

## Primary elections, 1980

### Towe gets schools seat, Ward endorsed for commissioner

An unusually low number of voters sent one incumbent county commissioner down to defeat and endorsed a new member for the board of education in Perquimans County's primary elections on Tuesday.

Democrats had 38 different candidates for local, state and national office to choose from and Republicans 11, but only about 45 percent of the county's registered voters took advantage of the opportunity to exercise their choices.

According to William "Buddy" Tilley's unofficial tally, 1,713 persons cast ballots at seven polling places across the county.

"There was no interest in the presidential election. I'm going to tell it like it is," said Tilley, chairman of the county board of elections. "Usually the vote is over 50 per cent. One time it was 65 per cent," he said, characterizing the primary turnout as "very disappointing."

In general, Tilley said that interest is stronger during a presidential primary year, and that voting in the county is heavier in the spring primary than in the fall, indicating that the general election turnout may be even more disappointing.

Tilley said, however, that sunny weather and dry conditions probably contributed to the low turnout, keeping farmers in the fields and away from the polling places.

The non-partisan county school board races were the only balloting for which

results were final, and Clifford W. Towe edged out Janice Boyce and Ed Brown to become the only new-comer to the board.

Towe scored heavily in the two Hertford precincts, and tallied 714 votes to 564 for Janice Boyce and 401 for Ed Brown.

Incumbent Preston Stevenson rolled to an impressive victory in the Hertford Township in a race against three opponents.

Stevenson captured all but the East Hertford precinct and polled 625 votes, to 359 for Gil Underwood, 357 for George White and 284 for Ed Nixon. Nixon had announced that he was withdrawing from the race some time ago but had not had his name taken off the ballot.

Emmett Long was the sole Bethel Township candidate for the board of education and polled 1307 votes.

Three democratic candidates were to be selected for three seats on the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners, and the hottest race took place in the Second District, where Charles Ward snuck by incumbent Waldo Winslow to secure one of two nominations for two seats.

Winslow's 488 votes placed him fourth in a field of four candidates, with Joe Nowell collecting 855 votes, Ward 750, and Billy Pierce 635.

Ward and Pierce ran neck and neck in six of the seven precincts, but the Bethel precinct spelled the dif-

ference, as Ward out-paced Pierce by 75 votes, 121-46.

Incumbent Lester Simpson ran away with the district one democratic nomination for commissioner, tallying 824 votes to soundly defeat challengers John London-372 votes, Lee Brabble-230 votes, and Margaret Stowe Garrison-215 votes.

County voters gave their present delegation to Raleigh a nod of approval as the endorsed all four incumbents for first district House and Senate seats.

In the Senate race, incumbent Vernon James, Pasquotank, collected 1,187 votes, followed by incumbent Charles Evans, Dare, with 925 votes and Lenoard Overman, Perquimans, with 687 votes.

Melvin Daniels, Pasquotank, led the Senate ticket with 1,264 votes, followed by Monk Harrington, Northampton, with 762 votes, and Winnie Wood, Camden, with 649 votes.

On the national level, Perquimans County voters endorsed President Jimmy Carter by a three to one margin over his challenger for the democratic nomination, Edward Kennedy.

Carter polled 1024 votes

while Kennedy could muster only 333 votes. But 276 voters checked no preference when confronted with a choice between the two candidates.

Few republicans turned out to vote in a primary election that featured no local republican candidates, but 49 endorsed Ronald Reagan as the their candidate for president, and 9 voted for Bush. Other votes were scattered among candidates who have withdrawn from the race.

Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. overwhelmed challenger Bob Scott in his bid for the democratic gubernatorial nomination, 1184 to 507.

Beverly Lake polled 43 votes

in his bid for the republican candidacy, while C.J. Carstens received 13 votes.

Incumbent lieutenant governor Jimmy Green collected more Perquimans County votes than did challenger Carl Stewart, 883-620.

In the race for democratic candidate for secretary of state, Perquimans voters proved that they were not quite ready to "give a young man a chance," as George Breece had urged them to do in his bid to upset elder statesman Thad Eure. Breece was handed a walloping 1,069-507 defeat.

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Preston Stevenson



Clifford Towe



Charles Ward



Joe Nowell



Lester Simpson

## Water rules altered

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners is raising its fee for re-installing water meters from \$15 to \$50 in an effort to avoid any hike in water usage rates.

Their action, effective July 1, was taken upon recommendation by Tom Harwell, an engineer with Rivers and Associates, in a user survey report to the commissioners on Monday.

Harwell told the board meeting that it stood to lose some 213 "resort type" customers unless it took action to make disconnecting from the water system on a six month basis less economically feasible.

The Perquimans County Water Department had planned to charge \$15 to reconnect to the water system after the customer had paid \$200 through monthly billing, and many customers using from 0 to 1000 gallons of water per month would have qualified in December.

Harwell had been asked by the county to do a survey and recommend ways that expenses could be cut back in an effort to keep water system cost-revenue on an even keel.

In his report, he projected a slight profit for the system in the coming year, with expenses running some \$215,000 and revenue \$225,000.

County accountant D.F. Reed, Jr., however, took issue with Harwell's projections, saying they did not adequately reflect the present rate of inflation. Reed's own figuring projected a mild deficit for the system.

But Harwell said that the current financial condition of

the water system is fairly standard for the amount of time it has been in operation.

Other recommendations approved by the board raised the base rate that would be paid by trailer court users from \$4 to \$7, the same level that any other users would pay (there are currently no trailer courts connected to the system), raised the penalty for re-installing a meter removed due to delinquency of account from \$15 to \$50, and added a monthly charge of 50 cents per fire protection sprinkler head for any businesses that might connect to the system in the future (does not apply to farms).

In another matter, the commissioners heard from N.C. Natural Resources and Community Development planner John Crew on options it faces in completing its abandoned land use plan update.

The plan, required by the Coastal Area Management Act, was left unfinished after it was determined that ARPD-C planner Dan Tew would be unable to meet a June 30 deadline.

Crew said that the county could either seek an extension of the deadline and hire a private consulting firm in the immediate future to finish up the plan, or begin on Sept. 1 and shoot for next year's deadline.

The county is currently in its fourth year of a plan that requires updating every five years.

The commissioners chose to initiate work on the plan in September and will consider several private firms

recommended by Crew.

The planner promised that the state would come up with additional matching grant monies to finish up the update project, and said that the 40 per cent of the work thus far completed by Tew could be utilized.

Crew said that the county still retains some \$4,500 of its original \$7,200 grant intended to pay for 90 per cent of the cost of the update, as the state will only pay for work actually completed.

Another item of discussion centered on what may be a future shortage of revenue sharing funds. County accountant Reed told the board that in a phone call to the U.S. Treasury he was told that that beyond a payment in the summer and another in the fall, the county should "by no means" budget revenue sharing funds for the coming fiscal year.

If no additional revenue sharing payments were forthcoming it would mean a reduction in funding from \$175,000 to \$95,000 in the coming year, Reed said.

In other action, the board:
 

- Heard from attorney John Matthews that contributions to Operation Overcharge would be illegal, based on an opinion from the state Attorney General's office, and;
- Heard from commissioner Welly White that the county recreation department would need some \$4,000 to finish up the fiscal year. White said that the recreation board had proposed a 50-50 split between the county and the town of Hertford. No action was taken.



### Casting a ballot

A Hertford resident checks off his ballot in the Perquimans County Courthouse on Tuesday. Voter turnout was termed light for the 1980 presidential primary. (Photo

by NOEL TODD-MCLAUGHLIN)

## Parking debate rages on

Margaret Stowe Garrison appeared before the Hertford Town Council Monday night with a second plea for enforcing the ordinance which forbids vehicles to park to the left of the curb in Hertford's business district.

Ms. Garrison, who appeared before the board some months ago, said that the parking situation "has not changed," and added, "Since it (the ordinance) is on your books, it should be enforced."

Hertford Police Chief Marshall Merritt reported that, although he and other officers have issued several warning tickets, his force was too small to keep up with all offenders. "We are a small department and a small department has to make priorities," said Merritt. "I just don't have the manpower or the time."

Crime has tripled in the area, according to Merritt.

## Tax collections expectations fall

Because of the current state of the local economy, Perquimans County will drop its tax collection expectations by 3 per cent for the coming budget year.

The 1979-80 budget was based on a 95 percent collection rate, but low grain prices, high fuel costs and high interest rates led the county commissioners to drop the projected collection of 1979 taxes to 92 per cent, said tax supervisor Keith Haskett.

The 92 per cent figure is an estimate of the total tax levy that will actually be collected by the county. It will be used in figuring the 1980 tax rate, as well as the 1980-81 county budget.

But because of a \$3.77 million increase in the tax base during 1979, the 3 per cent adjustment will not drastically affect the tax rate, according to Haskett's calculations. Haskett said that assuming

and he voiced his concern over spending unwarranted time on the necessary paper work involved with the issuance of tickets.

Councilman T. Erie Haste, Jr. asked Merritt when he anticipated having his force up to the capacity needed to police the parking ordinance. "I don't," was Merritt's reply, "and I've had a full force for two weeks now."

Following discussion, it was established that most parking to the left of curb violations occurred in front of J.C. Blanchard's and the Municipal Building, and that those parking illegally in front of the Municipal Building were often repeat offenders.

Ms. Garrison again reiterated her point. "A \$27 fine each time you violate would make a difference. I know I would think twice before I'd park illegally if I had to pay \$27," she said.

a budget comparable to that of the present fiscal year, a tax increase of a quarter of a cent per \$100 valuation would compensate for the three percent adjustment in expectations.

Anticipated increases in county stipends to Social Services, schools, and governmental departments will probably have more impact on the tax rate county citizens will pay on their personal property for 1980.

The fact that tax collection expectations have been adjusted downward does not mean that 3 per cent of the tax levy will go unpaid, Haskett said. The county does, however, expect payment to be slower in some cases because of the state of the economy.

The tax department will continue to press for payment until "99.9 per cent" of the levy has been collected, Haskett said.

Haste pointed out that strongly enforcing the ordinance could be harmful to downtown trade. "If somebody parked in front of your store gets a \$27 ticket, you're going to hear about it," he said.

Hertford Mayor and City Manager Bill Cox was in agreement. "People who come into town who get a ticket might not come back," said Cox, "and we are too small of a town to be knicker about parking."

Several possibilities to counter the illegal parking were discussed, including the erection of a sign in front of the Municipal Building forbidding parking to the left of the curb, and also erasing the ordinance from the books altogether.

But town attorney William Bentley was against eradicating the law. "For safety's sake, the law needs to be enforced," he said.

It was finally decided that the police department should continue to issue warning tickets for the first violation, and to write tickets only to habitual offenders.

In another matter, the council decided to give the U.S. Highway 17 Association, of which the town of Hertford is a member, \$500 out of the upcoming budget. Although councilmen Billy Winslow and Jesse Harris were against appropriating the money until the new budget had been worked out, Cox cast a tie-breaking vote in favor of the funding, along with Haste and councilman John Beers.

It was Winslow's and Harris' contention that the upcoming fiscal year would be a difficult one, and that contributing the money, at this point, would be unwise.

But Haste, who pointed out that the association had only a total of \$45 in present holdings, said not supporting the effort would be detrimental to the area's future. "It is not a contribution, but an investment," he said.

Progress on the Community Development Project, as

## P.H.S. students hold mock vote

Students at Perquimans High School think a little more of democratic presidential hopeful Edward Kennedy than do their elders, that is if a comparison of Tuesday's primary results and a recent mock election conducted at the school is any indication.

While Carter still carried the school, he had to fend off a strong challenge by Kennedy to win by an eight vote margin, 33-25.

## Teacher slots may not change

The Perquimans County Board of Education approved tentative teacher allocations that reflect no reduction in staff for next school year at a meeting Monday night.

The allocations avoid excessive combination classrooms (such as 5th-6th grades) and hold down classroom student-teacher ratios, said Pat Harrell, county schools superintendent.

The system had anticipated losing positions (based on average daily membership) but Harrell said that tentative allocation will be "reflected in the local budget."

The school board elected to purchase some \$34,500 in furnishings for the high school library in the most time-consuming item of business of the evening.

Board members inspected several different bids on different types and styles of furniture before accepting the low bid on wooden furniture.

The library is being renovated as part of the high school addition project, which was tentatively scheduled to

Edmund "Jerry" Brown got one vote.

The students also appear to think a great deal of Governor Jim Hunt. They gave him an incredible 78-8 bulge in his race with challenger Bob Scott.

The mock-primary was conducted by the Teen Democrats and government teacher Earl Willis.

be inspected by board members on June 1.

The board also moved to allow Hertford resident Pete Riddick to farm 9.1 acres of crop land for one-third of the net proceeds after an advertisement for bids on renting the land netted no response.

Riddick is employed as a mechanic with the school system but Harrell said that consultations with an attorney for the Institute of Governments had determined there would be no conflict of interest, particularly in light of the fact that the board had advertised for bids.

Another matter saw the board pass a resolution memorializing Raleigh Dingman, the former Executive Director of the North Carolina School Boards Association who passed away April 11.

The board was scheduled to meet Tuesday night with the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners to discuss its budget for the coming fiscal year.

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