



The Public Parade

Tied His Own Hands

May we add our two cents worth to the sentiments expressed January 29 in a letter to the editor by John A. Mitchener, III, about the handling of two cases in Chowan County Superior Court by Judge Charles B. Winberry?

In one case, a welfare fraud defendant was given a stern lecture from the bench, then sentenced to six years in prison, suspended for five years under supervised probation, and ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine and court costs and make restitution to the county in the amount of \$7,074.

In the other case, a convicted wife-slayer was given 15 years and 96 days in state prison and ordered to pay \$1,750 in attorney fees and costs if he is let out on work release. If the defendant received a stern lecture, it was not mentioned in the news report.

Instead, Judge Winberry, who could have given the man 20 years, seemed to be passing the blame to the legislature for failing to use "good common sense" in passing the laws governing sentencing procedures, adding that it was not in his power to change the process.

Well, maybe so. But in passing the fair sentencing act, the legislature was following the advice of lawyers, from Gov. Jim Hunt down, including a number of judges.

What tied the judge's hands was the plea bargaining arrangement between the solicitor and the defense counsel under which the defendant was permitted to plead guilty to a second-degree murder charge. Here was a man who, according to the evidence, had killed his wife with his own hands, leaving three small children without a mother.

As we understand it, presiding judges do not have to accept plea bargaining arrangements that would do violence to the judicial process. Had Judge Winberry insisted on trying this defendant on a more realistic charge, he would no doubt have found his hands untied when it came to sentencing.

We are glad to see the people of Chowan County speaking out through the columns of The Chowan Herald. We would like to see many more letters in the Mailbag every week. That is perhaps the most effective way the public can respond to what it considers lopsided application of the law in our court system. It is also a good way to call other public servants to heel when they get out of order.

Keep those cards and letters coming.

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National Farm Save Attendance Disappointing For Organizers

By JACK GROVE

ELIZABETH CITY—It was a sparse crowd that attended Saturday morning's opening of Farm Save Day on the campus of Elizabeth City State University. The crowd of 25,000 that organizers expected never materialized.

Various sources stated that many area farmers didn't attend due to the previously announced huge numbers expected. They reportedly felt that room for out-

of-area farmers should not be taken up by them.

Some 150 farmers and others, including more than a score of print and electronic media, listened for over two hours as speaker after speaker laid the plight of the nation's farmers squarely on the doorstep of the federal government.

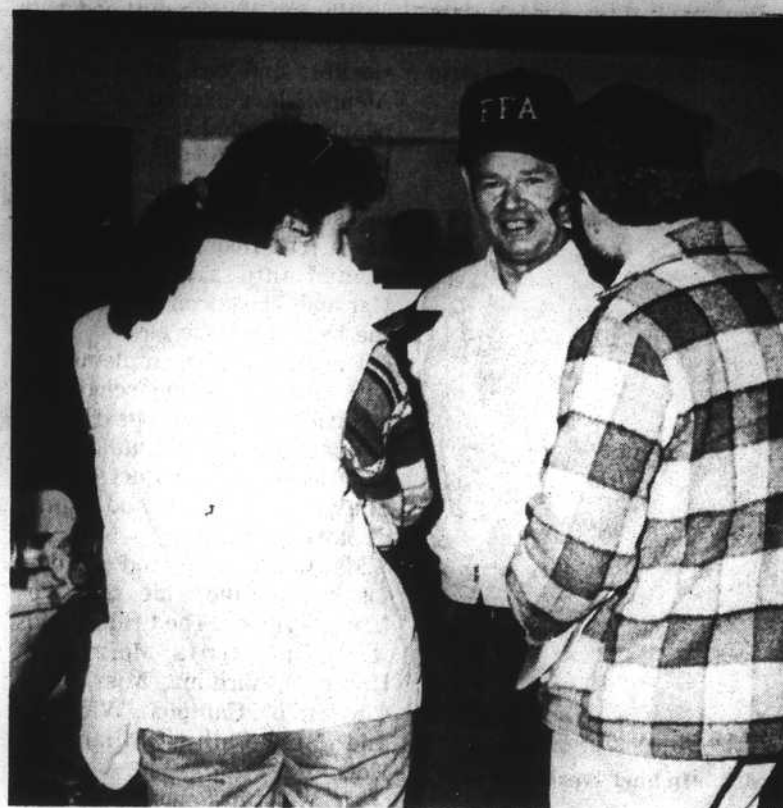
The morning program was conducted by members of the Future Farmers of America from northeastern counties. Introductions

of invited officials were made by FFA members including Mark Stevenson of Perquimans.

Sen. Marc Basnight of Manteo observed that he came from a Dare County farm family. "We had to leave farming." Speaking on foreign commodity competition, he said that the U.S. "used our research and trained them to compete against us."

Baseball great and Perquimans farmer, Jim (Catfish) Hunter told the crowd that he was raised in a large farm family. "My dad told me a long time ago not to farm." About the day's events, "We're here to tell the head officials we need help." And on foreign trade barriers, "They've got to take some of our products or we won't take any of theirs."

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ORGANIZER—Eugene Meads, an Elizabeth City businessman (center) is interviewed by reporters during Farm Save Day Saturday morning. Meads had the idea and organized the event for farmers across the United States.

Site Bought For Planned Animal Research Facility

By JEANETTE WHITE

One step has been taken toward construction of a hotly-contested animal research facility in Gates County with the sale of a tract of

land just south of Corapeake.

The five and one-half acre parcel on N.C. 32 East was purchased by Daniel E. and Helen N. Sonenshine of Suffolk. The land was sold for approximately \$25,000 by Clarence A. Rawls and others of Washington, N.C. The deed of sale was recorded in the courthouse January 30.

The Sonenshines were affiliated with Suffolk Kennel and Research Laboratory and leased a building from Environmental Consultants Incorporated (ECI). The animal-testing facility was closed when ECI went out of business after saying that the purchase and sale of animals was not "profitable". Suffolk Town Council voted in 1984 to sell unclaimed animals collected by the animal shelter.

Statistics show average cost of a dog bought from such a shelter is \$5, with sale price of the same animal for research netting up to \$150.

The Sonenshines attempted to build another site in Suffolk, but were turned down on a rezoning request. An attempt to purchase land for the facility in Gates last year also failed.

Dawn Eure of Gates has led a strong public move to block the research laboratory in her county.

"This is controversial because we fear the animals will be treated inhumanely. There is no definite known number of animals used for research every year because many are not reported, but we know there are millions of animals used," Ms. Eure said.

She said the Sonenshines originally reported they would be doing flea and flea product testing in Gates County, but added testing for heart worms to the list after opposition grew.

"Gates has no shelter or humane society, nothing to monitor and control what they do," Ms. Eure said. "I am definitely against animal research, there are alternatives to this."

Ms. Eure said one laboratory

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Marc Basnight

Basnight Given Post

RALEIGH—Lieutenant Governor Bob Jordan has appointed Senator Marc Basnight (D-Dare) Chairman of the Senate Base Budget and Appropriations Committee on Natural and Economic Resources. Basnight will also serve as Vice Chairman of the Local Government II Committee and as member of the Agriculture, Transportation, Natural and Economic Resources and Wildlife, Education and Pensions and Retirement Committees.

"Marc did a very good job representing his constituents during his first term. I know he will do an outstanding job with his new duties, and I look forward to working with him," Lieutenant Governor Jordan stated.

Basnight represents the 1st Senatorial District made up of Beaufort (part), Bertie (part), Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates (part), Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties.



SPEAKS ON BEHALF OF FARMERS—Rep. R.M. (Pete) Thompson speaks at the opening session of Farm Save Day at Vaughan Center on the ECSU campus. Also speaking at the event was Jim (Catfish) Hunter, shown at right. Thompson told the group, "I don't know of a group in the world that has been penalized for efficiency like the American farmer."

Conference On Family Support Is Scheduled

Rocky Hook Baptist Church will be the site of a Farm Family Support Conference, Monday, Feb. 23 from 6-9:30 p.m.

The conference is sponsored by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and is designed to give support to farm families.

Pre-registration is required prior to Feb. 20 at noon. Fee for the conference will be \$2, for which families will have dinner at 6 p.m. and will receive a resource notebook giving information about loans, medical care and support groups.

Rev. Larry McClure of the state convention said the conference is open to any farm family which registers.

In the conference following dinner, an overview of the immediate future of farming will be headed by Dr. William Toussaint, professor of economics at N.C. State University. Following his address, the conference will be divided into three groups.

One group for pastors and church staff will be led by Tom O'Neal, director of Baptist Hospital Counseling Center in Charlotte. The second group will

be for farmers and will be led by Don Evans of the Missouri Baptist Convention. The third group will be for spouses of farmers and will be addressed by Brenda Kneese of Palmer Springs, Va., who works with clinical support groups.

After group conferences, the meeting will hear a panel moderated by Maurice Cook of N.C. State University, followed by testimony from a farmer and his wife.

Rev. McClure said the purpose of the conference is to help farmers know how to deal with today's crises and to show where help can be received for various problems.

The same type meetings are scheduled in Oak City Baptist Church in Oak City at 10 a.m. Feb. 23; Deep Run Baptist Church in Deep Run Feb. 24 at 10 a.m.; and Poston Baptist Church in Wallace Feb. 25 at 10 a.m.

Rev. McClure said between 1974 and 1984, Chowan County lost 65 farm families. In the same period, Bertie County lost 105 farm families, 201 in Martin County and 45 in Gates County.

Food Funds Restored

Chowan County residents who are eligible for food distribution under the federal Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) will continue to receive this assistance for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Funds for the program have been restored, according to information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Food Nutrition Service in Atlanta.

Commodities provided through the program include honey, processed cheese, butter, instant milk, rice, cornmeal and flour. It was announced last month that the USDA had cut funding for the program from its budget. At that time, N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham stated, "Funds are not available on a state level currently to fund the administrative costs of the program."

In a statement issued on February 6, Gov. Jim Martin, Human Resources Sec. Phillip J. Kirk, Jr. and Graham said that they would not allow the discontinuation of TEFAP.

"We do not intend to let this important food program end,"

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Democrats Schedule Precinct Meetings March 5

Chowan County Democrats have scheduled their first precinct meetings since Democratic victories in last November's election.

The precinct meetings will be held at regular precinct polling places on March 5 at 8 p.m.

County Democratic Chairman Charles Shaw encourages all registered Democrats to attend. "Senator Terry Sanford's victory last November proved the Demo-

crats are back." Shaw said. "People once again are proud to say they're Democrats. We want all Democrats to attend these meetings, whether they're party regulars, or whether they just want to get involved with the party again."

The chairman said that precinct meetings are the most basic ingredient for Democratic success. "The precinct level is where all policy-making begins," he said.

"The more that people get involved in precinct meetings, the better the party can represent the views of all Democrats."

At the March 5 meetings, Democrats will elect precinct officers for the next two years and will choose delegates to the April 4 county convention.

Precincts will also have the chance to pass resolutions on political and public policy issues.



VEHICLES COLLIDE—The flow of traffic at the intersection of Church and Oakum Streets in Edenton was temporarily disrupted last Thursday afternoon, following a 3:00 p.m. collision involving the drivers of a Mustang and a tractor trailer rig. No injuries were reported. (Staff photo by Gail Basnight).