

CHOWAN HERALD

Doris Hughes honored as Woman of the Year Society, C4

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Should it stay or go?
Town to evaluate need for caution light in downtown Edenton
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Lauren Winner talks of Jewish upbringing, Christian conversion
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Edenton goes green



Pet and Pedal parade
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D. F. Walker OM teams head to state competition
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State ban on herring fishing could kill local heritage

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Herbert and Bobby Byrum may be the last of four generations of Byrum herring fishermen in northern Chowan.

Herbert Byrum started walking and fishing at about the same time.

"Daddy said, 'You're old enough to help, you're old enough to go fishing,'" the 63-year-old Cannon's Ferry commercial fisherman said.

Byrum believes a ban on catching river herring will put an end to the long tradition that flourished in the Albemarle Sound and Chowan River until recent years.

The ban, imposed by the Marine Fisheries Commission last month, bars com-



Herbert Byrum

mercial fishermen from hauling in herring from the river and sound. Over the years, catches would yield thousands of fish.



State officials say herring has been over-fished. Byrum and others disagree. They say the herring have recovered from low stock counts in the 1980s.

Some local fishermen are catching up to 10,000 of the fish per day, only to have to turn them loose.

Still, all the fishermen can do is pull in their nets and take home what the state allows. Most of what is brought in is nothing more than bait

force behind the ban. The more herring there are in the rivers, sounds and Atlantic Ocean, the more food there is available for rockfish and tuna — two species prized by recreational fishermen.

"When you put politics into anything, especially something like commercial fishing, you ruin it," he said.

"The whole thing in a nutshell is they want us out of the water."

Marshall Williford, a Chowan member of the commission, voted with the 4-3 majority to impose the ban. Williford said the move was necessary to aid the recovery of river herring stocks.

"I supported the moratorium," Williford said, "and continue to feel it is necessary to have [with] hopes of saving the river herring."

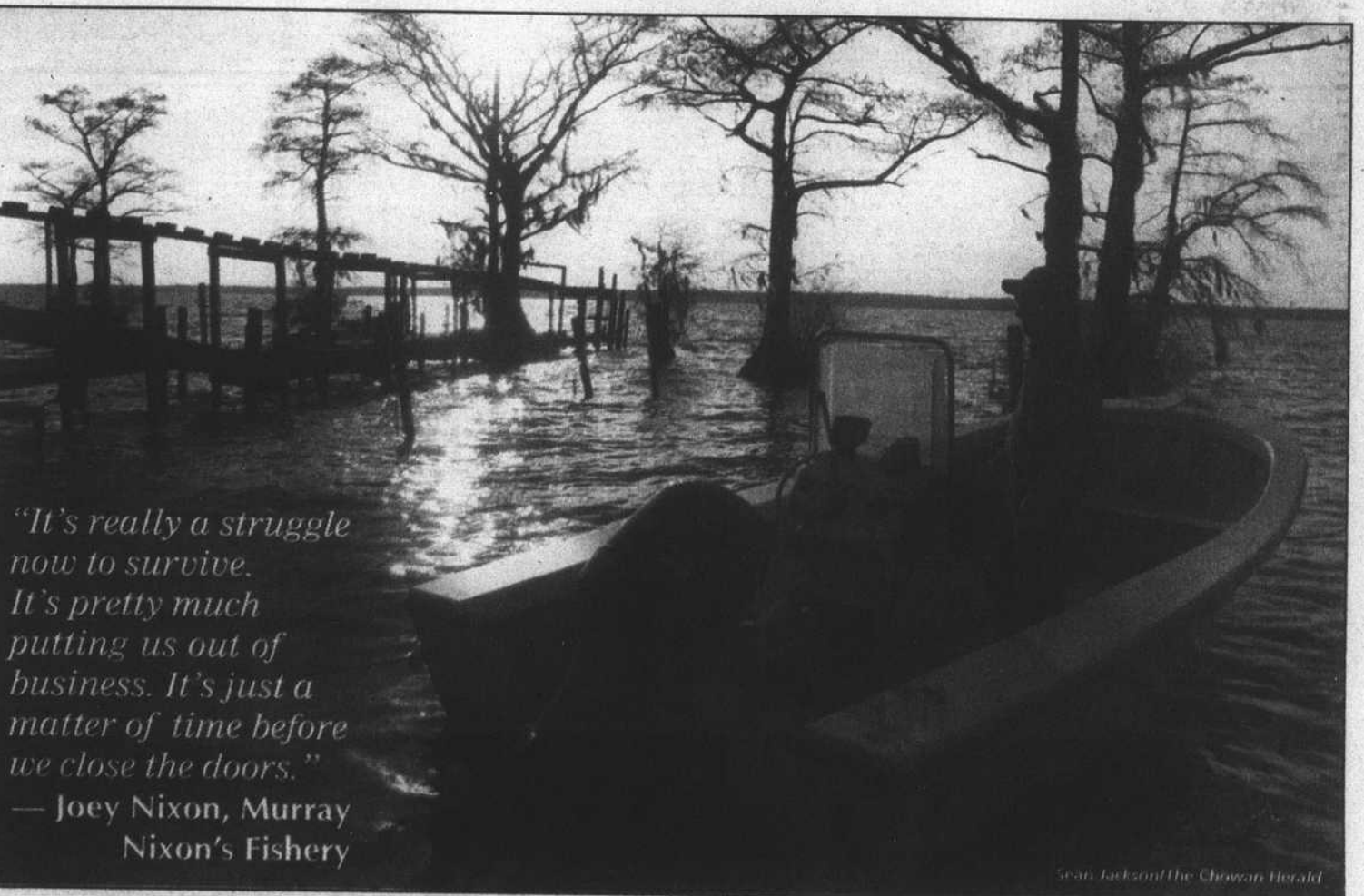
Joey Nixon, who runs Murray L. Nixon Fishery Inc. in Rocky Hock, disagrees. Nixon believes that herring stocks have already recovered from Chowan River pollutants that hampered a number of fish species in the 1980s.

"There's plenty of herring here ... It's a joke," Nixon said of the ban.

fish, Byrum said.

"We're really just junk fishing," he said.

Byrum said politics is the driving



"It's really a struggle now to survive. It's pretty much putting us out of business. It's just a matter of time before we close the doors."

— Joey Nixon, Murray Nixon's Fishery

Over 200 fisheries once thrived along the banks of the Chowan River. Many families made their living off the day's haul, including Herbert Byrum, above. A Marine Fisheries ban could stop a once-thriving way of life in Chowan.



His father, Leon Nixon, fished for years before venturing into another line of work — the restaurant business. Leon Nixon hates to see the industry that supported his and other families for more than a century come to an end.

"It's stupid," he said of the ban. "It's very stupid. It's

politics." The Nixons and others point out the irony that a four-day reprieve to the ban will happen in April. But only herring from the Chowan River can be caught, and those fish must be used for the Jamesville

Herring Festival over Easter weekend.

"It's ironic, don't you think?" said Peter Rascoe, the Chowan County special projects official who helped bring a public park and pictorial history to Cannon's Ferry a few years ago.

A Dying Tradition

Frances Inglis' grandfather, Frank Wood, ran the Greenfield fishery on the Albemarle Sound roughly a

century ago. That fishery, about 12 miles east of Edenton, has long since closed down. Inglis grew up near that fishery. She hates to see the tradition die, with the loss of boats brimming with herring and men making a living on the water.

"You can't keep a single herring now," she said. "It's such a shame."

Inglis has notes dictated by her mother, Rebecca Wood

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Families coming to Edenton are ready to play, survey says

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

Did you know that Edenton ranks number 18 among the most desirable places in the Carolinas to live, according to a recent survey published in *Carolina Living* magazine?

Or that 14 percent of those responding to the survey said they plan to start a new business in our state, or move an existing one?

Those were just two of the survey results shared with a local audience during a presentation by publisher Patrick Mason during a visit here last week.

Mason said newcomers to the Edenton area will be col-



Mason

lege educated and will possess more disposable income.

With an average household income of \$119,000, he said, they will also be looking for more ways to enjoy leisure time and ways to spend.

"These families will be arriving ready to play," Mason said.

And, he noted, while some taking the pop quiz he presented to the audience pre-

dicted golf would be a favorite activity, it actually came in at number 11.

The number one spot on the survey went to walking paths, followed by swimming and shopping.

"This town is a developer's dream," Mason said, when people look at all it has to offer.

All that came as very good news to Mayor Roland Vaughan, who had met Mason and invited him to make the presentation.

Vaughan said that with all the planned new housing developments in the works

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Fate of Broad Street stoplight pondered by town officials

Complaints by residents prompted Town to evaluate traffic flow

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Town officials want to keep motorists from sitting at a downtown intersection after businesses have closed for the day.

But exactly how to do that is still not certain, Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton says.

Last week, the stoplights at the intersection of South Broad and King streets were set on a

blinking caution mode overnight.

Hopes were to address the complaints from residents who said they were spending too much time waiting for green, Knighton said.

"I had one resident who said he felt he'd spent half his life sitting at that intersection," Knighton said.

Comments about the two-day test have been favorable, she added.

"We got three, four calls with people saying, 'Wow, this is a good thing,'" she said.

Police Chief Greg Bonner is still mulling whether or not the caution mode — which could run from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. — is the safest option, Knighton

said.

And then there's state officials' opinions. The stoplights are owned and maintained by the town.

"[The state Department of Transportation] doesn't like what we're doing," Knighton said.

But the state will supply a switch-timer for the town to use during the next round of tests, for which a date has yet to be determined, Knighton said.

The town council will have the final say.

"We thought we'd try it, get some feedback, send it to council and see if they think it's an option," she said.

Council would not vote on the issue until at least April, Knighton added.



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Rocky Hock Opry Friday & Saturday April 27 & 28 - 7:30 PM
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Billy Smith - Suffolk, VA 757-925-4541