

# Sheriff Predicts Early Release Plan May Cause Local Difficulties

Chowan County Sheriff Fred Spruill says recent suggestions to grant early release to non-violent prison inmates may cause problems at the local level. The state would like to release 800 inmates from the Dept. of Cor-

rections to relieve over-crowding. The releases would be for prisoners convicted of other than violent crimes. At present, county sheriffs can deliver prisoners to the department of corrections on any

sentence in excess of 30 days. The state pays the county \$12.50 per day for inmates sentenced to more than 30 days and held locally. Officials are looking at the possibility of leaving inmates in

county facilities for any sentence under two years, Spruill said. Spruill says the release would cause overcrowding in county jails and would mean additional operating funds. The Chowan County Detention

Facility, which was designed as a pre-trial holding center, was not built as a correctional facility. The jail has a capacity of 22 people and averaged 14 inmates daily in 1986, with up to six inmates added on weekend sentences. A

maximum of 32 prisoners were housed at one time last year with the overflow sleeping on mattresses on the floor. Meals for inmates are catered by the hospital for \$2 each. The county allocated \$122,000 annual operating funds last year and picked up an additional \$60,000 in jail fees. Based on figures from 1986, the county allows \$26.75 per day per prisoner. Since July 1986, Spruill says the jail has collected \$33,000 for detention of non-county prisoners.

Female inmates are sent to Tri-County Regional Jail in Elizabeth City and the county is billed \$40 per day. Chowan houses inmates for Gates County, which has no jail, and receives \$21.50 daily for each prisoner.

State law requires that certain provisions be made for each inmate other than room and board, such as medical and dental care and recreational facilities. In addition to funding requirements, Spruill said he thought a large percentage of the early parolees would be brought back into the court system.

One state prisoner released early led law enforcement in another area on a 200-mile chase last week after stealing a tractor-trailer. The parolee had been found guilty of car theft and sentenced to a three year term.

"I can foresee this as a big problem down the road," Spruill said. If the burden of providing care for inmates is shifted to counties, Spruill said the transition could not be completed before July.

The state sheriff's association is fighting the change.

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### The Public Parade

#### The Whipping Post

From sentiments expressed in a letter to the editor published in last week's Chowan Herald, we get the feeling that we are one of Rev. Ashby Browder's lesser enthusiasts.

In fact, he accuses us of converting the Public Parade into a Public Whipping Post for "anything or anybody" that doesn't fit into our "political or philosophical camp." He's also tired of our "nit-picking and fault-finding," our partisan politics and "barbs cast toward fundamentalists."

In the process, he commits the same offense he accuses us of. He criticizes us, with whom he does not agree, for criticizing those with whom we do not agree. And he does it with less charity than one ought to be able to expect from a Christian minister.

First, let's get the ownership of the Chowan Herald straight. We bought it more than 20 years ago from J. E. Bufflap and Hector Lupton and gave our brother-in-law a half interest, which we had to buy back when he ran into financial difficulties. We have spent the past few years straightening out the Chowan Herald's affairs and have enjoyed freely expressing our own opinions in our own paper.

We have never made any bones about our political persuasion. We have been elected many times on the Democratic ticket and have tried to advance the principles of that party. Down the years we have come to know some "registered Democrats" who would be more honest if they simply went down and changed their party preference.

That brings us to Ronald Reagan, who did just that, and Jim Martin and their administrations. It is inaccurate to accuse us of holding that they have "done nothing productive or right the whole time" they have been in office.

We have endorsed their actions on occasion, Jim Martin's statewide school bond proposal, for example. We were writing editorials long before either of them came to office and the record will show we were as critical of Democratic presidents and governors

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## Few AIDS Cases Reported In Albemarle Area

By JEANETTE WHITE  
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, called the deadliest social disease of the twentieth century, has not caused major problems for Albemarle area health officials.

Although three cases have been

reported to the Pasquotank, Perquimans, Chowan and Camden District Health Department, no public panic erupted and the victims of the deadly virus have died.

Two cases of AIDS were reported in Pasquotank and one in Chowan County. The Chowan pa-

tient reportedly contracted the disease elsewhere and returned to his native county just prior to his death. In nearby areas, four cases each have been reported in Hertford and Pitt Counties, with six on record in Onslow County.

North Carolina ranks twentieth

in the nation after 197 cases were reported statewide and 136 of the victims died.

Nationally 33,000 cases have been reported, with a mortality rate of 67 percent. Conservative estimates say that a recent recommendation from the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta for public testing will add at least 30,000 new cases immediately.

The CDC has asked that people who received multiple blood transfusions between 1978 and 1985 be tested for the virus, which can remain dormant for 15 years.

People who lived and received transfusions in densely populated areas are considered at a higher risk than those in rural areas.

Also at high risk are homosexuals, bisexuals, intravenous drug users and their sexual partners.

Sixteen people served by the local health district have asked for free testing, three of which

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**REPUBLICANS HEAR DRUG PRESENTATION**—Mary Spruill, employed at Chowan Hospital's emergency room gave a presentation on alcohol and drugs to Republicans at their county convention this week. County officers, executive committee members and delegates to the district convention in Nags Head were elected. Elected as county officers were: Ann Ellis, Chairwoman, Jim Chesson, Vice-Chairman, Margaret Smith, Secretary and Tom Harris, Treasurer. In addressing the convention on "communicating," Jim Robison observed, "We've got to get the word out — we have 700 Republicans and there's probably three times that many that are 'closet Republicans.'" (See related story, page B-1)

## Welcome Center Plans Being Developed

Plans are underway to promote optimum use of a proposed welcome center on U.S. 17 near the North Carolina-Virginia state line to serve tourism on both the highway and Dismal Swamp Canal.

Plans for the center materialized after Sen. Marc Basnight of Manteo proposed the dual-purpose facility instead of a planned \$500,000 rest area. Other legislators supporting the change are Rep. Vernon James of Elizabeth City and Rep. Pete Thompson of Edenton.

Promoters are hoping that the center will influence the Corps of Engineers to keep the canal open and clear.

Legislators have asked for commitments in dollars and volunteers to staff the center and promote the 10-county area's travel

and tourism industry.

Various committees have been formed to study the center and how it can best be used. The Historic Sites Tourism and Brochures Committee met Tuesday under leadership of Chairman Loraine Simpson of the Regional Office of Northeastern Historic Places.

The committee discussed established resources in the 10-county area which could be utilized to help the regional concept of the center, which will be the first in

the nation serving both road and water traffic.

Volunteers were assigned for surveys in each county to determine sites of interest to tourists. Information gathered will be used to determine what materials should be distributed from the center.

Groundbreaking for the new center is planned for spring of 1988 with completion scheduled for the summer.

At Tuesday's meeting Don

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## Drug Arrests Are Made

An undercover drug investigation by Bertie County Sheriff's Department ended Wednesday morning when the first of a number of arrests was made around 3:00 a.m.

Sheriff Wallace Perry said more than 20 arrests were expected on 60 charges ranging from possession of marijuana to trafficking in cocaine.

"There's plenty of it here, we've just scratched the surface," Perry said.

Although details were sketchy at presstime, Perry said investigation showed that drugs were being distributed in Chowan, Bertie, Martin and Hertford Counties.

The investigation, which lasted several months, was a joint effort between the sheriff's department and the State Bureau of Investigation.

At presstime nineteen arrests had been made, with one charge of trafficking in cocaine.

Officials confiscated seven pounds of marijuana and one-fourth pound of cocaine with a

combined street value of \$15,000. An undisclosed amount of cash was also confiscated and three or four other arrests are expected.

## Court Cases Are Heard

Judge J. Richard Parker presided over Chowan District Court March 24.

Terry Wayne Hufton was found responsible for having improper brakes and was ordered to pay cost of court. An appeal was noted.

Thomas Alfred Clarke III was found responsible for exceeding safe speed and ordered to pay cost of court. An appeal was noted.

Xavier Lamar Everett admitted responsibility for speeding in excess of 35 miles per hour in a 35 mph zone. He was ordered to pay cost of court.

Carl Conrad Stallings was found

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## Barker Issues Study Report

Architectural historian Brad Barker, who has been surveying Edenton and Chowan County historic structures for almost two years, reported last Wednesday to a citizens' luncheon about individual buildings and building types that are in danger of disappearing.

Barker opened the luncheon with a picture of the collapsed mill building at Bennetts Mill Pond. He pointed out that this had been the last remaining water powered mill in the area, and that it was associated with William Bennett, and his father-in-law, William Boyd, who were courageous signers to the Test, an Edenton declaration of revolutionary principles, in 1776.

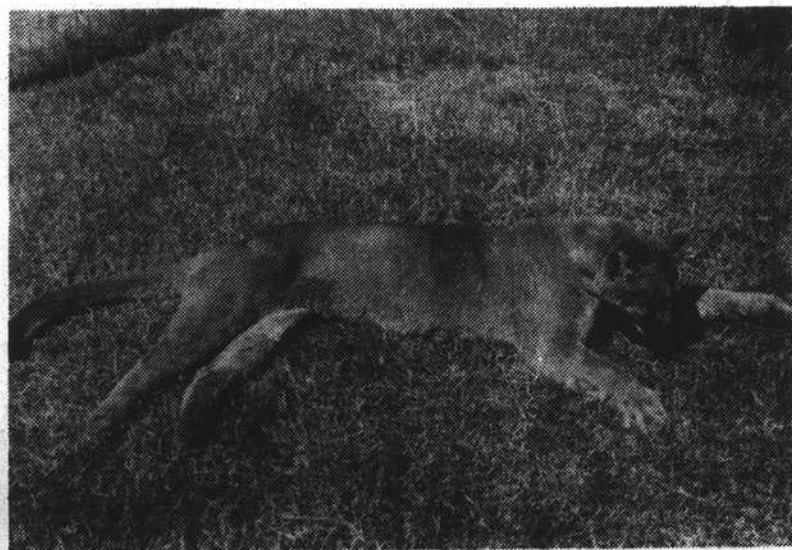
Barker's message to the audience was that a great many structures of historic importance, some erected even in this century, have already disappeared, and that many of the remaining will do so unless action is taken to save them.

Perhaps most important of these, according to Barker, is Athol House, several of whose great columns have collapsed. However, Barker made the point that many relatively humble structures have as much to say about life and culture in past years as do great houses such as Athol.

He cited particularly rural schools and stores as being examples of these more modest but equally important buildings.

Barker closed his presentation by urging owners and citizens' organizations interested in helping individual structures to seek the advice of the professionals in this area at the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

The luncheon and Mr. Barker's presentation were sponsored by four of the real estate companies in town: Century 21, Colonial Real Estate, Dail Construction and Real Estate, and The Rich Company.



This female cougar was killed near Kilkenny Road in Tyrrell County. (Photos by Mike Overton, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission)



This male cougar carcass was found later in the vicinity of the female.

## Two Men Arrested For Game Law Violations In Cougar Killings

Two men are facing charges of violating state game laws in connection with the fatal shootings of two cougars in Tyrrell County recently.

Jeff Garry Gibbs, 39, Fairfield, and Harry Thomas Phelps, 46, Creswell, were charged in the unrelated incidents.

The first dead cougar was discovered March 16 beside Kilkenny Road in southern Tyrrell County. The female weighed 88 pounds and was in "fairly good condition", according to the head of Wildlife Enforcement, Col. Harold Ragland.

The second big cat was killed the following day at a trash dumpster in the same vicinity. The second victim was a male weighing 120 pounds and considered in good condition.

The male bore a tattoo in one ear, leading officers to consider the possibility that the cats were raised in captivity and released.

An autopsy was completed by the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study Center at the University of Georgia in Athens. Officials are not certain if the cats were western or eastern breeds which still must be deter-

mined by an independent expert. The determination is made by the skull size.

Another official with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Hal Atkinson, said eastern North Carolina was a former traditional

range for cougars and unconfirmed reports of sightings had been received over the past 10 years.

Atkinson pointed out that if cougars are in the area, they present no danger to humans because

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## Countywide Sale To Begin

A county-wide sale today, tomorrow and Saturday will feature spring specials of local businesses. Twenty-three businesses are participating in this annual event.

Savings for shoppers can be

found in the full-size "broad sheet" supplement in this week's edition. In addition, more than 10,000 copies of this broad sheet were distributed in the surrounding counties via mail or hand-delivered.