

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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School insertion featured

In an effort to keep county residents informed on happenings during the past school year, the Perquimans County Board of Education has begun publishing an annual newspaper of school events.

The newspaper, which has been inserted in this week's issue of the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY, reports on many of the significant events of the last year.

Among the articles in the paper are reports on school accreditation, improved standardized test scores, Title I and exceptional children programs, sports, and a brief look at each of the schools.

"Many exciting things are taking place in our schools," writes School Superintendent Pat Harrell in a message to residents. "Our test scores have continuously been above the national average...our schools, as well as the central office, are in the process of becoming accredited...we are extremely proud of the recognition gained recently through our sports and band programs.

"This paper is designed to let you know what is going on in our school system, enabling you to become better informed citizens."

"I am proud to be a part of an organization that is committed to caring and sharing so that our children can learn in Perquimans County," writes Board Chairman Clifford Winslow in his opening remarks to readers.

The newspaper is also available at the school superintendent's office.

Fire levels home near Center Hill

A fire in Perquimans County near Center Hill destroyed the family home of a Hertford resident last Thursday night.

According to fire department reports, the Center Hill Fire Department responded at 11:45 Thursday evening to a fire which destroyed the home of the late Rennie Dail on Center Hill Highway.

The house, now owned by Dail's daughter, Bonnie White, had been rented out, but was not occupied at the time of the fire. No injuries were reported.

Fire department officials are still investigating the cause of the fire.



Picnicking

David Cartwright lets his belly show as Terry Shively escorts him over the rails at Missing Mill Park last Friday. The two children, along with the Frisbee enthusiasts at left, were enjoying themselves during Anderson United Methodist Church's Bible school picnic.

Chamber lines up festival program

By SUSAN HARRIS

Fall is just around the corner, and with it will come the first annual Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Indian Summer Festival in Perquimans County.

To be kicked off on Thursday, September 16 with Farm-City Day, the festival promises fun for everyone right through to the grand finale — a street dance in Missing Mill Park featuring Nita Bowen and the Dixie Clippers, on Saturday, September 18 at 8 p.m.

Farm-City Day will include a variety of farm-related displays under a tent in Missing Mill Park. B&S Enterprises, Hertford Motor Company and Byrum Implement Company are a few of the companies sponsoring farm equipment displays.

Guests Jim Walter, president of the N.C. Soybean Association, and representatives of the N.C. Peanut Growers Association will be on hand with demonstrations.

Hot dogs, hamburgers and other refreshments will go on sale at 10 a.m., and entertainment is planned throughout the day.

Friday will find Hertford's sidewalks filled with old-fashioned bargains as the merchants participate in Colonial Day.

The American Legion will sponsor a fish fry Friday evening at \$3 per plate, after which Pirate fans will fill Memorial Field to cheer the Perquimans team to victory over the Hurricanes of Northampton County-West.

Halftime activities will include the celebrated Marching Pirates in uniform for their second season.

A 5K race and fun run will start Saturday's Fun Day. The run, which will begin at Hertford Grammar School, is open to all ages. Trophies will be awarded to the overall winner and to winners in several age groups.

Co-sponsored by the Perquimans County Parks and Recreation Department and the Chamber of Commerce, the entry fee is \$6 through September 10 and \$7 thereafter. The fun run is \$1.

While joggers race over the 3.1 mile trek, booths will be opening up

downtown selling wares from art to popcorn.

Already signed up to participate are craftsman offering woodcraft, crochet, dolls, puppets, ducks, windchimes, pillows, baskets, Christmas ornaments, quilt racks, shells, plastic needlepoint, counted cross stitch and fabric craft.

There will be plenty of food on hand, along with various displays.

A dunking booth and games for children are planned for the park.

Entertainers to perform downtown and in the park will be the Albemarle



Indian Summer Festival

Pops Orchestra, the Flatland Cloggers, the Navy 4-Star Combo, Brenda Parker, the Lavezzo Sisters, the Cann Puppeteers and the Spirited Truth gospel singers, along with others.

At 8 o'clock Nita Bowen and the Dixie Clippers will play for the street dance in Missing Mill Park.

Booths are still available for rent, and entertainers are welcome to participate. For information, call Miriam Haskett for craft booths at 426-5620, Rebecca Spivey for art rentals at 297-2402, Richard Bryant for a food space at 426-5530, Helen Mae Murray for a display area at 426-7349 and Mary Harrell to entertain at 426-5664.

The Indian Summer Festival promises to be fun for young and old. Make your plans now to join in the gala event sponsored by the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

Get your Indian Summer Festival T-shirt from Darden's or Woodland Dress Shop and advertise the county's premiere extravaganza to your friends and neighbors.

Y'all come!

Hertford welcomes hunger walker

Beginning the final leg of his 700-mile journey across North Carolina, Chris Loftis jumped right into the same message he told a group in Murphy two months ago.

"When you receive a blessing and don't be a blessing," he said to a group of senior citizens at the Nutrition Site in Hertford, "that's an insult to God."

Loftis, a 23-year-old native of East Gastonia, had just about neared the end of his walk across the state when he spent Monday in Hertford, speaking and playing his guitar at the Nutrition Site, talking with county officials, and performing at Missing Mill Park that evening.

Loftis is walking in hopes of calling attention to the plight of the hungry, both around the world and in North Carolina. He is walking in behalf of CROP, the worldwide church organization providing relief to hungry people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

A ministry student at Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Loftis spreads his concern both as a Christian and as a humanitarian. "God told us to help the poor," he said to the group between renditions of several gospel songs.

Lugging a 40-pound backpack along with his guitar, Loftis — skinny as a rail, though he claims to have gained three pounds since he started walking — has made this as much a learning experience for himself as it was a means of spreading his concern. Wishing to be "a voice of the poor instead of a voice for the poor," he talks with local people and local officials, trying to learn of their attitudes toward poverty and what they are doing about it.

"You'd be surprised how many people say there are no poor people in North Carolina," he said. "They're usually rich people."

Some of the comments have even made this quiet young man a bit

angry. "If I hear one more time somebody say that the poor deserve to be poor, I might forget I'm a Baptist and beat the boy up."

"I've had a very good response from some people," he said. "Some have been very kind, and some have been not so kind. I've had people throw coke bottles at me and try to run me over. But as bad as some people have treated me, I think about how we all treat each other."

If spreading the word about hunger and poverty is his intention, then Loftis appears to have succeeded marvelously, having his story told in newspapers in Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte, Asheville, Lexington, Elizabeth City, and yes, even Hertford.

Along the way, he has stayed and eaten with local families, in Hertford with Lib Harris and Sister Barbara Gerwe of Catholic Social Services. While in Hertford, he spoke to several community leaders, among them County Commissioner Lester Simpson and Social Services Director Paul Gregory, learning for himself about the needs of the poor here and the help they've received.

"You're better off here than in some places I've been," he told them. "In some other counties, people just don't seem to care."

And he's just as determined about making his trip as he is about spreading his message. When Loftis says he will walk across the state, he means walk the whole way. Running late for his visit to the Nutrition Site, Harris picked him up between Hertford and Edenton and drove him in. But once he'd finished at the site, Harris returned him to the spot where he left off, and he continued walking from there.

"I hope people will ask me why I'm doing this," he said. "If I can plant a few seeds in people's minds, maybe something will grow."

Commission attempts to increase tax base

By TOM OSTROSKY
Second in a series

When the Perquimans County Industrial Development Commission holds their Committee of 100 banquet September 21, one of the most important topics under discussion will be the county's tax base.

Much of the commission hopes for forming a local organization to promote development rest on convincing people that industrial growth will reduce taxes.

The idea is simple enough: there are only two ways to reduce the amount of money individuals spend for property taxes, either by reducing local government spending, or by increasing the amount of property from which to draw taxes from.

Reducing government spending is not entirely out of the question, but is not very likely either. Over the past few years, local governments here

and elsewhere have been cutting their budgets as much as possible, until now many have reached the point where they're no longer cutting the fat, but the meat as well.

For example, at last Monday's meeting of the county Board of Commissioners, Social Services Director Paul Gregory asked the board to allow him to reinstate a staff position that Gregory had cut from this year's budget. Without that position, Gregory said, his department had become hopelessly backlogged. The board indicated that Gregory could begin looking to fill the spot.

Perhaps 80 percent of a local government's tax revenue is spent on things that the county has little choice in cutting. Light bills have to be paid, buildings have to be kept up, schools must meet certain standards, law and order must be kept, and employees' salaries must remain competitive or they will leave for better jobs and be replaced by less qualified persons.

Most of the other 20 percent is usually spent on items that may not be vital, but citizens wouldn't stand to have them cut either.

In Perquimans County, the tax rate increased from \$1.15 to \$1.20 this year, largely to cover a five percent increase in salaries and the yearly increases in utilities and maintenance.

Since 1970, tax collections in this county have increased about 228 percent, while total income for the county increased only 185 percent.

It's likely to get worse before it

gets better. Lately, the attitude in both Washington and Raleigh is to give the counties as many duties as possible, but not to give them enough money to carry them out. The weight of many state and federal cuts will fall on local communities.

Far more desirable than budget cuts, argue proponents of industrial growth, would be to increase the tax base with an addition of one or two or perhaps three new manufacturing industries. If the county's tax base had increased by another \$5 million last year, the county could have generated the same tax revenue without raising the rate.

Though \$5 million may sound like a lot of money, it isn't actually. The county's tax base, even in poor crop years, will naturally increase by \$2-\$4 million (six or seven percent) each year. Growth proponents believe that with only a few small factories — say, of the size and nature of Don Juan Manufacturing Corp. outside Hertford — would exonerate that natural increase to perhaps \$7-10 million.

It's not that the factory itself would increase the tax base. The physical plant at Don Juan, for example, is assessed at only about \$670,000. Rather, it is the increased salaries of the employees that raises the property tax base.

According to the Employment Securities Commission, average salaries in this area for manufacturing jobs, such as a textile plant like Don Juan, are \$183.67 per week, as compared to \$102.23 for jobs in farming, forestry and fishing, \$159.39

in the lumber industry, and \$165.32 in wholesale or retail sales.

At Don Juan, according to supervisor Stuart Anderson, unskilled employees working at a piecemeal rate can make anywhere from \$140 to \$200 per week, depending on their speed.

With those higher salaries, manufacturing employees go out and buy cars, homes, furniture, and so on, raising the tax base. In 1972, when Don Juan expanded its operation to their present location, total income for county residents increased over 40 percent, the biggest increase ever, and in the following year the tax base increased 14 percent.



Loftis

This week

Horse lovers compete each month in Perquimans County. Turn to page three.

Weather

Pleasant but with a chance of showers through Sunday. Highs in the mid-80s, lows in the mid-60s.