



Occupancy Tax Receives OK

Sometimes Too Secret

For an agency whose highest duty is to uphold the law, the Department of Justice is playing a strange role in the Oliver North case, which grew out of the sale of arms to the Iranians and the diversion of profits to the Contra forces in Nicaragua.

There was in effect at the time an embargo on the sale of arms to either of the warring nations in the Middle East; and there was a statutory provision, enacted by Congress, which prohibited aid to the Contras, both of which were violated by North and company.

North, who was on active duty with the U.S. Marines at the time, claims in his own defense that he was acting under orders of his superiors, including Adm. John Poindexter, director of the National Security Council, William Casey, director of the CIA, and the President of the United States, who was Ronald Reagan at the time.

The case against North and others is being pushed by a special prosecutor, who is seeking conviction on indictments returned by a federal grand jury. The problem is that he is having to move against the Department of Justice almost as much as against the defendants. To establish the chain of command, it is necessary for North to establish a paper trail leading to his superiors; yet almost every time he seeks to introduce such documents the attorney objects on the grounds that classified information damaging to the national security is involved. In at least one instance the attorney general objected to the introduction of material already in the public domain.

Under the law, a government agency may withhold information consisting of CIA records or that is "in the interest of national defense or foreign policy," an all-embracing, vague provision that can be invoked to deny the public use of almost any document.

Now, anyone who has ever been cleared to receive classified information knows that not everything in those jackets ought to be there. Beginning with the lowest level, which is "Restricted," and going all the way up through "Secret" and "Top Secret" will be such things as newspaper clippings, maps from various sources, letters and telegrams.

But it is all "classified" information and cannot be released, which provides a convenient way to put almost anything the classifiers want beyond the reach of the public. But the use of such a dodge in the North case raises the

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Precincts Meet Again

Two Democratic Party precincts have had to reschedule their meetings due to low turnout. The Chowan Democrats held precinct meetings last Thursday evening.

The West Edenton and Rocky Hock Precincts will meet Thursday, March 16 (tonight) at 7:30 p.m. West Edenton voters should go to the New Rescue Squad Building, and Rocky Hock voters to the Rocky Hock Rescue Squad Building.

All Democrats in these two precincts are urged to come out and participate at this time.

Chowan County Commissioners and the Edenton Town Council have joined forces in calling for a three per cent occupancy tax at local motels. The proceeds would be used to promote increased tourism here. The area's legislative delegation has been asked to sponsor enabling legislation in the current session of the General Assembly.

County Manager Cliff Copeland explained this week that the room tax should bring in about \$27,000 to be used solely for an "Edenton-Chowan Tourism Development Authority."

Funds generated would provide advertising of this area's attractions in the out-of-state and in-state media, provide welcome signs on the highway, allow attendance of area leaders at travel shows and provide updated signs for the historic walking tour.

The authority would be responsible for "promoting travel, tourism and conventions in Chowan County, sponsor tourism-related e-

vents in the county and finance tourism-related capital projects in the county."

The county manager pointed out that the town and county cannot pin all their hopes on free publicity such as the *Southern Living* magazine article on Edenton that appears in this month's issue.

Copeland explained, "We would want to do a professional job with it." The first thing envisioned is the hiring of a consultant to aid in planning. "A lot of our problem is we don't know what to promote." He mentioned small conventions of professional groups as one example.

The authority will develop a promotional budget and the county will serve as fiscal agent. Room taxes would be remitted to the county tax office monthly with motels retaining three per cent to offset costs incurred in collection.

Commissioners passed the resolution at their meeting last week while town council ratified the proposal at its Tuesday night meeting.

Funds Earmarked For New Building

Chowan Hospital may soon have a sparkling new psychiatric unit if current funding in Governor James Martin's budget holds up in the General Assembly.

County Manager Cliff Copeland told the County Board of Commissioners at their regular monthly meeting last week that the governor had included funds in the budget for the facility.

The hospital had been planning to renovate the former Unit B for the psychiatric unit at a cost of \$150,000. The \$2.8 million for mental health

needs for this region earmarked by the governor would provide an alcohol and drug detoxification center at Albemarle Hospital and new construction on Chowan Hospital's grounds.

Copeland, Charles Franklin, mental health director, Johnny Bryan, hospital administrator, and George Jones met recently with state Human Resources Secretary David Flaherty and enlisted the secretary's support.

Copeland said that if money for the unit were kicked out of the budget, a secondary funding source has been proposed, an \$85 million state bond fund, financed by a two



PLANT A TREE--Dee Phillips, tree committee chairwoman, presented each council member with a River Birch at Tuesday night's meeting. The Town of Edenton has received its tenth consecutive Tree City USA award from the National Arbor Day Foundation. Sixty-five trees will be planted at D.F. Walker School Friday.

Tenth Consecutive Year Town Given Tree Award

For the tenth consecutive year, Edenton has been recognized as a "Tree City USA" community. Only four other

cities, Brevard, Farmville, Laurinburg and Wake Forest share this distinction. Thirty-two communities in the state

have been recognized this year for their outstanding urban forestry programs.

To qualify, a city must have a tree ordinance, create a legal tree governing body and implement an active tree management program and observance of Arbor Day.

Edenton's tree committee consists of Dee Phillips, chairwoman, Stephen Karl, Gil Burroughs, Frances Inglis and Ruth Spencer with Councilman Livy Goodman as council's representative.

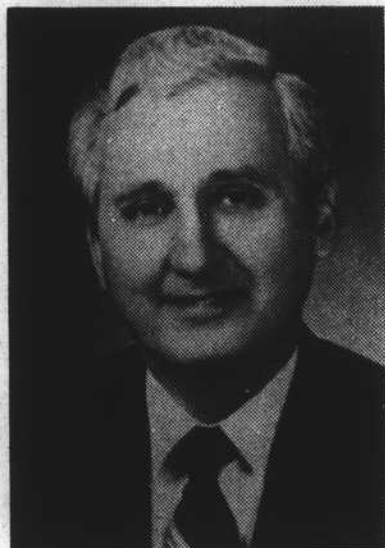
When the award, a special flag and new roadside signs were presented at the council meeting Tuesday night, Mayor John Dowd commented, "These tree committee members and those of the past are the reason that we got this award."

A tree planting ceremony will be conducted at D.F. Walker School Friday, March 17 at 12:30 p.m. A total of 65 trees of mixed species will be planted at the school, Mrs. Phillips said. At the meeting, she presented each member of council with a potted River Birch.

Anne-Marie Kelly, Town Manager, told council that she, Mayor John Dowd and Councilman Willis Privott met with county representatives on a proposed motel occupancy tax. The proceeds would be used to promote tourism.

Dowd said, "We're going to do this in a joint manner." He said that none of the proceeds would go into the general fund of the town or county but would go to a tourism authority. He also pointed out, "It's a type of tax that will not

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Dr. R. Gene Puckett

Puckett To Speak

Dr. R. Gene Puckett, editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, will be guest speaker at Edenton Baptist Church during the 11 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 19.

A native of Kentucky, Dr. Puckett is a graduate of Western Kentucky University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He held several pastorates before becoming affiliated with Baptist newspapers.

In 1982, he assumed the reins of the *Biblical Recorder* which is the journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Puckett's denominational activities have included service as president of Southern Baptist Press Assoc., trustee of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and guest professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The public is invited to attend the service. A nursery will be provided for children, three-years-old and younger.

Murder Case Is Continued

By JACK GROVE

Judge Thomas S. Watts heard lengthy testimony in Chowan Superior Court last Thursday during a hearing on a motion by the defense to quash evidence in a murder trial.

The motion was the latest development in the case of Randall Julian Powell, charged with first degree murder in the death of October 3, 1988 of Donald Meeler at Meeler's mobile home in Cape Colony.

Powell was in a room at the Travel Host Inn with two other men when authorities arrived at 4 a.m. on Oct. 5. SBI Special Agent Dwight Ransom, Sheriff Fred Spruill and Dep. Victor Lamb took the three to the sheriff's department after finding cocaine, a mirror with a white powdery residue on it and a straw.

Ransom testified that he told Powell that they were conducting a homicide investigation and asked if Powell would accompany them to Spruill's office to answer some questions. Ransom said that Powell freely agreed to go with them.

After 39 minutes of questioning, concerning his activities on the night of Oct. 2 and early morning of Oct. 3, the agent said that Powell volunteered that he had struck Meeler in the head with a hammer. At that time, Ransom testified that he told him to stop talking and then formally advised him of his Miranda rights to an attorney and that he did not have to say

anything further.

Ransom said that Powell then waived his right to have an attorney present and proceeded to write out a detailed statement of the murder and answered further questioning. He said that at 6:30 a.m. Powell was advised that he was under arrest for murder and that he might be charged with possession of cocaine.

Defense attorney Lloyd Smith of Windsor contended that his client's statement during the first 39 minutes of questioning in the sheriff's office was not admissible as

evidence since Powell was not initially advised of his Miranda rights. He said that Powell was under "custodial interrogation" during the entire time authorities talked to him.

Assistant District Attorney Nancy B. Lamb elicited from Ransom on the witness stand that the officer had specifically told Powell that he was free to go, that he did not have to make any statement and that he was not under arrest.

Smith called his client to the stand where he testified that Ransom had told him on

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Anniversary Celebrated

Members of Edenton's American Legion Post 40 at their March meeting endorsed a strongly worded resolution that calls for an all-out war on illegal drugs in the town and county.

Adoption of the resolution commits the local veterans organization to an all-out campaign aimed at uniting the community in a successful battle to fight back against drug dealers.

The document says "the community must rally and demand the city council and county commissioners to provide dynamic leadership, ample funding and no less than 100 per cent commitment in order to successfully rid the community of illegal drugs."

It continues, "This effort requires courage because the

local drug dealers are well financed, armed and capable of undermining any plan that might cut into their profits or put them behind prison walls."

Plans call for beginning the battle with a public awareness campaign to promote interest and to bring the entire community into the effort.

The American Legion is currently celebrating its 70th anniversary, March 15-17.

The Edenton post sponsors the Chowan County Fair, Truck and Tractor Pull, Rodeo, Cub and Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls State and the Law Enforcement Appreciation Banquet.

Also, American Legion Baseball, Little League Baseball, Sons of the American Legion and the Oratorical Contest.

Voting Gets Underway

The nominating process for the 1989 Pride of Edenton and Chowan County campaign has now come to an end, and included with this week's edition is a special section featuring photographs and profiles of the nominees.

The section is being sponsored by a number of area businesses who wished to recognize these outstanding citizens for their service to the community.

A ballot appears on Page 15-A of this week's paper so that readers of *The Chowan Herald* may nominate their top three choices for the award. All ballots must be returned to the Herald office by 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 30.