



The Longest Year

Radio and television newscasters have had a field day explaining how time-keepers the world over are having to add a second in order to keep 1988 abreast as time marches on.

It all started when the French, who seem to be keepers of the standards of time and distance, decided to add a "leap second" to 1987, making it the longest year.

The decision was made by the Bureau International de l'Heure in Paris; and so, at 23:59:59 on December 31, an extra second was crowded into Universal Coordinated Time to correct for the somewhat erratic and slowing rotation of the earth.

So, if you failed to spot the full moon of January 3, don't worry. It was a second late.

Survival Tactics

Now that we have survived the longest year and the 99th Congress, what else awaits us during a slow starter like 1988?

Well, for one thing, it's only 352 more days till Christmas. If we are very careful with our resources, that may be enough time for us to finish paying for the last one.

For another thing, there is Gary Hart, whose return to the presidential sweepstakes may turn out to be something less than a second coming.

We predict it will be a short run -- sort of on again, off again, gone again. Dukakis will win in New Hampshire. Gephardt will take Iowa and Gore will run well in the south. By that time Cuomo will decide that he has gained all the advantage he can from playing hard to get.

Then it will be a new ballgame and people will be asking who that fellow was that the reporters caught off base at a townhouse in Georgetown. Gary Hartpence?

Then, of course, there will be the new, "fair" income tax forms to be filled out and reported and a great many of us will discover that our income, like Gary Hart's campaign, is on again, off again and gone again. In fact, we have learned that it is better not to think of it as our money. It's just something left in trust with us until the government needs it, which is every April 15.

Another thing the new year will bring is the economy, which just now makes all of

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Long-Range Plans Formed

By JACK GROVE

Edenton-Chowan School Board members received a preliminary long-range school building and funding plan at a Tuesday afternoon meeting. The plan, minus any concrete recommendations, was formulated by a "super-sub" committee.

Committees composed of board members, teachers and county commissioners have met throughout the year identifying expected future class sizes, and physical plant needs which provided raw data to the super-sub.

Members of the super-sub include county manager Cliff Copeland; county commissioners Al Phillips and Alton Elmore; school board members Cecil Fry and John Mitchener III; school superintendent Dr. John Dunn; and general contractor Ross Inglis.

Their job is to prioritize school construction needs and to identify funding to meet those needs.

As a part of the state's new school funding program to finance local school building needs, a 10-year long-range plan was to be submitted to the Department of Instruction by January 1. Dunn told board members that an extension to the end of the month was granted to the local board. The preliminary plan will be sent, followed by another at a later date.

Two alternative plans were set forth with projected avail-

able funding in mind.

The first includes: construction of a new middle school to house grades 6-8; completion of the John A. Holmes master plan; razing of the 1936 Chowan building and addition of classrooms to house grades K-5; removal of the sixth grade from D.F. Walker and organization into grades K-5; location of a tri-county career center at White Oak; air-conditioning and energy efficient environment for all schools; and construction of an exceptional children facility.

The second alternative would: complete the John A. Holmes master plan; continue to house grades 6-8 at Chowan and replace or renovate the 1936 building; renovate White Oak for grades K-5; remove the 6th grade from D.F. Walker and organize into grades K-5; air-conditioning and energy efficient environment for all schools; and construct an exceptional children facility.

Copeland said Wednesday that funds for building would total about \$6.8 million which would be raised by a bond referendum. The debt service of the bonds would be paid for out of the 2 1/2 cent local sales tax increases enacted in the last few years and the county's share of a corporate tax increase of one percent. This would cause no increase in local ad valorem taxes.

The county manager said

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EARLY FILING - County commissioner Alton Elmore wasted no time throwing his hat back into the ring Monday. He filed for reelection seconds after the noon Monday opening for elections filing at the county elections office. Marie Akins processes the paperwork. Right behind Elmore in filing for reelection in her position as register of deeds was Anne Spruill.

Local Filings Underway

Two long-term Chowan County officeholders were the first to sign up when filings opened Monday at noon for the 1988 elections.

Anne Spruill, register of deeds and Alton G. Elmore, county commissioner from the first township were on hand at the stroke of twelve at the elections board office to file.

Mrs. Spruill entered office in 1976 and signed up for a fourth term.

Commissioner Wayne Goodwin whose term ends this year, said Monday that he was unsure whether he would seek

reelection.

Elmore, who is president of Edenton Furniture Co., Inc., was first elected to the Chowan board in 1972. He is now serving in his 16th year as a commissioner and is seeking a fifth four-year term.

During his years as a commissioner, he has served two years as vice-chairman, four years as chairman and represented the county on a number of committees, boards and commissions.

In filing for reelection, Elmore stated that he originally filed in 1972 because of his interest in the business of the county and the Albemarle area in general and wishes to continue for the same reason.

He cited many beneficial changes in the county during his tenure that included a countywide water system, new courthouse and jail and implementation of a county-manager form of government.

Looking ahead, "Probably the most challenging project facing Chowan County in the next few years is the updating, modernizing and building of more adequate school classroom and athletic facilities." He and other commissioners, school board members and private citizens are serving on a committee that will make construction and funding recommendations in the coming weeks.

Environment Hearings Set

Two meetings, impacting on local concerns about the environment will be held next week. One will deal with Virginia waterways and will be held in Newport News, Va. on Monday at 2 p.m. in the city council chambers at 2400 Washington Ave.

The second, Governor James Martin's Coastal Initiative plan, will be aired at a hearing in Elizabeth City at the College of the Albemarle, Lecture Auditorium, Building B, Room 202 at 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Local and state interest in the hearing by the Virginia State Water Control Board on Monday stems from non-designation of Chowan River tributary waters in Virginia as nutrient enriched waters.

N.C. Secretary of Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Developments said that he was surprised and dismayed that the Nottoway, Blackwater and Meherrin Rivers were not included. "We have been working

closely with Virginia since 1978 on methods to improve the water quality of the Chowan River," Rhodes said.

Both states had agreed to a goal of reducing phosphorous input into the Chowan and its tributaries by 30 to 40 per cent to prevent blue-green algal blooms that have plagued the Chowan in the past. The algae

reduces the river's recreational use. The blooms have also been linked to fish kills and diseases.

Designation as nutrient enriched would mandate monitoring and reducing sources of phosphorous and nitrogen influx into rivers.

"More than two-thirds of

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Concerns Abated

Any uncertainty concerning upcoming school board elections was all but erased with the receipt by the county of a U.S. Justice Department letter.

The uncertainty stemmed from a federal lawsuit instituted against selected counties in the state, including Chowan, for not requesting clearance, in accordance with the U.S. Voting Rights Act, when voting procedures were changed in the 1960's and 1970's and consolidation of the Edenton and Chowan school systems took place.

A letter from the Civil

Rights Division of the Department of Justice was received by the school board's attorney, C. Christopher Bean, last week. The letter outlines the history of the changes in voting for school board members and the consolidation from 1965 through 1974.

In 1965, local school board members were appointed by the N.C. General Assembly. In 1967, consolidation took place and the General Assembly established the at-large with residency district method of partisan election for the board. Six-year terms were established on a staggered basis.

A change was made by state legislation in 1974 which specified that board members would be elected by nonpartisan elections with a plurality vote requirement.

The federal letter was the result of a letter originated by Bean asking for approval of the current method of elections.

The reply stated, "The Attorney General does not interpose any objections to the changes in question." However, according to the Justice Department, the Voting Rights Act provides "that the failure of the Attorney General to object does not bar any subsequent judicial action to enjoin the enforcement of such changes."



PROBLEM - The landscape along county roads is dotted with trash and is the target of a new initiative by county authorities. This picture was taken Wednesday along U.S. 17 business north, about 500 yards from U.S. 17 bypass. It is the same area cleaned up by county manager Cliff Copeland, former Sheriff Glen Perry and county commissioner Alton Elmore last spring during the county-wide cleanup.

Litter Effort Begins

County commissioners Monday opened an all-out campaign to rid the environment of litter tossed away by careless individuals who are apparently unconcerned with the looks of this area.

A six-point litter cleanup project was approved by the board as the result of a comment by commissioner Al Phillips at last month's meeting. At that time he observed that roadside litter was becoming an increasingly severe problem throughout the county.

The points include increased enforcement of litter laws; DOT placement of additional "no-littering" signs; employment of a part-time supervisor for litter pick-up by community service workers and jail inmates; request to Dept. of Corrections for road crews for litter pick-up; make available trash bags to community groups participating in cleanup efforts; and con-

tinuing the participation in the annual spring state cleanup day.

Pointing to the U.S. 17 bypass and business intersections, County Manager Cliff Copeland observed, "It's just unbelievable the trash being thrown out of (car) windows."

He told the board that the sheriff's department had already begun enforcement procedures. He said that Sheriff Fred Spruill had briefed his deputies and had personally issued a littering citation two weeks ago.

Spruill said in an interview later that the citation was issued on Christmas day on River Road in the Rocky Hock area when he observed an individual throwing a vodka bottle from a car window. The person was stopped and ticketed. Conviction in court brings a minimum fine of \$50 and a maximum of \$200.

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NEW OFFICERS - Chowan Ruritan Club recently chose new officers for the year. They are (l. to r.): David T. Bateman, president; Lewis A. Dillman, chaplain; Karl Pritchard, secretary; Jackson Strickland, board member; Kent Rowley, treasurer; and Murray L. Goodwin, reporter. Not pictured are Paul Odom, vice-president; Fritz M. Ard and Van R. Hare, board members. (Related story on Page 7-A)