

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## Briefs

### DMV to change hours

The Hertford Division of Motor Vehicles office will have new hours effective April 2. The office will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Saturdays. This change in hours is to conform with the hours as requested by the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles.

### Thompson pig-pickin' planned for April

There will be a pig pickin' on Friday, April 13 to off the campaign to re-elect R.M. "Pete" Thompson. The meal will be \$10 per plate, and will be served at the ARPDC building beginning at 6:30 p.m. Anyone who would like to get information or reserve tickets should call L. Paul Smith at 426-7592 or Wayne Howell at 426-7844.

### Groundwater meeting scheduled at ECSU

Groundwater is a source of drinking water for more than 55 per cent of the state's residents, yet this precious resource is increasingly threatened. The Albemarle Environmental Association is sponsoring a public meeting, "Danger Down Under: A Citizen's Guide to Groundwater Protection in NC," on Thursday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the new Science Building on the campus of Elizabeth City State University.

Chip Hughes, formerly of the Clean Water Fund in Raleigh will speak about threats to groundwater, how it becomes contaminated, and how local citizens can help protect this vital resource. Much of what he will discuss comes from a comprehensive study that unmasked many problems in North Carolina. Published last year by the Clean Water Fund, "Danger Down Under: A Citizen's Guide to Groundwater Protection in NC," reports on the status of groundwater across the state.

According to the Clean Water Fund, groundwater protection is hampered in North Carolina by a lack of coordination among state agencies and inadequate enforcement at contaminated sites. Federal statutes to protect and clean up groundwater have yet to be implemented here.

One contaminated site revealed by the study was the fuel spill at the Coast Guard Base. This will be discussed at the meeting, and a representative of the Coast Guard will be available to report on the status of the ongoing clean-up efforts. For further information call 426-9563.

### FmHA schedules elections

Melvin E. Howell, County Supervisor for Chowan-Perquimans FmHA Office, announced today that FmHA is seeking the support and participation of minorities and women in the upcoming County Committee election, which is scheduled for July 2.

Howell said that the agency feels it is important that the County Committee reflect, to the extent practicable, the diversity of the individuals served by its programs. Minorities and women, along with other farmers and their spouses, who have their principal farming operation within the county or area in which the election is being held, are eligible to be nominated.

As a result of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, FmHA borrowers are eligible to be candidates for the County Committee election. There is, however, a limit of one FmHA borrower on the committee at any time.

If you are personally interested or want information on how to nominate someone, call the FmHA office at (919) 426-5733 or stop by the office located in the ARPDC Building, Church Street Extended, Hertford.

FmHA is an equal opportunity lender.

Thinking of placing a Classified Ad; but not sure how to do it? Just call our friendly Ad-Visor, Elenora. She will be glad to help you.

426-5728

Perquimans Weekly

119 W. Grubb St.  
8 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.



Photos by Beth Finney

The crowd at the rally in Camden last Wednesday night was united in its efforts to seek better educational opportunities for children in small rural counties. At left, the Perquimans High School jazz band provided a portion of the entertainment for the evening.

## Rally brings together needy schools

By SUSAN HARRIS

There were cheerleaders and bands at Camden High School gym last Thursday night. But the stakes were much higher than for any sporting event at which the groups have performed.

Thursday marked the first joint meeting of large groups of parents, teachers, elected officials and concerned citizens from Camden, Perquimans and Tyrrell counties. The group, which calls itself CBS, short for Citizens for Better Schools, is organizing to fight for what its members consider fair funding for small, rural public schools.

Parents in Camden County started the grass roots effort, which then spread to Perquimans and on to Tyrrell. Several people from Gates County also turned out to become involved.

The movement is an outgrowth of the Small Schools Consortium, a group of superintendents from relatively poor school systems across North Carolina who are working to bring attention to the economic plight of less affluent systems.

Camden Superintendent Rick Denning and Perquimans Superintendent Mary Jo Martin have been very persistent in their efforts to gain much-needed funds for small schools.

Speakers for the evening included Perquimans Attorney J. C. Cole and State Representatives R. M. "Pete" Thompson and Vernon James. Thompson and James, along with Marc Basnight, have pledged their support to the effort.

Pasquotank native Cole told the group, "Small rural counties need special help if our children are going to be able to compete in a very competitive society."

Cole also commented about the video "No Other Choice" which contrasts an affluent Durham County high school with a very inadequate Northampton County high school.

Thompson commented favorably on the group's enthusiasm, and encouraged them to remain steadfast in their objectives.

James was also impressed with the group's collective determination, and said he feels that such an effort by voters will have an affect on funding.

Linda Williams, a member of Camden's CBS steering committee, served as mistress of ceremonies for the evening. She informed those gathered that there are 170 state legislators to write and the goal is for all of them to receive a lot of negative mail to get their attention.

She said that letters should be written individually and discouraged form letters and petitions.

This campaign is the first in a series. The group plans to write initially prior to the May 21 short session. There will be another campaign prior to the 1991 session.

The parents and superintendents involved in CBS and the Small Schools Consortium contend that present formulas used by the state to fund schools are not fair to children from small counties.

The state constitution guarantees children in North Carolina equal education. But with a major portion of school funds coming from local budgets, many feel that the constitution is not being upheld.

Students from large urban areas with a wide tax base are able to enjoy better facilities and wider course offerings than those from small, poor counties.

"My people are ready to go to Raleigh tonight," said Tyrrell County superintendent Dr. Betsy Stallings after the rally.

The group is hoping that these peaceful, non-threatening efforts bring about the desired results. Although no parent, politician or school administrator will say "for the record" to go the route of citizens of other states and sue North Carolina, people have been made aware that a lawsuit may have to be filed in order to see a change. But for now, CBS is hoping that the state legislators will listen, and begin taking steps toward more equitable distribution of tax dollars for schools.

## Farmers should beware poor seed quality when buying

Bin-Run and Brown-Bag "seed" are a problem not only for the larger seed companies, but also for small seedsmen and seed growers. This "seed" is usually sold in violation of seed laws (state and-or federal) and the Plant Variety Protection Act. All seed sold are supposed to be labeled in accordance with these laws. In truth, however, most of this Bin-Run and Brown-Bag "seed" cannot be labeled or sold legally. And usually such "seed" are of lower quality or unknown quality.

The marketing of Bin-Run and Brown-Bag "seed" is hurting everyone. First, the farmer is getting lesser or unknown quality seed. Secondly, this so-called "seed" is by-passing the seed improvement programs in North Carolina - farmer seed growers, seed companies and wholesale-retail seedsmen. In other words, most of this commercial grain turned into "seed" is by-passing programs that are supplying high quality seed of improved varieties for N. C. Agriculture. Some of these violators or infringers are known and should be cautioned and encouraged to deal in legitimate seed - not bootleg seed.

### The Plant Variety Protection Law

The PVP Act was established as Federal Law in 1970. It grants the breeder of a protected variety the exclusive rights to reproduce and market, for planting purposes, seed of that variety for 18 years. During that period of time, the protected variety can be legally reproduced and sold for planting purposes only as prescribed by law.

This program benefits consumers, farmers, seed growers and dealers alike. The PVP Act encourages seed research to bring new products and technology to the market place. This means improved varieties with more dependable yields. Research data has shown that yield improvements have been made as a result of this increased effort.

### The North Carolina and Federal Seed Laws

Both the North Carolina Seed Law and the Federal Seed Act require that all seed sold must be truthfully labeled. The N. C. State Seed Law has some minimum requirements for germination, total weed seed, noxious weeds, etc. The law prohibits the sale of non-certified seed of

some protected varieties that have been designated for sale "only as a class of certified seed" under the PVP Act.

### The Seed Certification Program

The Seed Certification Program was organized to provide a systematic way of growing, storing, conditioning and marketing seed. Such crops are produced specifically for seed (not commercial grain converted to "seed.") All certified seed are inspected by an unbiased "third party" - The Crop Improvement Association - to be sure that specific standards of quality are met. The Seed Certification Program is a vital part of the N. C. Agricultural Industry.

### The Bottom Line

Let us all support the legitimate seed industry in North Carolina - for the good of the farmer and the seed program. Beware of a violator of the laws. Varieties under the PVP Act are all properly identified as being protected. The breeder's rights under these laws are going to be enforced, and I am told by some companies that legal action may be taken.

Again, support the seed industry against blatant violators of seed laws. The industry has as its purpose developing improved varieties and providing high quality seed for the farmers.

## Consumer groups are pushing for low-income banking

Are you one of the many people who has trouble cashing checks or has to pay a charge in order to cash your checks? You will be glad to know, then, that two bills have been introduced into the U. S. House of Representatives that will mandate the provision of low cost, no frills, basic banking accounts and the cashing of government checks by banks and savings and loans. Perhaps other salary checks would be included.

Consumer groups are pushing a requirement that banks and thrifts offer checking accounts with minimum balance requirements of under \$25 and 10 w/drawals a month for a minimal fee set by the Federal Reserve Board. These bills

would provide for registration at a bank so that identification would not be necessary.

Seventeen per cent of all families in this country and between 40 and 50 percent of low income families have no bank accounts and have to pay between 1 percent and 6 percent at check-cashing outlets to cash their checks. That means if you have to cash two \$500 checks every month, it will cost you between \$120 and \$720 a year.

Living without a bank account is risky. Nine per cent of the consumers in Virginia that were living without checking accounts have been robbed of cash in the last two years, compared to two hundredth

of one per cent of those Virginians who have a checking account.

This is a problem that needs attention.

There is a real difference in the structure and cost of checking accounts these days, and it pays to find the one that suits your needs the best.

To shop for one you need to assemble your facts. How much money can you keep in the bank? How many checks will you write each month? How often will you deposit or withdraw money in a month? Do you expect to earn interest on your account? Do you need to get your checks back? Will you use the automated teller machines or go into the bank?

When you are looking at the requirements for minimum balances, keep in mind that the bank may be talking about your average balance for the month or it may mean the lowest amount you have in your account at any one time.

Even though you may find an account such as a NOW account that pays you interest on your balance, it may pay you to put any your money over the minimum required into a savings account rather than an interest bearing checking account because savings accounts usually pay more interest. The few minutes of effort you spend shopping for your checking account can possibly save you \$100 in a year's time. Good pay for the time spent.