

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 37, No. 49

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, DEC. 10, 1981

20 CENTS

## Exam results show improvement at PCHS

The results of this fall's competency tests at Perquimans County High School showed that county students continue to improve in reading and math ability, and in fact did far better than the state average.

County School Superintendent Pat Harrell released the figures to the county Board of Education at the board's meeting Monday morning.

The figures show a steady increase in the reading test scores over the last four years. In addition, students have improved in some problem areas cited by the test scores.

"There's been an increased interest in teaching the fundamental, basic skills," said Harrell. "We've been taking a look at our language arts program to see what we were teaching and how we were teaching it."

"We've been trying to teach practical skills in our schools. I think this is evidence of the hard work our teachers have been doing."

The tests were given to 117 high school junior and seniors in October. By state law, high school students must pass both the reading and math

sections in order to graduate with a high school diploma.

The figures, compiled by Paul Ward of the superintendent's office, show that significant increase in reading scores for first-time test takers. In 1978, 86.2 percent of the students passed, while in 1981 the number who passed jumped to 91.7.

For the total test group, which included students who had failed the test previously, the number who passed increased somewhat over the last four years, from 86.2 in 1978 to 87.7 in 1981.

Math scores, usually better than

reading for high school students generally, dropped somewhat for county students this year.

"I don't really know why that happened," said Harrell. "We've got to look at our math program a little more closely."

For first time test takers, 84.6 percent passed in 1978, and 88.1 percent in 1981. But the number passing was higher last year, with 89.7 making a passing grade.

For the total group tested, 84.6 percent passed in 1978, peaking in 1980 to 87.7 percent, and falling considerably this year to 84.2 percent.

Of first time juniors taking the test, 92 percent topped the region and state scores in reading scores, 87 percent in math scores.

In the problem areas indicated by the test scores, county students have shown some improvement.

In the math test, the students improved considerably in geometric ideas questions, getting 55 percent correct in 1979 and 60.9 in 1981. A big increase was noted in questions on determining areas, with students getting 38.8 percent correct in 1980 and 48.1 in 1981.

But students lost ground on questions concerning installments, bills, receipts and credit cards, getting 57.5 correct in 1980 and 48.7 correct in 1981. A smaller decrease was found in questions concerning utility bills, students getting 62.3 percent of the questions right, down from 67.1 last year.

Students showed a huge jump in some reading skills though. Questions concerning comparing and contrasting information increased from 50 percent in 1979 to 76.2 percent in 1981.

## Snag delays town park construction

Missing Mill Park will become a reality in late spring only if Gaither Builders of Raleigh presents the town of Hertford and the City Manager with a performance bond by this Thursday, reported Mayor Bill Cox at the town council meeting Monday night.

Councilman Billy Winslow expressed concern over the absence of the bond as the next-lowest bid was over \$20,000 above the Gaither figure, funds the town may not be able to provide.

Gaither Builders won the shelter-walkway-parking lot contract, the largest expenditure of the project. The company also submitted the low bid on the landscaping.

Edenton Construction Company presented a figure of \$64,932, \$20,574 above the Gaither bid of \$44,358.

Holland Landscaping of Merry Hill presented a figure of \$9,317 for the landscaping, compared to \$5,326 submitted by Gaither.

Each bid accepted by the board must be backed by a 5 percent performance bond to protect the town from default. Cox anticipated the Gaither bid is forthcoming.

"I have no reason to believe otherwise until Thursday," Cox said.

The park project has been in the planning stages for six years. At present, the town has cleared and filled the site, at a cost of \$48,000.

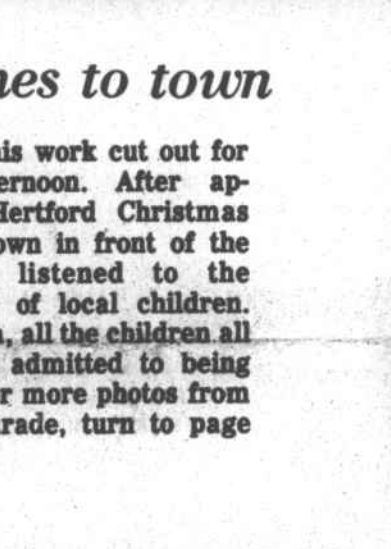
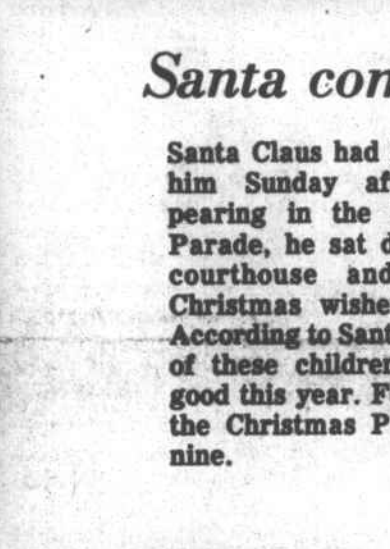
When completed, the park will contain a picnic shelter, a pier, restrooms, and a parking lot, much-needed recreational facilities in this county.

The county Parks and Recreation Department will maintain the area.

Chief Marshall Merritt and Captain Robert Morris of the Hertford Police Department informed the board of imminent state and federal regulations governing radar units.

New radar equipment must be purchased in July 1982 to comply with these new guidelines. All officers will be required to attend a training school before they are eligible to operate a radar unit.

The board tabled further discussion pending the release of the new code.



## Santa comes to town

Santa Claus had his work cut out for him Sunday afternoon. After appearing in the Hertford Christmas Parade, he sat down in front of the courthouse and listened to the Christmas wishes of local children. According to Santa, all the children all of these children admitted to being good this year. For more photos from the Christmas Parade, turn to page nine.

## Tests show county hits good water

Results from test wells dug for Phase II of the county's water program indicate that the county has been very fortunate in the site picked for the new wells.

The results were presented to the county Board of Commissioners at their Monday meeting by representatives of Rivers & Associates, the county's contractor for the project.

Those figures indicate that the water on that site will not only be a good quality, but the quantity was also high.

Three test wells were dug on the Old County Home property in Winfall, which will be the site of the wells for the project. According to Ron Sessoms, representative of Rivers & Associates, "The tests came out much better than we expected."

Sessoms added that because of the quality of the water, the county can expect a "much lower" expense for treatment of the water.

On the four quality factors that cause the greatest treatment expense — iron content, hardness, fluoride content and salt content — the test wells showed the water to be either as good as expected or much better, Sessoms said.

For example, salt content — a major problem for water sources in Perquimans County — was 68 to 100 parts per million. Sessoms said the state maximum is 250 parts per million, and he had expected the tests to show about 150 parts per million.

Iron content was also much lower than expected, Sessoms said. This was good news because "one of the major costs in the other treatment plant (in Bethel) is treating the high iron content," Sessoms said.

Sessoms said that the quality of the water was mostly luck. "We in the dark about it until we drill the test wells," he said.

Rivers & Associates has filed applications to all but one of the federal and state agencies which must grant approval before the project can be started. The one exception, the state Division of Health Services, could not be filed until the results of the test wells came in.

Once approval is granted from those agencies, the project must then be approved by the Farm Home Administration.

If all goes as planned, and there are delays or changes to be made in the plans, the county will begin to accept bids for the project in February.

In other action, the board unanimously re-elected Joe Nowell as chairman of the board. Nowell was the only nominee for the spot.

The board elected Welly White vice-chairman of the board, after nominating both White and Marshall Caddy.

The board re-elected Jeanne White clerk of the board.

## Shoppers take note

Why shop anywhere else for Christmas?

Hertford offers many opportunities for county Christmas shoppers to find just what they need for those people on their list.

And during the Christmas season, Hertford stores will expand their hours for the convenience of their customers.

Starting December 16, the majority of stores will remain open until 9 p.m., according to the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

They will close at 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The Chamber noted one exception. Darden Department Store will close at 5 p.m. on December 18 and 19, but will be open until 9 p.m. on the December 21-23.

Hertford Postmaster Henry Stokes said that the post office — normally closed on Saturdays — will be open from 9 a.m. to noon December 12 and 13.

Bigger is not necessarily better. That goes for schools just as much as it does cars, babies and governments.

That was the message given to the Perquimans County Board of Education by Bill Britt, director of the Northeast Regional Education Center.

"We used to think that if we got bigger we can find a solution to our problems," Britt said. "But now we see that larger does not mean better."

Britt spoke before the board during last Monday's meeting. His theme was that small school systems also have something to offer students, and the systems — like Perquimans County — shouldn't let their size be a liability.

As head of the Northeast Regional Education Center, an extension of the state school system, Britt consults with school superintendents in his region to find better ways of teaching children.

Having seen school systems across the state, Britt has his own preference in types of schools. A graduate of a small school himself, he knows what kind of school he'd like his daughter to attend.

"People don't believe me when I tell them this, but I would rather have my Martha in Perquimans High School than Cary High School (a much larger school near Raleigh)," he said.

"She'll never know anybody at

Cary. She'll never get to know her principal. She won't be able to learn from people.

"As you get bigger, you lose something. I think that is something that we don't consider as much as we should."

Britt cited several advantages to small schools. Along with having the personal contact that he believes is necessary for learning, they also have fewer discipline problems. "You might think you have a discipline problem, but you don't," he said. "John may get into a fight with Joe, but John and Joe have been fighting for years. That's not a discipline problem."

Small schools don't have the vandalism either. "It would cost you more to print out the forms (vandalism reports) than it would to repair the vandalism."

Concerning teaching in small schools, Britt noted that it is no longer true that a class has to have 25 or 30 students in order for it to worth the cost of hiring a teacher.

With computers and video displays, teachers can play a different role. "We have to change are thinking about what school is and the function of teachers," he said.

He foresees the day when teachers will become "brokers of knowledge," not necessarily certified to teach one

subject, but giving background and individual help to students in various subjects, the students receiving most of their learning from computers.

When this idea was first brought to people's attention some ten years ago, the price of such a computer system was about \$1 million, Britt said. Now it's about \$15,000. With the improvement in cost and performance of computers, "we can now do a lot of things we couldn't do before, and still

remain cost-effective," he said.

These advantages make the school consolidations of past years no longer necessary, and even unproductive, Britt believes.

"Smaller school systems think they have problems they don't have," Britt said. "And if we spend a lot of time and resources addressing problems we don't have, we don't have the time and resources for the problems we do have."

## For stolen goods charge

# Court rules in favor of Harvey brothers

Judge J.R. Parker presided over last Wednesday, Dec. 2, session of District Court and heard the following cases.

George Harvey was found not guilty of receiving stolen goods and Probable Cause was not found in a second receiving stolen goods charge.

Probable Cause was found in the case of Fred Julian Harvey, charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and inflicting serious injury. No Probable Cause

was found in three counts of receiving stolen goods.

Melvin Ray White pled guilty to misdemeanor charges of breaking and entering and larceny as well as injury to personal property and was given a minimum sentence of 12 months and a maximum of 18 months in the Department of Corrections, suspended for three years.

White was told to pay a fine of \$250 and the cost of court, to make \$200

(Continued on page 2)

## This week

The Pirate basketball teams sweep past Camden. See page 10.

## Weather

Partly cloudy and cold through Saturday. Highs in the 40s and lows in the upper 30s to low 30s.

