

# Weekly Perspective

## Our view

### On protesting phone service rate hike

The Hertford Town Council now counts itself among those who are protesting a Carolina Telephone rate hike proposal that would see the cost of area telephone service increase by about a third.

"It's hardly worth what we're paying now," would seem to be the council's attitude towards the proposal.

The only thing that Carolina Telephone doesn't want to go up on, it seems, is long distance service. That may be because the company doesn't have any jurisdiction over long-distance rates.

Everything from hooking up a new phone to just keeping a phone on the wall is going to cost more, though, at least if Carolina Telephone has its way about it.

Included in the rate proposal justification is the old catch 22, service can't be improved without more money.

Part of the problem is probably couched in the inheritance factor. Carolina Telephone took over where Norfolk-Carolina left off, and Norfolk-Carolina did not leave off in a particularly advantageous position.

But an increase of more than one-third in one chunk is more than area

customers can digest, particularly when dial tones are sometimes conspicuously absent and long distance dialings are sometimes interrupted by busy signals.

The fact that rate hike proposals are not immediately embraced by the public utilities commission offers some consolation, though. Proposals are examined, evaluated, and citizen input is considered.

We suspect that Carolina Telephone can survive with a rate hike of less magnitude than the company has proposed.

If we are correct in our assumption, we must depend on public stances such as the one taken by the Hertford Town Council for wringing the extra money out of the proposal.

Those persons who would like to comment on the proposal should be present at the public hearing in Elizabeth City on Jan. 6.

Written statements may also be submitted to the Chief Clerk, North Carolina Utilities Commission, P.O. Box 991, Raleigh, N.C., 27602.

## Looking back

By VIRGINIA WHITE  
TRANSEAU  
December 1942

**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS OUT FOR THIS YEAR:** Christmas decorations and the multi-colored lights, long a part of the downtown shopping atmosphere during the holiday season, will be out for this year, according to the Mayor V.N. Darden.

Mayor Darden stated that the Office of Civilian Defense had requested all cities and towns to forego the usual Christmas lights as decorations this year due to the black-out rules and the danger in case of an air raid.

However, the stores of Hertford have decorated in the usual holiday manner, and those seeking the varied colors and spirit of Christmas can get it by visiting the shopping centers of the town.

**HERTFORD GIRL SCOUTS HAVE BIRTHDAY PARTY:** The Hertford Troop of Girl Scouts were entertained last Monday night at a birthday party, the occasion being the anniversary of the local troop. Refreshments were served to the large number attending the party. As a climax to the evening, the troop leaders, Mrs. R.S. Monds, Jr., and Miss

Mary Jane Spruill, awarded first class badges to the following Scouts: Eloise Godwin, Maxine Landing, Pat Morris, Julia Laughinhouse, Catherine Holmes, Maude Holmes, Nancy Zachary, Mildred Skinner, Myrtle Norman Elliott, Romona Divers, Juanita Divers, Betty Winslow and Betty Chappell.

**BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT:** Born to Mr. and Mrs. Clyde E. Lane on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1942, a son. Mrs. Lane was the former Miss Daisy Mathews.

**AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY:** Jesse Lee Harris, son of Mr. and Mrs. Z.A. Harris, left Sunday for Columbia University, where he will enter Naval Officers' Training School. Mr. Harris volunteered in the U.S.N.R., and is in Class V-7.

**IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS:** At Pender Quality Food Store, 12 lb. bag of flour 60 cents; Grapefruit, size 70...5 cents each; oranges, 8 lbs. 49 cents; lettuce, two heads are 27 cents; U.S. No. 1 Maine Potatoes in a 10 lb. bag are 33 cents; tangerines, 1 lb. 10 cents; Lang's dill or sour pickles, in quart jars 35 cents; and Handy towels, roll 9 cents.

## Political similarities come to fore

While news analysts attempt to understand the events of 1880, historians can look back a century to examine 1880.

However different they might otherwise be, the years 1880 and 1980 have two things in common: both saw a Republican elected President of the United States and both saw a Joseph W. Nowell as a Perquimans County Commissioner.

In the gubernatorial election Perquimans went for Republican R.P. Buxton, rather than the victorious Democrat Thomas J. Jarvis.

Both Republicans and Democrats were then strong and active parties here, and stiff opposition was offered to several county incumbents. In two instances the election of 1880 had surprising results.

When the County Commissioners met in December, 1880, to seat the new board, there were two groups of men claiming the positions. James P. Whedbee moved the induction into the office of James M. Whedbee, Ellsberry W. Riddick, and incumbents Trotman, White, and Gregory.

Rejecting Whedbee's probably Democratic slate, the Board heard William A. Moore's motion to seat Henry H. Griffin, James Robert Parker (farmer and undertaker), Charles T. Layden, Edward W. Felton, and Joseph H. Hoffer. This probable Republican motion was also rejected.

The old Board declared there had been no legal election and that it would remain in office until elections could be had.

Soon after, the controversy was resolved, with blacks Felton and Hoffer and their slate of Commissioners taking office.

The other surprise of 1880, was the difficulty of getting a sheriff. The voters elected Miles Overman over incumbent Robert White by a vote of 898 to 816. When the time came to qualify for the office, Overman had to request a time extension so he could post the required bonds.

When his time expired, Overman was still unable to give bond. The office was declared vacant and Charles T. Layden was then elected. However, Layden was equally unable to present bond and the office was vacated again.

Robert White was called upon, and he had his bonds ready. Although the voters had turned him out of office, he still wound up as sheriff.



Ray Winslow

The year 1880 began with Nowell serving as Commissioner along with Joseph W. Trotman, Edmund White, Benjamin F. Gregory, and Charles Wingfield Wood. (Col. Wood's name survives in Woodland Circle and adjacent streets.)

John A. Wood was Clerk of Superior Court; Uriah W. Speight, Register of Deeds; Robert White, Sheriff; and Josiah Nicholson, Treasurer.

Belvidere merchant and farmer Rufus White sat in the State Senate, while Vermont-born lumberman Ira S. Blaisdell resigned his seat in the House of Representatives in February to be succeeded by John A. Vann.

Perquimans in 1880 was predominantly agricultural and rural, its access to markets hindered by the lack of railway connections.

The county's population then was 2,466. More than 1,150 citizens voted in the general election, with 982 votes cast for Republican presidential candidate James A. Garfield and 739 for Democrat Winfield S. Hancock.

### Real vs. Fake Christmas Trees

DELIGHT-FUL AROMA →

GREAT FOR BABIES & CATS TO CLIMB →

COST- AS MUCH AS YOU CAN SPEND ←

A FEW GAPS ←

GOOD MULCH AFTER 25th ←

NEEDLES ←

REAL

STORES IN A 1'x2' BOX →

COST AS MUCH AS YOU CAN SPEND ←

COMES IN SILVER, PINK, BLUE & EVEN GREEN ←

PERFECT FORM ←

SHOP FOR TREE ONLY ONCE ←

FAKE

CKK 80

## Retired but not tired of running

Harold Gensling must be running for something, else why would the 65 year old Bethel resident have started a hobby 19 years ago that he still carries on today?



Mike McLaughlin

From what I could gather at the recreation department's running club meeting Sunday night, Gensling began running just for the health of it, and now that he's started it he can't stop.

The way he talks about running, it's obvious the sport means a lot to him. He began his remarks Sunday night by saying that he was going to initiate a discussion on running. An hour later Gensling was finished telling us how he got started and what he's learned from nearly two decades of pavement pounding.

The logical order of this column, though, would be to dispose with first impressions. Gensling doesn't look like a runner. He doesn't look 65 either, for that matter.

With a pipe as a virtual extension of his hand, and cowboy boots on his feet, he looks at least 10 years younger than his actual age. The years of running haven't

melted the meat off his bones, either.

First impressions behind us, the next logical step in this story is the beginning.

Gensling joined the Norfolk Police Department when he was 40 years old. "They waived the age requirement for me," he said.

His first couple of years were spent on the beat, and that kept him plenty healthy. But then he was assigned to his first patrol car, and began to soften up a little. One day he found out just how physically fit he wasn't.

"I arrested a guy and brought him down to the station. I opened the door of the car and he took off."

Gensling took off after the fellow, but the chase scene lasted only about 100 feet. The police officer's legs collapsed under him, and the incident prompted

him to do something about his health.

Gensling began a fitness program prescribed by the Royal Canadian Air Force. It was a total fitness program, including sit-ups, push-ups, and, of course, running, among other things.

Much of the program was eventually dispensed with, but Gensling kept right on running into retirement and Perquimans County.

At the same time he started his running program, Gensling's wife got into it, and Gensling attributes the running program to saving her life.

She was admitted to the hospital for emergency surgery and her condition was such that Gensling was advised by her doctor to go home and pray.

"I was scared to death," said Gensling. He went home and prayed. Later the doctor would attribute Gensling's wife's quick recovery to her fine physical condition.

The couple now lives in the shadow of the county water tower in Bethel and running is an important part of their lives. Gensling's wife goes the first mile or so with him, then runs back home

while Gensling continues for another three or four miles.

They do it five or six days a week, and running takes a high priority. For instance, if Gensling has to go to Norfolk for some reason or another, he gets his running in first.

Every week or so when he's feeling extra frisky, he'll double his distance, turning five miles into ten.

Gensling started running before it was a fad, and the jogging shoe was not widely available if it even existed. His feet slapped the pavement in tennis shoes.

Jogging shoes are a big improvement, but he insists that you don't have to pay a fortune to get a suitable pair. Padding, not price, should be the determining factor. A well cushioned sole can do wonders for preventing sore feet.

He particularly stressed that the older runner should get a physical before he jogs off into the sunset.

And be prepared to become addicted. "I feel like it wouldn't be good for me to stop running," said Gensling. He's probably right.

## Facing South

a syndicated column:  
voices of tradition  
in a changing region

**JACKSON, Ala.** — "We just started on the line," Sarah Boykin explains in her soft but steady voice.

"We whispered. We carried it on down the line." In this way, she and approximately twenty other women workers began their first organizing effort in Vanity Fair's Clarke Mills in 1975.

The successful year-long struggle for union representation that followed brought together black and white women of varying ages and levels of education. But all the women shared one common trait: none of the group, composed mainly of sewing machine operators, had prior experience in organizing.

Like most of the women involved, Sarah Boykin, president of Local 118 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, has never considered herself a social activist.

"I've always been a loner." But to a degree, the effort to unionize has tran-

sformed Sarah Boykin and the other women as well. They have gained a healthy respect for the power of collective efforts, and a bond of strength has been created among them.

"Since we've gotten our union in and squared away, it's never a dull moment."

In the 1940's, when Vanity Fair — a leading manufacturer of women's lingerie — first opened its Clark Mills plant in Jackson, subsistence farming was still the predominant way of life in this south Alabama community. Vanity Fair, in turn, enjoyed a labor force that worked without question or complaint.

However, thirty years later, some of these same women no longer felt so grateful. They were angry because after nearly a lifetime of work, they still had few benefits, low wages, and no representation. These women, once all white, had been joined by a growing number of black women in the 1960's.

Together these two groups began to perceive their working conditions within a framework of racism and sexism, and this awareness increased their determination.

"I felt like I had to win," Sarah Boykin explains, "because I was what they looked at as an underdog. First because I was black and second because I was a woman."

Vanity Fair Mills opposed unionization efforts. The Clarke Mills plant, as the

single largest employer of women in the area, could easily intimidate its workers without taking overt action against them.

"Really, indirectly, they worked on us bad," Sarah Boykin points out. Rumors circulated that the plant would close if the union was voted in. For many of the women, the sole supporters of families, this threat, even if unfounded, was enough to suppress their active support of the union. Yet most workers silently supported union efforts, and on Oct. 29, 1976, they elected the International Garment Workers Union as their bargaining representative.

With the contract they negotiated in the latter part of 1977, members of Local 118 gained their first experience in collective bargaining. They asked for and received pay increases and improved health benefits. Their contract also provides for grievance and arbitration procedures.

The benefits the union has negotiated apply to member and nonmember alike and protect approximately 8,000 workers in fifteen plants located throughout southern Alabama and the northern Florida panhandle. But the benefit most often cited by the women is a less tangible one — a new respect for workers from the management.

Sarah Boykin says, "It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to be able to stand up and say, 'You're wrong' and to be treated like a lady."

After 14 years at Clarke Mills, Sarah Boykin does not want a promotion from her job as a sewing machine operator. Neither does she plan to leave. "It's not

that I love the place. It's just, I feel obligated to the other members, the people there, to stay there."

This deep sense of personal obligation on the part of Sarah Boykin and other women like her has helped combat fear with hope in Local 118.

"It seems like there are some people that are still afraid," Sarah Boykin recognizes. "You would think they would look at us and say, 'Well they did everything and didn't get fired.' I always tell them that. I say, 'Well, I'm still here.'"

PAULA McLENDON  
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Chatom, Ala.

FACING SOUTH welcomes readers' comments and writers' contributions. Write P.O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

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