

# Eastern Echoes

By Gail Roberson

## Lace And Lizards

Even now, though in her 80s and 90 pounds wringing wet, my Grandma Fannie is going to "whop" the daylight out of me because I'm now confessing that I'm the one who hid the shoebox full of lizards in her parlor and took the lid off... 25 years ago.

Twenty-five years ago, I was ripe for rebellion. I strayed about as far from the legacy of the sweet petunia Southern belle as I possibly could. In fact, I spent the entire first 10 years of my life trying to kiss my elbow so I would turn into a boy. It didn't work, but I kept at it. Even today, I sometimes forget to remember that it didn't work. And you know, I wouldn't have it any other way. And, I'm still ripe for rebellion.

If there's one thing I can't stand, it's a weak, whimpery woman. I never simpere for any man. I wouldn't even know how. I'm a woman and I like it. I don't want to be anything else. But, just because I'm female is no reason to act like a weaker sex.

There is no weaker sex. Any woman can tell you that, as well as most men. It's the weak woman and the chauvinistic men who created whimpery women. Weak women are whimpery. That's that. And men who like weak women are generally weak themselves, and plenty chauvinistic to go along with it. The men and women in between these two categories of people are the ones I like best. They know the sexes are equal. They respect each other and the different strengths each one possesses, ending up with a well-proportioned relationship that's healthy and beneficial to both.

It's here in the South that women are the strongest today. For years the vision of the honeysuckle Southern belle fluttering her eyelashes and arranging fragrant vase bougths tarnished the ability of many of our older women to break free of this "feminine" mold. But, the new women of the South have learned how to balance both family and career like a high-wire walker, and still retain the dignity and the poise required by the Old South.

It takes one heck of a woman to be either a farmer or a farmer's wife. It's unlike any other profession on earth. In our highly agricultural area, women shoulder as much responsibility as the men. Yet, it's here, in this part of the country, where we still think of ourselves as the weaker sex. We continue to think of the Southern woman as a beautiful vision descending a long staircase for afternoon tea in the parlor, instead of remembering all of those who helped to rebuild the South alongside their men in the fields and factories.

We southern women are made of the finest steel because we've been dragged through the hottest fires. Though the blood of the old Southern belle runs a little thinner in each generation, we still appreciate soft lace and delicate silk as much as our female ancestors years ago... but we don't run screaming from the room when cricket peeps over the chandelier either.

My breakfast room is thick with plants as the Amazon jungle. Somewhere, in the midst of all this greenery, there lives a tiny green lizard named Dudley. Occasionally, he is stalked by the cat, which sends him scurrying up the ferns suspended from the ceiling. From this lofty abode, he is safe to pursue his acquired lifestyle.

A northern friend nearly fainted when she saw him. Her shrieks and antics gave me the overpowering urge to punch her in the nose. Instead, I tried to explain, only to be drowned out by her constant demands to "just KILL it."

I hate whimpery women. Why can't they just be as comfortable with lizards as they are with lace. Like all the rest of us Southern women.



# Eagles' Coach Predicts Dogfight For Playoff Berths In Conference

By MARK INABINETT  
Special To The  
West Craven Highlights

During the 1986 football season, Havelock and West Craven dominated the other members of the Coastal Conference.

The Rams won the Coastal and the Eastern Class AAA championships and gave West Craven its only regular-season loss. Havelock beat the Eagles 7-0 in a game without a touchdown.

Havelock outscored its other Coastal opponents 233-19 and West Craven outscored its opponents in its five conference victories 223-46.

But it doesn't appear the two teams, or any two teams, will be able to dominate the Coastal in that manner this season.

"I think us and West Craven probably are down talent-wise," Havelock coach Wilbur Sasser said, "and I think most everybody else is up. I really feel like there are five teams in this conference with a chance to make those (three) playoff berths."

For West Craven coach Clay Jordan, the race will be for two playoff spots.

"I don't see anybody being able to put the people on the field Havelock can," Jordan said. "But down the ladder, the other two spots will be a dogfight."

The race for the state playoff positions will not start until Sept. 25 when the league season begins. Until then the Coastal teams will be engaged in non-conference competition, starting with the opening games of the season for five league members

Friday.

Havelock and West Craven both should have their young teams tested Friday. The Rams host Class AAAA, Craven County rival New Bern, and West Craven hosts North Pitt, expected to be a power in the Class AA Eastern Plains Conference.

In the other games, East Carteret hosts Lejeune, West Carteret visits Pamlico County, and Washington hosts Belhaven Wilkinson.

D.H. Conley and North Lenoir begin their seasons Sept. 4 with the Vikings hosting Ayden-Grifton and the Hawks visiting South Lenoir.

Although the non-conference games have no direct bearing on league play, they still could decide which teams make the playoffs, Sasser said.

"I've been a firm believer in winning breeds winning," Sasser said. "It'd be very tough if we went 0-4 or 1-3 in these games and then tell our kids they could win the rest of their games and win the conference championship."

The Rams have a tough non-conference slate with Bertie, White Oak and Tarboro following New Bern. West Craven also has a testing non-conference schedule with Greene Central, New Bern and Pamlico County coming up.

"The schedule we're playing is not the schedule we went out looking for," Jordan said. "Because of our success the last few years, we've got some teams who don't want to play us.

"If we come out of a non-conference schedule as tough as this one healthy, we could do well in the conference. It depends on how the kids look at these games. If they look at them as a learning experience, it would be positive."

West Craven and Havelock share another trait. The Eagles have three offensive starters and four defensive regulars returning. The Rams are a little more experienced in their bread-and-butter area — defense — where they return five starters, but only two offensive regulars return from the 14-1 team.

The two teams are not without talented players, however.

West Craven will be led by Dereck Booker, who was a Washington Daily News All-Area defensive back last season. With Jesse Campbell departed from the Eagles for North Carolina State University, Booker steps into the spotlight as West Craven's backfield star. Last season, Booker's 1,200 rushing yards were overshadowed by Campbell's spectacular exploits.

Havelock has a broader foundation on which to build, beginning with 265-pound tackle Lee Von Morris and continuing through 245-pound guard Brad Craig and place-kicker Stephen Craig.

With the change in personnel come changes in tactics for Havelock. The Rams plan to throw more this season with Ledel George, who intercepted 12 passes as a defensive back last season, stepping into the quarter-

back spot. "I feel like we have to have consistent success passing," Sasser said. "I feel like if things come together, by the time the conference schedule comes along we could be a very good passing football team because we've got a young man who can really throw the ball."

West Craven's first-game opponent, North Pitt, does, too — quarterback Calvin Hunter — as well as someone to catch it in tight end Ashley Sheppard, two of the region's top players.

"It's a tough opener for us," Jordan said, "but not a bad way to open for a team rebuilding. If we win, we'll open a lot of eyes, and we will go into the game as underdogs."

For the Coastal teams in Carteret County, the season appears headed in opposite directions. East Carteret and West Carteret have new coaches in George Viereck and Ed Hyatt respectively. But while the Mariners have some solid building blocks, the Patriots almost are without experience. Only six West Carteret players were with the team last season.

Lejeune beat East Carteret 7-6 last season when it reached the second round of the Class AA playoffs. Five offensive starters and six defensive regulars return for the Devilpups.

Although Pamlico County returns just three starters on each side of the ball, the Hurricanes hope to improve on last year's record behind running back Terance Tatum.

# 'Masked Bandit' Steals Hearts, Food

By RAY BRONK

A few years ago, I was a guest on a fishing trip. My host and I had fileted about 30 panfish, and since his refrigerator was full and the night was chilly, he stored them to cool on his screened porch. The next morning, all that remained of the fish filets was an overturned platter. There was a new hole in the screen. I thought my host would be furious. Instead, he just laughed and said, "Those darn coons, I should have known better than to trust them with fish left out like that."

Few members of the animal kingdom are as well known, and enjoy the charitable good will of humans, as does the raccoon, *Procyon lotor*. His "masked bandit" black facial configuration, lumbering, pigeon-toed gait and the ease with which he can be trained, tend to make him one of the more lovable and acceptable members of the animal kingdom found in North Carolina.

The raccoon is found throughout the lower provinces of Canada, all of the United States and all of Mexico. Several races of pale-colored, dwarf raccoons are found on the Florida Keys. "Coons" are grayish in color, with the famous black mask across their eyes and cheeks, and with five to eight black bands on the tail. They have long, buff-colored guard-hairs tipped in black and a creamy-white underfur. Their fur is prized for coats, and the raccoon is hunted for pelt and for sport.

A fully-developed adult raccoon living in an area of ideal conditions, and with an abundance of food, can weigh as much as a medium-sized dog, as much as 45 pounds, although less than 30 pounds is more normal maximum male weight.

Most sightings of raccoons are made from dusk to dawn, since they usually forage for food during hours of darkness. For this reason, they are rarely spotted during daylight hours. The den is usually a hollow log or hollow tree, when trees are abundant, and in rocky clefts and crevices in treeless areas. They are expert climbers. They use their non-webbed, elongated, spindly toes with great dexterity when climbing and when examining objects. In captivity, when water is available, they have an unexplained habit of "washing" their food, even if they have just caught the item in that same water. In the wild, they seldom wash their food, usually swallowing their food with no particular preparation.

Raccoons are usually found living near water, since they eat many foods growing in or near the water. They are omnivorous, and consume crawfish, fish, and snakes, as well as fruits such as grapes and persimmons. They eat acorns, nuts and corn. They will also eat birds, insects and larval and adult wasps. They scavenge in rubbish and garbage pails, and many homeowners investigating strange noises in the night have surprised a family of raccoons gobbling up pet food left overnight.

Although raccoons do not

reach adulthood until their second year, female raccoons are sexually mature at 9 to 10 months, an in their southern range, more than half conceive during their first year. Males reach sexual maturity after their second year.

The breeding season begins in February, with the young being born in April or May. A litter of from one to seven are born after a gestation period from 60 to 73 days, with an average of 63 days. They are small at birth, about 2.5 ounces, well-furred and with dark skins. The eyes and ears are closed, with the eyes opening about the 18th day. The female cares for the young, with no help from the male.

After weaning, at about seven weeks, the young will follow the female around, seeking shelter in tangles of roots and vines, crevices and under rocks. They begin following their parents around on hunting forays about a month later.

The raccoon is considered intelligent by many, although he is more ingenious and persistent than smart. His manual dexterity enables him to perform feats which make him appear superior to mammals in brain power. Raccoons are often trained as pets. This is not a safe practice. As the raccoon reaches adulthood, his insatiable curiosity and stubbornness make him destruc-

tive and untrustworthy. His temperament also changes, and pet raccoons are known to have caused serious biting and clawing injuries when formerly safe activities were repeated.

Although raccoons are sometimes said to hibernate, they do not. They do, in the colder parts of their range, hole up and sleep for long periods, living on stored body fat until about February. They do not display the physiological changes of hibernation; that of reduced temperature, reduced rate of respiration and heartbeat and insensibility to pain that characterizes true hibernation.

Raccoons are of the family Procyonidae (animals which come before dogs) which include coats, kinkajous and pandas; the order Carnivora (meat eaters) and class Mammalia (mammal).

Although recent studies have indicated that the raccoon has been destroying nests of game birds and wild turkeys, this destruction has not been intense. He is, in many parts of North Carolina, considered as pest. Pest or not, this remarkable, adaptable creature, able to live in varied circumstances and habitats, seems destined to continue to prosper and to prevail in the face of urbanization and other modern adversity.

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## Obituaries

### Albert T. Creamer

Albert T. Creamer, 77, died last Thursday at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Saturday at Chapman's United Methodist Church near Dudley's Crossroads with the Rev. Hillary Gaskins officiating.

Burial was in the church cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, Estelle Creamer; two sons, Reginald Lancaster of Currituck and Craig Creamer of Virginia Beach, Va.; one daughter, Mary Elizabeth Fornes of Vanceboro; two brothers, Raymond Creamer of Lumberport, W. Va., and Wade Creamer of Clarksburg, W. Va.; two sisters, Audrey McCulley of Georgia and Mae Gainer of Vanceboro; nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

### Clifton E. Lewis

Clifton Earl Lewis, 46, of 190 Riggs Town Road, died Saturday in Craven County Hospital, New Bern.

Graveside services were held at 1 p.m. Tuesday at New Bern National Cemetery with the Rev. Jack Phillips officiating.

He is survived by his widow, Charlotte Riggs Lewis; two brothers, Jessie B. Lewis of Bridgeton, Willie James Lewis of New Bern; three sisters, Marie Lewis Johnson and Virginia Brinkley, both of Bridgeton, Catherine Lewis Pope of New Bern.

Memorials may be made to Alcohol Treatment Bridge Home, Bridges Street, Morehead City, 28557.

### Sallie B.N. Roberson

DOVER — Sallie Bell Newell Roberson, 82, died Sunday. The funeral was held at 3 p.m.

Tuesday at Lane's Chapel United Methodist Church with the Rev. Dan Powers and the Rev. Richard Stanley officiating.

Burial was in the church cemetery.

She is survived by two brothers, Wesley Newell and Ray Newell, both of Dover; two sisters, Mavis Hodges of Dover and Lena Moore of Wilmington; several nieces and nephews.

She was a member of Lane's Chapel United Methodist Church.

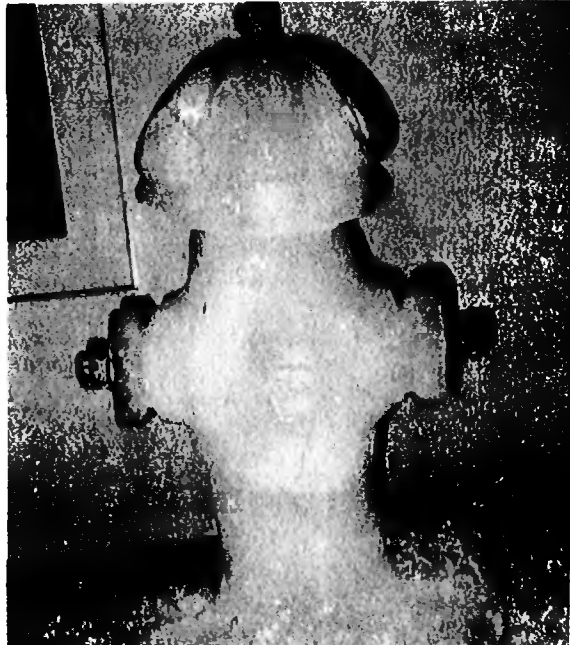
Memorial contributions may be made to Lane's Chapel United Methodist Church, Dover, or to the Fort Barnwell Rescue Squad, Rt. 1, Dover.

## New Telephone Lines Keeping Up With Area Growth

Carolina Telephone recently began installing new underground cable along Secondary Road 1400 in the Vanceboro telephone exchange to serve an expanding area, it was announced by W.C. Thomas, the company's district commercial manager.

"Carolina Telephone is spending more than \$23,000 to provide new underground cable for this area, which consists mainly of farmlands but is experiencing steady growth of single-family homes and mobile home sites," said Thomas.

"By plowing cable underground, Carolina Telephone avoids setting poles to support aerial wire and cable, thus enhancing the visual environment of the area. Underground cable provides more reliable service since it is usually not damaged by winds or storms."



Long Wait

Firemen would have a long wait before they could use this hydrant to fight a fire. The hydrant was sculpted from ice and placed in the lobby of the Greenville Hilton for the recent 100th meeting of the North Carolina Firemen's Association. The hydrant would have had to melt before any water could be gotten, and then it's doubtful that there would be enough water to do much good. Craven County firemen attended the meeting and hosted a hospitality room for the over 800 firemen who attended the meeting. (Mike Voss photo)

## Library Rewards Readers

Congratulations to all of the boys and girls who participated in the summer reading game at the Vanceboro-Craven County Public Library.

The children who read and reported on at least 10 books during July received certificates signed by Gov. James Martin. The also received library book bags.

Those reading the minimum of 10 books are:

Kim Poythress, LaTricia Freeman, Joann Laughinghouse, Jamie Watson, Gerald Brown, Amanda Hayes, David Wayne,

Rusty Mills, Amy Watson, Iman Moore, Crystal Fornes, Jeremy Mills, Matt Powell, Erin Smith, Gary Whitehead,

Brandy Simpkins, Amy Swain, Bakarr Johnson, Uriah King, Travis Powell, Billie Elks, Derrick Edwards,

Sarah Maddy, Tony Bryant, Brandy Wayne, Sharon Dunn, Joshua Hayes, Amy Bryan, Jennifer Locklear and Latina Edwards.

Many of the children listed read and reported on more than the 10-book minimum during July and were awarded prizes from the library for their efforts.

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