

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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20 CENTS

## VFD holds yearly fling

The Hertford Volunteer Fire Department and its Ladies Auxiliary sat down to their annual feast Thursday night, and when the dinner dishes were cleared the group was treated to comments by former state fire association president Bobby Joyner, reminiscing from old time firemen, and a different sort of Christmas caroling.

A highlight of the night was the presentation of the "Fireman of the Year Award," and this year the coveted distinction went to Chief Charlie Skinner.

Hertford Mayor Bill Cox presented Skinner with a plaque that read, "For dedicated and dependable service to the town and county as a member of the Hertford Fire Department."

In Cox's introductory remarks, he had this to say about the calibre of the Hertford VFD: "You can go anywhere you want to look, anywhere you want to, professional or volunteer, and you will truly not find a fire department more capable than this one."

Cox also presented two certificates of appreciation to firemen Sidney Eley and Parker Newbern for the slide presentation on the Winslow Oil Company Fire they prepared and showed to area fire departments and civic groups.

The banquet also commemorated the department's 50 year membership in the N.C. Fireman's Association and in keeping with that event Joyner outlined some of the advantages of membership and commented on fire departments and firemen in general.

Joyner, fire chief in Pitt County, said he had once computed the man hours of the volunteer fire departments in the county at minimum wage and presented the tabulation to the chairman of the county board of commissioners. "He just couldn't believe it," Joyner said.

In traveling across the state Joyner said he hears as much

or more from the wives of firemen as he does from firemen about the amount of time spent in service.

"Every time he's gone he's always at the fire station," is a popular complaint of firemen's wives, Joyner said.

He labeled the association one of the greatest in North Carolina, one that is respected across the state.

Membership benefits include a pension fund, line of duty insurance and death benefits, an ongoing legislative program, and a firefighting and pump school, to mention a few of the items Joyner enumerated.

Silas Whedbee, a retired fireman, told some entertaining tales about old time fire fighting and one of them concerned an ill-fated call to Winfall.

"In the 1920's the fire department bought a Model T fire engine," Whedbee said. "We got a call to Winfall and when we got in the middle of the Causeway Bridge we ran out of gas. Well, we got some gas and got it started again and it was running real good, so good that it went right on through Winfall and on out to Belvidere."

The only item of business on the agenda was the installation of new officers. Joyner installed the men and his wife Gail, secretary of the N.C. Fireman's Association, installed the officers of the Ladies Auxiliary.

The grand finale of the festivities was the Christmas caroling session.

Skinner got it started with the reading of a contemporary tune called "Oh Little Bank Americard" (to be sung to the tune of "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"). The song pokes fun at a credit card Christmas that begins on a pleasant, cheerful note then ends in tragedy when the bills come due.

Then Pete Riddick, Emmett Landing, and Skinner led the crowd in a more traditional collection of Christmas favorites.



Jolly round of song

Pete Riddick (left) and Emmett Landing lead Hertford Volunteer Firemen and their wives in a rousing round of

Christmas carols at the department's annual banquet held last Thursday.



Fireman of the year

Chief Charlie Skinner was named "Fireman of the Year" at the Hertford Volunteer Fire Department's banquet on Thursday night.

## Car stolen at gunpoint

Two Virginia Beach youths are alleged to have hijacked an automobile at gunpoint four miles south of Hertford on Friday and taken an hour and a half joy ride that ended in their arrest in Williamston.

According to an account supplied by Perquimans County Sheriff, Julian Broughton, Stephen Ernest Rose picked up Ronald Nathan Rice and Norman Paul Lober, both 16, hitchhiking in Morgan's Corner.

After traveling south on U.S. 17 for some period of time, one of the youths asked Rose to stop so he could "use the bathroom."

When Rose obliged, the youth riding in the front seat sprayed Mace in his face and pointed a small caliber pistol

at him, telling him to get out of the car.

Rose did so, and the youths continued south on U.S. 17 in his 1976 Ford Elite automobile.

They were arrested in Williamston while still in possession of the car, Broughton said.

Highway Patrolman, M. J. McArthur took the preliminary report and Deputy Sheriff Victor Lamb later transported the two to the Tri-County Jail in Elizabeth City.

Rice and Lober were charged with assault with a deadly weapon and grand larceny and are being held \$25,000 bond. Probable cause hearings are scheduled for the January 2 session of District Court.

## Hearing set on changes in county subdivision rules

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners has scheduled a public hearing at 10 a.m. on Jan. 7 to discuss amendments to the county subdivision that would simplify the sale of a single lot by a property owner.

The hearing brought about after county planning board members complained to the commissioners on more than one occasion that the amount of costly red tape involved in selling property was prohibitive to single lot sales.

It was proposed at the Dec. 3 meeting of the commissioners that the property owner be allowed to sell up to four individual lots from the same

parcel of land without presenting a subdivision plat to the planning board.

This would, in effect, change the definition of subdivision in the county.

County attorney John Matthews said at Monday night's meeting, however, that state statutes would probably prohibit such a change in the ordinance.

Other means of simplifying the ordinance will be explored prior to the hearing.

Ordinance provisions pertaining to water requirements for subdivisions may also be revised at the hearing.

Currently, the provisions

require that the developer install lines to the county water system where county water is available. Planning board members have argued for a more concrete definition of where water is available.

One of the more popular means of determining availability among planning board members would require that the developer hook on to the county system if he is within a set number of feet from the closest county water line.

The number of feet would vary, however, depending on the size of the development.

In another water related issue, the commissioners

learned that the state Department of Human Resources had withdrawn its funding commitment for Phase II of the county water system.

Chairman Joe Nowell, however, downplayed the importance of the withdrawal, saying that it occurred because of a failure of Rivers and Associates, the firm that engineered the system, to meet a paperwork deadline set by the state.

He said that reinstatement of grant commitment would probably be no more than a matter of submitting the required paperwork and reapplying for funds.

## Development association pays tribute to progress

Last Tuesday night was a night of recognition at Angler's Cove Restaurant in Bethel as industries and communities were honored for their efforts to improve the quality of life in the Albemarle region.

The event was the 10 county Albemarle Area Development Association's annual report and banquet program, and it drew a large crowd of business and community leaders.

Tom Bradshaw, state secretary of transportation, was the keynote speaker, and in a speech laced with humor, Bradshaw outlined a shortfall of funds that threaten the future of transportation in North Carolina.

A gasoline tax that has remained at 9 cents per gallon since 1969 and reduced consumption because of high prices have combined to put the state in the middle of a funding crunch, he said.

Bradshaw said, however, that the shortfall would not adversely affect already funded projects to improve U.S. 17 and other highways in the Albemarle region.

"U.S. 17 is what we call our major coastal highway," Bradshaw said. "We wish it was an interstate," he said.

The goal of the state DOT is to have the highway four-laned across the entire state, Bradshaw said.

Still, the future of N.C. transportation is clouded by a tight budget and the secretary said a Blue Ribbon Commission has been appointed by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. to make a study on where more funding can be secured.

"If we don't get a little more money we're going to go out of business," Bradshaw said, adding that the commission should not be passed off as "just a study to raise the gasoline tax."

"Today we are looking at the future of transportation," Bradshaw said. "Please stop for a moment and share with us your thoughts on where we are going."

But dire forecasts of future woe did not consume the entire program, as businesses and communities were recognized for making positive contributions to the area.

One industry from each county was honored, and in Hertford, that industry was the Hertford Hardware and Supply Company, and its proprietor, Eric Haste, Jr.

"Through these awards we say in a small way, Thank

you for being involved in your community," said Mayme Davenport, chairman of the ADA Community Development Committee.

Two Perquimans County communities received cash awards for their efforts in development and civic improvement.

The Woodville community received honorable mention in the small community category, and received a cash award of \$50.

Belvidere was the second place winner in the large community category, an honor that included a \$150 check.

The agricultural extension service and particularly home extension agent Paige Underwood coordinated community development activities in Perquimans County this year.

New officers were elected, and again, two Perquimans County residents were among those chosen to serve.

Dare County realtor Bill Wheeler was elected president, vice president West was Ed Brown of Perquimans, Bill Meekins was selected vice president East, Bill Smithwick was elected vice president South, and Majorie Fields of Perquimans County

was elected secretary-treasurer.

In an industrial development committee report, C.B. Smith announced that a data information packet for each town and county in the region had been completed.

"It's a complete outline of what you can expect from an area," he said. The packet includes such information as climate, average rainfall, income, recreational facilities, and other reference data.

In agriculture, committee chairman Joe Nowell filed a report that stated efforts to address the problem of algae bloom in the Chowan River to the governor's office had resulted in some fruition.

Nowell also reported that the Association had endorsed efforts to continue appropriations for a farm management and marketing specialist in North Carolina, and had requested the replacement of the horticulture specialist in the Tidewater station.

The financial report projected a balance of \$1,220.23 at the end of this year (Dec. 31).

## Health group suffers setback

Supplemental information, requested by DHEW, to the proposed use of \$200,000 in federal funds for the Northeastern Rural Health Development Association's (NRHDA) second year of operations in Bertie, Tyrrell, and Perquimans Counties was disapproved by the governing body of the Eastern Carolina Health Systems Agency (ECHSA) at their December 2, 1979 meeting in Greenville, N.C.

Funding of the application

was originally disapproved in August by the ECHSA upon the lack of evidence of local support for NRHDA's operations. DHEW's subsequent review of the application led to the request for the supplemental information, which the ECHSA ruled as not meeting the criteria that DHEW set forth.

In other action, the governing body unanimously approved a formal resolution

drawn up by the ECHSA long-term care task force, urging that the State lift its

moratorium on nursing home beds for Eastern North Carolina.

## Holiday changes

We would again like to remind our readers and advertisers of our special holiday printing schedule.

Our Christmas edition should be delivered by mail on December 24. News and advertising deadlines are today (Thursday) at 5 p.m.

We will follow our usual mailing schedule for the New Year's week paper, but because the holiday falls on our normal production day, we must move our news and advertising deadlines from Monday at 5 p.m. to Friday, Dec. 28 at 5 p.m.



Christmas shopping

Judith Jester and her daughter Frances were among the next to the last minute Christmas shoppers who visited downtown

Hertford last Saturday afternoon. (Photo by Mike MCLAUGHLIN)