

# Merry Christmas!

## THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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### Companies must give parents leave

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Working parents who need time to attend their children's school functions now have that right.

Starting this month, North Carolina businesses are required to give their employees at least four hours of school involvement leave per year. Education leaders think the leave could mean big returns for parents and children since parent involvement is important a child's success in school.

The new law was adopted by the General Assembly this summer. State employees will be granted eight hours leave per year.

The leave must be at a mutually agreed upon time between the employer and employee. Employers also have the option of making the leave paid or unpaid.

"As their child's first teachers, parents play a very important role in ensuring success in school," Bob Etheridge, state superintendent of public instruction, stated in a news release explaining the leave policy. "I believe that parents are the key to better schools. But, parents need help in being supportive and doing the kinds of things they must do to help their children."

Officials with local industries support the concept of parent involvement in school. However, many do not like the idea of being mandated by the state.

"I kind of resent the government having to mandate something that common sense and common decency would tell you to do," said Mac Hux Jr., plant manager at George C. Moore Company in Edenton.

George C. Moore employees can take leave whenever they need to visit to their children's school, Hux said.

Carl Terranova, president of Apricot Inc., a sportswear manufacturing industry, said his company has always allowed its employees to take leave for their children's school activities.

"We have a lot of women with younger children working for us," he said. "There are some times, like the first day of school, that you have got to expect them to take some time. As an employer you have a moral obligation to your people."

Some employers wonder why the state needed to mandate school involvement leave.

"Businesses that can't afford to give their employees four hours a year," Terranova said. "There's something wrong."

United Piece Dye Works LP., a Chowan County industry, also provides leave time to employees. However, the industry, "does not support nor condone government mandated regulations that dictate," the operation of their industry, said Marshall Kearns, director of human relations.

Kearns feels the state passed the law to give teeth to its call to get parents involved in their child's education. He thinks it might give reluctant employees permission to ask for leave.

"Any business that has any foresight in the future and its employees will grant leave," he said. "These (children) are the employees they will get tomorrow."

Educators are excited and encouraged by the law.

One-on-one conversations allow parents and teachers to communicate on a different level, said Dr. Randall Herion, superintendent of Perquimans County Schools. He said this communication almost always has a positive impact on the student.

### Winter wonderland



Holiday visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Chappell are treated to a winter wonderland under the Christmas tree. Mrs. Chappell spent 15 years making and collecting a ceramic holiday village complete with every accessory you would expect to find in a country landscape. It stretches out for 12 feet across the end of her living room and is bordered by a split rail fence. When lit, the scene is amazing. (Photo courtesy Nancy Chappell)

## Chappell creates ceramic winter wonderland

"It's my husband's Christmas. He and my children look forward to seeing it every year."

Virginia Chappell

Virginia Chappell has a beautiful Christmas tree in her living room. The problem is, folks are so taken by Mrs. Chappell's elaborate ceramic holiday village surrounding the evergreen, it's hard to remember there's even a Christmas tree there.

The village stretches across a 12-foot room and is approximately 4.5 feet wide. Inside a split-rail fence are roads, stores, churches, houses, snowmen, carolers, farms, ponds, street lights, snow-topped trees, a mill, even a train sitting atop a bridge.

Mrs. Chappell has no idea how many pieces she has under her tree. They've just added up over the past 15 years. But she knows how much a part of her family's holiday tradition the growing ceramic village has become.

"It's my husband's Christmas," Mrs. Chappell said. "He and my children look forward to seeing it every year."

Mrs. Chappell started making ceramics in 1977 when her doctor suggested she take up a hobby. She's enjoyed the craft off and on since that time, accumulating more

and more pieces as time went by.

A church with stained glass windows was one of the first items she made. She's see pieces she liked in catalogues and craft shows, and if she couldn't find the greenware to paint, she learned to alter the greenware to make what she wanted. For instance, one of Mrs. Chappell's Victorian houses was a haunted house before she went to work on it, taking a coffin off the front and replacing Halloween items in the windows with Christmas symbols.

Making all the ceramics was a breeze compared to setting up the village every year, Mrs. Chappell said. After putting up her Christmas tree, she strings white lights across the floor around the tree. Next comes the fluffy cotton over the lights. Then she begins setting up the buildings and figures, pulling lights up through the cotton layer to shine through the windows

of the buildings. There are roads weaving throughout the village, with tiny toy cars and trucks making their way along the by-ways. A mirror under the train trestle reflects light just like a slick river at night.

Mrs. Chappell said before her arthritis started bothering her, she even used to make little footprints in the snow around the park, complete with a slide and park benches. With arthritis taking its toll, family members now help set up the elaborate Christmas village.

She might think about leaving the village packed up next year, but it's evident from the smile on Mrs. Chappell's face as she remembers making each piece that the village is very much a part of her holiday tradition. The safe bet is that every Christmas will find Mrs. Chappell - or someone under her direction - crouched on the floor setting up the village, and continuing to make holiday memories.

## Conservation district wins national award

The Albemarle Soil & Water Conservation District was honored as a Grand Award District in the 46th annual Conservation Awards Program sponsored by The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and National Association of Conservation Districts.

Floyd Mathews of Hertford represented the district during a work/study program for award winners Dec. 2-5 in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Albemarle was one of only 49 local conservation districts across the country chosen as grand award winners based on 1992 achievements. Nearly 3,000 soil and water conservation district nationwide were eligible for the award.

The Albemarle District, with offices in Perquimans, Chowan, Pasquotank, Currituck and Camden counties, emphasizes conserving soil and water resources and protecting the environment.

Since 1947, the Goodyear/NACD Conservation Awards Program has encouraged and rewarded local efforts to protect and conserve soil, water, forests,

wildlife and other natural resources. Winning districts are selected on the basis of their success in developing and implementing an annual plan for delivering district programs and services.

"The success of conservation districts is vital to the protection of our country's natural resources," said Goodyear's David Fulton, director of the Conservation Awards Program. "This program assists local districts in their efforts to serve the community and recognizes those that have done an outstanding job of delivering quality conservation programs and services."

The Albemarle District will receive a plaque recognizing its accomplishment at the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts annual meeting Jan. 2-4 in Raleigh.

Also on tap during the meeting is the 50th anniversary celebration of the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The first soil and water conservation district in the world was the Brown Creek District in

Anson County, North Carolina, formed in 1937. Governor Jim Hunt will deliver an address during the conference.

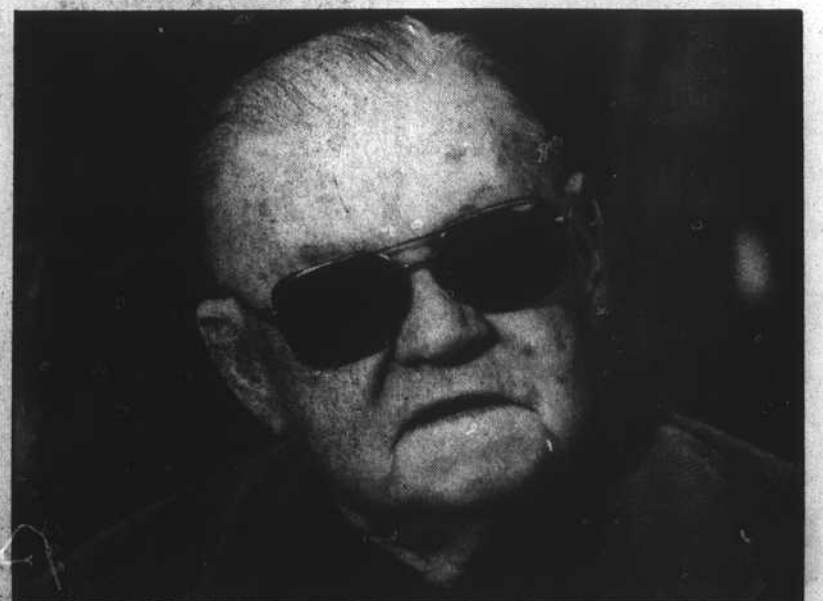
The North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts was formed in 1944. Programs of the Association are carried out by 488 District Supervisors. Each county is represented by a district.

Supervisors work with farmers and landowners on the Agriculture Cost-Share Program on Nonpoint Source Pollution and ways to control erosion, nutrients, animal wastes and pesticides.

Districts are also responsible for developing annual and long-range plans of conservation and resource development, using funds from both public and private sources.

The districts are supported by the Division of Soil and Water Conservation in the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources.

The Albemarle District celebrated its 50th anniversary earlier this year.



Floyd Mathews of Perquimans County accepted a national conservation award on behalf of the Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation Service. The local unit was one of only 49 in the country to receive honors. (Submitted photo)

### Offices, banks close for holidays

Christmas is coming soon...only one more day before Santa arrives.

Holidays mean time off from work and office closings. Following is a brief run-down on government and financial institution holiday schedules.

Perquimans County - All non-emergency departments will be closed on Friday, Dec. 24 and Monday, Dec. 27.

Town of Hertford - Offices will be closed on Friday, Dec. 24 and Monday, Dec. 27.

Garbage pick-up will follow the regular schedule.

Town of Winfall - Offices will be closed on Friday, Dec. 24.

Emergency calls to any county or municipal department should be made to the county dispatch department at 426-5751.

Perquimans County students will be on holiday break until classes resume on Monday, Jan. 3.

Hertford Savings Bank will close at 1 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 24 and re-open on Tuesday, Dec. 28. NationsBank and Centura Bank will stay open until 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 23, close at 2 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 24 and will be closed all day on Monday, Dec. 27.

### Inside

Sports  
Page 3

### Next week

Sisters celebrate special Christmas



### DEADLINES

- News Release  
Monday - 3:00 p.m.
- Advertising  
Monday - 3:00 p.m.