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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 62, No. 11

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, March 25, 1993

35 Cents



Janice M. Cole

Janice Cole considered for U.S. attorney

District Court Judge Janice M. Cole could stop handing down verdicts on minor traffic violations and become involved in cases involving major drug traffic violations.

Cole was recently informed that she is one of three people nominated for U.S. Attorney for the state's Eastern District. Also being considered for the post are Superior Court Judge Coy Brewer of Fayetteville and Abe Jones, a Raleigh attorney.

If appointed, the move would be a big step up the professional ladder for Cole, who was elected to her present position in 1990. Cole made history with her election, as she was the first black woman elected to the position of district court judge in the state's First Judicial District.

"It is such an honor and such a step-up in opportunity," Cole told *The Daily Advance* last week. "I feel almost overwhelmed. I am happy with the job as a district court judge, but this is such an opportunity."

"This appointment is definitely something I wouldn't be able to pass up."

Cole's nomination came through unusual channels, she said. Generally, recommendations are made by a state's United States Senators. But Cole said she was told she was recommended by the eight state Democratic representatives, Gov. Jim Hunt, House Speaker Dan Blue, state Democratic National committeewoman Jeannette Hyde and former state attorney general Lacy Thomburg.

President Bill Clinton or the U.S. Justice Department will name the next U.S. attorney, but Cole said she does not know when the decision is expected.

Cole came to Hertford as a criminal and civil attorney in 1983, practicing with her husband, James Carlton Cole, until her election to the bench. She served as assistant U.S. attorney of the Eastern District of North Carolina from 1979 until coming to Perquimans County. Cole was formerly a research associate at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and worked as a New York City police officer for two years.

Spring blooms with fashion



Kelly Bunch welcomes spring to 1812 on the Perquimans in this cotton floral dress from Kids Express. Spring fashion will be on parade Friday at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. when *The Perquimans Weekly*, 1812 on the Perquimans and area merchants

present *Fashions on the Perquimans* at the bed and breakfast. For a preview of the show and merchants, please turn to pages 10 and 11. (All fashion photos by Gary Cosby Jr.)

Fashion show set for Friday

Albemarle area merchants, 1812 on the Perquimans and *The Perquimans Weekly* have joined forces to present the first-ever *Fashions on the Perquimans* spring fashion preview, advertising campaign and fashion show.

On pages 10 and 11 of this newspaper, you will find color photographs of spring fashions for all occasions, along with advertisements from merchants who invite you to come into their stores to browse through a full line of spring and summer clothing. The models were photographed at the recently-renovated 1812 on the Perquimans, owned by Peter and Nancy Rascoe. On Friday at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., there will be fashion shows at the bed and breakfast featuring some of the season's hottest clothing.

The first show will highlight family clothing for church, work and play. At the second show, formal wear for those special spring occasions will be shown. Also featured at the show will be jewelry, wedding specialties and floral complements.

Fashions on the Perquimans was organized by Perquimans Weekly advertising sales representative Anzie Ziemba.

"We wanted to do something special for spring," Ziemba said. "We have offered a spring fashion preview for several years. I thought it would be appropriate to combine the rich history of the county with the fashion preview to give merchants an opportunity to share their spring clothing lines in one of the county's restored, historic homes. Nancy Rascoe graciously allowed us to use 1812 on the Perquimans as the setting for the fashion show. We're very excited about this first-ever show, and hope people will continue to call and make reservations. I know all who come will really enjoy this spring fashion spectacular."

Seating is limited at the fashion shows, but there are still spaces available for both shows. To make reservations, call *The Perquimans Weekly* at 426-5728.

Behind closed doors State debates change in open meetings law

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The North Carolina General Assembly is debating a change in the state's open meetings law that could change the way some public bodies do business.

Currently there are 20 specific reasons for public bodies, such as school boards, boards of county commissioners and town councils, to go into closed session. Legislation has been introduced in both the House and the Senate that would eliminate all but three or four of those reasons, forcing public bodies to hold discussions on some issues now debated behind closed doors in open session.

Senator Marc Basnight, president pro tem of the Senate, stated in a March 11 news release that the issue is being hotly debated by members of both houses.

According to Teresa Dalton in Basnight's office, the bills being considered by both houses are very similar in most respects. Both would allow closed sessions for the following reasons:

- *to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential by already existing statutes;

- *to prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize or similar award;

- *to permit a public body to receive advice from an attorney concerning identified pending litigation;

- *to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body; and

- *to hear and investigate personnel matters. The personnel section of the bill would not apply to hiring or selecting town, city or county managers or chief administrative officers; police chiefs; school superintendents or other top administrative positions.

The bill would also require that all closed sessions, now sometimes referred to as executive sessions, be called closed sessions.

In addition, the proposals require that minutes be kept of all open and closed meetings.

Penalties for violating closed meeting laws are included in the bills under consideration. The Senate bill stipulates that if a member of a public body intentionally violates the open meetings law, the court may assess attorney's fees against the group and order them paid personally by the person in violation. By the same token, if the court found that an action filed against the public body was filed in bad

faith or was frivolous, the court could assess attorney's fees against the person initiating the action.

Dalton said Basnight supports the move to discuss more public business in open session.

Basnight said that it will be up to the General Assembly to find the balance between the public's right to know and the need for discretion and privacy concerning sensitive issues.

Supporters of the change, including the North Carolina Press Association, contend that some public bodies have met in closed session to avoid public discussion of issues. There have also been instances when only the media was asked to leave a public meeting, which violates present state law.

Perquimans County Board of Commissioners Chairman Leo Higgins said the new law probably won't change the way the county's governing body does business.

"Generally, I dislike them (closed sessions)," Higgins said in a telephone interview Friday. "As long as I chair it (the board), we won't have many executive sessions."

Higgins said there should be only three reasons to meet in closed session: 1) to discuss and review personnel matters; 2) to discuss with the county attorney negotiations in progress between the county and another party involving a land contract; and 3) to discuss and review legal matters.

The chairman said there are several of the present reasons for holding a closed session that do not apply to the county commissioners, such as those covering medical patients, students, correction inmates, medical staffs and airports. There are others that, while stated as individual reasons at present, actually fall under personnel matters, Higgins said.

Higgins said meeting in closed session gives the appearance that a public body has something to hide, sometimes damaging the credibility of the board and its members. Although there are times when public bodies must meet in private, Higgins said board members have a responsibility to the citizens to make sure that the public interest is best served and the law is upheld before going into closed session.

Dalton said Basnight expects the bills to be debated on the floor of both houses of the General Assembly this week.

Futrell honored in Rocky Mount

A Hertford native earned the distinguished Citizen Award from the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce last month.

J. Richard Futrell, former chairman of the board and CEO of Centura Banks, Inc., was presented the prestigious award at the Chamber's 89th annual convention on Feb. 18.

Futrell, 61, left Centura Bank to accept a position in Gov. Jim Hunt's administration.

"This is quite an honor," Futrell said

when the award was presented, according to Rocky Mount's *Evening Telegram*.

"This award is something I'll always cherish and remember."

Robert E. Mauldin, chairman, president and CEO of Centura Bank, presented Futrell's award. He described Futrell as a driving force behind Centura Bank's progress and in the community.

Ruritans to hold golf tournament

The Parkville Ruritan Club will hold its first annual Scholarship Golf Tournament on Sunday, April 25 at The Sound Golf Links at Albemarle Plantation.

The format is Captain's choice. The entry fee is \$200 per four-man team. The tournament will be limited to 34 teams. There will be a 9 a.m. shotgun start.

Prizes are \$400, \$200 and \$100 gift certificates for teams placing first through third, respectively. Prizes will also be awarded for closest to the pin and longest

drive. The entry fee includes three golf balls per player and a pig pickin' (drinks included) following play.

Proceeds from the tournament will establish a scholarship fund for Perquimans High School students.

For more information, entry forms or to sponsor a hole, contact Kent Craft at 426-5555 or Gil Underwood at 426-5315. Entry deadline is April 20.



Fashions On The Perquimans

being held at
1812 On The Perquimans
Friday, March 26th
2:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.

Businesses Don't Miss Out!
Be Our Guest

Enthusiasm grows for march for town park

Like spring fever, enthusiasm for celebrating Earth Day on Saturday, April 17 with a March for Parks to benefit Missing Mill Park is catching on, according to Albemarle Environmental Association spokesperson Carolyn Hess.

Youth organizations such as scouts and 4-H groups have indicated interest in joining the three-mile walk through Hertford. Community groups, church groups and individuals have also

pledged their support, Hess said.

All funds earned will go to support the Town of Hertford's plan for enhancing the shoreline of Missing Mill Park. Current proposals are to build a boardwalk, which will include a short nature trail through wetlands in the park, and constructing a gazebo if funds allow. Hertford Town Manager W.D. "Bill" Cox said strong community support for park improvements greatly increases the town's chances of

receiving grant funds for park improvement.

The local Earth Day celebration is being held in conjunction with a nationwide event initiated by the National Parks and Conservation Association. National sponsors include Foghorn Press, MasterCard, Naya, Nordstrom, Nordstrom Rack and Polaroid.

For more information, call 426-8425 or 426-5140.

Speak out!

What is your stand on the proposed changes in the open meetings laws? For what reasons do you think public bodies should enter closed session?

Call *The Perquimans Weekly* at 426-5728 between 8 a.m. Thursday and 5 p.m. Monday to voice your opinion. You do not have to give your name.