

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Campaign To Free Peltier Is Vicious

To the editor:

As chairman of the N. C. Chapter of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, I wish to call attention to the strident, biased, and inaccurate reports being used to attempt a serious miscarriage of justice. These efforts are part of a continuing campaign to free Leonard Peltier, convicted executioner of two badly wounded and incapacitated FBI Agents.

On June 26, 1975, shortly before noon, Special Agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler were on the Pine Ridge, South Dakota, Indian Reservation attempting to serve a felony arrest warrant on a federal fugitive. They were lured into a secluded area of the reservation by Leonard Peltier.

The evidence at the trial established conclusively that Peltier knew who the agents were and incorrectly believed that they were there to arrest him on an outstanding warrant for attempted murder. Driving his red Chevrolet Suburban, he stopped his vehicle about 200 yards ahead of the agents, got out, and opened fire. Peltier was soon joined by several of his associates. Between them, they riddled the agents and their vehicles with over 125 bullet holes. Both were critically injured by long-range fire. Peltier has admitted his participation in this gunfire on nationwide television.

The wounded agents were quickly surrounded and overwhelmed. Witnesses and circumstantial evidence established that the helpless agents surrendered. They were then approached by Peltier and two of his helpers. While pleading for mercy, both agents were executed at close range by one of the three using Peltier's rifle. According to the appeals court summary of testimony: (Williams was shielding his face with his hands)... "The murderer placed the barrel of his gun against

Williams' hand and fired. The bullet ripped through Williams' hand, into his face and carried away the back of his head. He was killed instantly... The murderer shot Coler, who was unconscious, across the top of his head. The bullet carried away a part of his forehead at the hairline. The shot was not fatal, however. The murderer then lowered his rifle a few inches and shot Coler through the jaw. The shell exploded inside his head, killing him instantly."

Peltier fled to Canada with his trophy of the day's events, Special Agent Coler's service revolver.

Peltier was tried, convicted and sentenced to serve two consecutive life sentences for murder in 1977. His sentences were appealed to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. His convictions were unanimously upheld by the Court of Appeals. He then attempted to appeal to the United States Supreme Court but his appeal was refused.

In 1982, Peltier brought a motion for new trial, alleging numerous charges of irregularities in his trial. Again Peltier was denied relief by the district court stating "...the record of the case as it presently exists conclusively shows Peltier is entitled to no relief." This order was then again appealed to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. That court again unanimously affirmed the district court. The United States Supreme Court again refused to accept an appeal. Recently, Peltier's attorney on April 8, 1992, filed a motion in this case on the basis that he should have been tried as "aide and abettor." The U. S. Attorney's Office in Fargo filed its response brief on April 23, 1992, contending, "It is time to put this case to rest."

In April 1989, a CBS news show, "West 57th," featured Peltier as a "political prisoner" and showed scenes from a Moscow Red Square Rally for Peltier. On Sept. 22, 1991,

the widely viewed CBS show, "60 Minutes," ran a segment, "The Last Sioux Brave," that portrayed Peltier as convicted on trumped-up evidence. Both programs treated Peltier as a hero and celebrity. In protest to the "60 Minutes" program, FBI Director William Sessions cited both the fairness of the trial convicting Peltier and the fact that the two murdered agents were legitimately discharging their duties when "...their deaths came execution style at point-blank range."

Actor Robert Redford is now leading a major Hollywood charge to free Peltier from prison. He has executive-produced and narrated a documentary, "Incident at Oglala," which is scheduled for release this month. Redford has commented (People magazine, May 4, 1992, issue), "This documentary is my creative effort for (Peltier's) cause."

The vicious campaign to free Peltier and make him a martyr cruelly desecrates the memories of these two fine young men and agonizes their families and friends. It also does a serious disservice to legitimate Indian causes and the real Indian heroes of this country, both past and present.

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Photo by Bill Faver

THE CLAPPER RAIL, or Salt Water Marsh Hen, is a chicken-like bird with strong legs and a long bill.

The Secretive Clapper Rails

BY BILL FAVER

One of the most secretive of birds moves almost motionless through the marsh grasses. The Clapper Rail, or Salt Water Marsh Hen, is a chicken-like bird from 14-16 inches long. It is grayish-brown in color, hen-like in appearance, and has strong legs and a long bill. A white patch may be seen under its short tail, if you see the bird at all! Underparts are slightly brown. Often the only evidence of this bird in the marsh is its loud "cac, cac, cac" heard late in the evening or when the bird is disturbed during the day. Birds are also noisy just before a storm. One bird can set off a chorus of others as the sound carries across the marsh.

Clapper Rails live in marshes from Connecticut to South Florida and on the West Coast. They nest on the ground in a clump of vegetation, usually at the highest part of the marsh. Nests can be a simple depression made of grass or a more elaborate construction using spartina leaves stuck in the mud and a runway leading

up to the nest itself. Usually 9-12 buffy eggs with brown spots are laid.

Rails live and nest at the mercy of the high tides and storms. A high spring tide can easily destroy a nest if the bird has miscalculated and eggs will float away and nests fall apart. Ground living also makes them very vulnerable to predators such as raccoons, opossums and cats. Hunters also value the marsh hen as a game bird.

Clapper Rails feed at low tide on the mud flats, looking for fiddler crabs, other crustaceans, mussels, snails and worms. They have been seen to shake a male fiddler crab until the long pincher claw falls off and then to consume it. Their habit of moving secretly between the clumps of marsh grass has helped give meaning to the phrase "thin as a rail."

These rails may be seen as they are forced into view by high tides or as they dart across mud flats from one grass clump to another. They will look at you with surprise and then go on about their business as if nothing had happened. You will be surprised when all at once a "cac, cac, cac" will sound and other birds will join in to remind you that you are not alone in the marsh, but share it with many other creatures.



FAVER

MORE LETTERS

PO Traffic Ruins Quiet Neighborhood

To the editor:

I have read with interest the many articles and editorials concerning the new post office. There is one other fact about the new post office which no one has seemed to notice except the residents and property owners of Seaside North. If you live in a private residential development, you better watch out because this can also happen in your community.

Seaside North is located directly behind the post office. The developers of this nice, quiet, private community asked all the owners to please sign a release so several lots could be used by the post office. This release clearly stated no access to the post office would be made from inside the development; all accesses would be made from Highway 904. Many owners signed this agreement and others decided not to sign. Regardless of what we were told, we no longer have a nice quiet community.

The only access to the post office, for the employees and the mail trucks, is if they use the first road in Seaside North (Gate One, S.W.). I live on that road. I am expected to pay street maintenance fees for the upkeep of that road and I am extremely upset.

No longer can children play in our development without parents worrying about them getting run over. It's no longer safe to ride bikes, walk or skate like we have all enjoyed doing in the past. Now we are awakened at all hours of the morning with trucks making mail deliveries and with the postal employees speeding up and down the street on their way to work and home again. Our property value has decreased because no one else wants to deal with the traffic and the noise either. However, if someone does want to live in this area, ride through Seaside North. You'll find lots of homes and lots for sale.

I personally asked the postmaster, Frank Bringoli, to see if the trucks and employees would please enter the post office by turning onto Gate One, S.W., from the Food Lion end. There is only one mobile home on that end and at this point no one is living in it. I told him I was just trying to make a bad situation a little easier to handle. Mr. Bringoli acted like I was asking for something totally outrageous and said a few cars and trucks shouldn't bother anyone. I doubt he would feel that way if the cars and trucks were driving up and down his street.

I am asking the postal employees

and anyone else who wants to drive down Gate One, S.W., consider the residents, slow down and if at all possible please enter and exit from behind the Food Lion. Remember, this could be your neighborhood.

Sheilah M. Harrell
Seaside North

Reader Agrees With Column

To the editor:

I was delighted to read Marjorie Megivern's column in the May 7 Beacon. I'm encouraged that someone else has the same thoughts I have when driving from Bolivia to Shallotte.

She expressed almost every thought I've had—except more politely. I have a list of names I say to people, wishing they could hear. I even think of putting a loudspeaker in my car so they will know what I'm saying about or to them.

I'm one of those who wish I could instantly "wish" myself someplace and be there instantly, and can't understand people who drive slower by 10 to 15 miles per hour than the posted speed limit.

Teddi Neal
Bolivia



New, signed and numbered, limited edition Art Reproductions by Bryan Varnam

Bryan Varnam has been creating romantic paintings for the past 20 years. He was born and raised in Varnamtown. As the son of a commercial fisherman, Bryan grew up on the waters of the Lockwood Folly River and Atlantic Ocean.

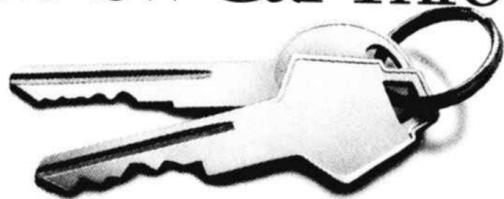
Above is his new 13 1/2x22 1/2 signed and numbered print of the Holden Beach Bridge, the first one featuring the high-rise structure in the traditional Bryan setting, \$45. Below is a dramatic 12x24 scene of the dunes and ocean which Bryan calls "West End." It is signed only, \$35. You'll love both of these prints.



Other signed and numbered, limited edition art reproductions by Bryan Varnam:	PRINT NAME	IMAGE SIZE	COST
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	Ocean Isle Bridge	12x16	\$35
	Ocean Isle Ferry	12x16	\$35
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