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Council pledges to work with businesses on solution

Oakum Street parking now in question

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

George Rowsom has been operating his funeral home at 104 N. Oakum St. for four decades, and he's frustrated that his patrons will have to park in the street for future memorial services.

And Rowsom is not alone in his frustration.

Rowsom and Doris McLean took their concerns with the loss of parking on North Oakum Street to the Edenton Town Council during the board's Jan. 12 meeting. Renovations to four blocks of the street have removed considerable chunks of parking space from the street.

"It looks to me now that everybody has to park in the street," Rowsom told town officials.

Begun last fall, the project is about half completed, Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton told Rowsom. Two blocks are completed, with only asphalt overlay remaining. The work has included the installation of curb and gutter along the street. Landscaping will also be added, officials have said.

"The project is very nice," McLean, owner of a convenience store at 103 N. Oakum St., admitted.

Still, McLean said, the loss of parking could have an adverse effect on business owners in the renovation zone.

"This is our livelihood," she said.

Knighton said she, police Chief Greg Bonner, and officials with the state Department of Transportation would seek to "accommodate" the affected businesses. Temporary parking could allow Rowsom to let clientele park in the street during funeral services, she said.

"I think the only option right now is to put some on-street parking during times" when it's needed, she said.

Mayor Roland Vaughan noted that the parking used prior to the project was on the town's right-of-way.

"The parking was out of habit," he said, "not out of ownership. The town owns the right-of-way."

Vaughan said the town is aware of the impact the loss of parking will have on affected businesses. He also noted that the street's new look does include "cutaway" parking areas, including one near McLean's store.

Knighton said the town's intent was to improve that four-block section of North Oakum Street, the town's hub for African-American small businesses.

"The intent was not to eliminate parking," she added.

Rowsom and McLean also said they would have liked to receive more notice of the impending work, prior to council's approval of the project more than three years ago.

DOT used flashing signs to alert residents of the information meeting held in 2001, the town manager said.

"Unfortunately," she added, "not everyone who was affected came" to that meeting.

McLean said she only received a letter stating that the project would happen.

Despite the businesses contentions about the loss of parking, the project has moved forward.

"(DOT is) hoping in the next few weeks that the project will be completed," Knighton said.

King's legacy is celebrated

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Although he stepped out of the public eye in November, the Rev. Jerald I. Perry was back in front of a crowd early Monday afternoon.

Perry, who served 15 years on the Edenton Town Council before leaving the board more than three months ago, was the keynote speaker at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration inside Swain Auditorium. With about 200 listeners on hand, Perry touted the slain civil rights leader's desire to effect change, without the need for notoriety. Perry agreed with King's united stance for change.

"It matters to me less who gets the credit, than who gets the job done," Perry said.

During his audience-rousing address, Perry urged his listeners to go home and read King's 1967 book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* and the writings of Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes, who also rallied against racial and social injustices.

Perry, himself a minister for the past 14 years, said some of the social equalities King worked for have been achieved. But now is not the time to rest, he added.

"I'm of the opinion," Perry said during the 90-minute ceremony held on the state and federal holiday observed in King's honor, "that it's time to assess where we are."

Continuing to seek equality in public education — namely, eliminating the racial achieve-

ment gaps that currently plague public school systems — is the best place to begin that assessment, Perry said.

Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan agreed that education "is the great equalizer." He said the arrival of a new



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of brotherhood and nonviolence was remembered Monday during a special service at Swain auditorium.

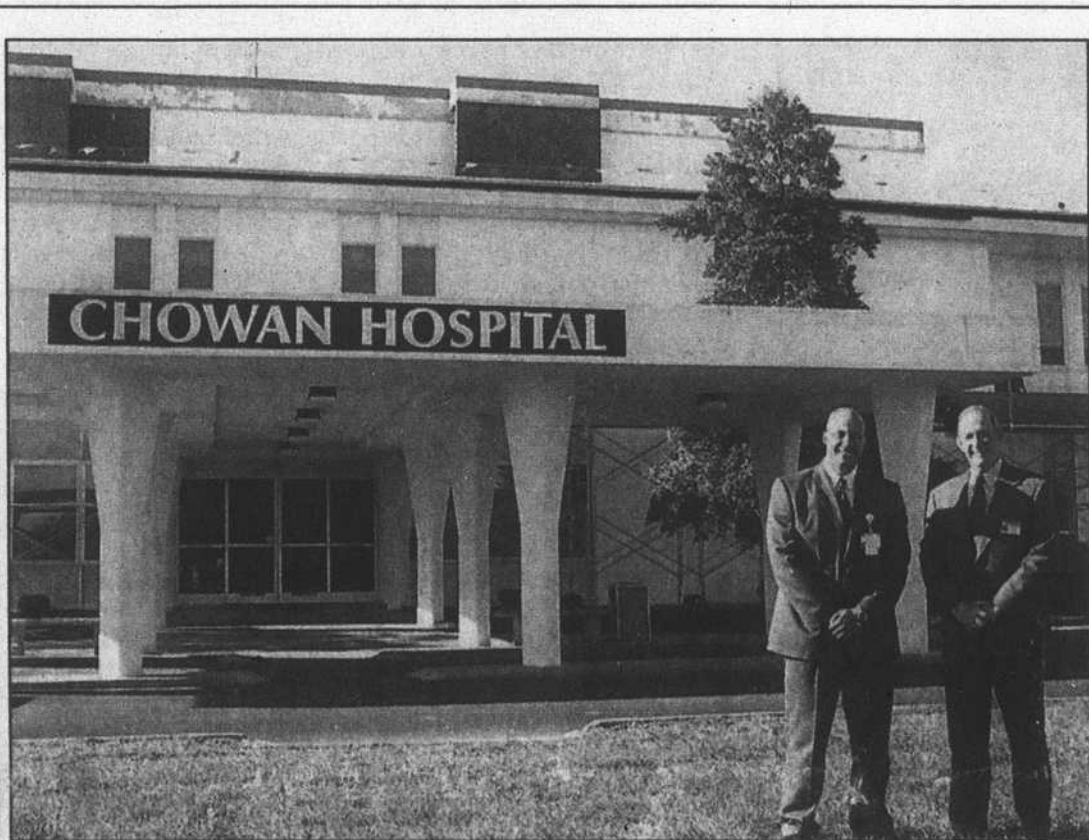
Boys & Girls Club in Edenton — expected to open programs later this month — could play a role in leveling playing fields for youths.

"We need to reach more children at that formative age," Vaughan said.

Unity will bring more change than using varied approaches, Perry said.

"When we all learn the same lesson," he said, "we can move on with the power and authority ... that we know we are there (working) for the cause of humanity."

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Jeff Dial, Director of Support Services, stands with Chowan Hospital President, Jeff Sackrison, in front of the newly waterproofed facade. The project that will replace the roof and waterproof the walls will be completed in early March.

Hospital's new look about more than beautification

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

Over the past few weeks, passersby may have noticed the fresh new appearance of Chowan Hospital. On first thought the new crisp facade may appear to be just a fresh coat of paint. Don't be confused; the new look is not paint or stucco, but a weatherproofing system to protect and weatherproof the brick outside.

During Hurricane Isabel wind gusts over 100 miles per hour caused rain to leak inside of the hospital through the walls and the bricks. "One wall in the Emergency Department looked like a water-

fall," Mary Katherine Ohanesson, PR of Chowan Hospital said. "I didn't even know a brick could leak," she added.

"Employees were vigilant during the storm in covering up the equipment so that no damage would come to it," Jeff Sackrison, President of Chowan and Bertie County hospitals said. "Most of the damage was to the ceiling tiles and the walls," Sackrison added.

Because of the age of the building (over 30 years) and the lack of construction done for its upkeep other than occasional patching, the University Health Systems (UHS) and Chowan Hospital decided that it was time to undergo analysis of the roof and walls.

"The roof was 5 years away from being replaced when Hurricane Isabel came along," Sackrison said. "After the storm, the roof was analyzed and the leaks during the storm were found to be coming from the bricks," Sackrison said.

"Although existing leaks at Chowan Hospital greatly needed repair, the amount of damage and water penetration experienced during Isabel dictated that action be taken," Jeff Dial, Director of Support Services, said. "In concert with UHS Design and Construction, an outside architecture and design firm

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Clark leaves CAC for new adventure

BY REBECCA BUNCH
The Chowan Herald

For the past seven years, New Jersey native Sue Clark has called Edenton home. But this spring, she will pack her bags and move on to a new adventure down life's highway. She and her faithful canine companion, Lucy, will be moving to Asheville, NC to find a new home - and a new life - with Sue's soon-to-be husband, musician Timmy Abell.



Clark

Clark, who has formed many friendships in the community during her years as executive director of the Chowan Arts Council, informed the members of the CAC board of directors of her decision in a letter. In the letter, dated Jan. 12, Clark commented, "As most of you know, I will be getting married at the end of May. I will be moving to Asheville and starting a company with my new husband offering arts education performances and residencies in schools. I will also, at long last, have some consistent time available to address my own artwork."

In her letter, Clark also expressed great pride in the continued growth being experienced by the nonprofit arts organization. "I am very proud of the tremendous growth of our organization over the past several years and of the reputation that we have earned locally, regionally, and across the state," she wrote. "We have met challenges with determination

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Divers find body of Cahill, 24, missing tugboat worker

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Divers found the body of a tugboat worker missing in cold Chowan River waters for 10 days early on the morning of Jan. 12.

The clothed body of Aaron Cahill, 24, of Elizabethtown, Pa., was found a half-mile from the Bertie County shoreline at 4:30 a.m., Peter Rascoe, spokesman for the search efforts, said early Wednesday morning. Cahill reportedly fell from the "Nancy B," a 68-foot Norfolk, Va.-based tugboat, on the morning of Jan. 2.

"The (Cahill) family is re-



Cahill

lieved," Rascoe said. He telephoned Michael Cahill, Aaron Cahill's father, at his home in Baton Rouge, La. shortly after 5 a.m. Wednesday.

Cahill's body was located in water roughly 17-feet deep. Water temperatures have remained below 40 degrees since Cahill went overboard, Rascoe has said. He was found in the Mount Gould Landing area the search had targeted since rescue and re-

covery efforts began, Rascoe said. It was near the area where Cahill's work gloves, boots, and hearing protection were found shortly after he fell in.

Wednesday night, "cadaver dogs" turned up two alerts, Rascoe said. A "sidescan" sonar also detected something on the riverbottom, he said. Craven County Emergency Management Coordinator Stanley Kite and Bertie Sheriff Gregg Atkins then made the decision to call in a dive team from Sydney. Those divers got in the water around midnight and located Cahill's body several hours later.

The Bertie sheriff's office transported Cahill's body to the state Medical Examiner's Office in Greenville.

At the height of the search, 29 local, state and federal agencies were involved in the search. More than 500 man-hours were logged in the recovery efforts, Rascoe said Tuesday.

He was reportedly hosing down the boat's deck when he went overboard. None of the other three crewmembers saw Cahill go overboard, officials have said. The boat was believed to have been about a mile from shore when Cahill disappeared, officials have

said. His death is being investigated by the Bertie County Sheriff's Office, Rascoe said last week. The incident is also being investigated by the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Safety Detachment from Elizabeth City and N.C. Wildlife Resources officials.

Cahill had planned to marry his fiancée Jennifer Hoffman later this year, family members have said. According to Peter Rascoe, Aaron Cahill's drowning death in the Chowan River is the first to be investigated by Chowan officials in about 15 years.

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