



Honors Overdue

May we hasten to congratulate the top-place winners of the competition recently sponsored by the Chowan Herald to honor those individuals most deserving of the pride of their fellow citizens in the town and county?

Dr. George Cooke, who is retiring as minister of Ballards Bridge Baptist Church after 25 years of service, won the first place award for "serving as a living example of Christianity in action."

Mrs. Ruth Spencer, a retired school teacher now leading the life of a busy volunteer, placed second; and Dr. James Slade, who specializes in pediatrics and adult medicine and is attending physician for the district health department-sponsored baby clinics, was named third place winner.

But you have read these names before. Perhaps what you had not realized was the community-wide feeling that they were the type of individuals in whom we can all take pride.

That 265 ballots were cast before the deadline Thursday, May 5, speaks well for the winners and the 30-odd other nominees. Usually it is difficult to get citizens to put their name on any sort of ballot where they are ranking one neighbor above another; but the fact that so many were willing to underwrite their choices by putting their signature alongside their ballot is an indication of the depth of their conviction.

The Chowan Herald is proud to have initiated this venture in mutual admiration, where people often overlooked in the daily flow of

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PROPANE-W.H. Weaver Co. foreman, Richard Winge holds the relief valve that was torn loose from a propane tank at the spot where the accident occurred. He is surrounded by debris that was being pushed into a pile by a bulldozer when its track severed the valve from the buried tank.

Gas Valve Broken Tank Ruptured

By JACK GROVE

Construction workers at the Swain School project got a scare Monday when the track of a bulldozer ruptured a buried propane tank while piling up refuse for removal.

Richard Winge, foreman for W.H. Weaver Construction Co., said that the bulldozer broke off a brass relief valve on the tank located 20 feet from the north side of the auditorium and about 50 feet from the back of the school.

He said that the accident could have conceivably caused an explosion and was

concerned about the possibility of other unknown buried tanks.

Equipment and workmen were removed from the immediate area and the fire department and gas company representatives were immediately summoned to the scene.

Edenton Fire Chief Lynn Perry said that a fire truck was dispatched to the scene at 2 p.m. Fire hose spray was used to aid in dispersal of the spray.

Allen Worrell of the county maintenance department removed the remainder of the broken valve and replaced it with a valve provided by Conger Oil Co. A 30-foot pipe provided by Western Gas Co.,

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Construction Begins On The Swain Facility

A group of local officials, state legislators, contractors and interested spectators gathered at Swain school last Wednesday for an official groundbreaking for construction underway there.

The school is being converted into 38 apartments for the elderly and others and the auditorium is being rehabilitated for use as a center for the performing arts, arts council office, senior center and teen center use.

Last classes were held in the school in January of 1986. The school was then deeded to the county so that the auditorium could be saved. County Manager Cliff Copeland said that the disposition of the school was in question. "And then Dwayne Anderson came to the rescue."

Anderson, of Anderson-

Benton Corp. proposed a public-private venture to convert the school portion into apartments and renovation of the auditorium. Due to efforts of Rep. R.M. (Pete) Thompson, Rep. Vernon James and Sen. Marc Basnight of the first district, state funds were provided for a portion of the auditorium work.

Ownership of the auditorium remains with the county while the school portion was sold to the developer.

Anderson-Benton, with assistance from the county, obtained a low-interest FmHA loan for conversion of the school.

A CDBG grant, awarded to the Town of Edenton for a senior center, was transferred to the project and the Edenton-Chowan Arts Council con-

tributed \$9,000 according to Copeland.

Terming the private-public venture a prototype, Anderson remarked that the county was receiving statewide attention in saving the school for other purposes. He said the project was being used as a case study in a graduate planning program at UNC-Chapel Hill.

He commented that the location would have a positive impact on downtown business and that a "spinoff" would be the probable rehabilitation of nearby neighborhoods. "The quality of life of the residents of the apartments will be outstanding," Anderson said.

Apartments are expected to be ready for occupancy before the end of the year and the auditorium will be "substantially complete."



GROUND BROKEN-Ground was broken last week for the conversion of Swain School into apartments and renovation of the auditorium into a center for the arts. Doing the honors were (l. to r.) Clara Boswell, county commissioner, Ernest A Swain, retired educator and the school's namesake, Edenton Mayor John Dowd, Alton Elmore, county commissioner, Roy Mannis, president of W.H. Weaver Construction Co., and Dwayne Anderson, developer.

Public Beach Rejected

A proposed public swimming beach on town property at the airport met stiff opposition at a public hearing Monday night.

The proposal was advanced by town recreation director Robbie Laughton at an earlier council meeting to take advantage of a state grant from Coastal and Estuarine Access Funds.

The beach would cover 700 feet of shoreline on Albemarle Sound. The beach and a planned park and parking area would be on 60 acres owned by the town. The park would include a bath house, a playground, picnic shelters and a nature trail.

W.A. Whichard told council "I'd like to speak against it. I think that a public beach should not impact private property," he said in reference to a nearby residential neighborhood. "The second reason is, I think the area is not suitable." He said the shoreline consisted of blue clay and sand would have to be trucked in for a proper beach.

Don Sims, a resident on Country Club Drive also voiced opposition. He said he was concerned about "keeping an orderly atmosphere," and suggested instead, a swimming pool behind the recreation department building.

Speaking for the proposal, Brenda Spruill told council, "I think we should try to make this thing work."

In opposition, Warren Twiddy commented, "The town fathers couldn't control it."

Council members indicated that they had had input from their constituents on the subject. E.N. (Pete) Manning

said that he had received 13 unfavorable comments and only two favorable.

The site chosen and security concerns were most often given as drawbacks. Marina Crummev said that the distance from town made it unusable for some.

Jimmy Alligood said, "I have a problem too with police protection. I realize that there's supposedly police protection in Cape Colony. I have to say no."

Willis Privott was alone in favoring the proposal when he said, "I would certainly like to see it further pursued."

Joe Hollowell, chairman of the county commission board, said that he was glad to see discussion of public access to swimming facilities. "I'm just glad to see council talk about it."

County manager Cliff Copeland suggested at the hearing that the town and county could jointly pursue beach access at the fishing pier being sought by the county. The pier would consist of a portion of the old Albemarle Sound bridge when the new bridge is opened.

Upon closing of the hearing, council voted down the proposal and referred the beach access question to a town-county committee.

Council members were unanimous in applauding Laughton's efforts in working up the plan to take advantage of state grants and to further recreation.

In another hearing, public comments were solicited on a proposed application for funding under the state's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant pro-

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New Welcome Center's Groundbreaking Held

The groundbreaking of a "first of its kind" facility in the state was the backdrop for discussion of transportation concerns of the northeast and programs that Gov. Jim Martin has set in motion.

The groundbreaking in Camden County was for the new welcome center between U.S. 17 and the Dismal Swamp Canal. The facility will include a 740 square foot information center, an 820 square foot rest area, a parking lot and a 150 foot boat dock for waterborne visitors. It will be located about 18 miles north of Elizabeth City.

A VIP luncheon was held

in Elizabeth City prior to the groundbreaking and attended by officials from northeastern county and municipal governments, the Albemarle Commission, chambers of commerce, Sen. Marc Basnight, Rep. Vernon James, Rep. R.M. (Pete) Thompson, Rep. Brewster Brown, Secretary of Transportation James Harrington, Transportation Board member Phil Godwin and Governor Martin.

At the luncheon, the governor noted that he had met with the area legislative delegation and local leaders a year and a half ago when the visitor center was first proposed.

"This is the first of those in a new policy," he said of the facility.

It is the first on a non-interstate highway and local groups will be responsible for staffing it. "I want to thank you for that initiative and for being here this afternoon," he told the gathering of over 200.

The welcome center scores another first as the only one in the nation to serve the boating public as well as highway travelers. The governor credited Basnight with the idea to have docking facilities for boaters.

Martin referred to another meeting with the legislative

delegation two years ago when he was presented with a map with nine northeastern highways penciled in for four-laning.

He said that out of that meeting and of meetings with other regional groups, his Strategic Corridor concept for an intra-state super highway system was born. The concept calls for 90 percent of the state's population to be within 10 miles of a four-lane highway that would draw the state together.

The highway network would be paid for with "additional money" not yet in the state's budget. "And you started right here with those nine interstate highways that you asked for," the governor commented.

Following Martin, Senator Basnight noted, "I was the one that wrote that map, if you remember, Jim," to appreciative laughter. He said that Virginia was spending more than double the money on roads that this state is.

"These (improved roads) cannot occur unless we generate new funds," he said in pledging to work for funding in the legislature's next session. He concluded with, "You have been a good governor and I thank you for helping in my region."

Representative James told the governor that more secondary roads money was needed also and said that he would support new funding.

Representative Thompson reiterated his previous stand

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NEW CONCEPT-Gov. James Martin speaks at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new welcome center on U.S. 17 north of South Mills in Camden County. The facility will be unique in that it will serve boat as well as highway traffic. Inset is the sign that will greet visitors.