



West Craven Highlights

News From Along The Banks Of The Neuse



VOLUME 11 NO. 14

MARCH 31, 1988

VANCEBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

PHONE 244-0780 OR 946-2144

(UPSP 412-110)

25 CENTS

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Big Top, Big Fun, Big Show

Hundreds of circuses have come and gone since the mid-1800s. Circuses large and small, carried by horse-drawn wagons or on dozens of railroad cars, three-ring circuses and dog-and-pony shows criss-crossed the North American continent bringing entertainment to the public. Cole Bros. Circus remains as the only circus to have survived a century still appearing much as it did over 100 years ago, under the Big Top.

Since 1884, three generations of Americans have thrilled to the sights, smells, sounds and feats of skill that typify the Cole Bros. Circus.

The Cole story was begun by William Washington Cole (1847-1915). His "W.W. Cole's New Colossal Shows" (1884) were, as he stated, "Presented in a reputable manner by reputable people." With the most modern of the 19th Century equipment, and performances of the highest caliber, Cole achieved enormous success. In fact, when he died he left an estate of \$5 million — quite a sum in the year 1915.

Around the turn of the century, the name of the show was changed to "Cole Bros. Circus" and purchased by Canadian showman Martin Downs and his son, James. During the late 1920s, Cole Bros. Circus was owned and operated by Floyd and Howard King, winterquartered in Texas, and played extensively in the West. The King brothers brought Cole Bros. Circus to the frontier, scheduling appearances at military bases,



A congress of clowns take a break from rigors of the circus

mining camps and remote boomtowns.

The Great Depression nearly signaled an end to Cole

Bros. Circus, but for the faith and perseverance of two men highly esteemed men in circus lore. Jess Adkins and Zack

Terrell acquired the show and built it into a new circus that

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Board's Vote Triples Cost Of Engineer

Commissioner Forrest Argues Fee Changes 'Double Dipping'

One Craven County commissioner calls it "double dipping." But four other county commissioners approved a plan last week that will more than triple the retainer fee paid to an engineer hired by the county.

The engineer, Vernon Harris, will receive a minimum of \$33,360 a year in retainer fees alone under a payment plan approved by the county commissioners in a 3-1 vote. Commissioner Roger Forrest voted against the proposal.

The approved amount is more than three times the \$9,000 paid to Harris' former firm, Northstate Consultants. The commissioners voted last month to drop Northstate in favor of Colonial Engineering, Inc. Harris owns Colonial Engineering.

The commissioners approved the motion made by Vice Chairman Charles Potter to okay the fees submitted by Harris.

Forrest said the measure was "double dipping" and said the retainer fees are unnecessary. The commissioner said that in the construction budget for the Neuse River Water and Sewer and Northwest Craven Water and Sewer districts the fees for engineering work amounted to \$1,353,000. Forrest argued that the engineer was already being paid for his work.

Harris explained last week that the \$2,780 each month breaks

down into accounts of various water and sewer projects:

— A general charge to the county of \$1,150.

— A charge of \$990 per month to the Neuse River Water and Sewer District, with \$390 for the water project and \$600 for the sewer project.

— A monthly \$390 charge for Northwest Craven's water project.

— \$250 a month for work done on the county industrial park.

Harris said the \$2,780 is over and above normal commission he makes for work done on any specific county engineering project. The commission is figured on a percentage sliding scale suggested by the Farmers Home Administration.

Harris said the fees were justified because the money will cover his time spent on general services, such as attending and reporting the results of the board meetings of the various water and sewer district advisory committees, travel between New Bern and his home office in Raleigh and making applications on part of the county for state and federal grants and loans.

Harris said the former \$750 fee was set up several years ago when "there wasn't much going on."

The retainer fees, according to

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Northwest Advisory Board Recommends Dropping Retainer

Saying it does not need an engineer on retainer, the Northwest Craven Water and Sewer District Advisory Board voted unanimously last Thursday during a special called meeting to seek the removal of a \$390-monthly retainer fee for the water system's engineer from its budget.

The board is recommending the deletion to the county commissioners. The commissioners have the final say on the request.

A board member "disgusted" with the situation, Ray Matthews, resigned during the meeting. The water system has experienced several problems that de-

layed start up of the system.

The action followed on the heels of the approval last week by the Craven County Board of Commissioners of a proposal to pay over \$33,000 to engineer Vernon Harris' firm, Colonial Engineering, Inc. Harris owns the firm but previously worked for Northstate Consultants.

"We don't need an engineer on retainer," said acting advisory board chairman Bill Pappas. Pappas became acting chairman after former chairman Gray Lancaster resigned earlier this month to protest the rate schedule adopted by the county com-

missioners for the Northwest Craven customers last month. The rate schedule adopted was higher than customers were originally told during a bond referendum campaign.

"We don't need an engineer, especially Harris. The Northwest Craven board does not like Vernon Harris. We feel that he has misled us in the past," said Pappas. Members of the advisory board indicated that Harris deliberately delayed the operation of the Northwest water system.

"I'm pretty sure the commissioners (two of them are customers) want the same thing we want

and that is water as cheap as we can get it," said Pappas in a telephone interview Tuesday. Pappas said he felt local engineers could provide any work needed "just as good as Harris can do it."

Pappas said he had received support from residents about the advisory board's stand. "They are telling me to stick with it," said Pappas.

The controversy over Harris came to a head last week when the county adopted a fee proposal that more than triples the monthly sum paid to Harris for work with the county's four water systems.

Before leaving Northstate March 1, Harris earned \$750 per month. After starting his own firm, Harris' fee increased to \$2,780 a month, including the \$390 monthly fee to Northwest Craven.

Several of the advisory board members said they were not comfortable with the "coincidence" that the water system became operational about two weeks ago, shortly after Harris took over all the county's contracts relating to water systems.

Advisory Board member Keith Register said Matthews heard reports from employees of the two

companies hired to install the Northwest system that they were instructed to slow down pipe installation in Townships 1, 3 and 9.

Wells were drilled in October but customers did not get water until about two weeks ago, said Pappas. Harris said the delay was caused by state officials who denied approval of the operation of the two wells because of discoloration in the water pumped from the wells within the first minutes of being operated. The water was certified potable, but the color did not meet state guide-

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Dizon Pitches Eagles To 3-2 Win Over Pack

By JIM GREEN

Sports Writer

The opening Coastal Conference game Tuesday between West Craven and Washington featured a couple of firsts.

Tripp Leggett, who entered the game without a hit, slapped a single that scored Franz Holscher in the sixth inning. Derek Curtis, a sophomore right-hander who suffered a one-run loss at Bertie last Friday, pitched an inning of strong relief to hold the Eagles.

But has been the case in three other games, the Pack fell behind early, rallied but came out short.

West Craven scored all of its runs in the first three innings and held off Washington behind the four-hit pitching of junior southpaw John Dizon to take a 3-2 victory on the Eagle diamond.

Dizon was 0-2 before Tuesday's game, but he had pitched well in both starts against defending Class 2-A champion Greene Central, according to West Craven coach Tim Hardison.

But the left-hander didn't look like an 0-2 pitcher Tuesday. Mixing the fastballs and curves to keep the Pam Pack batters gues-

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Vanceboro's Charlie Lee Earns Eagle Scout Award

Charlie Lee was awarded the Eagle Scout Award recently at the Vanceboro United Methodist Church.

He is the 15-year-old son of Nelson and Linda Lee of Vanceboro. He is the grandson of Mrs. Lena Lee of Jamesville and the late Elijah Lee. He is also the grandson of the late Seaton E. Overton and Mrs. Mary Lee Overton Lilley.

Lee is a ninth-grade student at West Craven High School. Lee entered scouting at the age of eight as a Cub Scout with Pack 58. He earned the Arrow of the Light, the highest award a Cub Scout can attain.

At age 11, Lee joined Troop 58 of Vanceboro under the leadership of Richard L. Can-



Charlie Lee

non Jr. As a scout, Lee has served as scribe, patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader and is now senior patrol leader in his troop.



West Craven's Kip Bryan slides back into first base as Washington first baseman Derek Curtis takes the throw from pitcher Gary Hodges during the third inning Tuesday. (Jim Green photo)

Jobless Figures Improve

Craven, Jones, Pamlico and Lenoir counties joined a statewide trend that saw 94 other counties improve their unemployment rates in February, according to the Employment Security Commission.

Craven County's unemployment rate fell from 4.5 percent in January to 4.3 percent in February.

The county's February labor force was estimated at 30,520 with 29,220 working and 1,300 jobless.

Jones County saw its unemployment rate decline to 5.5 percent in February after reaching 5.8 percent the month before.

Jones County's work force totaled 3,990 and 220 of that number were out of work and 3,770 working.

The unemployment rate in Pamlico County fell from 10 percent in January to 5.6 percent in February.

Pamlico County had 260 members of its 4,620-strong labor pool unable to find work, with 4,360 employed, the commission estimated.

Lenoir County's unemployment rate fell from 5.8 percent in January to 5.3 percent in February.

There were 29,070 people in the work force, with 27,530 working and 1,540 without jobs.

The state's unemployment rate decreased from 5.1 percent in

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