

Weekly Perspective

Looking back

By VIRGINIA WHITE TRANSEAU
NOVEMBER 1944
FIVE YOUTHS LEAVE MONDAY FOR EXAMS: Five Perquimans County white youths, Edgar Berry, James S. McNider, Louis Stallings, Ralph Perry and Robert Elliott, have been ordered to report to the draft office next Monday to go to Fort Bragg for pre-induction examinations.

WEEKLY TO PRINT EARLY NEXT WEEK: Following its usual custom of observing Thanksgiving, The Perquimans Weekly will be printed one day earlier next week. And all correspondents and others

having news items for publication next week must have the items in this office not later than 3 o'clock next Tuesday afternoon. Thanksgiving will be observed in Hertford with all business houses and offices, along with the post office, being closed for one day.

PASTOR RETURNED: Conference assigns Reavis and Cranford to county for year. Announcement was made at the meeting of the Methodist Conference, held in Raleigh last week, that the Rev. B.C. Reavis has been reassigned as pastor of the Hertford Methodist Church for another year.

A small catch in jailbreak attempt

Thomas Small should have been just a little suspicious when Humphrey Simons volunteered to do him a favor, especially when the favor meant breaking the law. There was bound to be a catch somewhere.

Formerly a resident of Chowan County, Small had purchased eighty acres in the northern part of Perquimans County in 1761. He was a wheelwright by trade and his business probably led to his acquaintance with Simons, who was a blacksmith.

On the first of June 1975, Small was a prisoner in the county jail in the town of Hertford. The jail was not yet forty years old, and it had been substantially strengthened in 1756 by Daniel Saint.

Saint had laid down new supporting timbers and put on a new floor well spiked. He also had installed a new outside lock and a new interior door with a good stock lock. After twenty years of usage, however, Saint's repairs were by 1775 no longer so strong as they should be.

Perhaps prisoner Small's knowledge of wood and metal fed speculation as to the holding power of the jail. (Through the years similar speculation would reveal to many prisoners the ease with which they might escape.)

The speculation was about to be put to the test. Small was called to the jail window, where he saw Humphrey Simons outside. Simons offered to help Small and the prisoner soon learned what the catch was.

Simons asked, "What will you give to get out? I hate to see you in this place." Small answered, "I'll give you all the money I have, and one bed."

Simons requested to see the money, so Small emptied his pockets and turned up about fifty shillings in



Ray Winslow

paper money and a purse containing two dollars.

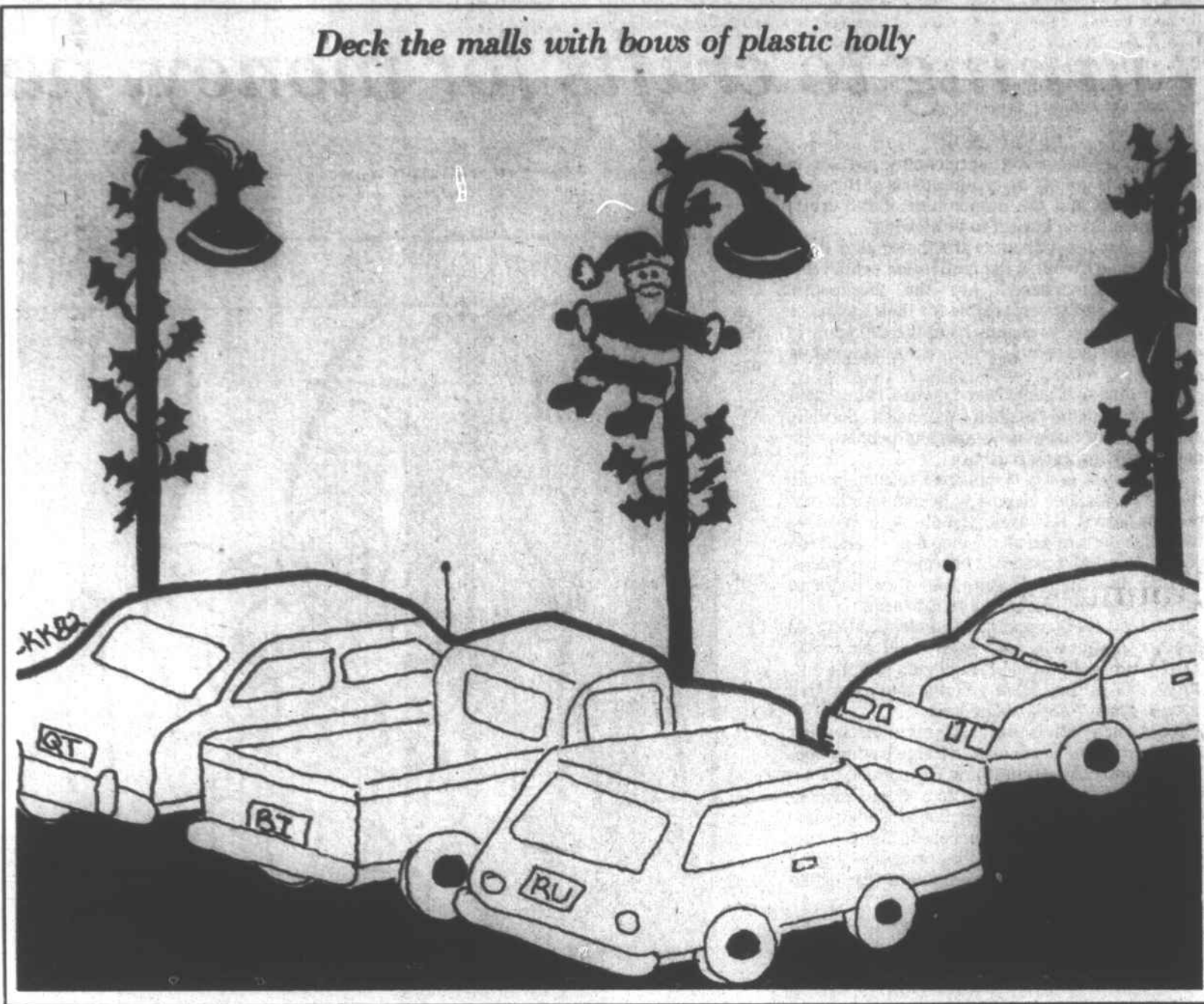
Satisfied, Simons agreed to see about it, indicating he would assist Small with an ax and break the jail's outside lock.

After dark, when the town had settled down for the night, someone handed Small an ax through the grates of the jail window. Small expected to break the inside door fastening, while the accomplice he assumed was Simons went to work on the outer lock.

The attempted jail break was unsuccessful. Small found himself, not free, but in greater disfavor with the authorities. Instead of gaining two dollars and fifty shillings, Simons found himself pledging the county's magistrates eight pounds for his appearance in court. Small had learned Simons' catch, both learned the law's catch.

Small and Simons paid for their mistakes. Simons went back to his blacksmith shop at the edge of town. Small sold his farm in 1777 and retained ownership of a town lot on Market Street until 1780.

Thomas Small has tried an ax. He would never know the proper implement needed to escape from imprisonment here. That implement was a spoon, for such a tool was used by some prisoners many years later to dig their way out of the Perquimans County Jail.



Deck the malls with bows of plastic holly

The unheralded sibling Civil War

I've been reading lately that there is this special program on television depicting a drama set during the Civil War.

I haven't had a chance to see the show, though from reading the advertising on it, I understand that it includes the old story idea of brother pitted against brother during that war.

This is not the first time the brother-against-brother story has come up, and it probably won't be the last. The reason I bring this up is because I think these dramas neglect another great conflict found throughout American history, and that is the war fought between brother and sister.

The brother-sister conflict is not quite so tragic, or so bloody, as the brother-brother conflict, but it is certainly as dramatic.

As a child, I can recall many great battles pitting brother against sister, as I'm sure the reader can also. It was a time when the power of prin-

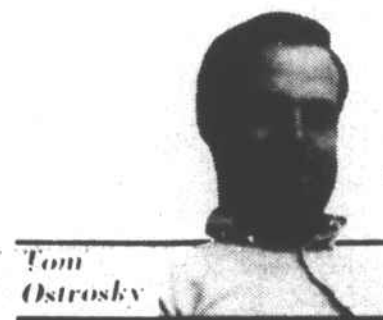
ciples tugged harder at my allegiance than the power of kinship.

I remember the great Battle of the Tricycle, one of the more momentous entries in the annals of the Ostrosky family. The backyard of our home was a seething battleground where I, in alliance with the family collie, made a violent foray against my sister, who with her ally, a dumb girl from down the street, guarded the coveted tricycle.

A classical flanking maneuver by myself, followed by a heroic cavalry charge by the collie, were ineffective, as my sister and her friend, with the tricycle, made a successful retreat to the kitchen, where my mother took up the defense.

There soon followed the long, attritional Hair Pulling Campaign, in which I successfully retrieve some of my damaged pride as well as took one teddy bear prisoner.

The conflict reached a turning point at the Battle of the Checkerboard, which took place in the living room. Fighting against immense odds — my sister and two of her girlfriends against me without the collie — I took advantage of my interior lines and fought off a clumsy, poorly-timed attack, all the while



Tom Ostrosky

disrupting my enemy's communications by yelling so loud they couldn't hear each other.

The fighting was fierce, but I succeeded in sending one of my sister's allies in retreat, and seized the checkerboard before the other two could send for reinforcements (my mother again). Casualties included an Oriental vase and a sofa pillow, and I suffered a cut on my left index finger.

With that victory, the fighting ceased for quite a while, coming to a head later on when my sister formed an alliance with another great power, this one a dopey boyfriend of her's.

Of course, there is a great deal more to that war, but those are some of the highlights. One can easily see

the material this could make for a television drama. It's something some enterprising network should look into.

Having just looked over the East Carolina University basketball brochure for this season, I get the feeling ECU is not going to have a very good team.

Most sports brochures from universities are packed with player profiles, action photos, statistics, and the usual public relations hoopla.

The ECU brochure has all of those things, but the most outstanding part of it is a color photo of a shapely young blonde wearing roller skates, and rather little else.

The caption modestly reads, "Not only does spring bring out the foliage beauty of the campus, but also the natural beauty of the campus. East Carolina is heavily populated with beautiful women, noted in many areas as having the finest female population of any college campus in the South."

So let's all go on down to Greenville to watch the basketball team, right?

Letters

Give your support to nuclear energy

Editor, THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY,

With the elections behind us, passions should cool on the future of this nation's fast breeder reactor program.

The opportunity to support breeder development will present itself during the special session of Congress next month. An affirmative vote, at that time, on the new budget for the Clinch River Breeder Reactor Project is vital.

Our three possible and almost limitless new sources of energy are the breeder reactor, solar power and

fusion. None is yet attractive from a cost point of view, but of them, the breeder reactor is by far the most advanced and the most likely to succeed. Yet, for it to reach a commercial stage will take two or three successively improved development reactors. The Clinch River Breeder Reactor is the next important step in that series.

Development of the breeder concept is indispensable to the future exploitation of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This truth is recognized by France, England, Japan, India, and the Soviet Union, where strong breeder programs are

underway.

I hope that when Congress reconvenes this month the members will be able to set short-term politics aside and vote resoundingly for the future of their country. After 11 years of development, Clinch River is already more than 85 percent complete in design. To kill it now would waste vital research already done and would foreclose a vital option for this country's energy future.

Carl Walske, President
Atomic Industries Forum, Inc.
Bethesda, MD

Voters oppose gun control

Editor, THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY:

For well over a decade, the 50 million gun owners of the United States and the National Rifle Association have been assailed by the advocates of gun control with the accusation that we have been insensitive to the tragic loss of human life.

Congratulations voters

Editor, THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY:

Congratulations to the people of Perquimans County. Your hard work and "yes" vote insured that the Recreation Department will be around for a long time. Don't let the vote or the work of so many end in vain! Use and enjoy the Recreation

Department. We have so much to offer everyone in the community in the way of arts, sports, educational and recreational activities. Come and participate. We'd love to have you.

Patty Lorick
Acting Recreation Director

November 9, displays the gun prohibitionists' cynical disregard of human life for purposes of political expediency. In the final sentence of the article, Michael Beard, Executive Director of the National Coalition to Ban Handguns stated, "I hate to say it, but one well-publicized homicide could wipe that 'California vote' out."

Imagine an individual of supposed intelligence praying for the death of some prominent American so that his own selfish, misguided cause might be advanced.

This from an organization that trumpets from any available podium and through any available medium their slogan, "To save one life."

What hypocrisy!
J. Warren Casady
Executive Director
NRA Institute for Legislative Action

Facing South

NEW HOPE, S.C. — Crazy. That's what some neighbors called Erma Anderson.

Plain crazy, thinking she could start cleaning up a neighborhood many people had given up on long ago.

But Mrs. Anderson turned a deaf ear to discouragement. She continued writing letters, making phone calls and talking to neighbors, searching for the right ways to improve the area where she has spent all of her 50 years.

Known for years as Bugerboo, the community of 200 houses and 850 people — most black, employed, with low to moderate incomes — lies on U.S. 1 between Graniteville and Aiken, South Carolina.

"We started and then stopped when people lost interest," Mrs. Anderson said. "They seemed...complacent? Is that the word? Some didn't want things to change."

But some things needed to change: the hog pens, the trash, the outhouses, the roads that washed away with every rainstorm; the tacked together tar-papered houses that seemed to shiver in the wind — all conditions faced, disliked and endured by Mrs. Anderson's mother in an earlier generation.

In the late 1960s, Mrs. Anderson began contacting legislators, business representatives, govern-

ment officials, anyone who could answer some of her questions. Although she was busy attending nursing school, she spent her spare time tending to the community.

She shared answers and information with her neighbors. They organized — for the first time since 1964 and its desegregation challenges. They visited meetings and looked up agencies. When they hooked up with Pixie Baxter in the Aiken County Planning Commission, things finally began happening.

In November 1978, residents changed the name of the community from Bugerboo to New Hope, "because that's what we had," Mrs. Anderson said with a smile. "Hope that things would get better."

Evaluations and applications were completed, federal grants were awarded, meetings were held and rumors were squelched. Ms. Baxter began making regular appearances in New Hope, talking with residents, trying to understand their fears, needs and hopes.

"So many people felt they were going to lose their property," she said. "We had to tell them that wasn't the case, that we had no wish and no right to take away their homes."

Half of those homes — some built early in this century — had no indoor plumbing. Some had no insulation

and only a fireplace as a primary heat source.

The work done by Ms. Baxter, the planning commission and Mrs. Anderson brought New Hope almost \$5.5 million in federal HUD grants and loans. The money has changed the physical face of the neighborhood by making possible the paving of streets, laying of irrigation pipe, and building of duplexes.

Abandoned houses have been demolished. People living in dilapidated houses have been given other housing arrangements.

REBECCA McCARTHY
freelance

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