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Riding the river all in a day's work

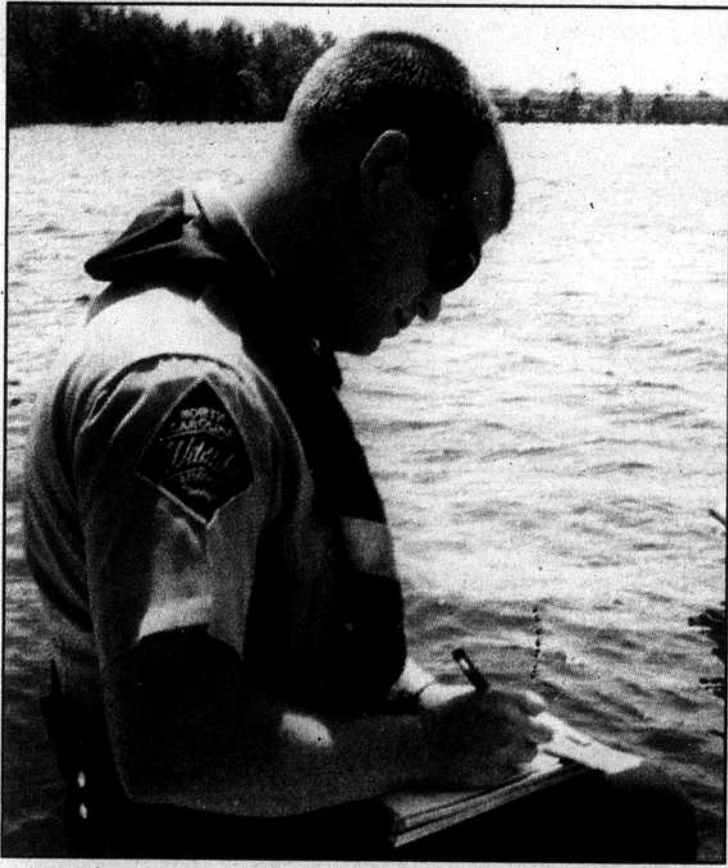
BY HELEN KERR OUTLAND
Staff Writer

The Chowan River is 50 miles long. Where the river meets the Albemarle Sound at the Highway 17 Bridge the river is two miles wide. It is from a boat landing near this bridge that Wildlife Resource Officer Mark Rich will launch his boat.

"Beyond this bridge, toward the sound, is considered coastal water," he says. "The river is considered joint waters until certain points and then it is designated inland waters." Rich points to orange signs that are designating the areas upriver and at the mouth of creeks that are considered inland waterways.

As he eases his boat out of the channel and on to the river he will have to keep the laws pertinent to each area in mind when dealing with boaters. The river is slick calm and the sun shines brightly. There is a soft cool breeze coming off the water. Before the day is over that will change.

Across the river several large sailboats glide lightly



Wildlife Resource Officer Mark Rich gives a boater a little reminder to be more careful. (Staff photo by Helen K. Outland)

under the bridge having come in from the ocean or the Inland Waterway. Rich says that sailboats measuring over 17 must have two fire extinguishers on board. "It is real involved boarding them

when they are at full sail capacity," he says.

Rich scans the shoreline through binoculars and spots a Bass fisherman. He throttles up and the big Mercury engine causes the

bow of the boat to rise from the water. Rich slows as he approaches the fisherman and greets the man in a friendly manner. The fisherman already has his license, fire extinguisher, and life jackets ready for inspection.

"Have you had any luck?" Rich asks the man. The man has caught two fish. He is participating in a tournament. He keeps checking his watch as Rich inspects the live-well. "The tournament fishermen all have live-wells with aerators," he says. "Just the same many of the fish, especially the ones caught early in the day, just don't survive."

However, fishermen are not Rich's only concern. His responsibilities go way beyond that. The summer is here and more boats, skiers, and jet skis are on the water.

According to the Boating Accident and Fatalities Report for 2000 there were 350,000 boats registered in North Carolina. Only 5,925 of these owners were boating education students. There were 173 accidents

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Natural gas firm agrees to rewrite existing contract

BY CHIP ROMANOVICH
Cox NC Publications

The company that holds the franchise for supplying natural gas to the region has agreed to revise an agreement that violates the state constitution.

In an initial draft of the deal, Progress Energy officials asked area municipalities for an exclusive 30-year term for its services, which will begin after the natural gas pipeline through the region is complete. "We can't sign an exclusive agreement," said Steve Harrell, Elizabeth City manager.

"The North Carolina constitution does not allow for monopolies, ergo the exclusive franchise is exactly that — a monopoly. They must not have been aware of that."

Harrell said he recently received a newer draft of the agreement that did not call for exclusivity.

Edenton officials had also questioned the exclusivity clause. Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said she didn't want to limit the town's options in the future.

"(The change) would mean we could issue an agreement with another gas company," Knighton said. "Chances are, there's not going to be another company 20 to 30 years out, (but) you never know, and we didn't want to lock ourselves out."

Representatives of the towns that will be served by the company — Edenton, Hertford, Winfall, Gatesville, and Elizabeth City — also had other reservations regarding the first draft of the agreement.

Edenton officials were also concerned with right-of-way responsibilities included in the contract, and some of the agreement's language, and changes were made.

The 30-year length of the agreement was one point Progress Energy wanted to keep in the agreement.

"Typically, there is a range (in the number of years) these can run," said Aaron Perlut, Progress Energy spokesman. "CP&L (franchise agreements are good for) 99 years. We thought it was a fair amount of time."

Closing of Walker site end of an era

BY HELEN KERR OUTLAND
Staff Writer

Prior to 1932 there was no high school for African Americans in Edenton. Students were sent to Hertford, Elizabeth City, and Winton. Due to the extraordinary efforts of black community leaders that soon changed and in 1936 the first senior class graduated from Edenton High School.

On Tuesday, May 29, former principals and students gathered at what became D.F. Walker to pay tribute to the school as the last class graduated. A 50-year his-

tory of excellence in education was coming to a close.

"This is a special day," began Dr. Allen Smith, Superintendent of Chowan County Schools. "We are here to reflect with pride and reverence on a school and its teachers who gave love and guidance. It reflects extraordinary work and a spirit to provide the best for all of our children."

Among the speakers for the ceremony was Ralph Cole, former principal of Walker for 21 years. Cole honored D. F. Walker, for whom the school

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James Kinion
Former D.F. Walker Principal



Relay for Life a big success

The local American Cancer Society Relay for Life was a big success, despite some stormy weather Friday evening that prompted some participants to head for home about two o'clock in the morning after their tents flooded. The event, held at featured a survivors walk (shown above). Thirty-three teams raised \$105,877.99 for the event. (Staff photo by Rebecca Bunch)

Peoples Choice art exhibit opens at gallery tomorrow

A very special exhibit opens in Edenton tomorrow as the Chowan Arts Council hosts a reception to allow local residents their first look at the Peoples Choice art exhibit for this year. Featured artists will be Peggy Brinkley, Fred Saunders and Marie Lynn Stuart of Pasquotank County.

Chowan Arts Council Executive Director Sue Clark encourages everyone to come and view some of the area's finest artwork during the reception, which begins at 6:30 p.m.

"Each of these artists has his or her own unique style, and all are worth seeing and enjoying," said Clark. "We hope everyone will join us for one of the most special events that we

host all year long — the Peoples Choice Art Exhibit."

The opening reception will be preceded by the annual meeting of the membership of the Chowan Arts Council that afternoon at 5:30 p.m. in Swain Auditorium. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. "We value the input of our members as we evaluate the past and envision the future," said Clark.

The Arts Council is also getting ready for another very special activity, its annual Free Community Music Festival which will take place Saturday, June 16, at the downtown Edenton waterfront park from 4-7 p.m. (see next week's paper for more details.)



Artist Peggy Brinkley's work will be among that featured in the exhibition

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