

HIGHLIGHTS

Volume 2, Number 1

Vanceboro, N. C. - Thursday, January 11, 1979

12 Pages

Price: 20c

Citizen of the Week

Joe Thomas

Vanceboro--Joe Thomas of Vanceboro has been named to fill the state senate seat vacated by the late D. Livingstone Stallings. The Democratic Party's Second District Senatorial Committee selected Thomas on January 2. He was sworn in at a noon ceremony in Raleigh on Wednesday, January 10.

Thomas is married to the former Linda Morris. They reside in Vanceboro with their four children; Scott, Alan, Brynn, and Emma. It is important for any person in public service to have a supportive spouse, and Thomas attributes much of his success to his wife. Her continued assistance will enable him to devote more of his time to his duties as Senator. In an interview for the Highlights, Thomas said, "Linda and I appreciate the committee appointing me. We will be working together to try to do a good job."

A native of Askin, Thomas attended Ernul Elementary School and Vanceboro Farm Life High School. Graduating in 1959, he went to N.C. State University, where he received his degree in forestry in 1963. He is currently employed by the Westminister Company as vice-president and manager of the eastern region.

Senator Thomas is a member of the Vanceboro Rotary Club, the North Carolina Society of Engineers Club, and the East Carolina Engineers Club. In addition, he has served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Vanceboro Medical Center since its origin. He is also a

member of the Vanceboro Planning Board. In 1969 Gov. Bob Scott appointed Thomas to six-year term on the Board of Water and Air Resources, which later became the Environmental Management Commission.

In July of 1977, Gov. Jim Hunt appointed Thomas to the Board of Transportation for a four-year term. In Craven County, Thomas has worked for the four-laning of Highway #17 from Vanceboro to New Bern and the completion of Highway #70 bypass around New Bern. He has enjoyed his work with the Board.

Although he has resigned his position as a member to take the senate seat, he will continue to have input on local matters.

Thomas became interested in politics through his work in civic and church activities. As a member of Kitt Swamp Christian Church, he held positions of authority at a very young age. While at State, Thomas served as senator from the School of Forestry and was a member of the Young Democrats' Club.

Upon returning to Vanceboro, Thomas ran for town Alderman but lost. However, this did not crush his political spirit. In 1969 he ran for mayor of Vanceboro and won. It was during Thomas' term as mayor that the water system was completed. In addition, he worked to get funding for the police department.

On the state level, in 1968 Thomas headed up the Young People for Bob Scott in Craven County. The 1972 campaign found him working for Jim Hunt in his bid for Lieutenant Governor.



NEW SENATOR--Joseph E. Thomas of Vanceboro shown here during an interview with Highlights News Editor Connie Bryan, was sworn in yesterday to represent this district in the N.C. Senate. [Photo by Rick Cannon]

Two years later, he worked for Robert Morgan in his successful campaign for the U.S. Senate as an Area Campaign Key in charge of Craven, Pamlico, Carteret, Jones, and Onslow. Again in 1976, Thomas served as the Area Campaign Key for Jim Hunt in his gubernatorial campaign.

Education, transportation, and economic development were cited by Thomas as the three areas that he is most concerned with. In the realm of education, he plans to continue the work of Senator Stallings to secure the best possible education for the youth of North Carolina. Thomas also stressed the importance of supporting teachers.

In transportation Thomas hopes to be able to work toward the improvement of primary and secondary roads in eastern North Carolina. He advocates a change in the method of funding highway construction. In the area of economic development, Thomas promises to help attract "good, clean industry, which in turn gives good-paying jobs to our people."

He expressed concern over the outward flow of young people away from Craven County in order to find jobs.

When questioned about the proposed merger of the Craven County Schools with the New Bern City Schools, Thomas replied, "I am for the people of the county deciding on this situation. . . We should make sure that the children are getting what they should be in education and that the taxpayers of our county are getting what they are paying for in education. . . In the long run, I think it will be the best thing for the children and the quality of education as well as for the taxpayers to have one school system and school board for the entire county."

Concerning his feelings upon assuming the Senatorial seat, Thomas states, "I am excited about being able to serve as Senator for the people herein our district. It is an honor and a pleasure for me. I want to be their Senator, and I want to be a responsive legislator."

Connie Bryan

Each week the Highlights and ten area businesses will sponsor a Basketball Contest. Participants can win as much as \$25 each week. Some lucky participant will win an expense paid trip to the NCAA Eastern Regionals in Greensboro. Each sponsor will carry a game being played during the weekend in his ad. Participants will predict the winner of each game and enter the team beside the sponsor's name on the Official Entry Blank in whose ad the team appeared.

Vanceboro getting car wash

Vanceboro, N.C.--The Vanceboro Board of Alderman to approve the re-zoning of the corner of Highway 43 and Mill Road from residential to commercial making way for a new car wash to be built there in the near future. The action came at a special meeting called for six o'clock p.m. this past Monday night. David Lancaster, who recently purchased the lot from Mr. Walter Elks, plans to start construction of the car wash immediately. In other action, the Board approved the bid of Barris Construction Company for the paving and resurfacing of some of the streets in Vanceboro at \$1.81 per square yard. The project, which will cost in the neighborhood of \$20,000 will be paid for with what is left of the Powell Bill funds received by the town. After the paving project there will still be over \$7,000 left for patching and emergency repairs. Chief among the streets that will be paved is First Avenue from the Episcopal Church to Buck Lane. Third Street which runs by the old cemetery between Grand Avenue and Mill Road will also be paved. In all ten sections of streets will be paved. It was announced that Mayor Morris had been appointed by the Craven County Board of Commissioners to The Regional Manpower Advisory Committee of the Neuse River Council of Governments.

Changing from license tags to stickers made it necessary to change the Town Ordinances to read "Every owner of an automobile, truck, motorized vehicle requiring state licensing shall secure a town identification decal which is to be placed on the lower right hand corner of the windshield on the passen-

ger side. Failure to display this number will be in violation and subject to penalties as decided by the courts." Police Commissioner Alton Whitley announced that Officer Stanly Kite had resigned to take a position with the Craven County Sheriff's Department. In his place, Whitley explained that he had hired G. M. "Slim" Hudgins to replace Kite. Whitley requested the Board's approval of his action. The approval was unanimous. Morris indicated that Hudgins had received very high recommendations from Craven County Sheriff Pete Bland and Chief of Police Harley Ringer. Hudgins is a certified criminal investigator. He reportedly did most of the work while employed with the Craven County Sheriff's Department. Chief Ringer presented his Annual Police Report. Mayor Morris commented that this is the first time in his memory that Vanceboro has ever had a complete year end review of the activities of the Police Department. Morris and the other members of the Board praised Ringer for the fine job he is doing as Vanceboro's Police Chief. Ringer commented that he feels Vanceboro is a pretty safe town in which to live. He explained that out of 820 arrest only one percent were persons living within the city limits of Vanceboro. Mayor Morris congratulated Ringer on the high conviction rate (91%) Ringer reported for the year. Ringer attributed this to an improved records section and better preparation of his cases. See -- **Next Week's Highlights for a complete summary of the Annual Police Report and an in depth look at the Vanceboro Police Department.**

Break in

Vanceboro--A break-in occurred at Vera's Diner sometime during the night of January 3 or early morning on January 4. Approximately \$100 damage was done to the diner.

Oops! We Goofed

The article "Miss Lela Celebrates" that appeared in last week's Highlights was written by Mrs. Kathlene Carawon instead of Mrs. Ethelene Butler.

Troutner takes first in Basketball Contest

Patrick Troutner of Vanceboro was the first place winner in the Highlights Basketball Contest's First Week. Patrick picked 9 correct winners and won the tiebreaker over Jay Huff who also picked nine. Third place went to Jimmy Huff who missed only two but had to win the tie breaker over A. B. Morton who also

picked eight correct. Six entries went into the "Beat the Editor" Drawing which was also won by Patrick Troutner. The winners of the first weeks Basketball Contest are as follows:

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|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Patrick Troutner | 9-1 |
| (won tie-breaker) | |
| 2. Jay Huff | 9-1 |
| 3. J.G. Huff | 8-2 |
| (won tie-breaker) | |

"Beat the Editor" Patrick Troutner

The correct winning teams for the first week were as follows: Syracuse, UNC, LSU, UCLA, Wake Forest, Michigan St., Duke, NCSU, Notre Dame, The Citadel. Tie-Breaker: N.C. A&T, 78 Points. Ten Entries picked seven correct.