



The Public Parade

A Fatal Strategy

There is a story about a baseball manager who in disgust told a young left outfielder that he had loused his position up so that nobody could play it.

Could it be that some such explanation as that is the reason so many promising candidates for President of the United States are taking themselves out of the race?

First there was Lee Iacocca, the business wizard who brought about such a dramatic turnaround at Chrysler.

After a best-seller book, saying, in effect, that what was good for Chrysler might not be so bad for the country as a whole, and after a series of speeches sounding every bit like a potential presidential candidate, Iacocca let it be known that he was not running and would not be drafted.

Then there was Mario Cuomo, the two-term Governor of New York, who lifted the 1984 Democratic national convention out of the doldrums with a keynote speech that left everybody thinking here was a formidable candidate for the 1988 presidential nomination.

Now he has bowed out, perhaps not as decisively as Iacocca, but more dramatically. His announcement, he said, was based on "reason and instinct."

Could that sort of reason and instinct also explain the reluctance of such other able men as Senators Sam Nunn of Georgia and Bill Bradley of New Jersey to get into the race? Or why George Bush wears such a glum expression these days and former Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee suddenly decides he would rather run the White House staff than run the country?

Is the common denominator among them all the realization that the next President of the United States will be faced with having to make some of the most painful decisions possible for a chief executive, including, but not

Continued On Page 4

Ordinance Is Approved

Chowan County Commissioners this week passed an ordinance that will protect local law enforcement officers and the county against lawsuits in the event of auto accidents related to escorted funeral processions. The ordinance was requested by Sheriff Fred Spruill.

Currently there is no state law governing funeral processions escorted by the sheriff's department. In a letter to Spruill, signed by N.C. Assistant Attorney General Robert E. Cansler, Cansler stated, "No ordinance can ever completely protect you from all liability." However, "I believe the enactment of this ordinance (a draft was enclosed) is preferable to no ordinance at all."

The sheriff told county commissioners that some lawsuits have arisen across the state from procession related accidents. No statute exists giving processions the right of way.

He said that the town of Salisbury did have such an ordinance in effect when an accident occurred at an intersection resulting in a suit. Because of the ordinance, the town won the legal action.

Spruill said that the ordinance would offer protection to law enforcement, the county, funeral homes and individuals in the procession. "At this point in time, we're wide open."

The ordinance provides that a

Continued On Page 4

Currituck Man Tried On Murder Charge

By JEANETTE WHITE

The sound of weeping mixed with grim evidence in Chowan Superior Court this week when Eazed (Zed) Rudolph Meekins of Powells Point went on trial for the April 29 kidnapping and murder of Mrs. Ethel S. Owens of Harbinger.

Mrs. Owens' family cried as District Attorney H.P. Williams lead a parade of witnesses through testimony about the victims' life and circumstances of her death.

Meekins, 28, was charged with first degree murder, kidnapping and burglary after Mrs. Owens' partially clad body, riddled with 19 stab wounds, was found May 3 down an embankment on an isolated, swampy section of U.S. 158 in Currituck County.

In a trial with a white victim and black defendant, a jury of nine black and five white members was chosen. Judge Fred Williams of Durham is also black. In Bertie County, 144 prospective jurors were used to select the panel after the trial was moved here because of tension in Currituck County.

Security during the trial was tight, with all courtroom doors guarded, witnesses not

allowed in the courtroom until they take the stand and a metal detector used on spectators.

The trial has been fraught with motions from court-appointed defense attorneys Lennie Hughes and O.C. Abbott to suppress evidence and each motion has sent the jury from the courtroom, sometimes for several hours. A relatively new law requires two court-appointed attorneys for a capital offense.

A parade of black and white witnesses said the 79-year-old victim was a well-respected widow who had lived alone since the death of her husband in 1971. One elderly black man, Sammy Simmons, testified that he lived near the victim and helped her with chores. "She was a friend, I miss her," Simmons said.

The defendant's mother, Sarah Meekins, had worked with Mrs. Owens for many years, helping with cooking and cleaning chores. Witnesses said a "loving relationship" existed between the two women, but that the victim often expressed fear of Zed Meekins.

According to witnesses, the victim's family became alarmed when they could not reach her by

Continued On Page 4



SEWING UP A STORM—Corinne Thorud was one of a group of local residents who volunteered their time to assist in Little Theatre productions. Here she is shown sewing a costume for one of the troupe's early presentations. Thorud, noted Ross Inglis, "was a reliable, faithful worker, both on stage and off." Much Little Theatre memorabilia from the past has been preserved by a former producer, Joe Conger.

Little Theatre To Reorganize

By REBECCA BUNCH

Since its somewhat unusual beginning in 1964, and continuing through the early 1980's, the Edenton Little Theatre was one of this community's favorite forms of entertainment. Fueled by the talent and enthusiasm of local people, productions spanned a wide range of theatric styles and subjects — everything from the murder mystery, "Ten Little Indians", to the children's classic, "Cinderella".

Now, after considerable discussion among former members of the troupe and an expression of interest by several newcomers to Edenton, area residents have decided to attempt a reorganization. A meeting for that purpose has been scheduled for tonight at 7:30 p.m. in Shepard-Pruden Library, Edenton. All interested persons will be welcome.

The original Little Theatre was formed in 1964, almost as an afterthought, following a performance of the suspense drama, "Night of January 16". The play was staged as a fundraising event of the Chowan Hospital Auxiliary. Performed in the historic Chowan County Courthouse, the event marked the true beginning of the Edenton Players.

"Royal Gambit", directed by

Ross Inglis and produced by Joe Conger, was the Little Theater's premiere presentation. Other offerings in those early years in-

Continued On Page 4



CONFERENCE CHAMPS—The Junior Varsity basketball squad of John A. Holmes ran away with the Northeastern 2-A Conference championship recently. They had a 15-3 overall record and 10-2 in conference play. Team members are (l. to r.) front, Kevin Holley, Donnell White, Tommy Nixon and Chad Johnson. In back, Johnnie Alexander, Mickey Bonner, Jeff Leary, Leroy Revelle, Gerald Perry, Chuck Paylin and Coach Tyrone Spellman.



HAVING A BALL—The dance floor was packed at Saturday night's annual Hospital Auxiliary Ball at the new National Guard Armory. The ball's theme was "Welcome Aboard USS Life." (See page 8-B for additional pictures and details.)

Committee Begins Fundraising Efforts

The Build The Park organization, formed to create a waterfront activities park on the former J. H. Conger Oil Company property on Edenton's waterfront, has launched an effort to raise \$20,000 from private sources to get the park established.

Build The Park's chairman, Gil Burroughs, said that this sum was needed to bulkhead about 150 feet of the property's waterfront, and to get several recreational facilities in place on the park site by late summer. Burroughs further stated that a local waterfront facilities contractor, Waff Brothers, had made "a very generous proposal" to put the bulkhead in place for about \$100 per linear foot, accounting for \$15,000 of the targeted \$20,000 to be raised.

At the February 10 town council meeting, Burroughs displayed a scale model showing preliminary plans for the park. The site plan shown on page 9-A, illustrates what the group has in mind.

The facilities include an exercise and jogging warm-up course, a handball court, an outdoor stage, a beach volley-ball court, shuffleboard decks, and horseshoe pits, covered picnic facilities, and a floating ramp for launching light watersport craft.

Burroughs emphasized that Build The Park is anxious to have citizens' suggestions for modifications to this plan. One feature projected for the park is the placement on it, for use as a park administrative office, of the bridge operator's office from the old highway 32 bridge over Albemarle Sound. This structure is being donated by the Highway Department.

Longer term, the citizens group

hopes to be able to erect a boat house to accompany the floating ramp.

Describing the Build The Park fundraising program, Burroughs said it had several elements, some of which were already underway.

The group's first step was to mail a letter to about 150 individuals and families who had initially opposed plans to sell the parkland to private investors for the erection of a waterfront motel. The letter requested donations, and particularly offered to "sell" each foot of the needed bulkhead for \$100 to donors who could then have their names inscribed on the bulkhead's concrete cap.

A second element of the fundraising drive will get underway Monday, March 9, Burroughs

said. This will be a door-to-door solicitation throughout the town of Edenton and much of Chowan County carried out by volunteer members of the Build The Park organization. Again, Burroughs said, while donations of any size will be sought, remaining feet of the bulkhead will be available for "sale".

Finally, Build The Park will ask civic and business organizations as well as individuals for major gifts for general park development purposes or for contributions in kind for construction of specific park facilities.

Burroughs said, that he could report that as of March 2, contributions and commitments total-

Continued On Page 4

Bear Hunting Considered

By JACK GROVE

Chowan County Commissioners had a bulging agenda at their meeting Monday morning. Among items considered were a proposed bear hunting season, road improvement assessments at Chowan Beach, bid approval for construction of a skilled nursing facility at Chowan Hospital, a resolution concerning a state-wide phosphate ban in detergents and consideration of a subdivision plat at the Chowan Country Club.

Representative Vernon James sent the board a letter asking their views on a brief bear hunting season for the area. Currently bear hunting is prohibited by state law. If this law were repealed, then the Wildlife Commission would have responsibility for setting the duration of the season.

In discussions with Jerry

Wright, Chairman of the State Wildlife Commission, County Manager Cliff Copeland was told that there have been an increasing number of complaints of bears destroying crops and other vegetation. Additionally, Copeland said that local wildlife official, Mike Overton, said that the legislation "was very much needed."

Commissioner Wayne Goodwin told the board that bears feed at night and that his crops have been victimized. He said that even though farmers can get special permits to destroy predators, "bears can stay awake longer than farmers. I support the Wildlife Commission in their efforts" to control the bear population.

The resolution passed. Chowan Hospital Administrator, Johnny Bryan presented bids for construction of the new skilled nursing facility. He said that the bids had already been approved by the hospital board.

A low bid for general construction of \$1,227,100 was submitted by the L.P. Cox Co. Other low bidders were: Southern Piping of \$215,000 for plumbing; D.L. Johnson of \$198,711 for electrical; and Southern Piping of \$297,000 for mechanical. Bids totaled \$1,937,811.

An overrun of \$227,811 over the original cost estimate was due to soil conditions according to Bryan. Approximately 280 pilings will be needed to underpin the structure to allow for possible future expansion to a two-story building. Statistics show an ever-increasing population of senior citizens in the state.

The overrun will be covered partly by a grant from a private foundation and partly from the hospital's reserve fund, according to the administrator. The Board of Commissioners approved the bids.

A bond issue, covering the con-

Continued On Page 4