

# Edenton-Chowan Alternative School To Close

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education heard comments Tuesday from interested citizens concerning the projected closing of the Alternative School that has been housed in the basement of the Ernest A. Swain School. The board proposed to close the school as a cost-saving measure.

School Superintendent Dr. John Dunn led the meeting off with a discussion of budget cuts mandated by the county and state governments. He pointed out that \$30,000 was cut due to a recent county property tax hearing when commissioners lopped three cents off an originally projected 15 cent per hundred increase.

The state legislature also surprised school officials by a six and one-half cent salary increase for teachers and a straight \$75 per month raise for non-certified staff personnel such as custodians, aides and maintenance personnel. This cost the school budget another \$19,258 in unexpected expenditures, Dunn said. The board had budgeted for a five per cent increase.

"The board was faced with some rather tough decisions," the superintendent said. He cited statistics concerning dropping enrollment figures in the Alternative School and a much higher per pupil expenditure. During the

1985-86 school year, it cost \$5,166 to educate an alternative student while the student cost at John A. Holmes was \$1,881.

Holmes principal Rob Boyce addressed keeping the program alive at his school. He said the school could absorb a maximum of twenty students whose entry level into the Holmes program would be much like the in-school suspension program. The goal of the program would be to allow as many of these students as possible to become involved in the regular instructional program as their progress in attitude and academics reached acceptable levels. There would be one teacher for every ten students and "We're talking about using our home ec room upstairs," Boyce explained.

Dunn told the listeners that none of the teachers in the present Alternative School would lose their jobs. "We would lose two people, a secretary and a teacher's aide," he said.

Board Chairman Cecil Fry then opened the hearing to comments from the audience.

Mack Livesay, with the State Division of Youth Services told the board that December 7, 1977 was a memorable date, the date on which the Edenton-Chowan Alternative School opened its doors.

The state official said that the goal of the program was "To combat juvenile delinquency and provide services to young people at risk." He termed it, "One of the most viable programs that's been presented."

"The last program presented is usually the first one to go," he said. I'm happy to see that it could be absorbed into Holmes High School. With the Alternative School, you've almost completely done away with drop-outs. This

school has made a very significant contribution to the State of North Carolina," he concluded.

A graduate of the Alternative School, Gwen Balcredi of Raleigh

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**A BETTER CHOICE** — We heartily endorse the alternate plan put before the city council at its July 8 meeting for use of municipally-owned property on the Edenton waterfront and want to commit the Chowan Herald to do its part toward raising the funds at the appropriate time.

While the modified bed-and-breakfast proposal advanced by Anderson-Benton Corp. is not as objectionable as the original proposal, it still amounts to creeping commercialization of the waterfront area, which is not the direction we feel the city ought to be moving.

We believe that the proposal by Gil Burroughs and Ross Inglis to involve local civic and community groups in the development of a waterfront park in three stages to be workable; and we know the end result would generate more community pride and spirit than the plan offered by the outside developers.

As proposed, Phase I, calling for the stabilization of the shoreline and construction of badminton and volleyball courts at a cost of \$7,000 to \$10,000, is a modest beginning which can easily be achieved. Phase II, calling for further development of the park area at a cost of \$9,000, is a next logical step after the first. Phase III, calling for the erection of a boathouse and other appropriate facilities, is estimated to cost some \$20,000 and will require a little more effort. But nothing succeeds like success, and the third step may actually be easier than the first two.

We especially liked the offer by Burroughs to provide the boats and give sailing lessons free. There must be any number of younger people, not to mention some who are older, who would love to have an opportunity to learn the basics of sailing. Such lessons are offered the public up on the Charles river in Boston, but with a difference. Up there you have to pay.

So, we hope the council will look

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## Accident Takes Life

An apparent drowning last Wednesday evening took the life of Joseph Keith Byrum, 21 of Chowan County. The accident took place while he was swimming with several friends in Albemarle Sound behind the Soundview Restaurant in Washington County.

Calvin Garrett, 24, said that he was swimming with Byrum at about 7:30 p.m. when the victim dove off a pier into shallow water. The water depth was reportedly two to three feet at that spot. "He dove too deep," Garrett said.

Byrum was pulled from the water unconscious and not breathing witnesses said. Mouth to mouth resuscitation was started and CPR administered by Guy Davenport, a bystander, until the local rescue squad arrived on the scene, according to Washington County Sheriff Jim Whitehurst. The victim was pronounced dead at Chowan Hospital.

Doug Belch, Director of Chowan County Emergency Medical Services, said, "This is the first recent fatality that I know of." Referring to the shallow waters along the sound's shoreline, he said, "We're very fortunate that we don't have more of them."

The EMS director said that there has been one accident a year for the past two summers involving neck injuries associated with diving in the sound.

Byrum, of Route 3, Edenton, was employed by Wilber Ray Bunch and Sons Farm. He is survived by his mother, Louise Gray McClenney, of Edenton; his father, Joseph B. Byrum of Edenton; his wife, Candace Potts Byrum of Edenton; a daughter, Lauren Pickell of Merry Hill; and a son, Thomas Kevin Byrum of Edenton.



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## Swain Possible Apartment Site

A preliminary step has been taken in the possible conversion of the abandoned Ernest A. Swain School property into an apartment complex for the elderly. Chowan County Commissioners heard a Charlotte developer, Dwayne Anderson of Anderson-Benton Co. outline the proposal. This is the same company that proposes to build an inn on Edenton's waterfront.

The board of commissioners recently decided to market the school through the N.C. Preservation Fund, a non-profit organization that handles sales of historic properties. The goal is to preserve the historic building and at the same time realize a financial gain for the county. Revenue would go toward renovation of the auditorium behind the school for community use.

County Manager Cliff Copeland told the commissioners that a contract had not yet been executed with the Preservation Fund because the building had not yet been deeded to the county from the School Board. Despite this, the organization is continuing to market the property, Copeland said.

Anderson, a former city planner, said that he had done most of the planning for the downtown area of Tarboro. As examples of the work his company has done in converting buildings for apartments for the elderly, he pointed to the Belvidere Hotel in Reidsville, with 35 apartments and the R.M. Wilson High School

in Rocky Mount, with 54 apartments.

The approach for Swain would be the construction of ten apartments each on the second and third floors. The first floor would be reserved for amenities for the residents as well as the public. These amenities would include office space, a recreation area and public toilets as well as an area that could house a civic organization such as the Edenton-Chowan Arts Council.

Anderson said that the standard size classroom makes an "ideal module" for a one bedroom apartment. He said that the one problem with this type of construction was affordability.

The developer said that the unit cost for each apartment was approximately \$45,000. He said that a new loan program combining forces of the N.C. Farmers Home Administration and the N.C. Housing Financing Agency would make possible a low-cost loan to a developer for this type of housing. Only historic renovations would qualify.

These agencies have targeted 29 rural counties of the state as eligible for the program. Included are Perquimans, Tyrrell, Bertie and Chowan. The 29 counties are divided into four areas with Chowan being one of nine in this area. Each targeted area of the state will receive only one program, Anderson said.

He said that his company would need some kind of cost-share agreement with the county for

some of the amenities such as an elevator, landscaping and public toilets. With the low-cost financing and cost-sharing, Anderson said that the apartments could be available to tenants for a rental of \$210 per month plus utilities of about \$50 per month for a total of \$260.

Commission Chairman Alton Elmore told the group that he had attended Wilson High School in Rocky Mount and had subsequently seen the development there. He said that at the time he saw the apartments, he didn't know who the developer was. He termed it a "first class facility."

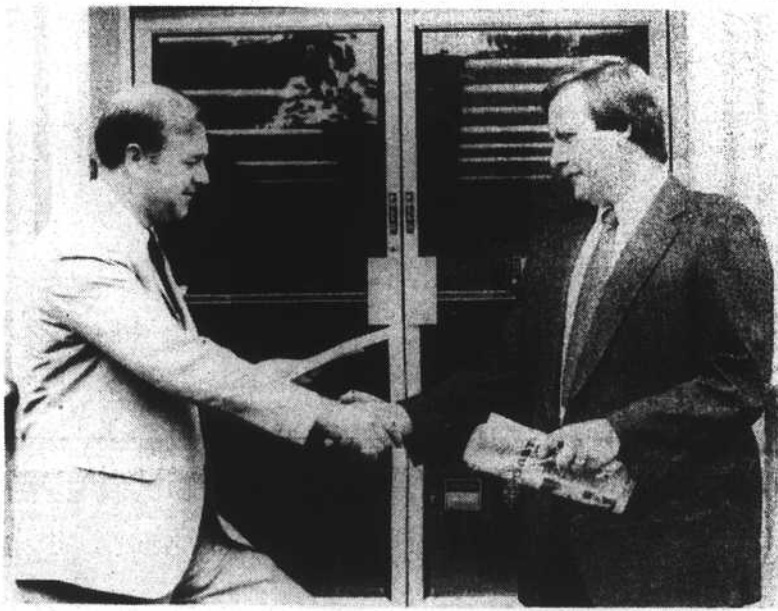
Anderson said that his company needed a letter from the county stating its interest in the proposal and including any "subject to's" that the county might wish to include. He said that the letter

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## Sales Tax Hike Set For Fall

A measure passed by Chowan County Commissioners Monday morning will make it a little easier to figure sales tax for customers and merchants alike. The board passed a hike of a half cent in local sales tax which could mean an extra \$100,000 in revenue to the county the first year.

The combined state and local sales tax now amounts to a nickel on a dollar. Other area counties passing the increase this week were Pasquotank, Perquimans and Camden.



**BANKER HANDS OVER DEED**—Marshall Tetterton, President and Chief Operating Officer of Peoples Bank hands the deed for Edenton's old Peoples Bank building to Mayor John Dowd during a ceremony on the building's steps Wednesday morning.

## Bank Donates Building

The oldest bank building in historic Edenton will have a new life, thanks to Peoples Bank and Trust Co.

The bank Wednesday donated its 75-year old Bank of Edenton building to the Town of Edenton. It will be used to house municipal offices.

Marshall Tetterton, President and Chief Operating Officer of Peoples Bank, presented the deed to Edenton Mayor John Dowd and the Town Council in a ceremony at the building.

Tetterton said, "We at Peoples Bank can think of no higher purpose for this fine old building than to serve the modern-day needs of a town that has done so much to recognize and preserve the history, culture and architecture of its past."

Mayor John Dowd responded, "We deeply appreciate Peoples

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## Contractors Form Association

By JACK GROVE

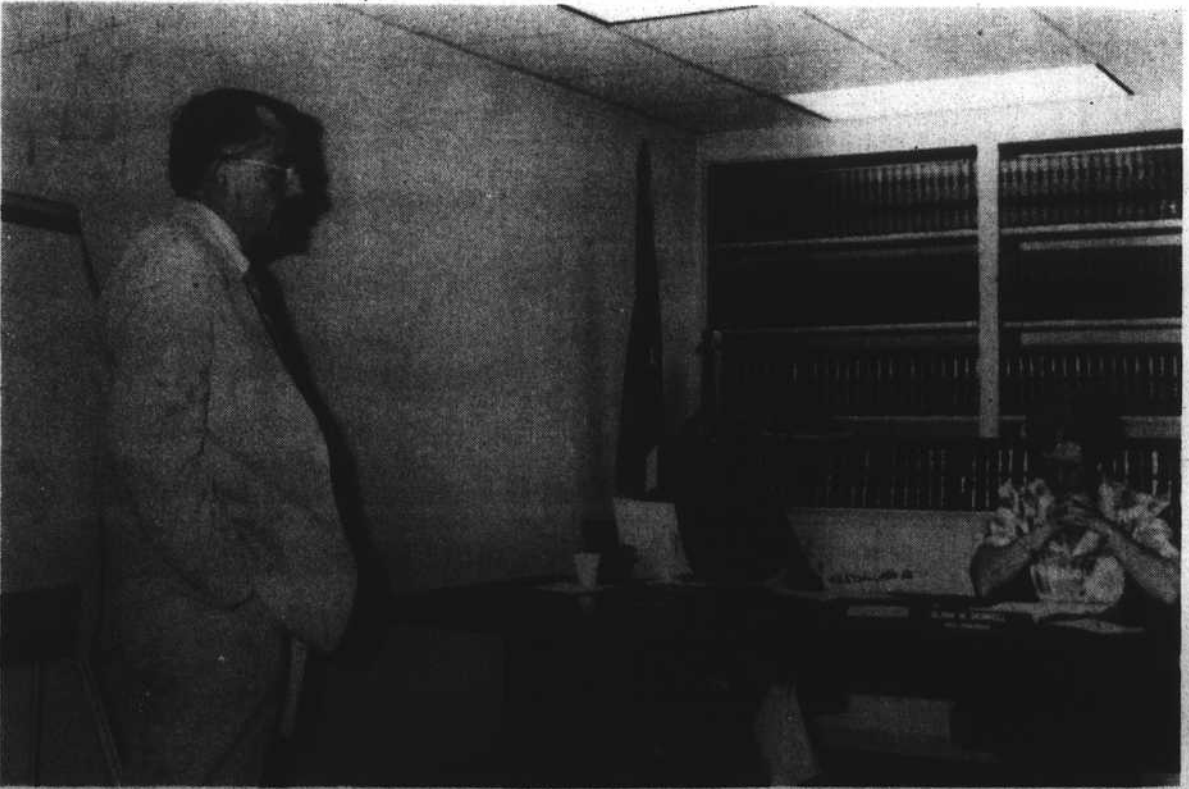
A new association of builders was born at a meeting of licensed general contractors last Friday. The noon lunch meeting was called by contractors to air charges of misconduct on the part of local unlicensed contractors and to question procedures used by town and county building inspectors in issuing permits.

A special guest at the meeting was Mark Selph of Raleigh, field representative of the N.C. Licensing Board for General Contractors. He told the group, "I work for you," and called for an informal meeting of questions and answers. Selph is the only field representative for the state and its one hundred counties.

He said that there were problems in all the counties with unlicensed contracting activity. State law requires that anyone contracting to build a structure costing \$30,000 or more must be licensed by the state. An exception is a person or corporation building on his own property with the intent of occupying the building.

It is this exception that the contractors felt was being violated. It was charged that unlicensed contractors have sent property owners to obtain building permits in their own names to circumvent the law. In cases such as this, the property owner must be on the job site daily to supervise construction. Selph said that this provision of the law "opens the gate to unlicensed contractors." Calling it a defective law, he said the exception constituted "the bugaboo

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**ARCHITECT OUTLINES APARTMENT PLANS**—John MacRae of Anderson-Benton Co. describes plans for the conversion of the Swain School into one bedroom apartments for the elderly. Each apartment would have a full-sized kitchen. Commissioners Al Phillips and Clara Boswell study sketches during the presentation.