

TOUR TIME IN EDENTON

Sprucing up for the Pilgrimage

Locals working in gardens, homes for flocks of weekend visitors to biennial event

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

Nancy Reilly may have looked relaxed but she was really hard at work.

Sipping coffee and still wearing her pajamas, she was working on preparing short bits of historical and architectural information about her home to share with Pilgrimage visitors.

The house is ready and awaiting only the arrival of fresh flowers she plans to buy.

"I'm going for a natural look," Reilly says, "not a lot of elaborate arrangements."

Several blocks away, Frances Inglis was working in the garden at the Homestead, where generations of her family have lived.

Getting ready for the tour makes homeowners more aware of how their homes will look to others, Inglis says.

"You start to notice things, like piles of books sitting around that you haven't done anything about."

Gardening galore

All over town, homeowners were getting ready to greet the thousands expected to visit during the Pilgrimage.

Extra coats of paint are being added and yards are being readied.

Over at the Shepard-Pruden Library, Master Gardener Sandy Granger was tidying up the grounds.

Some plants there were damaged by an unexpected frost and needed replacing.

Local plant nurseries are getting calls from home-owners who, mindful of the frost, want them to hold plants until just before the Pilgrimage.

Setting out new flowers will happen before Friday — just not too quickly.

"Judging by the number of calls we've had," said Sandra Halsey of Halsey's Lawn and Garden, "we're expecting a really busy week."

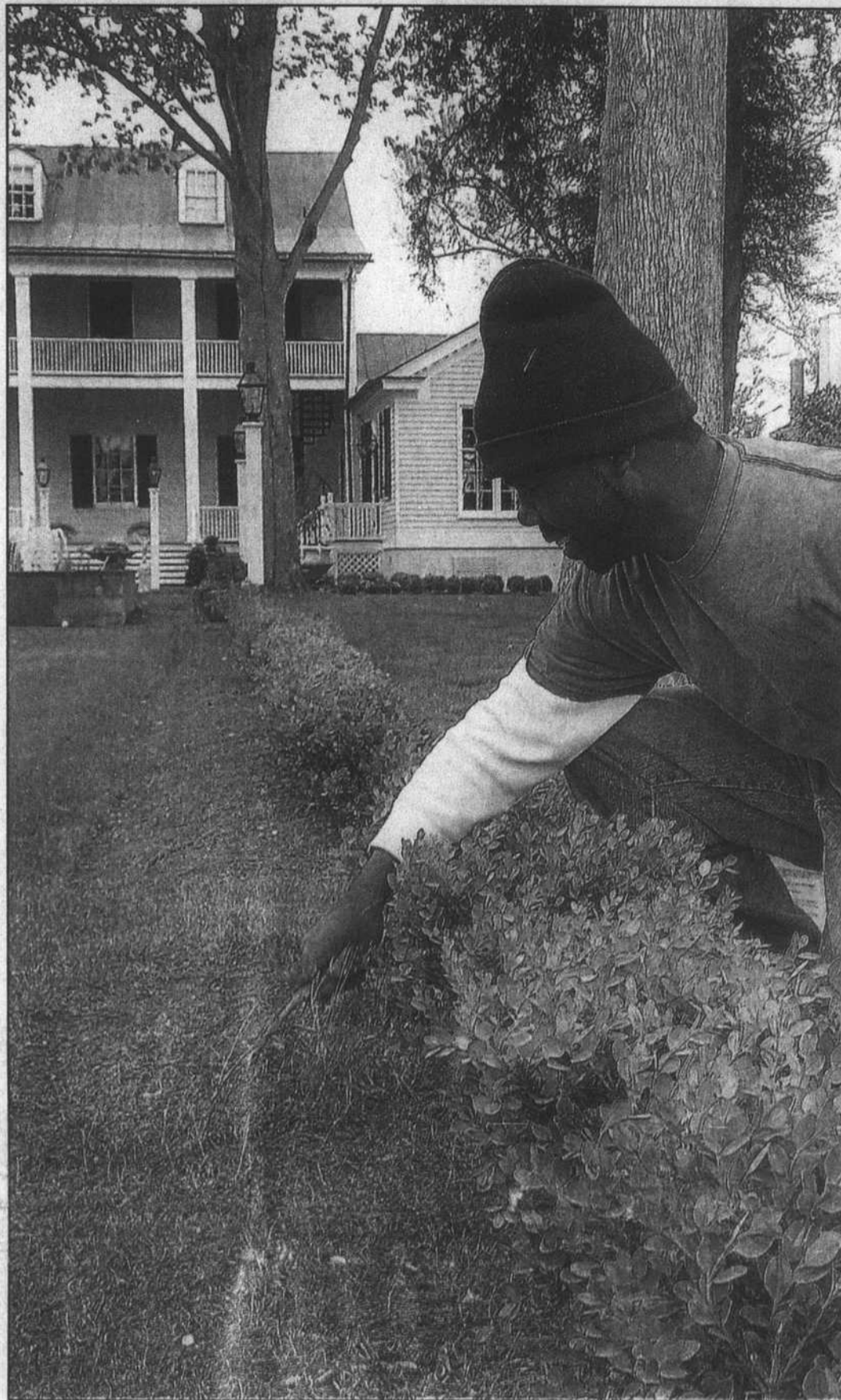
Busy businesses

Downtown at Acoustic Coffee, owner Anita Andersen said her shop would stay open later Friday evening and that she was going to try to have special music on Sunday afternoon as well.

She's just returned from vacation, is relaxed and ready to greet Edenton's special guests.

"I had to go take a rest to get ready for it," she joked.

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Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Gabriel Williams weeds in the yard of the home of Jim Farr, the Skinner-Paxton House, on West King Street. The home is one of 16 on the tour.

Bank's Broad Street plans draw concern

Inside, A3

Bull riders compete at Rocky Hock rodeo

See below

Town Hall fire treated as arson

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Thieves broke into the town manager's office yesterday, stole computers, and started a fire.

The incident is being investigated as arson, a break-in, and larceny.

"We're looking at it as an arson," Police Chief Greg Bonner said, as town and state Bureau of Investigation investigators combed the building's front room.

Yellow crime-scene tape blocked residents from entering the building.

"Somebody tried to do serious damage, that's for sure," Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said.



Town Finance Director Janet Hines discovered a fire at the counter in the front of the building when she arrived for work, Bonner said.

Although the fire was quickly put out, smoke and fumes — in addition to the ongoing investigation — forced town employees to set up temporary quarters in the adjacent Gateway Bank building, Knighton said.

Town staff moved into the Chowan County Water Department offices in the county office building later in the day.

"We don't know how long we'll be out of the office," Knighton said, adding that it could only be a matter of a day or two.

Bonner said it appears at least two suspects broke out a window in Knighton's office — in the rear of the building — stole three computers, then set a fire at the counter.

A pipe or similar object was used to break out the window in Knighton's office, Bonner said. The suspects apparently left out of a back door, he added.

Hines made the call to the fire department around 8 a.m.,

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Rodeo reels in crowd, riders at Top Notch ring

Rocky Hock arena hosts first of seven sanctioned events

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Jonathan Stevenson of Hertford was pumped before he even hopped atop his bull Saturday night.

Stevenson, 18, would be the first rider out of the gate at the rodeo at Top Notch Ranch & Arena in Rocky Hock. Nervous physical energy is good, he said, but a positive frame of mind is a must.

"You want to ride the eight seconds and win the money," Stevenson said with a grin shortly before the event began.

Stevenson did just that. Riding his bull Eject, Steven stayed atop for eight seconds, winning the Intermediate Division event with a 70-point ride.

Cody Howard of Bear Grass also had a full ride, atop his bull Dairy Queen.

"I've been at it for about a year," Howard, 17, said before posting a 64-point score in the Intermediate Division before nearly 300 fans.

It was the first event at Top Notch sanctioned by the Southern Extreme Bull Riding Association. Top Notch official Joey Nixon, like the riders, was psyched about the event. Nixon just opened Top Notch last spring.

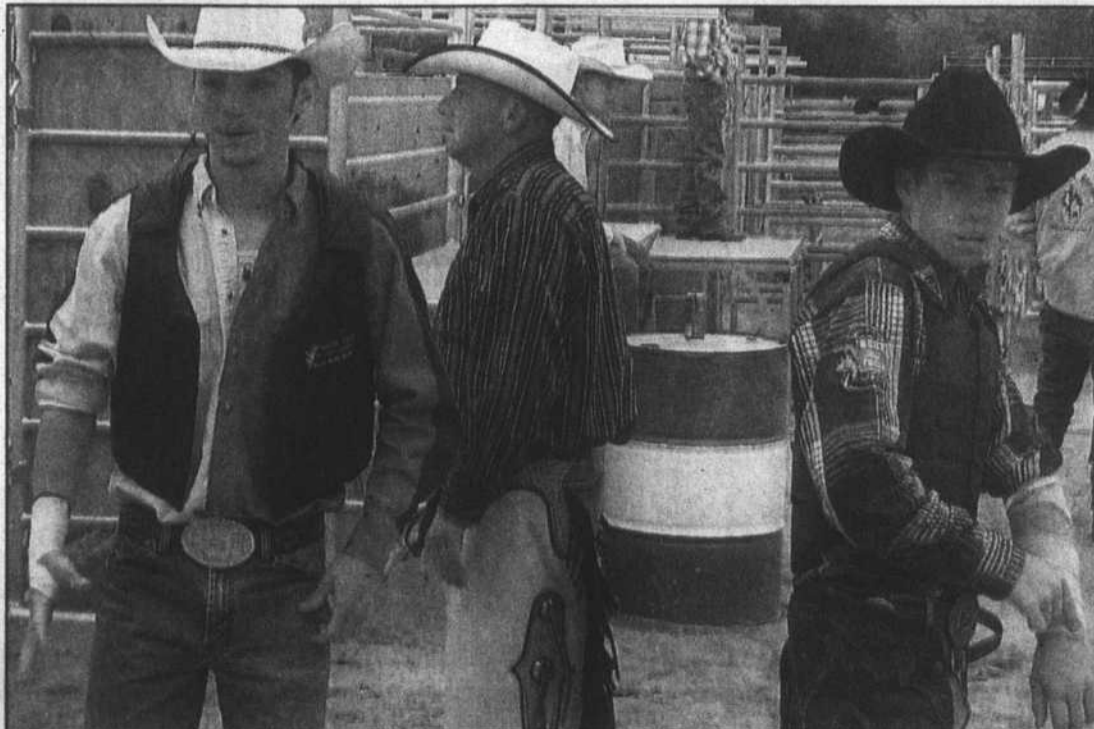
"We just want to have a good show," Nixon said.

That they did.

With fans of all ages seated in the bleachers, 21 bull-riders and a host of women barrel racers thrilled the crowd on a cloudy, cool night.

The object is to appeal to

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Sean Jackson/The Chowan Herald

From left, Jonathan Stevenson, John Eure, and Cody Howard await their turns on rodeo bulls Saturday at Top Notch Ranch & Arena in Rocky Hock.



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Shepard-Pruden library celebrates expanding future

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