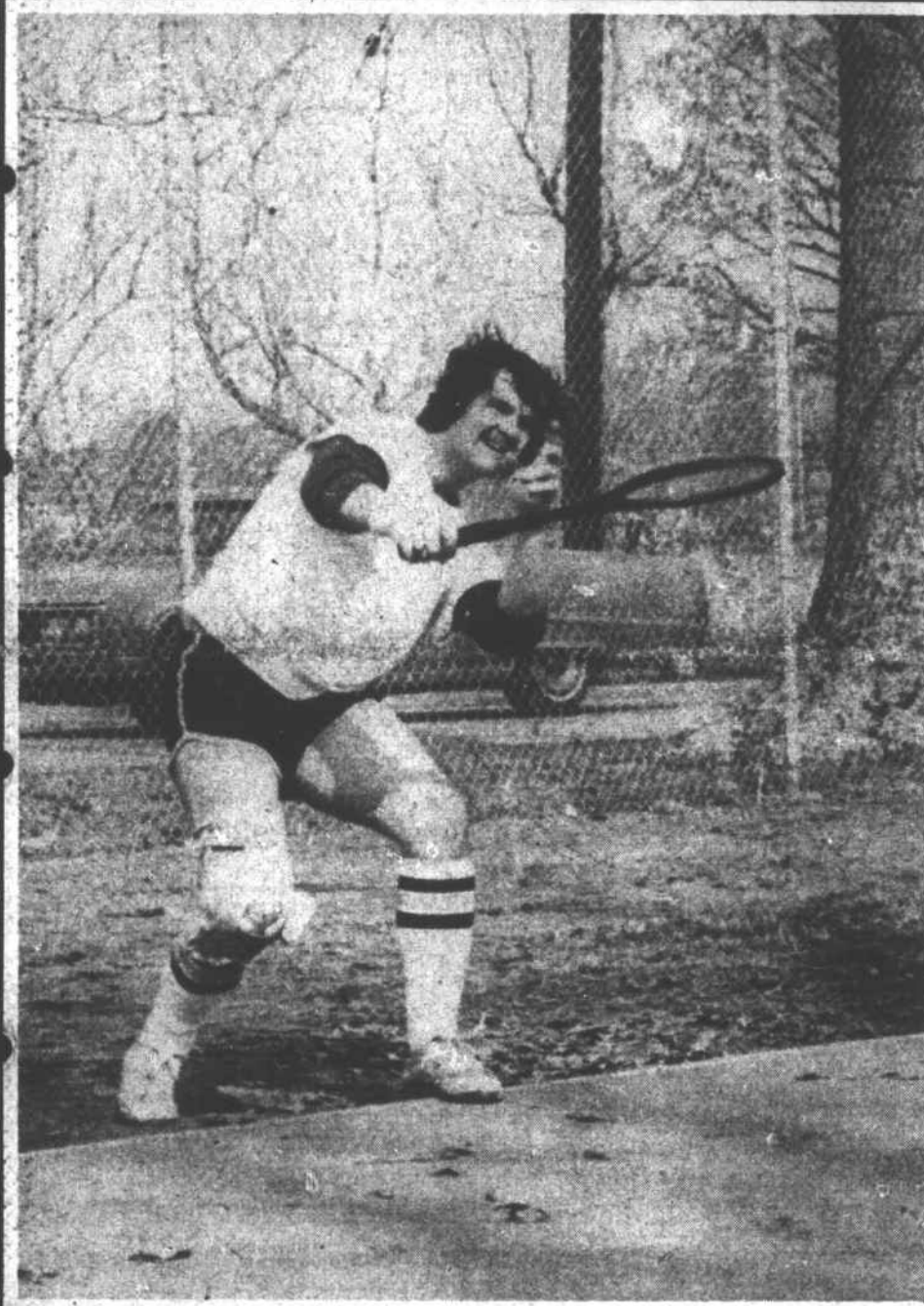


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## Spring singles

Old man winter may yet have a little more grumbling left to do, but recent spring-like weather brought out the sun-worshippers in full force, like go 'cart enthusiast' David Cullipher, pictured in a field off Grubb Street Extended. Jimmy Byrum was among the many who crowded the town tennis courts for a little warm weather fun. (Photos by NOEL TODD-MCLAUGHLIN)

## Utility bills explained

by NOEL TODD  
McLAUGHLIN

A recent DAILY ADVANCE news article that reported the price Elizabeth City residents pay to Vepco for each kilowatt hour of energy used has brought on a deluge of questions as to why Hertford's rates are seemingly higher.

But according to Hertford mayor and town manager, Bill Cox, Hertford's rates are not higher at all.

Elizabeth City pays \$.017 for every kilowatt hour of energy consumed. That appears to be almost one cent less than the \$.01967 Hertford residents pay for that same kilowatt hour.

Needless to say, every time Vepco gets a price increase, they pass it on to the customer. And instead of changing the machine used to compute utility bills, each time Vepco increases rates, the town of Hertford takes the difference between their base rate and Vepco's base rate and adds it to the fossil fuel charge.

"It would cost us \$300 to change the machine every time Vepco raises their rates," said Cox, "if we had made every change, it would have cost the town \$1,200."

Vepco's base rate is \$.27, and the town does not add or subtract from that figure. Vepco's rate for the first 800 kwh is \$.739, as compared to the town's \$.4.802. Vepco's rate for power used over 800 kwh is \$.4216 in comparison with the town's \$.3.279.

The difference between Vepco's rate and the town's rate is added to the fossil fuel charge, in addition to a line loss factor, which is defined as what is lost between the receiving point and the distribution point. "The line loss factor is a minor thing," said Cox.

Cox did, however, concede that the town of Hertford's rates were higher than Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation. "EMC is cheaper than the town of Hertford," said Cox, "I can't argue with that."

But according to Cox, Hertford's higher rate yields a utility profit necessary to pay for the general operation of the town.

"EMC provides no other services to its customers. There is no denying there is not a profit (off of utility rates), but every penny and

nickel goes back to the people of Hertford in services," said Cox.

The utility profit generated between July 1, 1978, and June 30, 1979, was \$161,390. This was part of the \$440,655 budgeted for general expenditures in the town of Hertford. "The town actually spent \$470,144," said Cox.

Among services provided, in part, by the utility profit are police protection, fire protection, street maintenance, sanitation,

recreation, and inspection.

"When you say the town made it, they turned around and used it," said Cox who maintains that utilizing a utility profit is the only fair way to provide such services.

"We could implement a special tax for property owners but then only property owners would pay for the services enjoyed by everybody," said Cox, "this way everybody pays for services equally."

But the way in which we pay

for these services can sometimes be confusing and Vepco's billing process remains somewhat of a mystery.

Hertford customers pay Vepco a \$.27 base charge regardless of consumption. Even if no energy is used in a home during the billing period, the customer is required to pay the \$.27.

The residential user may compute his bill by

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ITEMIZED STATEMENT OF SERVICE						USAGE	AMOUNT
METER NUMBER	READ DATE	DAYS	PRES READ	CONS-TANT			
55495434	13180	31	9701	3200		1644800	\$25.309.23
16810				DEMAND		3147	\$23.948.33
28136993				RKVA		480	\$29.76
SUBTOTAL - ELECTRIC SCHEDULE RS							\$49.287.32
FUEL COST ADJUSTMENT AT 0.017 DB PER KWH							\$27.961.60
CURRENT BILL AMOUNT							\$77.248.92
PAY THIS AMOUNT							\$77.248.92
A LATE PAYMENT CHARGE AT FERC DEFINED RATE WILL BE ADDED IF NOT PAID BY FEB 22 1980							
MAIL DATE FEB 7 1980						Vepco VIRGINIA ELECTRIC AND POWER COMPANY	

## Whopper of a bill

If you think your January electric bill was a doozy, just look at the one the town of Hertford had to foot. Total due: \$77,248.92.

## Gun law Proposed change argued

Hertford resident George Bullock made a second attempt to stop the discharging of firearms within the town limits at the Hertford Town Council meeting Monday night.

Although he had requested the change at the council's last regular meeting because of two shooting incidents that occurred on his property, the council's decision was to retain the present ordinance.

Bullock said he believed the shootings to be unintentional, but that the second offense had lodged a bullet in the wall of his home and that if he or his wife had been standing there, they would have been "killed or seriously injured."

The present ordinance allows the shooting of firearms only within a licensed shooting gallery or for the protection of one's

personal property against obnoxious animals.

The council ruled at their last meeting that to limit the individual's right to protect his or her own property would be an infringement of the constitution, to which Bullock responded, "My rights are being infringed upon. I'm being deprived of my peaceful existence."

Bullock added that the town could be libel in case of an injury. "It's been demonstrated this is a dangerous thing to have and it should be taken off the books," he said.

Town attorney William Bentley said that the town couldn't be libel because any projectile that crosses one's boundaries into another's property is not in compliance with the ordinance and would thus libel the offender, not the town. "There is nothing in that

ordinance that allows anyone to shoot a firearm into anyone else's property," he said.

"That might be okay in the county," said Bullock, "but it's impossible to discharge a firearm in town without it going into someone else's yard."

Hertford Police Chief Marshall Merritt was in compliance with Bullock. "You never know where a bullet is going to go in a crowded municipality," he said.

After further discussion, it was decided that Cox would seek interpretation of the present firearm ordinance from the attorney general and would present his findings at a public hearing designed to get the public's reaction on whether or not the ordinance should be changed.

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## School fuel cost to skyrocket

The Perquimans County School System expects to pay from \$1.35 to \$1.45 per gallon for fuel oil to keep classrooms warm next winter.

The estimate was released at a school board meeting on Tuesday afternoon, scheduled after snow forced cancellation of the regular Monday meeting.

Schools superintendent Pat Harrell said that in the past 12 months, the price the school system must pay for fuel oil has risen from 46 cents to 90 cents per gallon, and there is no relief in sight.

The board took no action on

revising the school calendar to account for the three additional snow days missed last week, because last Tuesday board members were uncertain when school would be reconvened. It will be up to school administrators to adjust the calendar, Harrell said, adding that he did not foresee Saturday school attendance.

The school board also accepted an audit covering financial affairs for the 1978-79 fiscal year, and decided to schedule a series of meetings to discuss budget-making for the 1980-81 fiscal year.

Other special meetings were scheduled March 26 to meet with Dr. William Self and Dr. Julio George of UNC-Chapel Hill on the Rockefeller Project, and April 28 to meet with the principals of Perquimans County Schools.

Board chairman Clifford Winslow announced that the legislative committee of which he is a member has decided to recommend a school facilities need bond referendum of a minimum of \$600 million to a full legislative commission. The commission will have the option to recommend the referendum to

the N.C. General Assembly for placement on the 1980 ballot.

The committee's recommendation included a need stipend of \$750,000 to each local school district in the state with the remainder of the money being distributed on an average daily membership basis (larger districts receiving larger shares).

Elizabeth City State University's newly formed graduate program was another subject of discussion at the meeting.

The program offers sequential courses in three areas of education: ex-

ceptional children, vocational education, and early and intermediate education.

Courses are taught by faculty members of UNC-Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, and N.C. State. Within three years, ECSU is expected to have its own graduate school completed, and students may apply their courses towards a degree at the local university.

The board also approved the appointment of Eva Ward as finance officer for the school system, and discussed the initiation of tornado safety drills in the schools.

## Winfall okays alcohol

Newly appointed Winfall Town Councilman Lloyd Ray Morgan was welcomed to his first meeting with the council last Wednesday evening. "We'll break you down or in, one or the other," joked one of his fellow councilmen.

The meeting was held on Wednesday, in lieu of the regular first Monday of the month meeting, due to snow conditions.

New business concerned

obtaining an emergency electric generator for the town's water system. It was pointed out that while the town hasn't experienced any recent power outages due to storms, a stand-by generator is needed for possible future outages in order to keep residents continuously supplied with water.

Councilmen Jake Chesson and Richard Bryant will obtain estimates for the proposed generator.

Concerning Ned Nixon's bid to produce alcohol (for use in gasoline) in the town limits, Jack Symons noted that "He's got the nod from the town to go ahead."

The council has not heard yet from Town Attorney James Singletary concerning the proposed annexation by the town of a tract of land bordering U.S. 17. Singletary is researching the legal aspects of the annexation.

## Annual student testing begins

Perquimans County students will participate in the state's Annual Testing Program during a two-week period beginning March 17. The 1980 annual testing marks the third year the state's program has been in operation in the county.

The test, administered to students in the first, second, third, sixth, and ninth grades, is achievement oriented and designed to gauge progress in math and reading skills.

Students in the fourth, fifth,

seventh, eighth, and tenth grades will also be taking the test at the same time on the local level.

The test is administered on both the state and local levels in grades one through ten in order to measure progress. "We decided we needed a system of continual progress," said Paul Ward, Perquimans County Testing Coordinator.

According to state education officials, test results have shown marked improvement

over the past two years on the state level. And according to Ward, Perquimans County's results have also shown improvement. "In two year's time, we are certainly making progress," he said.

Educators feel that information gleaned from the test results helps teachers improve instruction by providing tangible objectives for which they can plan their yearly instruction around.

"The whole testing program furnishes us with a direction

for the educational program of our children," said Ward.

Reading and mathematics scores improved at all grade levels and in all areas of the state from 1978-79.

First and second graders scored above the national average in all eight of the state's education districts in 1979.

Math scores increased from a grade level equivalent of 2.1 to 2.3 among first graders and from 3.2 to 3.4 among second

graders between 1978 and 1979.

"Statewide, I think people are really pleased with this program," said Ward, who added that parents, too, benefited from the testing results.

"Parents get an individual report with the objectives printed out on the back and it might give them some idea of things they can do at home to help," said Ward.

## Precinct meeting scheduled

Democrats from Perquimans County will caucus at their precinct polling places on Thursday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m., announced Archie T. Lane, Sr., chairman of the county Democratic party. Any registered Democrat is eligible to attend.

"These precinct meetings represent grass-roots democracy in action," said Lane. "Democrats all over North Carolina will be gathering to elect delegates to the county Democratic con-

ventions and to discuss and pass resolutions on issues that concern them."

Lane stressed that the Democratic Party is seeking broad participation in its

meetings at both the precinct and county level. "We seek to be an inclusive party," he said, "and urge all active Democrats to attend these meetings and make their voices heard."

## Road hearing coming

North Carolina Board of Transportation member Marc Basnight and division staff members will meet with the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners in the Commissioner's Room in the courthouse on Tuesday, March 25, at 10 a.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to establish the county's 1980-81 Secondary Roads Improvement Program. Any interested persons are invited to attend.