



# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 Cents

## Winfall closed session ruled 'inappropriate'

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

The Winfall Town Council held an inappropriate executive session on Aug. 9, according to a memorandum to council written by town attorney Walter G. Edwards Jr. on Sept. 14.

Edwards' memorandum came in response to a council request to review the session after councilman Bert Hayes formally objected to the August closed meeting at the council's Sept. 16 regular session. Hayes said during the September meeting that the decision was made during the closed session to name Fred Yates mayor pro tem. Hayes said the private session was inappropriate and that appointing a new mayor pro tem should have been discussed and voted on in open session.

Edwards said after a review of the state's general statutes, "it would appear that this executive session was not appropriate." Edwards noted that the only remedy for the improper session is by injunction to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

Hayes provided The Perquimans Weekly with a copy of the Aug. 9 meeting minutes. The minutes reflect the council's motion and vote to enter executive session. Not stated, however, was the general purpose of the closed session. State law requires that the general purpose of any closed session be stated in the motion to convene in closed session. The minutes also show the return to open session.

While an inappropriate executive session was held, the minutes do reflect that action was appropriately taken in open session. The minutes show that upon reconvening in regular session, Fred Yates made a motion to appoint himself unpaid acting mayor for the remainder of Mayor William Bartlett's term. Councilman William Ray Miller seconded Yates' motion. Yates, Miller and councilman Jake Chesson voted for the motion. Hayes abstained. The minutes state Bartlett will receive the mayor's salary.

Hayes contends that going into executive session was inappropriate, and that Yates' appointment as acting mayor gives him an advantage in the November mayoral race. Yates faces David Peckham in that election. There is no record of any objection to the closed session from Hayes in the Aug. 9 minutes.

Yates said Monday that the executive session was called because Hayes wanted council to stop paying Bartlett's salary. The mayor receives \$300 per month. Councilmen receive \$30 per meeting. When Hayes was appointed to fill Bartlett's post, he was paid \$300 per month, but no longer received the \$30 per month stipend. Bartlett also continued to receive \$300 per month.

Yates said he told council during the closed session that he would agree to serve as acting mayor with no pay so that Bartlett could continue to receive the salary. With that agreed upon, council returned to open session and appointed Yates mayor pro tem.

David Lawrence, an attorney specializing in local government policy with the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill, said an executive session could have been called to discuss Hayes' performance, but not to appoint a mayor pro tem. Lawrence said his question regarding the session deal with the fact that there was no vacancy to fill. The minutes do not reflect Hayes' resignation or removal from the temporary office. Hayes said he did not resign.

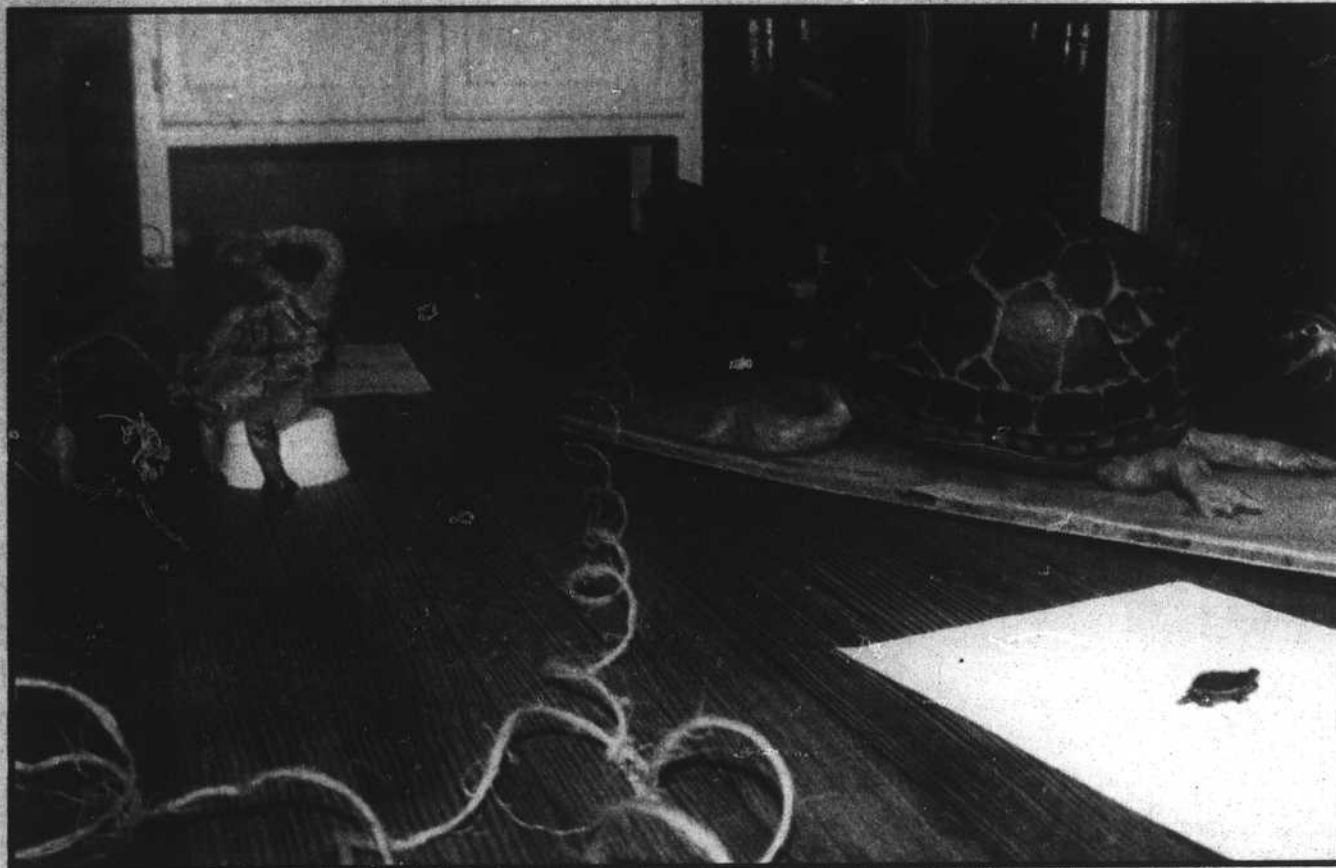
Hayes also objected to an August work session he said violated open meetings laws.

Edwards said because the workshop was not a regular workshop, it did not fall under the open meetings laws. The attorney went on to stress that even if the workshop could be considered a regular meeting, the session was properly called with proper notice given.

Lawrence said the meeting was clearly an official meeting.

## Counties to state: Give us a break

### Turtle mania!



Artists of all ages are entering The Perquimans Weekly's Turtle Mania Contest. Participants are asked to create a turtle using any medium for a Turtle Mania contest. The entries are being displayed in the window of Once is Not Enough. Early entries are very creative, with turtles made from plates, clay, wood, even vegetables, already on display. The winners in each age group will be announced Friday at noon. For entry information, contact Anzie Ziembra at 426-5728. Please see pages 7-11 for a preview of this year's festival. (Photo by Susan Harris)

## Commissioners fight unfunded mandates

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

Give us a break! That message went from North Carolina county commissioners to state legislators in mid-August.

Tired of raising local property taxes to pay for state and federally mandated programs, the N.C. Association of County Commissioners decided to take action at the organization's annual convention last month.

A resolution passed by the group calls for state government to provide funds for mandated programs and to strengthen state laws requiring estimates of fiscal impacts of proposed legislation and state rules.

"I think we're all united, not only across North Carolina, but nationally, in telling governments that local governments can no longer afford the programs which they mandate to us without sending us the funds to carry them out," said Perquimans County Commissioners Chairman Leo Higgins.

Higgins said the biggest chunks of money spent locally on mandates have been for solid waste disposal and expanded social programs.

According to the resolution, program mandates handed down without money to fund them put additional burdens on local taxpayers. Counties are forced to choose between raising ad valorem taxes and cutting services, infrastructure and capital needs, and school funding.

"In recent years there has been an alarming increase in the number of state and federally mandated services and regulatory programs imposed on county governments...the result of this increase is to impose on county governments responsibility for program implementation and regulation without the authority to control these programs or regulations, thereby upsetting the balance that exists in our intergovernmental system..." the resolution states.

The resolution supports house bills 433 and 434, legislation introduced to force the state to fund its program mandates and strengthen the law requiring estimates of fiscal impacts of its legislation and rules. Similar legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Congress to provide relief for local governments.

Higgins said he has received replies from Gov. Jim Hunt, acknowledging both the state and federal resolutions and stating he supports both.

## Perquimans' average SAT scores fall

### State said rural systems in poor areas struggle to keep up

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

State education officials are patting themselves on the back for the 23-point rise in SAT scores over the past four years. Perquimans County administrators may be scratching their heads.

While the state has made slow gains in total SAT scores, Perquimans dropped its score. Perquimans students who took the SAT averaged 854 in 1990; 879 in 1991; 814 in 1992 and 802 in 1993.

The county is not alone in the Northeast Region. Chowan County has also seen a continuing drop in its test scores from a high of 895 in 1990 to 825 in 1993. Likewise, Dare County dropped from 890 to 868 over four years. Gates County has seen a decline from 869 in 1990 to 779 in 1993. Martin County has dropped from 775 to 737.

Nine of the school districts in the region have seen scores rise and fall over the 4-year period. Roanoke Rapids, Camden, Pitt, Bertie and Washington County schools have managed to continue the upward curve in SAT averages.

According to a news release distributed by State Schools Superintendent Bob Etheridge, students in rural areas taking the SAT scored an average of 819, 40 points below the state average of 859. Students who attend high schools in large cities averaged 903. Suburban students averaged 894.

Etheridge also noted the correlation between the income earned by parents, the educational level of the parents and SAT scores. Differences in parental income, Etheridge said, can result in close to a 200-point difference in SAT scores. The higher the salary of the parents, the higher the SAT scores, studies show. The average SAT score of students whose parents earn less than \$10,000 is 729. For those students whose parents earn \$70,000 or more, the average score is 923.

"The relative poverty of the state, especially in the rural areas, directly correlates with student achievement on the SAT," Etheridge wrote.

The education level of parents also greatly influences SAT scores. Students whose parents do not have a high school diploma average earning about 250 points lower on the SAT than students whose parents have

graduate degrees. Students whose parents do not have a high school diploma average 729. Students whose parents have a high school diploma average 808. For those students whose parents have associate degrees, the average moves to 831. The average jumps to 909 for students whose parents have a bachelor's degree.

Etheridge said the differentials point out how dramatically factors other than what is taught in the classrooms affect SAT scores. While some factors, such as education and family income, cannot be overcome, Etheridge said some steps can be taken to improve SAT scores. Students must take rigorous courses, take schoolwork seriously and make education their first priority. Students must also be given the opportunity to take advanced courses. Parents must learn to turn off the television and get kids turned on to learning and completing homework.

"As State Superintendent, I intend to keep up the pressure on raising the SAT average," Etheridge said. "It may be only a symbolic test, but it says important things to our citizens and our businesses."

Improvement in student achievement must continue."

## School testing schedule announced

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

It begins in October and ends in June. It could affect the track your child will end up on in high school, or if your child graduates from high school. Is it

- report cards?
- ball games?
- testing?
- none of the above?

If you answered c., you are correct. Perquimans County Schools Testing Director Paul Ward released the school system's 1993-94 testing schedule last week. The PSAT, the preliminary SAT, will start the testing off on Tuesday, Oct. 12. The PSAT familiarizes students with the SAT format and gives students, teachers and counselors feedback on students' strengths and weaknesses. Like the SAT, the PSAT is becoming more focused on critical thinking skills. Perquimans County has 123 slots funded by the state for the PSAT. Students who take the test must have completed algebra I. The state recommends enrollment in geometry.

In December, Perquimans High

School students in grades 10-12 who have not passed the N.C. Competency Tests in reading, mathematics and writing objective must be tested. The tests measure students' mastery of minimum competencies and are required for a high school diploma. The test will also be offered to seniors who have not passed it during the last month of school.

February 1 is the first big test day at Central School and Perquimans Middle School. Fourth, sixth and eighth graders must take the N.C. Writing Assessment. Students are given a prompt and must write an essay which samples a student's command of composition and grammar. The grade 4 prompt is narrative; grade 6 is descriptive or clarification and grade 8 is persuasion or point-of-view. Scores reflect the readers' overall assessment of students' performance based upon the main idea, supportive details, organization and coherence.

March means writing at the high school, when the English II Essay Test will be administered. Both common and variable prompt tests will be given during the March 1 and 2 testing

times. Algebra will be the subject of the day on March 3 when the Algebra I Open-Ended Test is scheduled at both the middle and high schools. The 1994 edition is a new test geared toward critical thinking.

All students in grades 6-8 will take North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests during the last four weeks of school. All students will be tested in reading, math and social studies. Students in grades 3, 6 and 8 will also take a science test. In addition to the traditional multiple choice tests, some areas of the tests are open-ended, requiring students to write responses and use problem-solving skills to formulate their answers.

End-of-Course tests in algebra I, algebra II, geometry, English I, biology, chemistry, physical science, physics, U.S. history and economic, legal and political systems are also scheduled for the last month of school at Perquimans High. The English II test is completely open-ended. The algebra I test is partially open-ended.

The N.C. Minimum Skills Diagnostic Test is set for the end of the year.

## School employees head for class

By JEANIE UMPHRETT  
Community Schools Coordinator

Approximately 20 non-certified Perquimans County Schools staff members participated in an information session explaining how a Bachelor of Arts Degree can be earned during a four-year period attending classes on Friday nights and Saturdays.

The program focuses on individuals interested in earning a degree in business and/or teaching. Superintendent Randall L. Henlon stated that he was elated with the interest and turnout for this initial meeting held at the Board of Education office. Dr. Bishop Patterson of Elizabeth City State University met with the staff members and provided information on the general program offerings. Information on scholarships and credit by exam was also provided.

"Dr. Jenkins has been extremely cooperative and helpful in making the full resources of the university available to his staff and students," said Henlon.

The university can offer a \$3,000 yearly scholarship to those who qualify for the Incentive Scholars Program and can also offer Pell Grants.

Linda Logan, teacher assistant with the Exceptional Children's Program at Perquimans High School said, "I have always wanted an opportunity to obtain a college degree. I can't wait to get started."

Donna Harris of the central office bookkeeping department has been pursuing a business degree full-time for the last year. She is pleased that the evening/weekend program will enable her and others to obtain a four-year degree.

"I am delighted that I can continue to work toward a degree and that others are encouraged to improve their skills and obtain a degree without giving up their jobs," Harris said.



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