

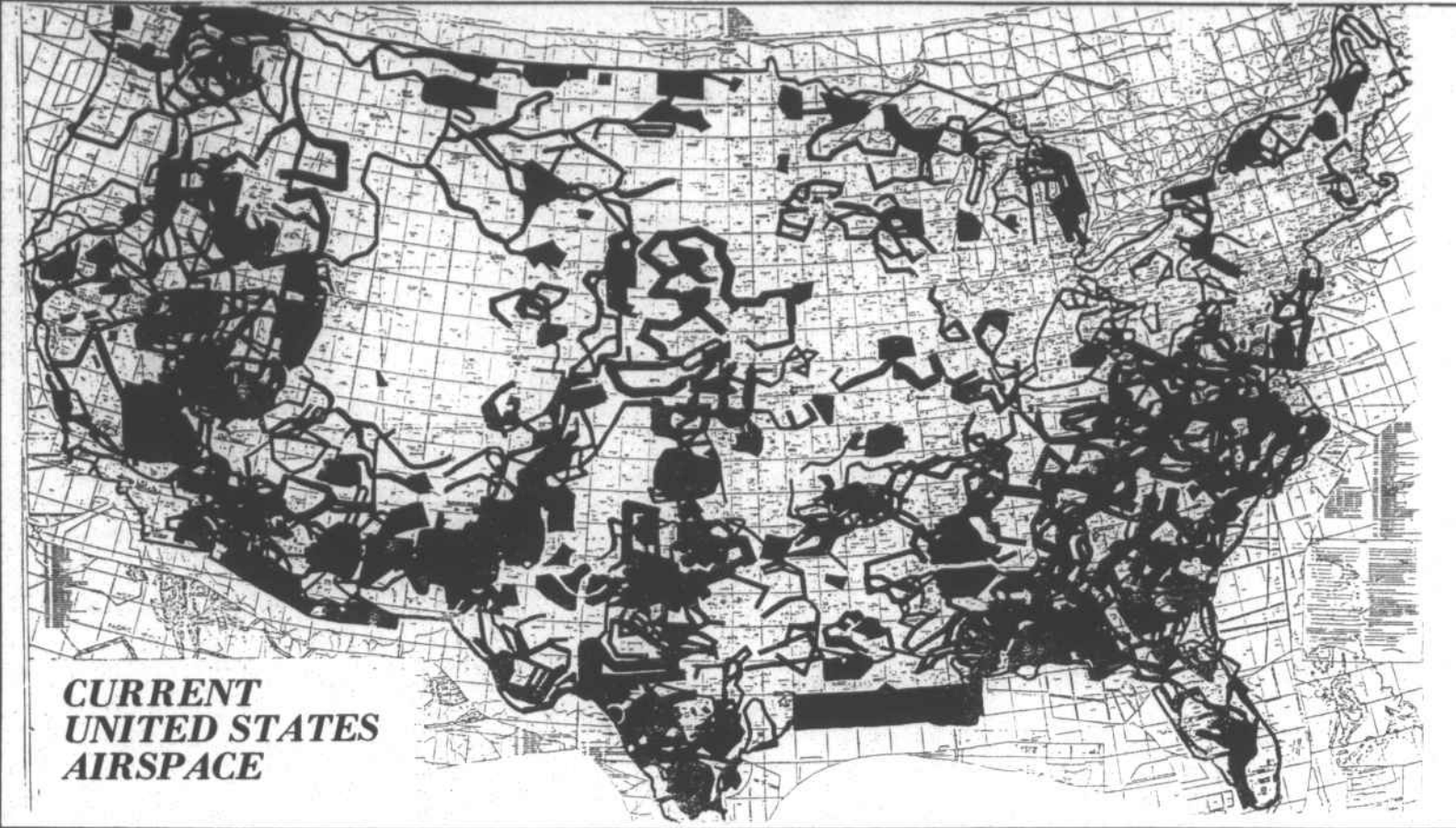
THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 58, No. 15

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C. Thursday, April 14, 1988

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CURRENT UNITED STATES AIRSPACE

Airspace issue to be discussed at meeting

Once again the issue of airspace, and the navy's request for expanded airspace in the Albemarle Sound off the coast of Perquimans County has surfaced.

In 1983 the Navy requested the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) grant them an expansion on the military airspace in the Palmetto Range (located off Holiday Island's coast), and the Stumpy Point Range located in Dare County. These requests met with much opposition locally and statewide, and once again, according to the Navy, the request lies in the hands of the FAA.

Following an environmental assessment by the Navy, which according to Don Flowers, executive director of the Albemarle Commission, and chairman of a local committee set up to fight the request for expanded airspace, proposes to use the airspace in a manner that is environmentally damaging and therefore totally unacceptable, the Navy is still claiming the expansion is necessary, and will not effect local residents, the communities they live in, or the environment.

Flowers and members of the local committee, as well as many others disagree. Numerous attempts to change the language of the proposal have failed, and the committee feels very strongly that if this expansion is granted to the military it will have a lasting affect on residents, not only in Perquimans County, but in much of northeastern North Carolina.

There is much military airspace throughout the United States, and especially in the Albemarle and Pamlico areas of North Carolina. The airspace is used by military agencies to

practice war-time flying maneuvers, and for many year's people living in the nation's rural communities have dealt with the problem's of low-flying aircraft, and supersonic military aircraft.

At the present time, the Palmetto Range, just off the coast of Perquimans County in the center of the Albemarle Sound, is used by the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and other military agencies for bombing practice, and practice of war-time military flying maneuvers.

The Palmetto Range is classified as R-5302 section of military airspace. It is used throughout the year and at various times during the day and night by the military for their activities. Usage of the Palmetto Range increases during the summer months because the Dare county range is often closed. Use has also increased over the last several years, because the military has installed a superior scoring system for precision scoring on the range, and they have added more requirements for practicing of precision scoring by pilots.

The Navy has requested changes in the restrictions governing the airspace, because they claim the restrictions which currently require them to must fly above R5301 A-B-C produce "artificiality" in the training exercises, and requires pilots to execute a "potentially" dangerous descending turn to establish themselves at target run-in altitude.

They would like to see the Palmetto Range changed to R-5302, and they are asking that three miles be added at the south end of the present range, the flying level of aircraft be lowered at the north end of the range, and the

hours of operation be set from 7:00 a.m. until 11:30 p.m.. According to the Navy, the range would not be used on the weekends except by previous notice to airman, and they have determined that these changes would not cause hardship on local residents.

In their proposal, the Navy states they do not expect any noise complaints, they are not creating any new air fields, they don't feel there will be any effects on wildlife, they also claim the area of the sound to be flown over under the proposal is a seldom traveled area of the Albemarle Sound, and they add that surface vessels could still operate at will as they have in the past within the area, with little impact on the fishing industry. The Navy also claims the nearest town to the area is five miles away, and vessels and citizens will be

in no danger of laser reflections given off by aircraft using laser weapons for target practice in the area.

Flowers and the committee feel differently. They find the proposal completely unacceptable, and add that the Navy has been presented with several issues, which they have mostly disregarded.

According to the committee, and other sources who have done studies on the airspace issue, there are many effects to be considered.

They claim the portion of the sound in question is well traveled by pleasure boaters, and commercial fisherman, who would be greatly effected by the expansion. The expanded airspace would also come within one mile of the front beach at Holiday Island, it has been documented that the noise will have an effect on humans,

and studies done in Nevada have proven there is a significant impact on wildlife in these areas. In addition to these factors, the committee and many residents feel there is a great hazard to people in the area from the laser reflections, which could be given off by aircraft using such weapons.

In the fall, the FAA held two hearings, one in Manteo, and one in Hertford at the Albemarle Commission Building, concerning the proposal. At that time a representative of the Attorney General, Dan McLawhorn, defended the state's position on this issue that the proposal is unacceptable, but to date no decision has been made by the FAA.

The proposal is still under consideration, and no one knows for sure it's status. Neither Tom Crook, a spokesman for the FAA, or Lt. Wagner, the Navy's representative, could be reached for comment on the status of the proposal.

However, the Navy has set up a meeting on April 15th at 11:00 a.m. at the Dare County Regional Airport with members of the committee to discuss the proposal once again.

Members of the committee hope that this meeting with Navy officials will possibly result in an understanding between the two groups, and bring to light some problems with the present proposal.

Stan Busted, a local member of the committee, feels this is an issue which must be addressed, and that more citizens must be made aware of.

The committee feels that hopefully, if enough opposition is raised by local citizens, and public officials, the FAA will deny the Navy's request for the expanded airspace.

County planning to conduct census

The Perquimans County Commissioners voted last Monday to conduct a new household census pending board of education approval for gathering information necessary to establish new voting districts.

The county will hire a local resident of the county to conduct the census this summer, and the approval comes as the result of a recommendation made of the county's election study committee.

Following a meeting with committee members and local representatives of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), it was determined and agreed that a census is the best way to gather the necessary demographic needed in determining new voting districts.

According to Paul Gregory, the committee discussed the possibility of hiring a school teacher to head up the project, but they have not ruled out the possibility of hiring someone else, or someone who may have experience in collecting census information. Gregory added that local residents would also be asked to help with the census by identifying black and white residents in their local community.

John Matthews, county attorney, and a member of the election study committee stated he feels the census is necessary to determine the feasibility of a new voting district system. "Frankly, I don't think we could get an at-large system approved without first finding out if a district system would work," Matthews said.

Several months ago the NAACP threatened to file a lawsuit against the county, which would have forced a change in the way the county presently elects members of the board of commissioners, but during a commissioners meeting in March. Ron-

ald Penny, NAACP attorney, told members of the board no lawsuit would be filed if the two parties could work together, and find a suitable solution to the problem on which both could agree.

The census is the first step towards doing that.

If new districts are established, they would have to meet two general requirements. One district would have to be 60 percent black, and the total population in all the districts would have to be close to equal, and all parties concerned agree that this will be difficult in Perquimans County because blacks are interspersed throughout the county.

According to the elections study committee, the only apparent way to establish a voting district with a majority of black residents, and districts with equal population would be to expand the number of districts.

This would mean expanding the number of commissioners elected and changing the board from five to possibly seven members.

Gregory stated in his report to the board that the committee at this time feels that having a board with five members is desirable, but these ideas are still being explored.

During the meeting, several of the commissioners stated they feel a district system is the only fair way to elect commissioners as opposed to the at-large system, and John Matthews agreed.

"Everyone would prefer a district system, if it will work," said Matthews.

In other business, the board will be looking into the possibility of hiring another forest ranger for the county, and the board is still waiting on a cost analysis regarding the lights at Perquimans Middle School. According to Gregory as soon as the cost analysis is in, the lights will be removed.

Police report weekend robberies

The Hertford Police Department reported an armed robbery and a breaking, entering and larceny over the weekend.

The armed robbery occurred on Sunday and over \$5000 dollars was stolen from the assistant manager of Be-Lo as he made the night deposit. The breaking, entering, and larceny occurred at Cannon Cleaners on Grubb Street, and resulted in the loss of over \$400 worth of clothing.

At approximately 9:40 p.m., Sunday evening Jerry Lane, the assistant manager at Be-Lo Foods, was making a deposit at NCNB at Harris Shopping Center when he was robbed.

According to police reports, when Lane got out of his truck, a black male, approached Lane from behind the bank, pointed a gun at Lane and ordered him to throw the money bag on the ground.

Lane complied and was then told to get back in his truck, which he did. At that point, the robber ran around the back of the bank, and disappeared.

Lane then went to the Cherokee Cafe, and called the police who responded promptly.

The breaking, entering, and larceny was discovered at approximately 6:10 a.m. as an officer was routinely checking doors while on patrol. The officer realized that the back door at the cleaners, although locked, had become loose since the last time it was checked, and break-

ing and entering was suspected. The officer contacted the owner of the business, Lizzie Harrell, and upon inspection of the building and its interior it was determined that a breaking, entering and larceny had occurred.

Several items of clothing were missing, but no money was taken. Chief Marshall Merritt canvassed the neighborhood following the incident, and discovered several plastic bags, coat hangers, and one of the missing coats.

Investigations are continuing into both incidents.

The police department also arrested Lucian Matthew Whidbee, Rt. 3, Box 30T, Meads Trailer Court, Hertford, and charged him with Driving While Intoxicated, and carrying a concealed weapon.

Mr. Whidbee threatened his wife and children with the weapon, and his wife called the proper authorities. Trooper Newberry and Sgt. Spence of the Hertford Police Department were notified following the call, and later that night Whidbee was arrested because of irrational driving. He was charged with DWI, and a search of his car, after his arrest, resulted in finding a gun.

Whidbee was then charged with carrying a concealed weapon. As of press time, he was in the Albemarle District Jail under \$800 bond, and his first court appearance is scheduled for May 11, 1988.

Two running for register of deeds seat

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of articles about candidates in the upcoming election, May 3rd. This week we will explore the two candidates seeking election as the Perquimans County Register of Deeds.

Two candidates are seeking election to the office of Register of Deeds, Alice White Copeland, and the incumbent candidate Jeanne Chappell White.

Alice White Copeland states that she has chosen to run for the office of Register of Deeds for several reasons in the upcoming election.

First and foremost, she feels that the voters of Perquimans County should have a choice when electing candidates, and that no one should run unopposed in an election. Copeland also feels that it is time more younger people become involved in Perquimans County and its government.

Copeland, who is a senior at PNC Community College, graduating on May 20th with an Associate Degree of Applied Sciences in Paralegal Technology states she feels she is qual-

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Copeland



White

"As We Were" scheduled

Make plans now to attend "As We Were" a show of historical pictures depicting scenes of Hertford and Perquimans County

"As We Were" will be held on Friday, April 22nd from 4:00 until 8:00 p.m., and on Saturday, April 23rd from 10:00 until 4:00 p.m. at the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce. Admission is free to all, and the building is accessible to handicapped persons.

This event is being co-sponsored by The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce, and Perquimans County Historians.

Special olympics scheduled

The local Special Olympics will be held April 15th at Hertford Grammar School. Athletes from Perquimans Central School, Perquimans Middle School, Hertford Grammar School and Perquimans High School will be competing. The students train hard for this special day and are proud of the ribbons they win.

The Regional Special Olympics will be held April 23rd at Northeastern High School in Elizabeth City. Olympic events will be held between the counties of Gates, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, Chowan, Tyrrell, Bertie, Hertford and Currituck. Volunteers are needed for each competition and Hardees Benefit Bucks are being sold to support Special Olympics. For more information contact Kathy Ansink - 482-3454 or (work) 426-7166.



Pictured are Eunice Cale, left and Patti White, right of the Perquimans County Senior Citizens center.

Senior center provides many programs for county's older adults

Every day more and more retired people are moving to Perquimans County, and the Perquimans County Senior Citizens Center provides older adults in Perquimans County with interesting activities, and programs which keep them active.

The senior center was established in 1978, when local officials saw a growing need to serve older adults in the community.

The center is located on the corner of Grubb and Academy streets, and it was dedicated on November 4th, 1979.

The senior center provides older residents in Perquimans County with a focal point, and the center and its staff are completely committed to providing quality programs for its members.

Patti White, is the director of the senior center, and she has been with

the department since it was established.

It is her duty to co-ordinate and direct all the center's activities.

Currently the center offers many activities for its members including: senior citizen clubs, free blood pressure clinics on Fridays, AARP, a recently established bowling league, bible study twice a week, breakfast club meetings, special events, such as bingo tournaments, trips, and much more.

The center is also active in the senior games, which will take place in June at ECSU.

The primary focus behind the center's program is to promote health, education, and public awareness of issues facing our senior citizens.

The senior center also employ's two of our county's older adults. They are Eunice Cale, the center's assis-

tant director, and Ellie Mae Vickers, the center's green thumb worker.

Ellie Mae Vicker's is in charge of the telephone reassurance program offered at the center. This program currently has 30 to 40 residents it serves, and each day, Monday through Friday, they receive a call from the center to make sure they are all right.

In looking toward the future, Patti hopes that one day the nutrition site will be moved to the center, so senior citizens total needs can be met at one building.

But until then, the center will continue bringing senior citizens worthwhile programs, and will strive to meet all the community's needs.

Patti is a graduate of Perquimans High School. She is married to Herbert White, and they have two children Ashley, and Towe.