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Smith appears before board

Supporters crowd board meeting room

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Board of Education spent over 45 minutes in closed session Monday night, listening to Sharon M. "Sherry" Smith tell the story of her suspension and return to the classroom from her point of view.

Smith was accompanied by her attorney, Luke Largess; N.C.A.E. representative Lueta Sellers; her husband, Bruce; and a family friend. School board members, superintendent Randall L. Henion, assistant superintendent Jake Boyce and school board attorney Ken Soo were also present during the session.

Smith said she prepared the written statement she read to the board with the assistance of Largess and Sellers. She said after the meeting that she was glad to have the opportunity to meet with the board and appreciated having them listen to her story.

Smith was put on a 90-day suspension with pay on March 15 by Henion pending an investigation into misconduct charges. The board voted on May 17 after meeting in closed session with Soo not to renew her contract for next school year. On May 19, Henion met with Smith and told her she could return to the classroom as early as May 20. Smith resumed her teaching duties on May 24.

The board initially agreed to hear Smith at the June 7 board meeting, but Smith requested to meet Monday because her attorney could not meet on June 7. Board chairman L. Wayne Howell agreed to postpone the meeting.

After hearing from Smith, the board and administrators stayed in closed session with Soo. The Smith delegation was called back in just prior to the board reconvening in open session.

Howell said the board had heard Smith's presentation, would study the information she presented to them, and would make a decision on her disposition on June 28. The board meeting scheduled for July 5 was moved to June 28 earlier this month. The board meets at 8 p.m.

It appeared that Smith was not alone Monday. Over 60 people, including parents, students, school personnel and citizens from every township in the county, filled the board room. Most waited until the board reentered open session to file back in and hear Howell's statement.

"We're here to see that justice is done," one parent said while waiting outside during the closed session.

Most of the people informally polled during the closed session said they would return to hear the board's verdict on June 28.

A bad year for tom-ah-toes



Willa Mae Wilcox and Myrtle Durdie discuss the neighbors in this scene from *A Bad Year for Tomatoes*, Bootstrap Acting Company's summer comedy now playing on weekends through July 4 at Angler's Cove. Please see page 8 for a review. (Photo by Susan Harris)

Patrol targets drunk drivers

RALEIGH -- The North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies across the state, kicked off Operation Eagle this month. The highly successful enforcement program was begun in 1988 and has resulted in more than 20,000 charges, including 3,554 for driving while impaired (DWI).

"This program has done more than just arrest drunk drivers," said Thurman B. Hampton, Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety. "It has also raised the public's awareness of the magnitude of the drunk driving problem in North Carolina, and has hopefully convinced some people to not take the chance of driving after drinking."

Operation Eagle will continue to concentrate its efforts on drunk drivers this year, but speeders and drug traffickers will also be targeted by officers of the State Highway Patrol, Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) and local police and sheriff departments.

Operation Eagle will be conducted in a different manner than in past years, according to Highway Patrol Commander Colonel R.A. Barefoot. Checking stations to stop drunk drivers will no longer be used. Instead, officers will do saturation patrols of the area, known as "wolfpacking."

"In the past, this program has been directed at the larger population centers," said Colonel Barefoot. "But the problem of drugs, drunk drivers and speeders is not unique to the bigger cities and towns. It's also a problem in the smaller communities and rural areas. That's why we modified the initial concept of

Operation Eagle."

In addition participating in the saturation patrols, ALE Director Roland Dale says his agents will concentrate on enforcing alcohol laws in the targeted communities.

"ALE agents will be checking establishments that serve alcohol to see that laws preventing service to minors and intoxicated persons are obeyed. We may also target illegal shot houses or trouble spots," said Dale. "Illegal use or abuse of alcohol can't be tolerated. The cost in lives and property is too high."

Thousands of law enforcement officers have participated in Operation Eagle with the ultimate goal of improving safety on your highways by arresting violators and reminding the public of the commitment by North Carolina to enforce the law.

Operation Eagle will be conducted on weekend nights throughout the summer across the state. The exact dates and cities in which the program will be conducted will not be announced at this time.

Students make the grade on state tests

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Overall end-of-grade reading test scores for grades 3-8 were above state average.

Initial results on the state's new end-of-grade tests show Perquimans students performed overall above the state average.

Students in grades 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 scored above the state average set using the field test results from the 1991-92 school year. Fourth graders were on average.

Perquimans students were above state average across the board in reading, where grades 3-8 were all above the state average.

Social studies and science scores were a mixed bag with third and sixth graders below the state average in both areas and eighth graders on average in social studies and above average in science. Fourth, fifth and seventh graders did not take a social studies or science test.

"The North Carolina State Testing Program was quite an experience during the 1992-93 school year," said Paul Ward,

Perquimans Schools testing director.

Ward said all students in grades 3-8 took the tests for the first time.

"The new tests are more challenging than the California Achievement Tests used by the state in the past," Ward said. "The end-of-grade tests put more emphasis on higher level thinking skills and skills that require students to apply what they have learned."

The scores from the 1992-93 testing will be used to establish benchmarks to measure improvements over the years. In addition, the scores will be a part of the statewide report card.

The state tests differ in three primary areas from the achievement tests formerly used:

1. The tests are developed by

North Carolina teachers and Department of Public Instruction staff.

2. The tests measure the curriculum, the Standard Course of Study, that should be taught in North Carolina Schools.

3. The test has two types of questions, open-ended and multiple choice.

Open-ended questions require descriptions, analysis, comparison or other written explanation.

Items in the math, science and social studies areas related to situations and problems encountered in everyday living, such as doubling a recipe or determining the length of time it would take to ride a bike from one place to another at a given rate of speed.

Reading items were based on

stories, poems, articles and passages appropriate to each grade level. The open-ended question at the end of the passage might require students to consider and explain the emotion of the writer or a character in the passage.

The tests were designed to ensure that students are taught higher level thinking skills essential to school improvement and preparing students to enter the rapidly changing technological world.

Grading also differed on the state tests. Test scanning equipment and testing assistance was provided to every school system, which allowed each system to quickly grade the multiple choice sections of the tests. Open-ended test scores will be available in the fall after grading by 900 specially trained teachers grade them this summer.

Actual figures on percentiles will be available later this summer.

Town eyes budget

The Hertford Town Council will hear from the public on Wednesday, June 28 at 7:30 p.m. about the municipality's proposed \$932,288 fiscal 1993-94 general fund budget. The budget requires a tax rate of 45 cents per \$100 valuation.

Almost a third of the proposed budget covers law enforcement. Under the plan, the town's police department would receive \$330,800. The next largest appropriation would be for street maintenance, at almost \$190,000. Sanitation will gobble up \$135,192 and administration \$123,500. Non-departmental expenses, including unemployment insurance, FICA, group insurance and retirement, will cost \$70,500; fire department, \$43,000; contingencies, \$20,981 and cemetery, \$19,000.

There were not enough chairs for the 60-plus people who attended Monday night's board of education meeting. All of the people polled after the meeting said they would be back next Monday night to hear the board's decision in the Sharon M. "Sherry" Smith case. (Photo by Susan Harris)



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