

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## Marching unit may be taking last few steps

The Perquimans County Marching Unit will apparently no longer be marching at high school football games after this year, though there is a chance that the unit may be merged with the high school band.

School board chairman Clifford Winslow suggested the possibility of merger in a Monday night meeting with parents concerned over the fate of the marching unit.

If such a merger were to occur, marching unit members would be required to take band and be able to play a musical instrument. They would be under the full control of band director David Zimba, Winslow said.

A special meeting will be set up between band director David Zimba, high school principal William Byrum, the school board and schools superintendent Pat Harrell to determine if such a merger is feasible.

The parents group had come to clear the air on what the future of the marching unit was to be.

"Our main reason for being here is to find out the status of the marching unit to the school system next year," said Mrs. Lois Jennings.

Winslow said that the marching unit is a private organization over which the school board has no jurisdiction. He said that the policy of the band was that every member would have to learn to play an instrument.

Mrs. Jennings responded that members of the unit were not told of the policy until it was too late for them to join the band.

The marching unit has been performing at high school football games and various civic events for 17 years.

Though it has come to be associated with Perquimans High School, it is a private organization.

In the meeting Monday night, Byrum said that marching unit members, along with other high school students, were given a chance to join the county band in May of last year.

Now it appears that school officials will at least consider giving them another chance.

There was also some question at the meeting over who owns the bus used by the marching unit.

The bus was paid for through a private fund drive several years ago, but was titled to the school system so that school gasoline supplies and mechanical service could be utilized.

Members of the parent group said, in essence, that if the group couldn't perform at the football games they would like to have title to the bus.

Harrell said that any question concerning ownership of the bus should be turned over to the board attorney.

Winslow agreed that legalities should be checked, but added, "Knowing the history of it, I don't think any board member would object."

In discussion following the appearance of the parent's group, board member Lloyd Dail took issue with the policy that will disallow performances by the marching unit at the football games.

"I expect for 12 months a year they spend as much time at this as some people on the (school) payroll," Dail said. "I'd hate to see 'em sold out."

What ever decision is made in reference to the marching unit, Dail said he felt the school board should make it.

## A new look

Beginning with today's issue the Perquimans Weekly is getting a new look.

The major change our readers can expect to find this week is the establishment of an editorial section on page 2.

This section will feature

locally written editorials and a column, to be written on an alternating basis by our co-editors.

Other changes will include the establishment of a community page entitled Perquimans People, and an agriculture page.



Barefoot romp

Fall has brought cool weather to Perquimans County but last week still wasn't too late for a barefoot romp in the grass, as 12 year old Melissa Corpew will attest. (Photo by NOEL TODD-MCLAUGHLIN)

## Clinic gets more flak

The A-95 Clearinghouse Committee reaffirmed their disapproval of the controversial Northeastern Rural Health Development Association at a Thursday night board meeting of the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission.

NRHDA is a government supported health group trying to operate medical clinics in Perquimans and Bertie counties. NRHDA is presently operating a clinic in Tyrell county.

Opposition to the health association stems from lack of local support. Pam Whitely of ARPDC, said, "We haven't received anything positive or negative from the Perquimans County Commissioners or the Hertford

Town Council." She added, "People apparently feel there is adequate medical care already."

There appears, however, to be some controversy as to whether or not the clinics are needed.

Andrew J. Martin, Director of NRHDA, said Friday, "There is a definite health care need in the areas we want to serve in Northeastern North Carolina. This region has been designated a Manpower shortage area."

NRHDA has revised their original proposal and will submit it to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare by October 15. HEW will decide whether or not to fund the project after that time.

Included in NRHDA's amended proposal is the deletion of the previously applied for dental services in Perquimans County.

The ARPDC directors also heard a report from the Albemarle Law and Order Association. Clarence Owen, Elizabeth City police chief and Chairman of ALOA said that federal funding of ALOA was decreasing and that the association was going to have to "tighten their belts."

Owen said that the cinching would probably be felt in staff cut-back of the Criminal Justice Planning Department.

Owen requested and received the continued support of ARPDC in attempting to obtain funds for ALOA.

## Poverty rampant in Perquimans

By MIKE MCLAUGHLIN

State figures show that well over a third of the residents of Perquimans County live their lives at or below the poverty line and social services director Paul Gregory said even that figure may be too low.

"I just wonder if the figure isn't higher than that (the state estimate), Gregory said. "I'd almost say half the county is very near the poverty line or below."

Social services offers an extensive program of aid and assists many of those persons with too little to live on.

But the image of the image of the great public trough, where those who are too lazy to work come to eat, doesn't hold water in this county.

The majority of the county's poverty line residents receive no assistance at all. For those who do receive assistance from social services, the programs are nothing to get fat on, Gregory said.

Why the extensive poverty in Perquimans County? A major part of it, Gregory said, is the county's large percentage of elderly residents.

Social security checks just won't stretch to meet the inflated cost of food and fuel.

"We're a group of counties where old people like to retire," Gregory said. "We don't have the industry to bring in the young people."

Grace Dizon, of the Economic Improvement Council, agreed that there is a tremendous problem with the elderly, but said the problem of poverty runs through all age groups.

A shortage of jobs and wages that don't keep pace with inflation are two additional reasons for poverty in the county, she said.

The food stamps program is probably the largest poverty subsidy program operating here. Gregory said that between \$33,000 and \$34,000 in stamps are distributed to residents of the county each month and the figure is steadily increasing.

Food stamps eligibility is based on income, with adjustments made for certain expenses. It is the only form of income subsidy available for a household with a male

resident who is able to work.

There are presently 441 families receiving food stamps in the county. This amounts to some 1,363 persons. State figures show, however, that some 3,345 persons are actually eligible for the program.

This means that some 43 percent of those eligible to receive food stamps are actually participating in the program. State wide, 54.1 percent of those persons eligible actually participate.

"We're a little bit under the state average," Gregory said. "We should be at the state average and it will supplement their incomes, but a lot of people out there might be eligible for \$10 or \$12 a month and they just don't want to mess with it."

"They either don't want to take the time and effort, or they just want to support themselves," he said.

Gregory isn't sure why participation in the county food stamps program falls below the state average. His office makes an effort to publicize the program, and he is available to speak to any interested public group. Still the numbers come up short.

Aid to families with dependent children is another program which serve impoverished persons in the county. It is available only to families with no father residing in the home, and there are presently 148 families receiving assistance.

Gregory said that some of the mothers have young children and genuinely need the assistance. Others, he said, could work if they wanted to do.

"I would like to see mothers who have children in school support themselves and their families," he said.

Social services also helps low income and elderly persons with Medicaid, a day care subsidy, a chore service, and other programs.

The Economic

The program is designed to move families residing in substandard housing into standard housing, with hot and cold running water, indoor plumbing, and enough rooms for all the family members.

According to Ms. Dizon, the shortage of adequate, affordable housing is a real problem in Perquimans County. The subsidy program has a waiting list that goes back to May of this year.

The agency also has a job development program that works to provide job training and placement, a weatherization program to help cold-proof low income housing, and there may be funds available this winter to help low income people pay their fuel bills.

But according to Ms. Dizon, EIC doesn't have enough manpower or funding to help all the people who need help in Perquimans County.

"There are too many people and not enough resources sometimes," she said. "That's the way it's probably always going to be."

There is, however, a drawback to pouring government aid in to low income families. Gregory said there is a tendency among subsidized families, for subsequent generations to become welfare dependent.

It amounts to a continual chain of dependents of the state who don't know how to support themselves.

The key to solving this problem is education, Gregory said. "I don't see how we're going to lower the welfare caseload except by educating the young folks and finding them a job," he said.

"Some way we've got to make them understand they've got a responsibility of working and supporting a family," Gregory said.

He doesn't feel that such education is an impossible task.

"Many people have pulled themselves up," Gregory



Busy hands

Painting is just one of the hobbies that keeps Mick Whitley busy. Wearing a smile at the age of 84 in fact, one of her hobbies

is a little unusual. (Photo by NOEL TODD-MCLAUGHLIN)

## Mick just k

By MIKE MCLAUGHLIN

Mick Whitley keeps her grey-white hair pulled back in a neat bun. Today she wears a blue plaid dress that hangs loose on her aged, small frame.

She looks like an average elderly woman...until she cackles with laughter or launches into a tale of woe back when, the life brimming up in her eyes.

Her 84 years have taught her a lot. Given her memories, a few sorrows, some definite opinions, even a secret or two.

You might ask what separates her from any other 84 year old woman. She would say nothing. But there is something.

Mick Whitley appears to have found some sort of fountain of youth. She says it's her hobbies that keep her so happy and full of life.

She learned to live alone when her husband passed away 15 years ago.

Now she fills up her time with needlepoint, crochet, plays her organ, plays bridge, and watches "the stories"

(soap operas) on television though always keeping her hands busy with some craft or other so as not to waste time.

She likes to sit working on her screened in porch overlooking the Perquimans River. It's back away from traffic and the river is beautiful.

An unfinished painting sits on an easel in one corner. "It's supposed to be the Perquimans River," she says, "but it could be any river."

The pink body of a sock doll, as yet unclothed and faceless, lies in a basket on the sewing table.

"I've got too many things going...can't get them all done...too many irons in the fire," Mick said.

In between her crafts, her friends and her television stories, Mick fits in a lot of reading. She gets her books at the public library.

"I get some trash and something to improve my mind," she said. "I love to read archeology."

Until 1966, Mick was identified by the car she drove, a

the car has now been fully restored and is making the rounds on the antique car show circuit.

Perhaps the most unusual thing about Mick is a secret power she possesses, what some people might call black magic.

Mick Whitley trades for warts. She'll trade a straight pin for a wart. Take the pin and hide it and the wart will go away, at least in most cases.

"It sounds like magic but it's not," she said of her special talent. "I wouldn't call myself a wart witch. In the olden days people did that kind of thing."

to someone who will use it and keep it alive by passing it on. She believes in it because it works.

The real secret is not the trading for a pin. But Mick won't say just what it is. She can only tell it to one person, and that person may be Walter Edwards, Jr., her nephew and an attorney in Hertford.

So what kind of background does it take to trade in warts in 1979? For one thing, Mick has a college degree, and spent the first four years of life after

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