

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 38, No. 14

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, APR. 8, 1982

20 CENTS

## Big Star's closing will hurt business, county merchants say

By SUSAN HARRIS

The Big Star is closing and most Hertford merchants are singing the blues along with the six full time and twelve part time employees of the store.

According to store manager Bob Taylor, the store will probably be sold out in about two more weeks. The meat and produce sections are already practically bare, and several shelves are empty elsewhere in the facility.

Employees are not saying much about job prospects, as most of them will more than likely be vying for the same jobs in other food stores.

As of press time, the workers had no idea what their benefits would be, only that their employment would be terminated at a later date.

Taylor revealed that the Grand Union company which owns Big Star will contact each employee individually to let them know their entitlements. Taylor said he was sure everyone would receive "an equitable package."

Shopkeepers interviewed at the shopping center were not optimistic about the effect of the store's closing on their business.

"We're definitely going to feel it," said Mary Ruth Smith, owner of Dozier's Florist, whose business is located adjacent to the grocery chain. "It's hurting all the merchants," she added.

Kay Knight, proprietor of Punkin's, echoed that feeling in her statement. "If people have to go out of town to

buy their groceries, they're going to do all their other shopping in the same area."

Although Dennis Hare at One Stop Auto Parts next door to Punkin's doesn't think the closing will have any effect on his business, he thinks a well-managed grocery store will bring business to everyone at the shopping center.

"I'm afraid it's going to hurt our business, too," said Doris Crandell, assistant manager of the Super Dollar Store. "All we can do is wait and see," she said.

The Olive Branch will suffer a business loss due to the Big Star closing, but co-owner Margaret Stowe expressed her deepest concern for the senior citizens who do not or cannot

drive out of town to purchase their groceries.

"I feel like especially the older folks are going to lose the most," she stated, adding, "I think it will have a devastating effect on the shopping center."

Chamber of Commerce president Chris Christensen, also a downtown merchant, said, "If we don't get a grocery store it's going to be a tragedy. It's going to effect all the merchants."

Of the effect of the closing on the downtown merchants, Katherine Nelson of Roses stated, "People won't come to Hertford."

Charles Woodard agreed with Nelson, saying, "It takes the money out of Hertford."

Erie Haste is more optimistic about

the situation, although he felt that having county residents laid off from their jobs will effect the economy.

Haste hopes that people will remain loyal to local businesses and will "give us an opportunity to continue to serve them and meet their needs."

"It's very discouraging, however, I feel like someone will soon replace Big Star," said Jessie Harris, owner of the building which houses the grocery chain.

If Big Star will accept Harris' offer to break their lease 13 months early (which will save them some \$24,000), Harris believes he could negotiate with "a major chain much, much larger than Grand Union (owners of Big Star)."

"I would work hard to get the best I

could get," Harris went on to say. He named Byrd Food Store, Food World, Winn Dixie, Kroger Sav-On, Be-Lo, and S&R as outfits which have expressed an interest in the Hertford market either to him directly or through others.

The feeling in the county is unanimous: the people want a grocery store with fair prices and good management.

No one seems to care if they're open 16 hours a day 6 days a week plus Sundays. They just want a grocery store where they can buy the groceries their families need and where they can get checked out quickly.

Hopefully the county will soon have such a store.

## Schools press for sales tax

By TOM OSTROSKY

Pushing for more money for school construction, the Perquimans County Board of Education is prepared to go to greater lengths to convince people — and state legislators, they hope — of the need for a statewide one cent sales tax, with a portion of the money earmarked for school system capital improvement.

School Superintendent Pat Harrell received the endorsement of the county Board of Commissioners for the tax which, according to the proposal by state treasurer Harlan Boyles, will earmark 40 percent of the money received for school capital improvement, 40 percent for county general spending, and 20 percent for water treatment facilities.

Also, the staff of the superintendent's office has developed a slide show and brochure outlining the county's problems with school buildings and the need for a statewide sales tax.

Though members of both the school and county board are unanimous in their support of the statewide tax, Perquimans County appears to be one of the few counties in the region, perhaps in the whole state, to be pushing for it.

Two other options seem to be more popular among other counties and state legislatures: one, a local-option sales tax, which would not be statewide but rather administered by each county at its own discretion, and two, no sales tax at all in a very attractive option in an election year.

At a recent meeting of county commissioners in the region, all but those from Perquimans County indicated they supported the local-option tax, probably because the other counties want to have the choice of adopting the tax or not.

The county boards are pushing for the statewide tax rather than the local-option tax because Perquimans County, and other small counties like

(Continued on page 2)



Supervisors Birds pick at the leftovers while the plowing goes on a farm in Winfall.

## Citizens want something done for Blanchard Building

A group of citizens appealed to the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners to do something with the Blanchard Building in downtown Hertford.

Speaking for the group, Barbara Nixon of the county Extension Homemakers Council and H.R. Christensen, chairman of the county Chamber of Commerce, said the building — purchased by the county some time ago and used for storage — is an eyesore and a detriment to downtown businesses.

Though the two admitted that their group was small, they indicated that they believe the concern for the

building goes beyond Chamber and extension homemakers council members.

"This is a sore subject with a lot of people," said Nixon at the meeting. She added that "no plan was ever evident," for using the building when the county bought it, and described the place as "a glorified, expensive closet."

Nixon, who is part of group trying to revitalize the county's industrial development committee, said, "When we advertise Perquimans County we advertise the water, the fishing, and the climate. God gave us all these things, and we don't advertise

anything we do ourselves."

Though Christensen said he would like to see the building used for "anything that creates traffic. Anything is better than what we have now," Nixon said she would like to see a community center built there.

She indicated that the extension services' "Festival of Skills," an arts and crafts show that was very successful last fall, may not be able to use the Morgan's Furniture Building on Church Street this year. A refurbished Blanchard Building would be a possible downtown site for the show, which this year will be held during the Chamber's planned fall festival.

Christensen noted that any activity in the building would help the town's faltering downtown businesses. "You just can't put a value on what people coming to Hertford does. People look in the stores and say, 'I didn't know this was here.'"

The county originally bought the building for new office space, but the cost of renovating the building made that impractical. Boardmembers said that cost, in the coming tight fiscal year, is still a concern, but board chairman Joe Nowell asked Nixon and board member Charles Ward to come up with some cost estimates for renovating part of the building as a

community center.

In other action, the board:

- Passed a resolution supporting a statewide one cent sales tax, with 40 percent of the money received to be earmarked for school construction, 40 percent for the county, and 20 for sewage treatment.

- Set 5 percent as the figure for salary increases for Department of Social Services employees. That figure will only be used as a benchmark for budget calculations, and may later be changed.

## Chamber meets with area groups

By SUSAN HARRIS

Some thirty-three persons representing organizations throughout Perquimans County attended a meeting at the courthouse to discuss the festival to be sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce the week of September 13.

Festival chairperson Mary Harrell told the group that the Chamber wanted to introduce "an event in this county that we can be known for."

It is hoped that the festival will become an annual celebration.

Chamber president Chris Christensen stressed to the group that all organizations will be equally involved in the festival. "This is not a Chamber of Commerce event," he said, describing the endeavor as a "melting pot" of ideas and activities.

Paige Underwood, County Extension Agent, announced that the extension homemakers clubs would hold their annual Festival of Skills during the county festival.

Underwood also reported that the Farm-City week observance usually held in October would be incorporated into the event.

The 4-H clubs would also like to be involved, according to Justina Bailey, Assistant Extension Agent, adding that the clubs might sponsor a fishing tournament for all ages.

The food show and tasting tour might also be held in conjunction with the festival, Bailey said.

The senior citizens' groups hold a crafts fair at the Senior Center each year, and could hold this year's fair to coincide with the festival, said Patti White who represented the Parks and Recreation Department.

Pete Riddick reserved Friday night for the American Legion, at which time they will have either a fish or chicken fry. A home football game will follow the dinner.

The Newbold-White house could be the scene of many and varied activities, said Anne Young who spoke for the Restoration Association. A mock session of the assembly and a Quaker service were two suggestions Young gave the group.

The girl scouts will march in the parade slated for Saturday morning, and will demonstrate their outdoor skills, said spokesperson Marjorie Rayburn.

Rayburn also suggested that some activities be held in communities in the county, rather than all within the town.

The Hertford Saddle Club will participate in the parade and may

synchronize their September horse show with the festival, according to Jimmy Kirby who represented the club.

Bill Meekins with the Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company told the group that his company would support the festival in any way possible. He said he thought the idea of a fall festival was very good, and wished the county much success.

Commissioner Joe Nowell spoke on behalf of all the commissioners when he said, "I think it's an excellent idea." Nowell pledged the support of the commissioners.

Mayor Bill Cox said he and the town council are "very enthused" about the festival. Cox is also in charge of lining up sites for festival activities.

He reported that the Blanchard building, the John Deer building and lot, the new park, the Senior Center and grounds, and Claude Brinn's building will be available for the event.

Mary Harrell told the group that a name for the festival should be chosen by next week.

Harrell also requested that any organization interested in participating contact her as soon as possible.

## Kiskitano Sun

### Union students' book is 'better than last year'

Following the lead of last year's gifted and talented class at Perquimans Union School, who created a book of memories from local residents entitled "Yeopim Moon," this year's class has just come out with "Kiskitano Sun," a new look at the lives of people in this county several decades ago.

According to Union teacher Sid Eley, who directed the layout of the book after GT teacher Charlene Ringer left the area in December, experience has made this year's book even better than last year's. That's quite a statement: "Yeopim Moon" won first place in the Tar Heel Junior Historian literary contest, which this year's book has also been entered into.

They've also learned something else from experience: print more copies. Last year's 400 copies of "Yeopim Moon" sold out before many people had a chance to buy one. But even then, 840 copies of

"Kiskitano Sun" may not be enough.

A big plus for this year's book — which Eley describes as "memories, not facts" — is the greater number of pictures of people and places in the county. There are pictures of downtown Hertford in the 1920s and 30s, pictures of classes at King Street School, Durants Neck School, White Hat School, New Hope School, pictures of men now in their fifties and sixties in knickers, pictures of programs from the Hertford movie theater, and portraits of families from the 30s.

And of course, there are the student's stories and interviews. The titles speak for themselves: "Mayor, Postmaster, Lawyer, and Volunteer Fireman" (about Silas Whedbee of Hertford), "Memories of Farm Life" (about Nora Winslow of Belvidere), "Bear Swamp Stories" (Roy Chappell, Sr. of Bethel), "Four Hundred Pounds of

Cotton in One Day" (Lubertha Blanchard of Hertford), "W.A. Russell (of New Hope) Let's the Cat Out of the Bag," and probably the most provocative, "Yucky Girls," about Billy White of Hertford.

Eley admits his job was easy. "Charlene Ringer did a fantastic job getting it together," he said.

"Some (of the students) were tickled and some embarrassed," by seeing their work in print, Eley said, but the favorable reaction from readers has already come in. "One lady told me that she read the same thing in PARADE magazine," he said. "They both had the same style of interview."

"The kids are getting an experience here that they're not going to get anywhere else," he added.

A copy of the book can be purchased for \$3 from Eley, the GT students, and several local businesses.