

Star Wars At The Bar

High tech flunked an important test at 11:39 a.m. last Tuesday when NASA's space shuttle Challenger disintegrated 10 miles above the Atlantic, bringing home to us again the sad fact that the best laid plans of mice and men don't always work out.

In terms of human life, the loss was great. All six members of the crew and a school teacher civilian perished in the twinkling of an eye, almost as if, like the prophet of old, they walked with God and were not.

But, dramatic as it was, and deep as was the national grief in to which it plunged us all, it would have been considered minor had it been the crash of an airliner or troop transport, which often claim lives by the hundreds and barely make the headlines.

Nor, through the long corridors of history, could it be considered an unacceptable loss in human lives given in the quest of knowledge and exploration. For example, the search for the northwest passage to the Pacific bore a higher cost in human lives and suffering than all our space exploration to date.

It will be recalled that Sir John Franklin, after two attempts to survey the route by land during which he lost 11 of his 20-man crew, became icebound in 1846 with two ships and 129 men near King William Island and all eventually perished after much hunger and suffering.

A comparably-costly NASA venture would trap a large crew aboard a space station unable to return to earth then slowly running out of life-support supplies while backup crews on earth sought hopelessly to find and rescue them and television nightly relayed messages of the loss of this crew member and that.

That is the scenario we must avoid at all costs.

But, aside from the loss of life in the disintegration of the Challenger, there was another, perhaps more significant cost. The sort of credibility of high technology that such ventures as Star Wars demand. The Challenger disaster occurred while still under the control of the computer system manned by the ground crew.

The computer said everything was going just fine when, in reality, the shuttle was primed for a blowup.

That is an unacceptably high ratio of failure—one in five for the Challenger, two in 20 for the fleet of four shuttles if you count the ground fire in which Gus Grissom and his two colleagues died.

In situations such as Star Wars would demand, computers must be capable of handling as many as two billion transactions a second, of finding lethal warheads among thousands of decoys, of calculating speed and trajectory and timing retaliatory projectiles—all without error.

A one-in-a-thousand ratio of failure would mean disaster, not to mention such odds as two in 20.

So the whole defense program of the United States is brought back into question by the failure at Cape Canaveral. Are we going to continue to invest billions upon billions in research and development toward a system which, when the chips are down, might fail?

That is the real question posed by the destruction of the Challenger. And, whatever the answer, we hope politics can be kept out of the solution. We hope we have seen the last of such public relations flights as this one would have been.

The System And COA

During February North Carolina's 58 campuses are celebrating National Community College Month, thus joining with the other 1,173 public and private two-year colleges in the United States for the purpose of calling attention to the role they play in meeting the basic educational needs of the country.

And at mid-month these same 58 institutions will join with the public schools in observing North Carolina Vocational Education Week, during which emphasis will be put on improving the relation-

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Regulations Discussed

Chowan County Commissioners meeting in regular session last Monday evening heard public comments on proposed hunting regulations for the County. The number of interested persons made it necessary to convene that portion of their meeting in the court room. The new regulations will make it unlawful to hunt state maintained road right-of-ways and will regulate permission for hunting and carrying of hunting weapons on private lands.

In other business, the board:

- Heard a presentation on the proposed waterfront inn by Edenton Town Administrator Sam Noble. The board voted to back the concept.

- Approved extension of funding authority for equipment for Dr. William Blakemore through the Chowan Medical Development Authority until April 30, 1986;

- Reappointed members to the Board of Directors of Chowan Hospital;

- Approved a resolution submitted by the Town of Nags Head requesting display of USS MONITOR artifacts in north-eastern North Carolina;

- Approved a resolution submitted by the National Association of Counties in support for a lobbying

effort for the re-enactment of revenue sharing;

- Agreed to help finance two additional positions for the Edenton Fire Department;

- Approved a request from the Chowan Ruritan Club that they be assured the use of the Chowan Community Building across from Chowan High School in exchange for renovations done by the club;

- Scheduled a public hearing concerning upgrading the Chowan Beach area to be held at 9 a.m. on March 10;

- Scheduled a public hearing at 10 a.m. on March 10 concerning the proposed mobile home park ordinance;

- Approved an agreement with the DOT for rocking the parking lot at the new rescue squad building and for spot paving in the hospital parking lot;

- And approved a resolution recommending the splitting of District I of the Department of Transportation between DOT board members Earl Rountree of Gates County and Kenneth Roberson of Robersonville, the resolution to be sent to Governor James Martin and Secretary of Transportation James Harrington.

Women Host Luncheon

By Jack Grove

The Chowan County Democratic Women hosted the Executive Director of the state Democratic Party at a luncheon at noon Tuesday. The special guest, Ed Turlington, substituted for State Democratic Party Chairman, James Van Hecke who was called to Washington, D.C. at the last minute.

Invited guests included candidates for all of the local upcoming elections as well as representatives of the Edenton Town Council, Chowan County Commissioners, the School Board and area Democratic leaders, including Representative Vernon James of the N.C. House of Representatives.

Turlington told the group that he sees "a whole new attitude in the state," since the recent election setbacks the party has experienced. He said that for the first time ever, the state organization has a "young voter coordinator."

In mentioning the race for the U.S. Senate seat of Republican John East who is retiring, he said "we do have ten" (for the primaries). Turlington said, "Even though we have ten candidates, we sense that the atmosphere is different (from 1984). Let's talk about good news this

year and forget the Congressional Club."

He said that he felt like the Democratic Party would do well in replacing many of the Republicans in the state legislature.

Concerning state legislation, he said, "We did well in the legislature this year" specifically alluding to new bills affecting education. He cited legislation that improved agriculture and tax relief as well.

Concerning tax cuts, he said that if Governor James Martin had gotten everything he had wanted, "our calculations were that you could run the state government for about 55 minutes."

Turlington urged everyone present to actively participate in the party through precinct, district and state levels and to participate in the campaigns. "Remember that we retain great strength in this state," he said.

In a brief interview after the luncheon, Turlington responded to several questions. Asked if the public could expect televised round-table debates of the candidates such as the ones held for the gubernatorial primaries, he said, "I honestly don't know." He did express interest in such a

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E.C. Toppin



Wayne S. Rice

Sheriff Candidates Profiled

By Jack Grove

Editor's Note: This week we begin a series of interviews with candidates who have filed for local political office. It is designed to acquaint voters with the candidates and give the candidates an opportunity to share with the public their goals if elected.

We begin this series with the first two candidates of five who have filed for sheriff. The death of Troy Toppin left a vacancy in the office which was filled by the appointment of Glen Perry to complete the unexpired term. Perry previously announced that he will not be a candidate.

E.C. Toppin

E.C. Toppin was the first candidate to file for the sheriff's position. He and his wife Brenda reside on Rt. 1, Edenton and have

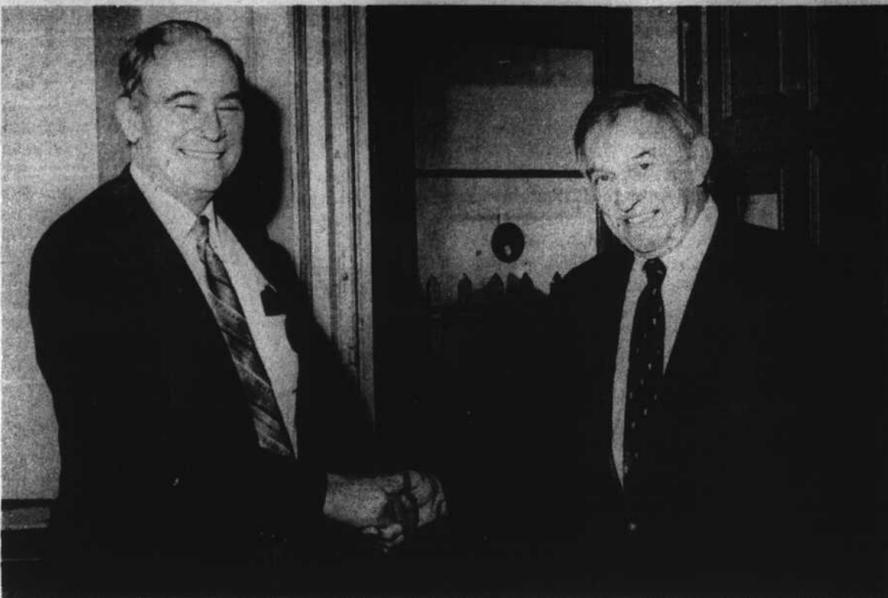
three daughters aged 9, 19, and 22.

Toppin, 43, a native of Chowan County, served four years in the U.S. Air Force. He is a graduate of Chowan High School and has completed 32 credit hours at East Carolina University.

Having never run for political office, he is a supervisor at Dennison Computer Supplies with 19 and a half years service to that company. He has supervised as many as 140 employees at Dennison.

An active member of American Legion Post 40, Toppin has twice served as its commander. He held the post of State Commander from 1982-83.

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DEMOCRAT FILES—R. M. "Pete" Thompson, well-known Chowan County resident, is shown being congratulated by C. A. Phillips, long-time Chowan County Commissioner. Thompson filed under the Democratic Party banner for a seat in the N.C. House Representatives. There are currently six contenders for two House seats in the Democratic Primary to be held May 6.

Thompson Declares For House Seat

By Rebecca Bunch

Edenton businessman R.M. "Pete" Thompson filed last Thursday as a Democratic candidate for the General Assembly from the First District. The two First District seats are currently held by Rep. Vernon James and Rep. Charles Evans. Evans recently announced that he would not be a candidate for re-election, citing family and business obligations.

Thompson has long been active

in local politics, and is currently serving as chairman of the Chowan County Democratic Party, a position he will have to relinquish.

When asked whether Evans' decision not to run was a major factor in his (Thompson's) decision to seek the office, he replied: "Certainly, that was something I took into consideration. But, actually, I had been thinking about doing this for a long time."

Thompson also indicated that he

did not intend to run an issue-oriented campaign, saying instead that, "The main issue, in my mind, is the need for continuing strong representation for Northeastern North Carolina from this district. We have been fortunate to have had that, with our two current representatives, and I would certainly like to see those efforts continue in the future."

A Pasquotank County native, he grew up in Weeksville. Thompson

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REPUBLICAN FILES—Shirley Perry (second from right) filed for the NC House of Representatives, First District, in Hertford Friday afternoon. Also shown are (l. to r.) Election Registrar Elizabeth Winslow, Wallace Nelson, Anne Carol White, Robert Powell and Barry McCarty. Checks were presented to pay the filing fee by Perquimans and Pasquotank Republicans.

Shirley Perry Registers For Legislature

By Jack Grove

HERTFORD—A group of Republicans descended on the Perquimans County Board of Elections office Friday afternoon. They came to take part in the filing of Shirley Perry for a first district seat in the N.C. House of Representatives. If elected she would be the first Republican to serve in the twentieth century from this district.

There are two representatives from the first district which comprises the following counties: Camden; Chowan; Currituck; Dare; part of Gates; Pasquotank; Perquimans; Tyrrell; and part of Washington.

The incumbents are Representative Vernon James from Pasquotank County and Representative Charles Evans from Manteo. Evans announced recent-

ly that he would not run again due to family considerations and to be able to spend more time building his law practice. James has filed for reelection.

There are now six Democrats vying for their party's approval. Last week, R.M. (Pete) Thomp-

son filed in Chowan County. The two highest vote-getters in the May Primary will join Perry in the November General Elections which will decide this district's representation for the next two years.

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Primary Filing Completed

Filings were closed at noon Monday for the May 6 primaries. A final slate of candidates can now be reported.

Candidates for sheriff include Democrats E.C. Toppin, Delvin Jethro, Wayne Rice, Norman E. Bunch, and Republican Fred Spruill.

The Clerk of Court's race pits incumbent Majorie H. Hollowell against challenger Marguerite B.

McCall.

For County Commissioner, Joseph B. Hollowell, incumbent, will face W. Carroll Smith; Clara Boswell, incumbent, has been challenged by W. David Ober; and C.A. (Al) Phillips runs unopposed.

The list of newcomers filing this past week is headed by R.M. (Pete) Thompson who has filed for the N.C. House of Representatives from the First District.

The School Board race has seen most of the new faces as a result of filings this week. They include Frank E. Cox, a resident of the Riverton section challenging James Taylor; Lois E. Jordan of 121 W. Peterson Street who will oppose Alice Jones; Thomas Issac Sharpe of 111 E. Gale Street running against J.M. Parrish, Jr.; and Paul Chappell of Tyner who has filed for the seat being vacated by Eugene Jordan and who will be unopposed.

COA Notary Course Scheduled

The Continuing Education Division of the College of the Albemarle has announced a Notary Public course to be held at John A. Holmes High School beginning on Tuesday, February 11. The course will be taught on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 10 with a registration fee of \$10 plus cost of book.

Registration will be during the

first two weeks, at the beginning of the class period. It will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. You will need your Social Security Number with you to enroll. Persons 65 and over may enroll free.

For further information, call John A. Holmes High School, 482-8426, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 10 p.m.