with careless ease. Such trust, such reckless abandon. Such bravado.

Let all the kids in the neighborhood watch in envy; they just might get a turn at the string.

No problem, you say, just go to the closet and dust off last year's model and head for the open field behind the house.

Believe me; I tried. We own a kite, or last we did last year. A light, bright thing we picked up at a shop one Sunday afternoon. But this year...The roll of kite string's up in the hall closet right where it belongs. But no kite—anywhere. And this was a standard model, too big to dismiss with a shrug and say The Borrowers must have taken it.

I've been checking and so far I've found two boxtop-type offers for free kites with the right number of UPC codes and cash register receipts. By the time the order's in the mail, spring could be over.

This urge may linger on unsatisfied, for how can one justify buying a kite when such modern necessities as a new telephone, new shoes and a calculator that spews out numbers on paper are already on the want list?

But then again, why not put that kite at the top of the list? After all, flying a kite on a sunny afternoon in spring nurtures the soul. It brings out the child, the wonderer, in all of us. It helps make us new again.

We all need occasionally, as a poet once wrote, to "slip the surly bonds of earth" and reach out and almost touch the face of God.

Please, go fly a kite...and invite me along.

Susan Usher



# I Missed The Chance Of A Lifetime

How often does one have the chance to get something for nothing?

Not very often to be sure. In fact, it's been said nothing in life is free. But if that's the case, I think I've been about as close as anyone can come to getting something for nothing, or at least being offered something for nothing.

A few weeks ago, I received a letter from a company selling vacation timeshares in North Myrtle Beach. All I had to do to win two fabulous gifts was respond within 48 hours and show up for a 90-minute courtesy tour of the resort.

Some of you may have received a similar letter. And some of you may have even gone after your prizes. Me, I passed up this opportunity of a lifetime.

Frankly, I've heard horror stories about these 90-minute courtesy tours. I've heard some of these places are like prisons. You're locked up until you buy whatever it is they're selling, and then you're let out on good behavior.

Doug Rutter



The grand prize, according to bold type on the front of the letter, was a five-day Florida vacation for the entire family. Sound too good to be true? In this case, I think it was.

On the back of the letter, in much smaller print, was the fact that the entire family is limited to two adults. Not such a great family vacation any more is it?

If you can, picture a mommy and daddy waving to their children as they pull out of the driveway destined for the Sunshine State. "Sorry kids. Maybe next year. Don't worry though, we'll bring plenty of photos and mouse cars back from Disney World."

The trip to Florida was for anyone who visited the resort on a weekday and completed the tour. In addition, each person is given the opportunity to cash in on another prize.

My "unclaimed merchandise" as they called it was listed near the bottom of the front page. You'll never guess what they had waiting for me. Give up. OK, it was a traditional elegant five foot grandfather clock.

Is that tempting or what? That would have looked great next to the coffee table we made out of scrap lumber that littered Holden Beach following Hurricane Hugo.

Actually, that grandfather clock wouldn't have been safe with me around. I could picture myself smashing the glass door on the clock with a basketball two days after getting it in my home. I know, Mom always said don't play ball in the house.

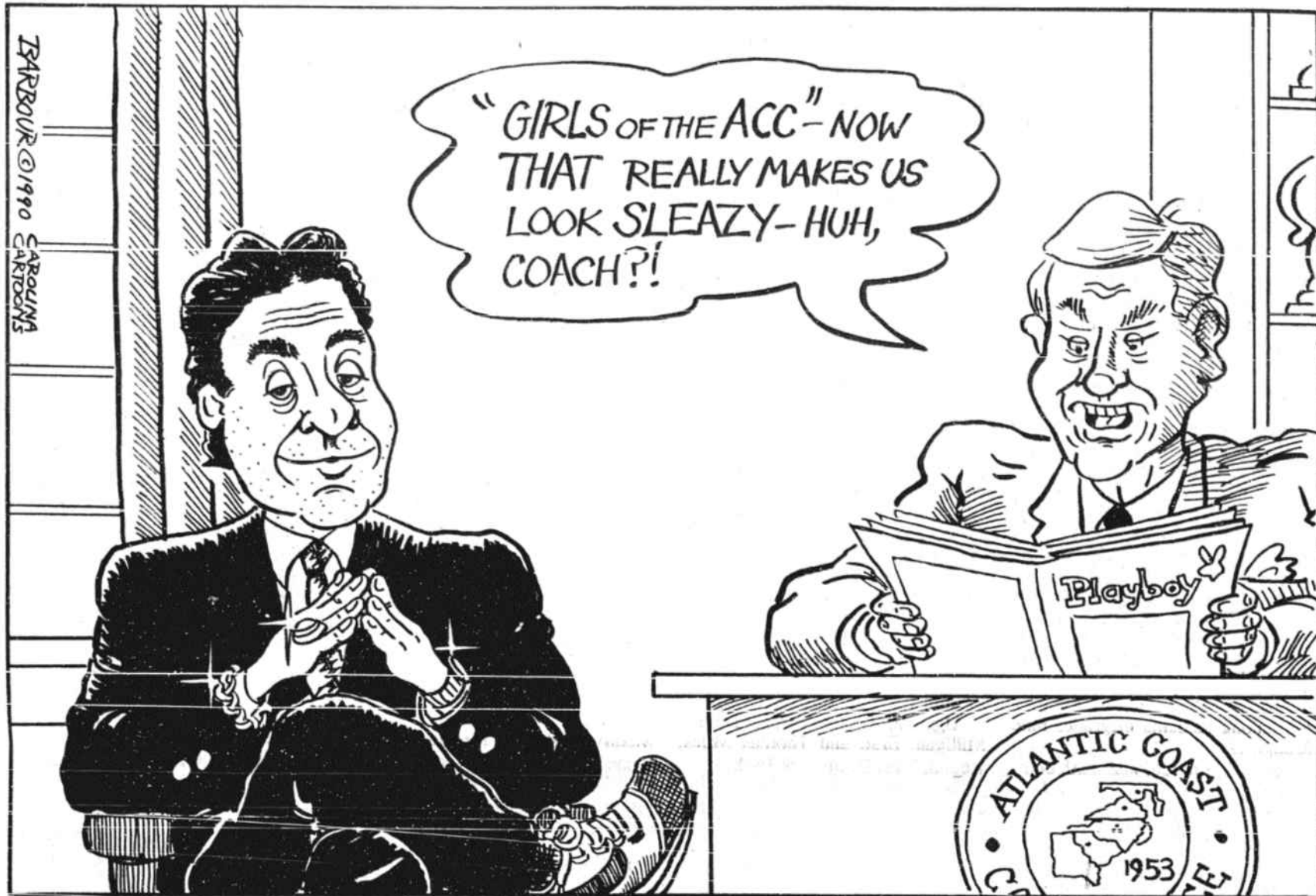
My name and merchandise was listed right under a listing for Claycamp from Spanaway, Washington,

and right above Johnson from Northfork, Virginia. Claycamp picked up \$1,295 in cash and Johnson won a color television. Those are real prizes, much better than a grandfather clock.

From what I've heard about some of these operations, though, all of the prizes are usually less valuable than the gasoline you burned driving to pick them up. For all I know, this grandfather clock could have been made out of tin foil.

When it comes right down to it, I don't think I would have won anything even if I had called these people, shown up at the resort and survived the 90-minute courtesy tour. I didn't even meet the eligibility conditions.

Even if I passed as a credit-worthy individual, which is questionable, and lied about meeting the minimum annual income requirements, I think they would have nailed me when it came time to prove my identity. They had me listed as Mrs. Douglas Rutter.



## Country Helps Those In Need?

BY JESS PARKER, Brunswick County Veteran Service Officer

I am proud of my country. It may not be perfect, but it is the best one I know. How many times have those statements been repeated?

This country helps those in need. Just observe what is happening in the world. Communist-controlled governments are folding, and the United States is expected to bolster the economies of the new regimes.

In many instances, this government seems compelled to send a billion here, a billion there, and food or technology somewhere else. That is great, but, as Paul Harvey would say, "This is the rest of the story."

There are some veterans who are in trouble with the VA because out-of-pocket medical expenses are more than annual income. The excess money needed for survival comes from family, church or lending institutions, but the government considers it income and reduces benefits which, in turn, creates a larger problem of survival for the coming year.

Case in point: A veteran and his wife have a fixed annual income of \$8,864 which is combined Social Security and VA benefits. According to the VA, that is a total cap of income.

The veteran and his wife are cancer patients and their medical expenses, after insurance, are \$10,134. The math is simple—they have spent more than their annual income and have not bought any clothes, paid the light bill or been to the grocery store.

Now the VA wants to know the source and the amount of the extra income. When it is reported, the benefit will be cut to the cap level of \$8,864; thereby creating a larger amount needed from family and church for the coming year. The lending institution has refused any more cash advances. When the larger amount is reported the next year the benefit will be cut again.

The couple in question are not dead beats. They worked over 30 years, built a home and had a nice little nest egg for retirement years. But then cancer struck. The wife used the nest egg, the veteran used the proceeds from the home, and together have been reduced below poverty level. Their plight is not the exception; it is becoming a rule.

But this is a great country which helps those in need. Ask the Europeans, Asians and Central Americans!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Next Victim Of The Speeder Could Be A Child

To the editor:

I am very angry as I write this letter. I live on Village Point Road across from the Methodist Church. This evening three adults and three children watched a dark car come flying down the road and run over someone's little hound dog.

The insensitive moron didn't even stop and see if they injured or killed the poor thing; they just went on.

I've seen so many dogs and cats killed in this section, I've lost count. What really worries me is there are 12 children living in this small stretch of road. And some of them cross over to the church to ride skateboards.

Even though the person only hit an animal, what's to say next time it won't be a child?

If a law enforcement officer could sit on this stretch of road just one day he would probably use his pad of tickets up by the end of this shift.

What I'm trying to say to the people who use this stretch of road is, for the sake of the children and animals, give us a break!

C. J. Wilson  
 Shallotte Point

### Dunes Need Time, Man's Assistance

(The following letter, addressed to the mayor and town council of Sunset Beach, is printed here at the writers' request.)

While visiting our house at Sunset Beach this past weekend and earlier in the year, we were pleased to see the sea oats had been planted at the dune line to help secure the dunes after Hugo's destruction.

We have been equally dismayed that most people don't seem to realize the fragile nature of this effort and walk right over planted areas. We were wondering why the city has not posted notices advising visitors to show care.

It's our opinion that public no-

tices should be displayed on the causeway leading to the beach, at all public parking areas and access points, and along the beach. Lastly, all rental services and realtors should provide visitors and renters a form announcing this effort. We're certain most people would respect the integrity of this effort and lend their support. It's also a way of teaching visitors something about the fragile nature of the barrier islands.

Please give serious attention and action to this or programs you may already have in place. Everyone (owners, residents and visitors) should be made aware that this island was fortunate because it was not overly developed, and though we lost large areas of our dunes, the natural system worked in its natural state. It now needs time and man's assistance to rebuild itself.

As leaders of our island, it is your responsibility to do whatever it takes to make this effort successful.  
 Joe and Jere Sonderman  
 & Family, Charlotte

### Some Get In Stew About Its Origin

To the editor:  
 I recently read this and thought some of your readers may have some comments to share. Anyway, it promotes Brunswick County.

**Brunswick Stew? Origin**  
 "Some claim it originated in Brunswick County, Virginia. Others claim it hails from Brunswick, Georgia. But because Bobby Q. Pig is a Tar Heel, we cling to the belief it was first developed in Brunswick County, N. C."

James M. Gaddy  
 Asheville & Holden Beach

## 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.

# A Tribute To People Everywhere Who Talk Funny

Spring is almost officially here, and business folks are scurrying about getting ready for the new tourist season, and plans are already being made for this year's fall festivals in the South Brunswick Islands. It's going to be a busy summer.

I grew accustomed to living in a tourist environment long before I became a Brunswick County resident about three years ago. No, I didn't move here from Myrtle Beach, S. C., or Gatlinburg, Tenn., or anywhere in the state of Florida. I used to live in Valdese.

If you've been a Beacon subscriber over the years, you probably remember reading about this tiny western North Carolina town in these pages. I mention the place from time to time, and I recall reading a column that former Beacon editor Marjorie Megivern—now associate editor of our Island Living supplement—wrote about Valdese eight or nine years ago.

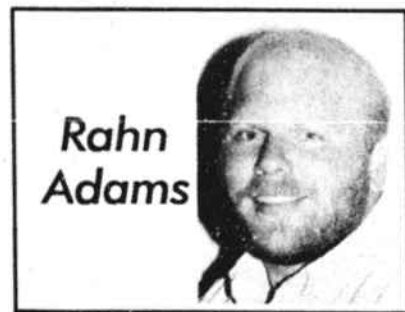
Not long after that particular issue rolled off the press, Marjorie became the most talked-about newspaper columnist in Valdese for at least a week or two. I know, because I lived in Valdese at the time and was a writer for the town's weekly newspaper, The Valdese News. I didn't appreciate having an

out-of-town columnist steal my thunder.

Before I give you the wrong impression, let me say that I like Marjorie and that I'm waiting with bated breath to read her upcoming Easter issue of Island Living. Marjorie, in fact, can be either thanked or blamed for bringing me to Brunswick County. I met her a few years ago at an awards banquet in Raleigh, and she told me that the Beacon had an opening for a writer.

As she and I sat next to each other at the banquet table, I didn't realize that Marjorie was the columnist who had written a highly unflattering piece about Valdese several years earlier. She and her husband, a religion professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, had driven six hours to attend Valdese's Waldensian Festival, and they were disappointed to find out that the celebration was little more than a town-sponsored flea market, as most festivals are.

I wish I had known Marjorie back then, so that I could have shown her around Valdese and helped her better understand the town's heritage and introduced her to some of the fine Waldenses whose French-Italian ancestors settled the Burke County town in the late 1800s. They moved there from the Cottian Alps of Italy, where they had suffered re-



Rahn Adams

ligious persecution.  
 A few months ago I looked up Marjorie's old column in the Beacon library and had a good laugh in reading it again. I've been meaning to tell her that she probably would have enjoyed her visit more if she and her husband hadn't unknowingly booked a room at what was then one of the most ill-reputed motels in the Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area.

She also didn't take to the traditional Waldensian sport, boccie, a court game similar to lawn bowling. I have participated in the Waldensian Festival's boccie tournament and can truthfully attest that boccie is every bit as exciting as the N.C. Oyster Festival's oyster-shucking championship or the Holden Beach Festival By The Sea's horseshoes competition. To each community its own.

But I guess what initially stunned

me the most in Marjorie's column were her remarks about the Valdese outdoor drama, From This Day Forward, which depicts the story of the Waldenses' struggle for religious freedom in Italy and their emigration to America. Like many make-ends-meet productions of its sort, the Valdese drama went through some lean years in the early '80s, and as could be expected, the quality of the production dropped.

Marjorie should have visited Valdese a couple of years earlier, when I was a cast member and got to play the two main bad-guy roles in the drama: a despicable French soldier who used the butt of his musket to kill a Waldensian baby in its crib and a grouchy Waldensian settler named "Mr. Perrou" who couldn't play a simple game of boccie without assailing his opponents.

It wasn't my acting ability that landed me the baby-killer and boccie-bully parts, even though that season's cast included several talented actors who went on to appear in network television productions and highly-acclaimed outdoor dramas like The Lost Colony at Manteo. I got the roles because I had been lifting weights for several months and looked like one mean body. They just wanted me for my body.