

# Weekly Perspective

## Other views

### Food prices and inflation

**By JOHN SLEDGE**  
**N. C. Farm Bureau Federation**  
 The overall consumer price index increased 6.1 percent in 1982. Food prices, by comparison, rose only four percent, about half the increase of 1981 and the smallest rise since 1976. Of course, rates of inflation are based on averages. For example, some food products increased more than others. Fresh fruit prices increased by 13 percent while meat prices were up 4.8 percent. And, within these categories, there's even further breakdowns.

Pork prices, for example, increased 12.9 percent in 1982, while beef prices moved up only 1.4 percent. Some food items declined in price in 1982 such as poultry and eggs. But, everything is lumped together to come up with an overall four percent inflation rate for food. Depending on your diet, your food costs could have been higher or lower than the four percent. But, in any case, food continues to be a bargain. Only one major consumer expense item had a lower rate of inflation

than food in 1982 and that was clothing. Other major consumer expenses inflated more than food such as housing, up 7.2 percent and medical care, up 11.6 percent. During the double digit inflation of just a couple of years ago, food tended to rise in price with the overall inflation rate. Now, with much lower inflation, food again tends to reflect this lower inflation rate. Food prices seem to be more result of inflation than a cause of inflation.

### Former Sheriff held unusual position

Archibald Fletcher Riddick (1849-1909), Sheriff of Perquimans County from 1889 to 1900, held an unusual job in his youth. To build up a nest egg so he could marry, he took a position as an Issue Clerk for the Yankton Indian Agency in Dakota Territory early in 1879.

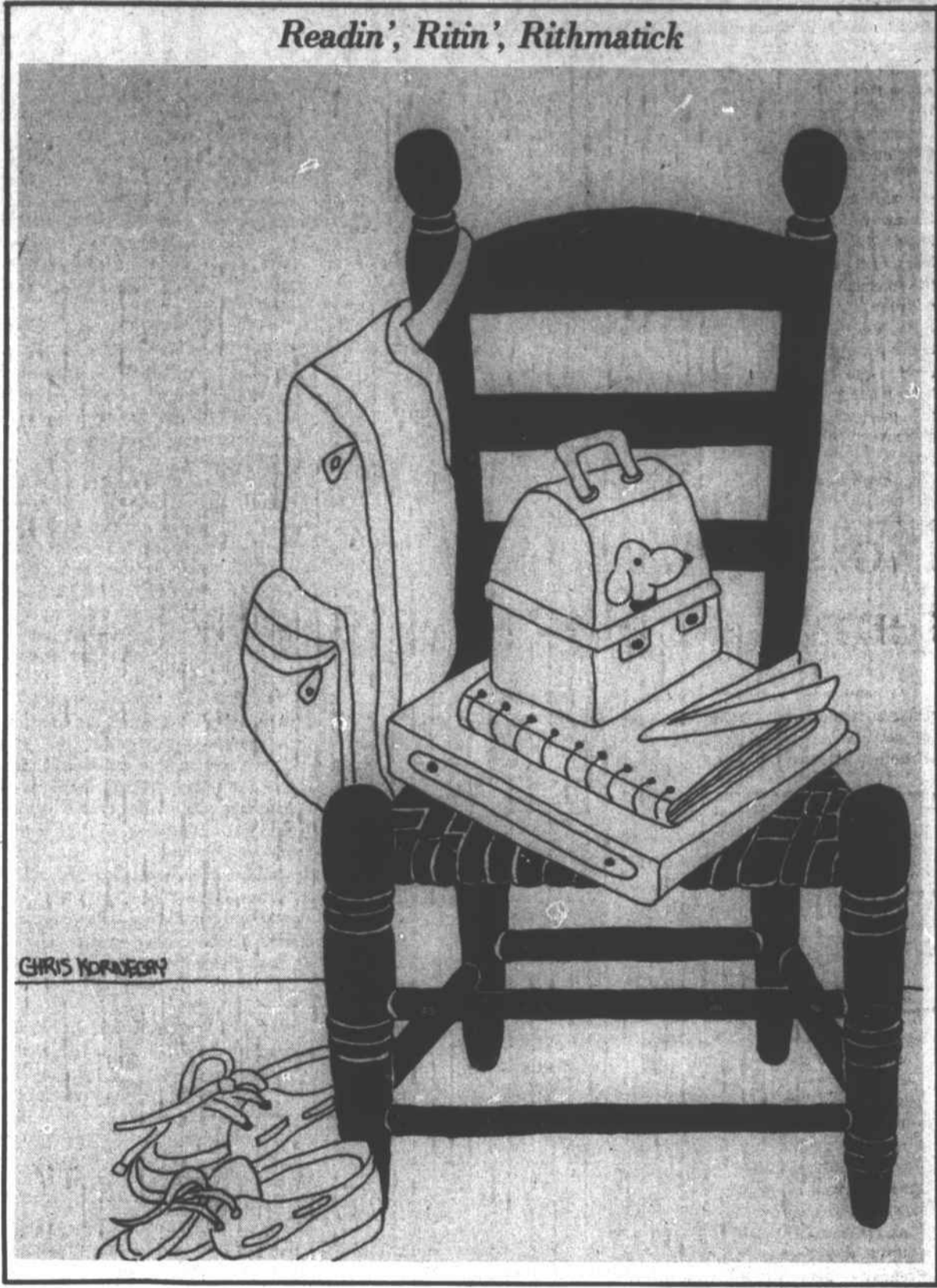
my charge. I also have a man to attend to handling, and issuing the other articles.



(Riddick probably obtained the position with the assistance of his uncle William Nicholson, formerly of Belvidere, who had been Superintendent of the Central Division for the Office of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.) On March 7, 1879, Riddick described his work in a letter to his future father-in-law. As Issue Clerk he participated in the distribution of rations to about 2,000 Indians. (The Indians were probably Sioux, who had a few years earlier undone Custer at Little Big Horn, or Omahas.) The Indians were divided into eight bands, "and one band draws each day, except on Fridays and Saturdays, when two Bands draw on each day." On one day Riddick issued seven head of "Texas Steers," and quantities of flour, sugar, coffee and baking powder. Riddick wrote: "The hard and disagreeable part of the work is done by the Indian Butchers placed under

My work consists in keeping the accounts, taking the Indian's receipts, (which simply means 'touching the pen' while I make the mark), and when there is a 'grand rush', weighing out the Coffee and Sugar. "The present mode of issuing is quite complicated and requires double the labor formerly expended. The weather has been quite severe since I came up, but today it has been too warm for comfort with our heavy clothing on." "Thermometer indicating 74 degrees in the shade. The ice in the Missouri River broke up this morning, and is moving out rapidly." Riddick also described local society: "There are quite a number of New Yorkers and other Eastern people up here in connection with the

Missionary work. There are two Missions here, one Episcopal, in charge of Bishop (William H.) Hare, the other Presbyterian, and in charge of Rev. Mr. Williamson, a very good man, and one thoroughly versed in the Indian language... "There are also several unmarried ladies (I had nearly said 'young' ladies, but I can't conscientiously say it) in connection with the Missions, thus furnishing us a very good grade of society." "I think I shall manage to survive unless devoured by the mosquitos. I wanted, worse than any thing else, to pay Belvidere a visit this Spring, but under the circumstances couldn't see my way clear." "I shall, however, if nothing unforeseen occurs to prevent, make my next move in that direction, but, when, I can not say." Archibald Riddick did make it to Belvidere, where on December 10, 1879, he married Anna Almy Nicholson. He then went into the mercantile business with his wife's father, Josiah Nicholson. For a time thereafter, he sold flour and sugar to the farmers of Perquimans instead of issuing them to the Indians of Yankton. (Our thanks to Dr. Arch Riddick for a copy of his father's letter.)



### Looking back

**20 Years Ago**  
**By VIRGINIA WHITE TRANSEAU**  
**LOCAL FIRM BUYS E. CITY BUSINESS:** Erie Haste, Jr., secretary-treasurer of the Hertford Hardware & Supply Company, announced Monday the purchase of the McNaughton Outboards of Elizabeth City by his firm. Mr. Haste stated that the addition to the Hertford business will be operated by City Marina and is located at 414 Front Street in Elizabeth City. The owner stated that the purchase of the business was being made to give even better service to Perquimans and Pasquotank Counties.

T. E. Haste Sr. will be operating the City Marine in Elizabeth City. The company has the Mercury franchise for both Perquimans and Pasquotank Counties. **OPENING DATE FOR CHESAPEAKE BRIDGE-TUNNEL TO BE DEFINITELY SET BY MIDDLE OF SEPTEMBER:** The south approach to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel is virtually complete and paving has started on the first section of the 17.6 mile bay crossing, a bridge tunnel official reported. **ANNUAL FARM FESTIVAL SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN HERTFORD SEPT. 12-13:** This year's annual Farm Festival has

been scheduled for September 12 and 13. The Chamber of Commerce and the County Home Economics Extension Agents have planned the festival and have some very interesting exhibits lined up. **COMMISSIONERS IN SESSION TUESDAY:** The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners meeting her Tuesday expressed their thanks to County Commissioner Thomas D. Nixon for supervising the renovation of the court room in the Perquimans County Court House. A petition was approved for the State Highway Commission to improve county road S.R. 1311. This road is in the White Hat section of the county.

## Facing South

a syndicated column

voices of tradition in a changing region

ASHEVILLE, N. C. — "My grandmother washed clothes with a 'batling stick,' " says Marilyn McMinn-McCredie, "and I watched men land on the moon. I'm in my early forties but I live in a culture three centuries old." "Now I make my living telling people what that's like — why we mountaineers are such a paradox, living in the past and present at the same time." Marilyn is as much a paradox as the mountain way of life she champions. A concert performer without formal training, a historian and folklorist without a degree, and a cultural ambassador without portfolio, she is the latest emerging star on the horizon of North Carolina mountain folkdom. And she seems a little pleasantly puzzled by it all. She was born in the hills of Henderson County, of people who have held land there for four generations. Oral tradition was strong on both sides of her family, so she grew up steeped in hillfolk and Indian legends, tall tales, ghost stories, herb and cooking lore, and hand-me-down family anecdotes — all of which she absorbed easily. "Even as a child," she remembers, "I sensed that there was something special about the way it was all handed down so carefully by word of mouth. I came to feel that I had somehow been appointed a keeper of the faith, to preserve and pass on these things in turn." There was plenty of opportunity. With both parents working, Marilyn, the oldest of five, was left as a child to look after her siblings. The old stories came in handy for keeping them amused. When she married the first time, at age 18, she promptly bore four children of her own, and the stories again proved useful. Her first public storytelling occurred in the Henderson County schools, where she worked as a teacher's aide. Then, in 1976, encouraged by some friends, she offered a course she called "Western North Carolina Folk History" at Henderson County's Blue

Ridge Technical College. "I wrote the prospectus on the back of an envelope. That's how loose the class was — and still is," she maintains. "I was surprised and pleased to discover that a whole class of educated adults, many with advanced degrees, should find my material valuable." From there, she branched out and foot-pounded her way into engagements on television and radio and at summer camps and local resorts. "I'm probably the only performer ever to show up for a gig at the almighty Grove Park Inn clutching a dulcimer and barefooted." "I was sure they'd tell me to use the servants' entrance." Her several prestigious concert appearances include one at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. The dulcimer, which she began playing to regain use of her right-hand fingers after a car accident in 1977, has become her trademark. So has the plaintive melody "Shenandoah." Her expressive gray-green eyes sparkle as she says matter-of-factly, "Carl Sandburg taught me to play that tune. That's interesting since he died years before I bought my instrument." She grins, "I'll tell you the story sometime." Marilyn's schedule is crowded these days. On the lecture circuit to

other campuses, her folklore course remains popular: demand for seats in her classes usually exceeds supply. "When I'm teaching," she says, "I try not to teach. I just want to share what I know with people I think will appreciate it." Recently, she submitted to Governor James B. Hunt a proposal for the creation of a statewide and state-operated cultural interpretation division, which she would head. "The legislators and officials I've talked to seem enthusiastic about it," she says. "We'll see how it fares as a potential budget item. Meanwhile, I'll keep trying to explain our mountain heritage by show-and-tell wherever and however I can." "You know," she says, "the first banjos didn't have any frets. The people who played them just made an educated guess as to where to put their fingers. Once a city slicker asked an old banjo picker how he knew where the right notes were." "Son," he said, "there ain't no notes on a banjo. You just play it." "I guess I've got a fretless approach to folklore." **ROGER MCCREDIE** folklorist and freelance Asheville, NC **FACING SOUTH** welcomes readers' comments and writers' contributions. Write P.O. Box 531, Durham, N.C. 27702.

### Letters to the Editor

**Editor,**  
**THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY**  
 This letter is in response to an article that appeared in the August 18 Weekly. It concerns a charge by Super Dollar Stores, Inc. that I have violated a lease agreement that I signed in 1971. This is not true. The issue is whether or not Giant Discount is "a general merchandise store, or variety store similar to Super Dollar." I do not believe Giant Discount fits that description. Super Dollar features, by far, softwares — men's and boys'

clothing and shoes; women's and girls' clothing and shoes; household furniture (rugs, etc.); and many other items not offered for sale by Giant Discount. Giant features toys, health and beauty aids, and drugs. Over the last eight years, this building has been occupied by three different tenants who carried merchandise very similar to Giant Discount. These three were Scottie Discount, Cameron Store, and Punksin. Since these stores were accepted, I am wondering why Giant is being opposed.

**Editor,**  
**THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY**  
 As I sat down this week to make preparations for registering Girl Scout troop this year, two facts became clear: 1) Perquimans County Girl Scouts served 60 girls last year. This year could see a large increase as new girls join the older troops and new first graders enter Brownies. 2) At the present time there are no adult volunteers to work with the majority of these girls. Due to moves out-of-state, different responsibilities, and general change, the leaders who had these Brownie and Girl Scout troops are no longer available. To date, no new leaders have volunteered to fill these vacancies. **NO LEADERS + NO TROOPS** means **NO GIRL SCOUTING** for Perquimans County. If there are men or women in our area with time, energy, and a little bit of talent to share, I hope they will consider a position as a Girl Scout leader, or volunteering in another capacity to assist these troops. All of us who were fortunate enough to be Girl Scouts are sure glad there were willing adults around to work with us! Let us pass on the heritage! Interested persons can contact me at 264-3362. Sincerely, Carolyn Lawson Service Team Manager Colonial Coast Girl Scout Council Perquimans County

**Letters**  
 The PERQUIMANS WEEKLY welcomes the opinion of its readers. We print letters to the editor on subjects of local, state, national and international interest. Letters should be limited to 300-350 words and should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. Only the name and address will be published with the letter. The subject matter should be of interest to the community, not a personal gripe. Letters may be edited by our news staff for clarity and space limitations. Mail letters to: The Perquimans Weekly, P.O. Box 277, Hertford, N.C. 27944, or drop them off at our offices at Courthouse Square.

My only explanation is the ownership of Super Dollar has changed hands and the new owner has interpreted the lease differently from the INTENT and UNDERSTANDING that existed in 1971 when the founder of Super Dollar and myself made this agreement. Giant is NOT a Roses, Macks, Family Dollar, Ben Franklin, TG & Y or K-Mart, the type of store the 1971 agreement embraces. Because this case is now in litigation, let it suffice to say there are other legal defenses in my behalf which will be brought out as this case proceeds along in our judicial system. Again, I adamantly dispute Super Dollar's accusation. Jesse Harris P.S. Another significant fact: Super Dollar's store is 7,000 sq. ft., Giant's is only 2,100 sq. ft.

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Jane B. Williams - Pat Mansfield  
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Jane B. Williams  
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Pat Mansfield  
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