

THE DARE COUNTY BOARD OF REALTORS®

(1962 – 1973)

BY David Stick

Part 1 – Early History

Organized real estate activity was slow coming to the Outer Banks even though there were some big-time early property transfers. The first land granted by the Lords Proprietors of Carolina after they received their charter from King Charles II in 1663 was described as “the island heretofore called Carlyle now Colleton Island,” which they transferred to Sir John Colleton, a fellow Proprietor. Six years later Governor Samuel Stephens of Virginia received a grant for Roanoke Island; and about 1719 John Lovick acquired Ocracoke Island. But these were instances of property acquisition by wealthy individuals, with no resemblance whatsoever to what we know today as real estate activity.

The establishment of the town of Portsmouth on the Core Banks side of Ocracoke Inlet in 1753 figured more closely in the entrepreneurial pattern, since John Kersey, the owner of the land upon which the town was to be located, was to receive all of the proceeds from the sale of Portsmouth lots. In authorizing the establishment of the new town, however, the colonial assembly named five leading citizens of mainland communities to lay out Kersey’s fifty acres in half-acre lots with convenient streets, and then contract for lot sales with prospective purchasers. The initial price was twenty shillings per lot, and each buyer was required to build what was described as “a good, substantial, habitable framed or brick house or good substantial warehouse, of not less dimensions than twenty feet in length and sixteen feet wide,” within eighteen months of purchase.

The stringent conditions and covenants imposed on both the seller and the purchaser of Portsmouth town lots were typical of government involvement in land development activities throughout the colonial period. More often than not, before a property owner could get an act through the assembly authorizing him to establish a town, the enabling legislation would call for setting aside prime property for public wharves, a Town Common, and usually a courthouse and jail as well.

When North Carolina reached statehood, things changes dramatically, and by the time the first summer tourists began showing up at Nags Head in the 1830’s, the State allowed the property owner to do just anything he wanted with his land without worrying about government rules and regulations. As the south side Nags Head resort expanded, individual lots were transferred by metes and bounds descriptions. By the latter part of the century, however, the regular summer visitors became more interested in locating their cottages closer to the ocean, and the development activity became more. Lowe, who acquired property in south Nags Head from sound to ocean and platted it organized. One of the first to actually lay out a development was a man named John under the name of Lowe Hotel Lots. This is where the St. Andrews by the Sea Episcopal Church is located.

Possibly the first organized land development activity on Roanoke Island was west of Manteo in the early 1900s when John and Asa Evans laid out a subdivision of small lots they called Manteo Extended, though people soon began referring to it as California. By that time the invasion by northern sportsmen had begun, and large tracts from Currituck to Ocracoke were being put together for private hunting clubs. Sizable pieces of Outer Banks property still had not been claimed for private ownership, and as the demand for club property increased a few individuals began taking advantage of a State law that allowed a North Carolina citizen to file an application for a grant of unclaimed property. The grants were issued by the Secretary of State and the individual claiming the property was required to make a small payment for his new land, sometimes as little as fifty cents to a dollar an acre. In some instances local people got the grants, then sold the land to the northerners for their future hunting clubs. In others, since non-North Carolinians were not eligible for grants, a local individual would serve as the non-resident's agent, filing the claims and then transferring title to the wealthy out-of-stater. A classic example of this was when a man named Brisbane, with a Mrs. Gaskin of Hatteras as his agent, acquired more than a dozen different tracts between Buxton and Hatteras Inlet, including Cape Hatteras itself. That these Brisbane tracts, later acquired by the Henry Phipps family, contained miles of untouched ocean frontage, was of little note; the big push then was for more land for the private hunting clubs.

Part 2 – The Jersey Shore Invasion

Another change came in 1926 when two men from Asbury Park, New Jersey, Allen R. Hueth and Frank Stick, came to the Outer Banks on a fishing and hunting trip and fell in love with the place. As residents of the booming Jersey Shore, they envisioned the time when the little resort community at Nags Head could spread from Kitty Hawk to Hatteras, and they soon began buying up Outer Banks real estate. Among their earliest purchases was an ocean-to-bay tract which included Kill Devil Hill and the site of the first flights in a heavier than air machine by Wilbur and Orville Wright. Hueth and Stick subsequently sold the tract to Charles Baker and Susan Sutton, also resident of the Jersey Shore, to raise cash for other real estate activities. A condition of the sale was that Baker and Sutton were required to donate Kill Devil Hill to the federal government if ongoing efforts to have a memorial erected were successful. The oceanfront part of this tract, which extended north for nearly a mile from the Kill Devil Hills Coast Guard Station, was first developed as Carolina Shores, then changed to Kitty Hawk Shores. The undeveloped back part is now the site of the Kill Devil Hills town hall, beach library, First Flight schools complex, and the Baum Bay subdivision.

Hueth and Stick purchased another ocean-to-bay tract a mile or so north of Kill Devil Hill and began developing it early in 1927 under the name of Virginia Dare Shores. Associated with them in this venture was Captain Dan Hayman, a Kitty Hawk native, and the centerpiece of Virginia Dare Shores was a one hundred-foot wide avenue (as compared with the sixty foot-width of other streets in the development) named Hayman Boulevard. Virginia Dare Shores was laid out in blocks running 500 feet east to west and 200 feet north to south. Ocean Boulevard extended the length of the development, 250 feet back from the high water mark, and

Bay Avenue paralleled the shoreline of Kitty Hawk Bay. In time a long dock was built as the south side end of Hayman Boulevard, with two large buildings over the water on the south side of the dock. One of the buildings was used as an office, kitchen and dining room. The other, the pavilion, was designed for concerts and programs for excursions coming in by steamboat from Elizabeth City and tidewater Virginia, and for dances. There were two cement block cottages owned by the Virginia Dare Shores developers on the south side opposite the dock. In addition, one private summer cottage, also made of cement blocks using beach sand as the aggregate, was built adjacent to the proposed Ocean Boulevard. Known as the Weeks Cottage, it was the first summer cottage built north of the old Nags Head resort. And is still there, on the northwestern corner of the intersection of Virginia Dare Trail and Walker Street.

To stay at Virginia Dare Shores. We also came down at least once in the winter. For the 25th anniversary of the first flight, December 17, 1928, the Virginia Dare Shores pavilion served as headquarters for the commemorative festivities and banquet, and I had the thrill of meeting Orville Wright and of riding in the back of a pick-up truck from Virginia Dare Shores to Kill Devil Hill with Amelia Earhart Putnam, the famed aviatrix.

Not only was Virginia Dare Shores the first full-scaled planned real estate development on the Outer Banks, in a relatively short period of time it also became the first real estate failure. The total lack of roads and bridges for vehicular access to the Outer Banks was a known problem the developers took into consideration. The death of Allen R. Hueth by heart attack on the Kitty Hawk-Point Harbor ferry was something else again. And by 1929, when my father moved his family from New Jersey to Skyco on Roanoke Island, the great depression cast an ominous shadow over the future; Frank Stick had to give up on the Virginia Dare Shores venture in order to save what he could of his other real estate investments on the Outer Banks.*

*NOTE: Frank Stick emerged from the depression retaining only a one-quarter interest in his Croatan Shores subdivision in Kill Devil Hills, and a tract in Salvo which he donated for the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, the proposed ocean park he had conceived and ardently promoted. In the process he lost his one-half interest in a large ocean-sound tract in Nags Head extending from just south of today's Village at Nags Head to below Jeanette's Pier; his one-third interest in a tract on Big Colington Island (now Colington Harbour); and other smaller pieces of property, from Duck to Avon, which in most cases were taken over by former fellow-investors from the Jersey shore, or were bought in at the courthouse door by local businessmen.

Part 3 – Bridge and Highway Access

The first Roanoke Sound bridge, in fact the first real bridge of any kind on the Outer Banks was opened to traffic in 1928. Built by Dare County and financed with county-backed bonds, the primary distinction of the bridge was that it connected sandy ruts at Nags Head with muddy ruts on Roanoke Island, for there was no road at either end. Two years later, a group of Elizabeth

City businessmen built the first Currituck Sound Bridge, connecting an oyster shell road at Point Harbor with a sand trail at Kitty Hawk. Only then did the State of North Carolina decide to build a road connecting the two toll bridges. Known as The Virginia Dare Trail, and constructed of asphalt from a plant on the east side of Jockeys Ridge, the new road opened for potential development fifteen and a half miles of prime oceanfront property between upper Kitty Hawk and lower Nags Head.

The builders of the Currituck Sound bridge, the Wright Memorial Bridge Company, platted an oceanfront area extending south from the bridge causeway and began selling lots in what they called Kitty Hawk Beach. There was still some movement in Baker and Sutton's Kitty Hawk Shores, and a little in Virginia Dare Shores. Over on Roanoke Island, meanwhile, William "Will" Griffin made an unsuccessful start toward the establishment of a completely new town on the north end of the island which he called Fort Raleigh City. Griffin had what was probably Dare County's first real estate office there, opposite the entrance to Fort Raleigh. At about the same time he laid out and sold lots east of Jockeys Ridge under the name of the Nags Head Development Company, while Theodore Meekins of Manteo was in the process of starting other developments in Nags Head and Kill Devil Hills. Meanwhile Frank Stick platted rows of lots on each side of Virginia Dare Trail north of Kitty Hawk Shores. He called this development Croatan Shores, and when he had difficulty selling the lots. Stick, a nationally known artist, turned his talents to designing, building, and then selling a succession of large Cape Cod type cottages which later became known as Millionaire's Row.

Other than the Dawson Brothers of Elizabeth City, who bought a tract north of old Nags Head and built their own cottages there as the nucleus of what soon became known as Dawsonville, the depression years following the construction of the beach highway saw comparatively little in the way of real estate activity. Then came World War Two, and suddenly people not only couldn't get gas to drive to the Outer Banks, but did they somehow managed to get there, everything was blacked out to guard against German submarine attacks. It was not the most prosperous of times for those in the real estate business.

Part 4: The Post-War Boom

The end of World War II saw the removal of restrictions on gasoline sales, a rush to turn out new automobiles in plants that had been converted back from tank to car production, and the beginning of the Interstate Highway system. It was time for Americans to hit the road, and the response in Dare County included the resumption of Paul Green's symphonic drama "The Lost Colony", and the resurgence in real estate activity as new developments appeared.

At the head of the pack once again was my father, Frank Stick. This time he acquired an option on a 2,600 acre ocean to sound tract north of the Currituck Sound Bridge causeway. For someone who had lost his one-half interest in more than a mile of ocean-to-sound property in south Nags Head because he was unable to pay off a fifteen hundred dollar depression-era loan, this was an especially bold move, for the terms of the option dealt with dollar figures previously unknown on the Outer Banks. To be exact, the agreed upon price was thirty thousand dollars for a four-mile stretch of barren beach, sand hills, wood, swamp and marsh.

There was a lawsuit over the option, and by the time it had been settled in my father's favor, the business climate had changed and several investors were ready to provide the thirty thousand dollars and start-up money in exchange for a stake in the development. The partners he chose were his son-in-law, John B. McMullan, and the Aydlett brothers, Elton, Cyrus, and Journey, all of Elizabeth City.

An early problem facing the Stick-McMullan-Aydlett partnership was what to name their new development. Since most prospective purchasers were expected to come from states to the north of Dare County, Frank Stick offered the name Southern Shores as a possibility. He wasn't especially sold on it, and neither was anyone else, but nobody came up with anything better, which is why the new post-war planned residential community at the extreme northernmost limits of the developing Dare Beaches was named Southern Shores.

In 1947 I left my job as a magazine editor in New York to return home and the following year joined my father in the effort to get Southern Shores started. With a friend of his named Bill Copping, we formed a company called Kitty Hawk Enterprises to develop Southern Shores, sell lots, and build houses for purchasers. The father-son working arrangement did not turn out well, and the following year I left the company and became an independent real estate broker.

At the time all you needed to set yourself up in the real estate business was to pay twenty-five dollars for a state privilege license. There was no requirement of any kind that you know anything about either real estate or business, and anyone suggesting adoption of a code of ethical practices would have been laughed off the beach. A couple of years later, however, a representative of the North Carolina Association of Realty Boards came to Manteo to discuss with real estate agents in the fast-growing resort area, the advantages of their forming a Dare County Board of REALTORS®. Everyone who had brought a state license to practice real estate was invited to the meeting, but only three people showed up: Ernest E. Meekins, and Alpheus W. Drinkwater of Manteo, and David Stick of Kill Devil Hills. With so little interest, the idea of establishing a board of REALTORS® was not pursued. However, Ernest Meekins saw sufficient advantages in having the word "REALTOR" listed after his name, so he signed up in a unique independent status, and for several years was listed in the roster of the North Carolina association as a "Member at Large".

The first Outer Banker to become a member of a Board of REALTORS® was William J. "Bill" Anderson, operator of a store at Kitty Hawk and owner of several cottages there, was involved in real estate was essentially limited to rentals of his own property. Anderson was accepted for membership in the Pasquotank County Board of REALTORS® in Elizabeth City. I was the second from the beach to join the Elizabeth City board, followed by Robert A. Young, W. C. Foreman and Harry C. Lawrence, all three now deceased.

My involvement with the North Carolina Association of REALTORS® came, ironically, not as REALTOR®, but as an author. At the annual meeting of the association at the Grove Park Inn, Asheville, October 17, 1956, I was one of the featured speakers, my subject being the history of real estate in North Carolina. Some day it may show up, but to date I have been unable to find a copy of that speech. Three years later, I again attended the annual meeting of the State association, this time in Pinehurst, and this time as chairman of the publications committee of

the State association. In that capacity I participate in the successful effort to get the legislature to pass the real estate licensing law and because of my involvement received license number 204.

By that time, the five Dare County REALTORS® in the Pasquotank County Board were beginning to wonder why we were driving more than a hundred miles to meet with other REALTORS® whose real estate business had little relationship to ours. An effort was made to broaden the scope of the Pasquotank Board and provide for alternate meetings between the Dare and Pasquotank Boards by changing the name of the organization from Pasquotank County Board of REALTORS® to Northeastern Board of REALTORS®, but the first time a meeting was held in Dare County, practically nobody from Elizabeth City showed up. It was then we decided to pull out of the association with Elizabeth City area REALTORS® and form our own board.

The Dare County Board of REALTORS

The charter for the Dare County Board of REALTORS® was dated November 163, 1962, with twelve men signing on as charter members. Half of them, Bill Anderson, Bill Foreman, Harry Lawrence, David Stick, Ted Wood and Bob Young, were transfers from the Northeastern Board. A seventh, Ernest Meekins, was an at-large REALTOR®. They were joined by five newcomers, Orrville Baum and Bill Fletcher of Kitty Hawk, George McGaw and Eddie Melson of Kill Devil Hills, and John Lawrence of Nags Head.

If some of us had anticipated that membership in our own board of the Outer Banks would prove to be a more worthwhile experience than it had been in Elizabeth City, we were soon disappointed. For the most part, meeting consisted of small talk, a tax deductible dinner, and little more. The Outer Banks was in the throes of the most massive changes in the history, with real estate activity at the core, but those of us who felt that professionals in the real estate field should be setting examples in planning for the future seemed to be frowned upon as radicals. It even took years to convince some of the new members that they should remove the words "Caucasian Race Only" from their rental literature.

After six years, only two others, Stockton Midgett of Hatteras and Ed Bishop of Currituck, had been added to the membership. There were still only twelve members, as a result of the death of Ernest Meekins and the resignation Orville Baum. Finally, though, the board members decided to do something in addition to just meeting, eating and talking. It was as much a move toward self-preservation as anything else; nevertheless, it was a progressive step.

By the time that all of us engaged actively in the real estate business on the Outer Banks had come to realize that a misunderstanding on the part of banks and other lenders was unnecessarily inhibiting our business activity. Probably because Cape Hatteras and the Outer Banks were names used as identification points when hurricanes were approaching the coast, all property on the Outer Banks seemed to be considered extra high risk when loans were being sought. We all acknowledged that anybody building right on the brink of the ocean was taking a big risk, and that low back-beach areas and soundfront property could be subject to flooding. But we also knew that a residence in the high northern point of Roanoke Island, or sheltered by

forests on the ridges in the Buxton Woods, or Nags Head Woods, or Colington, or Kitty Hawk, or Southern Shores, was no more subject to flooding than downtown Elizabeth City, or New Bern, or places like Crabtree Valley in Raleigh. We turned to Planters Bank for help in solving this crucial problem.

Part 6: The REALTORS® / Planters Bank Project

An important meeting was held Thursday morning, January 18, 1968, in the John Yancey Motor Hotel, Nags Head. Here are the minutes which I recorded as "Acting Secretary" of the session:

This meeting was called by the Dare County Board of REALTORS® in order to discuss with representatives of Planters Nations Bank and Trust Company problems concerned with securing mortgage loans in the Outer Banks area.

Present from the Board of REALTORS® were: George McGaw, president; Robert A. Young; Harry C. Lawrence; Herbert Bishop; David Stick. And from Planters National Bank were Archie McLean, president; James B. Powers, executive vice preside; William A. Breedlove, vice president; Jarmin Stallings, vice president.

Mr. McLean reported to the group that Planters Bank was in the process of establishing a full time mortgage loan department and was currently searching for a qualified individual to manage the department. He explained that the establishment of the mortgage loan department would enable Planters Bank to place packages of mortgage money with larger lending institutions and insurance companies, thus making it possible for Planters to handle with its area a considerably larger number of mortgage loans. He pointed out that one of the greatest deterrents to securing mortgage loan money in the Outer Banks area was the difficulty in getting adequate insurance coverage for property on which the loans were made.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed by all present that the difficulty in securing insurance coverage, and other problems which have hereto made it difficult to secure mortgage loans in the area, result to a large degree from a lack of understanding on the part of prospective lenders as to actual conditions on the Outer Banks. It was agreed that a first step in attracting large lenders to the area would be to have available factual information which would show, among other things, the large proportion of property in the area which is not subject to storm damage, the low incidence of mortgage foreclosures and resultant losses by lending institutions in the area in the past, and other similar information.

Accordingly, it was agreed that efforts would be made to conduct a detailed survey of these and other factors affecting mortgage loans, and to prepare a comprehensive, understandable and attractive prospectus which could be used by Planters Bank, the Board of REALTORS® or others interested in attracting mortgage money to the area. As a first step, those present agreed to assemble as much information as possible and meet again at the John Yancey Motor Hotel at 9:30 am., Friday, March 15, 1968.

Assignments were given for assembling the information. Stalling, the executive in charge of the area Planters Bank operations, was to make "a thorough study of the mortgage loan and foreclosure experience of Planters National Bank, and (its predecessor) the Bank of Manteo, in the Outer Banks area." Bishop was to secure the same sort of information from Albemarle Savings and Loan Association, and President McGaw was to name to other REALTORS® to secure comparable information from First Citizens National Bank and from Southern Loan in Elizabeth City. McGaw, Young and Stick were responsible for assembling "as much pertinent data as they can in the form of surveys, studies, and reports already compiled by various agencies and prepare recommendations on other data which would be needed for prospectus." Finally, Breedlove was to make contact with "the proper authorities at East Carolina University, and with a private firm which has done work of this sort for Planters Bank, to determine how they can assist in the preparation of the study and prospectus, and to get some idea of the costs involved."

In addition to coordinating the project as acting secretary of the ad hoc group, one of my assignments was to conduct the interview with executives of the First & Citizens Bank in Elizabeth City. Other than instances of estate settlement they could find only one case of loss of a building financed by them, and even then, I was surprised to hear, the balance of the loan had been paid off by the Red Cross.

At the follow-up meeting March 15th, the REALTORS® and Planters Bank people were joined by Tom Willis, director, East Carolina Regional Development Institute, and Dr. James H. Beardon, assistant dean, School of Business, East Carolina University. At that time it was agreed that the material we had assembled would be turned over to Beardon, who would conduct a professional study on the subject and prepare and publish a quality prospectus stating his findings. The cost, \$3,000, if I remember correctly, was to be shared jointly by the Dare county Board of REALTORS® and Planters Bank.

The Beardon report was a disappointment. Having gone through a rough draft, I got off a quick letter to Breedlove of Planters Bank, dated June 13, 1969, expressing the following concerns:

It contains numerous typographical errors which in my opinion lessen its effectiveness.

It relies entirely too heavily on work done by relatively unqualified employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Because Beardon did not submit it to qualified historians and local authorities before printing, its effectiveness is seriously negated.

Also, I feel he has failed to state obvious conclusions forcefully enough, and has

The only newspaper clipping I can find on the report is an article in the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, August 6, 1969, datelined Raleigh:

A study which will be release shortly by Planters National Bank and the Dare County Board of REALTORS® will claim that reports of hurricane damage on the Outer Banks have been greatly exaggerated.

Roy Sowers, chairman of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, said Tuesday that the study was prompted by the fact that insurance companies “tend to look with a jaundiced eye at Dare County regarding insuring property and putting long-range money into capital improvement.”

Sowers said the report was made with the cooperation of East Carolina University, which studied the number of hurricanes that struck the Outer Banks and resultant property damage.

“Damage is far less than most people think.” Sowers said. “And the study should make insurance companies look more favorably at Dare County.”

Governor Bob Scott described the report as “an example of private industry going to bat for the economic development of an area”

With the Beardon study in hand, the next step was for Planters Bank to arrange for a meeting with representatives of large insurance companies. It was scheduled, finally for Wednesday and Thursday, April 1 and 2, 1970, at the Carolinian Motor Hotel, Nags Head. Those of us representing the Board of REALTORS® on the project were anticipating this April meeting, considering it the final step in what had proved to be a drawn-out project. Then I received the following letter from Archie McLean, dated March 19, 1970:

Our meeting for insurance executives scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, April 1 and 2, 1970 at the Carolinian Motor Hotel at Nags Head has been canceled. We have received a very poor response from the insurance industry: therefore, we had no choice other than cancel the meeting.

Since Planters National Bank is a corporate citizen of our coastal community, we want to be a part of the total development of this area. The purpose of this meeting was to present factual data concerning insurance risks with structural property in Dare County. We also wanted to improve the lines of communication with the insurance industry and the interested citizens of the coastal area who are concerned with its total potential development.

I want to thank you personally for your interest in this subject and this area and to express once again, our keen disappointment that the program cannot be presented as planned.

Note: Planters Bank, of Rocky Mount, N.C. had acquired the Bank of Manteo in the 1950s. Later, Planters merged with Peoples Bank, also of Rocky Mount, to form Centura Bank.

Part 7: The Long Range Planning Program of the Dare County Board of REALTORS

My close association with the Dare County Board of REALTORS® ended formally in 1976 when I retired from the real estate business, but the years preceding that were filled with controversy. In 1969 I had served as a member of a special legislative committee that prepared the first draft of what later became the Coastal Area Management Act, and during the early 1970s I had become an impassioned spokesman for those favoring controlled growth on the North Carolina coast. Opinion pieces that I was writing for newspapers and magazines, and testimony supporting CAMA in public hearings, had branded me as a traitor in the eyes of many REALTORS® and others involved in the real estate business.

One day in the spring of 1973, the three active owners of Southern Shores Realty Company, Bill Fletcher, Julian Oneto and I, engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on what was happening on the Outer Banks. CAMA had not passed in the 1973 session of the general Assembly, but it was due to come up again in 1974, and a key element of the proposed law was the establishment of a Coastal Resources Commission to implement the act. If CAMA passed, the CRC would have broad powers to tell us in Dare County what we could and could not do with waterfront property. If CAMA did not pass, the federal government would be doing the same thing. Hadn't the time come, we reasoned, for the members of the Dare County Board of REALTORS®, the professionals in the real estate business, to take the lead in responsible land-use planning for the future? Bill Fletcher thought so, Julian Oneto, the newly elected president of the Dare County Board of REALTORS® thought so, and Julian came up with a plan.

Julian's plan was simple. If I would prepare a major speech on what I perceived to be the responsibility of REALTORS® in developing a long range land use plan for the Outer Banks, Julian would make certain that it was adequately covered by the news media.

Julian made the arrangement, and the March 21, 1973 meeting of the Board of REALTORS® was held at the Elizabethan Restaurant in Manteo with thirteen of the twenty-two board members present. The room was filled; however, for two radio stations had set up their equipment to tape my speech and several reporters and other observers were in attendance.

In the speech, titled "The REALTORS' Role in Shaping the Future of the Outer Banks," I asked the simple question: "In our quest for growth and so-called progress, is it possible that we are gradually destroying the very things which make us love the Outer Banks and attracted us here in the first place?" Instead of criticizing other developers, I admitted my own mistake, saying I had "developed lots which were too low, or too close to the ocean, or too exposed to the winds" and had filled swamps and dug canals that had affected the water table, and "destroyed the natural habitat of countless animals and birds which might have been retained if I had known

how to do it differently, or had realized that I shouldn't have done it at all." I then posed the following question:

Will those of us living on the Dare Coast, and specifically the REALTORS®, provide leadership in determining what the Banks are to be like in future generations?

Or will we continue sitting by while special interest groups, and agencies and agents of the federal and state governments, make the decisions for us?

I concluded the speech with the following:

I am a writer by profession and I have labored over the preparation of these remarks for a period of weeks. I did not do this to impress those who might agree with me, or further anger those who do not.

I did it because I am convinced that the day of reckoning is at hand. I did it because I hoped, if challenged this way, the REALTORS® of Dare County would respond with a sense of dedication for which they could always take pride; and I did it because I am convinced, if we do not act now, boldly and responsibly, we will in truth bring about the destruction of the very things which make us love the Outer Banks.

The resultant news coverage exceeded anything Julian had envisioned. The speech was reprinted in its entirety by several metropolitan newspapers and excerpted in others. Editorial comment, all favorable, appeared in papers as far away as Pittsburgh. A number of individuals wrote personal letters expressing approval. And all thirteen of the REALTORS® who attended the meeting and heard the speech vowed to take an active part in developing a long-range planning program for the Dare County Board of REALTORS®. The opposition did not surface until the next meeting of the Board of REALTORS®, when several of the eight board members who had missed the March meeting showed up *en masse* to criticize my speech and the board action in supporting the proposal. One of the most vocal objectors finally admitted that he had not even read the speech, but had heard all he wanted about it. The people at the headquarters of the North Carolina Association of REALTORS® in Greensboro weren't especially happy with it either, and especially that I had admitted mistakes by REALTORS®.

By that time, however, the Dare Board of REALTORS® under the guidance of President Julian Oneto was well along on developing its long-range planning program. A personal interview questionnaire had been written and printed, the interviews to be conducted by interested citizens of Dare County. Contact was being made through various civic and community organizations to line up volunteers who would conduct the one-on-one interviews. A printed set of guidelines explaining the long-range program of the Realty Board included the following:

Like numerous other areas throughout the country, Dare County is being subjected to tremendous changes which will not only affect daily life in 1973, but will also determine what the Outer Banks will be like for future generations.

Unlike other areas, however, the changes and growth here are taking place with almost total lack of coordinated planning for long-range objectives.

No one knows where we are going, because no decisions have been made as to where we want to go.

For this reason, the first step in the REALTORS®' program is to try to arrange a personal interview with every citizen of Dare County, with every student in the county's Junior and Senior high schools, and with every non-resident property owner to seek their individual views in arriving at a consensus on the subject. WHAT DO YOU WANT DARE COUNTY TO BE LIKE 50 YEARS FROM NOW?

Concurrently, the REALTORS® are assembling all available material from municipalities, county government and state and federal agencies on what has already been done in long-range planning, and on solving problems which have already come to light or can be anticipated.

When all of this material is assembled it is hoped that there will be some clear-cut answers to the following questions: 1. What do we want Dare County to be like in the future? 2. In what areas are we already working toward those goals? 3. In what other areas do we need to plan and work to accomplish the long-range goals?

It is in the quest of this information that the Dare County Board of REALTORS® is enlisting the assistance of organizations and concerned individuals throughout the county. It should be made clear that the ultimate goal is not for the Dare County Board of REALTORS® to prepare a long-range plan for Dare County and the Outer Banks, but rather to provide basic information and coordination in assisting appropriate government agencies in formulating such planning.

With Julian Oneto at the helm, the program had gotten off to an impressive start, and for the first time the Dare County Board of REALTORS® was being viewed as a progressive business organization dedicated to participating in guiding future growth so that the things we like most about the Outer Banks can be protected.

Then, suddenly, a catastrophe! Julian Oneto was involved in a tragic automobile accident in front of the Southern Shores Realty office. He was dead soon after arrival at the hospital. So was the Dare County Board of REALTORS® long-range planning project.

Part 8 – Postscript

With the death of Julian Oneto, those of us who had been working hardest on the long-range planning project, and on establishing a meaningful community role for the Dare County Board of REALTORS®, lost our enthusiasm and drive. I attended only occasional board meetings after that. I just wasn't interested in continuing to go to meetings that were primarily devoted to small

talk, a tax deductible dinner, and the exchange of inside information on how to make big bucks out of the Outer Banks.

Note: Things have changed. As of June, 1994, there were 379 REALTORS® and 42 associate members of the Dare County Board of REALTORS®, for a total of 421. Also, there is a question as to whether the monthly dinners are tax deductible.
