

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 37, No. 16

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, April 23, 1981

20 CENTS

## Telephone rate hikes take effect

Carolina Telephone announced recently that a rate increase approved April 3 by the North Carolina Utilities Commission has already taken effect.

On April 3, a three member panel of the North Carolina Utilities Commission issued a recommended order that Carolina Telephone be authorized to increase its rates by approximately \$18.4 million annually. Carolina Telephone had asked for \$25.2 million last August, based on an earlier accounting period, and said its needs had grown to \$30 million by the end of 1980.

The new rates were put into effect on April 16 under bond in case a change in the order necessitated a refund to customers. The order will become final on April 27.

In Hertford, a one party residential phone will now cost \$10.30 per month, up from \$8.80 (two party-\$9.20, four party-\$9.85). A one party business phone jumps from \$21.95 to \$25.80 (two party-\$23.10, four party-\$22.15).

Rates for other county exchanges were not available as of press time.

The new rates will be reflected in the next bill received by customers. Because all billing dates except one do not coincide with the effective date of the change, part of the bill will be at the old rate and the part of the bill beginning April 16 will be at the new rate.

T.P. Williamson, vice-president-administration, said, "We appreciate the fact that the utilities commission recognizes our need for substantially more revenues. Carolina Telephone had its local service rates increased in 1975, after 18 years without any general increase. Local service rates were reduced

in 1979. Our needs have increased because of inflation, increased expenses and very little local service rate increases since 1957."

Williamson said two factors are influencing the way Carolina Telephone is adjusting its customers' rates.

"First, decisions of the Federal Communications Commission, court decisions and congressional interest are bringing deregulation to the telephone industry. The Communications Act of 1934 established telephone companies as regulated monopolies to insure universal telephone service at a local rate affordable to most Americans, with the result that some telephone services subsidized others. Now, modern technology has brought competitors demanding the right to compete in the sale of new telephone and other communications equipment, provision of new services such as data transmission, and the offering of long distance calling.

"For that reason, we must make each of our services self-supporting, so we now are:

- \*separating the cost of the telephone from the cost of providing calling services. Customers may lease their phones or purchase them and avoid the monthly telephone rental charge;

- \*increasing charges for service connections and move and change charges so that they cover the actual costs to us;
- \*increasing extended area service rates to more nearly cover the costs of providing those special arrangements, and;
- \*increasing charges for miscellaneous equipment and services.

(Continued on page 2)



## Simulated rescue

Hertford firemen Billy Nixon, Larry Chappell and Parker Newbern rescue Sid Eley, who affects a man overcome by a chemical spill in a Thursday night training exercise at Albemarle

Chemical. The men were honing their reactions in the event of an actual chemical spill at the company (Photo by MIKE MCLAUGHLIN).

## PCHS athletic additions likely

Funds from this year's school budget may be used for the construction of a public restroom facility at the Perquimans High School athletic complex, as well as an addition to the gym of a weightroom for high school athletes.

Board of education members agreed to look at cost and various means of contracting the projects after school superintendent Pat Harrell told them that there are funds left over in the capital outlay portion of the budget.

A total of \$25,000 had originally been budgeted for the restroom complex, which was later to have been expanded to include a fieldhouse.

But bids far exceeded the amount budgeted, and the restroom project was put on the back burner until now.

Board member Lloyd "Flutch" Dail volunteered to supervise the restroom project free of charge so that it can be sub-contracted at what the board hopes will be a smaller price tag.

Schools superintendent Pat Harrell will check on the legalities of having a board of education member supervise a school construction project.

The weight room would be added to the back of the gym, and Harrell estimated its cost at from \$7,000 to \$8,000.

The board also began the process of preparing a local schools budget to present to the county commissioners.

Harrell, with the help of school principals, had prepared a working budget document that showed about a 13 percent increase in the current expense side of the schools budget with no new additions to the budget.

The present year's current expense budget from local funds totals \$785,212, and with no cutback in services, that figure jumps to \$888,451.

Harrell also included a few items in an expansionary side of the budget for the consideration of the board, totalling some \$17,000.

A tentative capital outlay budget that incorporates a wide range of needs was also examined. "We listed everything realizing that some things would have to

be cut out," said Harrell.

The total figure was \$280,600, compared to the present year's \$154,400 capital outlay budget.

Capital improvement needs of \$192,100 were outlined (present year's figure-\$114,000), equipment needs of \$66,500 were listed (versus \$40,000 in the present budget), and a new activity bus was included at a cost of \$22,000.

Board member Cliff Towe lamented that there never seems to be enough money to meet the capital improvement needs of the schools.

"Each year we cut out stuff that should have been done two years ago," he said. "We really need to see to it that the schools are more presentable than they are now."

Dail underscored the need for a stronger maintenance effort, and particularly an accelerated painting program (\$9,000 is included in the tentative budget for the hiring of a new painter).

He also said the maintenance and janitorial staffs need careful supervision to prevent loafing.

The board must by law have a budget document prepared and ready to present to the county commissioners before May 15.

In another matter, the board received good news on Perquimans High School math students. The students won overall competition with high schools from across northeastern North Carolina in a recent contest at Elizabeth City State University.

PHS sophomore Paul Merritt finished fourth out of 37 contestants in the Algebra division, and senior Dennis Godwin won a comprehensive full year scholarship to ECSU for his honorable mention finish in the advanced division.

The scholarship is renewable annually if Godwin's classroom performance stays up to par.

And finally, a welcome was extended to board member Emmett Long, who returned to an active role after heart surgery.

## 'Yeopim Moon' hot off the press

"Yeopim Moon," an oral history project conducted by seventh graders at Perquimans Union School, is hot off the press.

The publication was unveiled at a Monday night meeting of the Perquimans County Board of Education, and received rave reviews from that board.

"First class," and "Fantastic," were a couple of adjectives board members used to describe the students' effort, which involved transcribing interviews with county senior citizens into article form.

"You wait 'til you read it," school superintendent Pat Harrell told the enthused board members.

Perquimans Union gifted and talented teacher Scharlene Ringer presented the 52-page volume to the board.

Mrs. Ringer said it attempts to focus in on the Perquimans County of by-gone days through recollections of the business community, and the personalities of those doing the recalling.

She continually stressed that the publication is entirely the work of the students, even to the point of putting the copy on the pages for printing.

Aside from the general quality of the work, what is most impressive about "Yeopim Moon" is that it came out on schedule. There was a time

when Mrs. Ringer wasn't sure that the "Yeopim Moon" would rise at all.

About the time the students were finishing up transcribing pages and pages of quotes taken from the tape recorded interviews, Mrs. Ringer was hospitalized for surgery and absent from the classroom for about a month.

"I said, 'Hey, that's it,'" Mrs. Ringer said. The project had to be completed while grant monies were available and she wasn't sure it would make it.

But the students grabbed the initiative while their teacher recovered, and when her husband handed her the completed articles she

was very impressed.

A total of 600 copies of the book were printed, and they will be sold for \$3 each.

That's a small price to pay for living versions of history. "With a history book sometimes you don't get the true flavor of the times," said Mrs. Ringer.

"Yeopim Moon" illuminates times, places and people that might otherwise have been forgotten, and does it with the colorful light of memories.

The book is expected to be sold at area businesses, or may be obtained by calling Mrs. Ringer at Perquimans Union School.

## Stay off drugs, ex-addict warns

by NOEL TODD  
McLAUGHLIN

A 19 year-old prisoner and former drug addict talked to a group of 8th graders at Hertford Grammar School Thursday, in an effort, as he put it, "to keep (them) from making the mistake of doing drugs."

Steve Wright, a Virginia native, is presently doing 1 to 4 years at the Chowan County Detention Center for accessory after the fact in an armed robbery. Wright was the get-away car driver in the Edenton incident involving a robber who has come to be known as the Milk Shake Bandit.

After entering Hollowell-Blount Rexall Drug Store in Broad Street in Edenton, Wright's accomplice apparently ordered

a milkshake, then trained a gun on the store's pharmacist and demanded he turn over certain drugs.

Although he wasn't apprehended at the time, Wright said he eventually turned himself in when he learned of warrants pending for his arrest.

Wright said he was off drugs at the time of his surrender, after having gone through a gruelling, six-day withdrawal. "I quit cold turkey, and it took me almost a week of spitting blood, being tied up and watched constantly," he said, adding that friends had to sleep with their arms around him to keep him from injecting more drugs into his system.

Before he quit, though, Wright said he was feeding a morphine and heroin habit which cost him some \$500 a day. "I was shooting up so many drugs that I couldn't go outside in the day time because I couldn't see, the sun was too bright," he said, "I couldn't talk and could barely

walk because I had lost about 40 pounds."

Wright turned to robbery to pay for his habit. "I ended up with a gun in somebody's face because of drugs," he said.

Wright told the sixth graders that his troubles began when he experimented with marijuana when he was their age. Pretty soon, he said, smoking pot was "no longer enough" and he went on to "hard drugs."

As he got older, Wright said he was missing increasingly more days in school. He was kicked out of a Virginia public school in the 10th grade for skipping 45 days in one term, and subsequently dismissed from two military academies as well.

"Drugs didn't just lead me to jail, they also led me away from my education," said Wright.

He said drugs also led him to jail.

Wright painted an ugly picture of prison-life, telling the youngsters of being sprayed for bugs, stripped naked and searched, and being bullied by fellow inmates. "One prisoner a month gets killed in state prisons," said Wright.

A pencil and some paper were all he was given to while away the hours, said Wright, adding, "Nobody in there cares about you."

Wright was off of drugs when he turned himself in, and has already served about 80 days of his sentence. Much of his prison life has been spent developing talks and going around to various church and school groups warning youngsters of drug abuse.

He credits his wife of 4 months as playing a major role in his decision to give up drugs.

Following Wright's presentation, the floor was opened up for questions. One student asked Wright what she should do



Former drug addict Steve Wright visited Mrs. Mead's sixth grade class at Hertford Grammar School last Thursday to talk about drug abuse and life in prison.

if someone threatened. "Try this or I'll beat you up." While Wright told her she would be better off in the long run to "take the beating," Perquimans County Deputy Sheriff Joe Lothian, who accompanied Wright to the school, told the girl to call the sheriff's department.

"Call us whenever somebody tries to force you to do something," said Lothian.

The presentation was sponsored by the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department, which will appear before any school, church, or civic organization with a drug abuse program upon request.

## Concert benefits cancer victim

Country singer and county resident Melissa Lewis and her band "Country Magic" played a benefit concert at Perquimans County High School Friday for Dwayne Parks, a 12 year-old cancer victim who had his right arm and part of his shoulder amputated in December.

Although the turnout at the concert could be described as modest, Margaret Brabble, who sponsored the event along with husband Lee, said that many of the \$3 tickets had been sold to well-wishers who could not attend Friday. As of press time, Mrs. Brabble did not have a final count of monies earned.

The benefit was staged to help defray Dwayne's medical expenses, which often surmount \$4,000 a day. According to his

mother, Ms. Gail Griffin of Belvidere, Dwayne is required to go up to the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, for one week out of every month. She said the family had no medical insurance, relying only on Medicaid.

Dwayne was expected to attend the concert but an exceedingly low blood count prompted him to check into Albemarle Hospital Thursday. There his situation was deemed to be serious, and he was rushed to King's Daughters Children's Hospital in Norfolk, Va. His mother said his blood count was "very low" and he was hemorrhaging through his nose.

He was listed in "critical but stable"

condition early Friday, but hospital spokesmen described him in "fair and improving" condition earlier this week.

In a telephone conversation Monday, Dwayne said that he was "feeling alright."

"I'll get out as soon as my blood count gets back up," said Dwayne, adding that although he wouldn't describe his Easter holiday in the hospital as "nice," he said "everything went okay."

As reported in the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY in December, doctors discovered a tumor on Dwayne's arm while X-raying a bone broken throwing a football. It was diagnosed as a rare form of cancer called Osteogenic Sarcoma.

Some \$4,000 was raised last week for Dwayne's cause by WCDJ radio in Edenton. Mrs. Brabble said that those wishing to make pledges could send a check made out to the Dwayne Parks Fund to: Brabble's Country Store, Route 1, P.O. Box 516, Hertford.

Although the Brabbles have never met Dwayne, they felt compelled to help him when they heard about his illness. "Lee and I were talking about it and saying it could have been one of our grandchildren," said Margaret.

"It could happen to anybody, and we feel it's our obligation to try to help people when we can," she said.

### This week

•Last Wednesday's Special Olympics offered a change of pace for Perquimans County exceptional students — see pages 3 and 4.

•It's been a long season for a baseball coach used to success — see page 8.

•Youths get ready for the Albemarle 4-H Livestock Show and Sale at a fitting and showing demonstration — see page 16.

### Weather word

Chance of showers Thursday and rain on Friday, ending Saturday. Highs will average in the lower 70s, lows in the 50s.



Melissa Lewis