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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

BELVIDERE ACADEMY GETS HISTORICAL MARKER

Over 200 gather for celebration

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Over 200 people gathered from as far away as Connecticut and Georgia to recognize the contributions of Belvidere Academy to legions of students.

Months of fundraising by members of the Belvidere Homemakers Club culminated in the erection of a historic marker at the site where Belvidere Academy once stood on Highway 37. The community building now occupies that property.

Two former teachers attended the ceremony, Mary Chappell White of Belvidere and Annie Smith Rohlander of Greenbelt, Maryland.

White, who was teaching at the school when it caught fire and burned to the ground in May 1935, went on to teach for many years at Central School in Winfall. She was affectionately known as "Miss Mary," and under her guidance, many elementary students learned to read and write.

A real surprise for White at the ceremony was her portrayal, appropriately enough, by her granddaughter and namesake, Mary White of Fayetteville. Young Mary borrowed one of her grandmother's vintage dresses a while back "for a project." Little did the grandmother

know what Mary's project entailed.

"You should have seen the look on her (White's) face when Mary got up there in her dress to portray her," said Thelma Riddick, one of the organizers of the move to place a monument at the site.

In addition to the teachers, former students and descendants of former students attended the ceremony.

Mary Raper Butt presented the history of the school.

Belvidere Academy began its long and notable history in the Piney Woods Friends Meetinghouse in 1833. The first building was erected on the site of what is now the community building in 1835. The academy eventually became a boarding school, with students coming from all across Perquimans County and even outside its boundaries.

A new building was built in 1903, a grand, two-story structure. The cost of erecting the new building and purchasing desks and other equipment was a whopping \$2,824.30. It cost another \$100 to finish the upstairs later.

Piney Woods Monthly Meeting sold the building to the county in 1914. It served as both an elementary and high school until 1925. After that, high school students traveled to Hertford to attend classes in the brand new

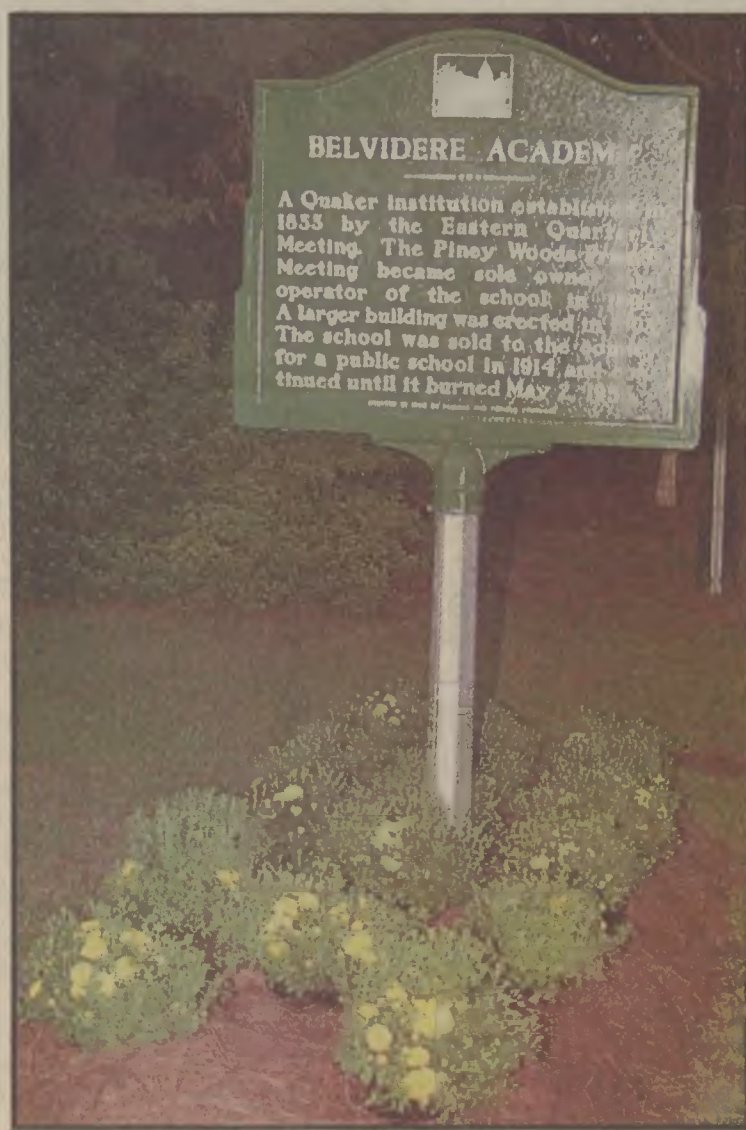


PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Months of hard work by a handful of Belvidere women led to the erection of this sign, marking the site of Belvidere Academy. The Academy was known far and wide for its excellence in education, and played a prominent role in the history of the Perquimans County hamlet.

school there. Elementary students continued to attend at Belvidere until it burned to the ground in 1935. Legend has it that papers being burned in the school's wood stove created sparks that caused the fire. Fortunately, no one was injured in the blaze.

The marker is a testament to the dedication and determination of the homemakers' committee that spearheaded

the effort. They needed to raise \$1,000 in matching funds in order for the state to mark the site. They contacted former teachers, students and those interested in historic preservation and came up with the funds.

Because of their efforts, generations to come will note the great significance of this small Perquimans community in the history of local education.

State toughens driving while impaired laws

North Carolina's driving while impaired laws will get tougher tomorrow.

Two new laws take effect, strengthening what are already considered to be among the toughest driving while impaired laws in the nation.

Beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 15, it will be unlawful for any person under age 21 to drive a motor vehicle after drinking any amount of alcohol. A violation of this law will result in a one-year revocation of the person's drivers license.

"This law means those who are under the age of 21 and are therefore not allowed to buy alcohol will also not be allowed to have any alcohol in their system while driving,"

said Lt. Colonel C.R. Wilkins, acting commander of the N.C. Highway Patrol. "This 'zero tolerance' of underage drinking is understandable when you consider that the alcohol fatality rate for drivers age 16-17 is twice as high as for drivers 25 and older, and the rate for 18-20 year old drivers is

nearly three times as high."

The second new law taking effect regulates open containers of alcohol in the car. It will be unlawful as of tomorrow to have any open container of alcohol in the car if the driver has not been drinking, such as in the case of a designated driver or a bus driver, passengers can drink beer and unfortified wine (wine with no more than 17 percent alcohol content).

The old law allowed passengers to have open beer and unfortified wine regardless of whether the driver had been drinking. The old law prohibiting the driver from drinking while driving is still in effect.

"Enforcing North Carolina's D.W.I. laws remains the first priority of the Highway Patrol," said Wilkins. "Our goal is to improve highway safety, and we will use every tool available to us - including these new laws - to remove impaired drivers from the road."

State funds mailed

The N.C. Department of Revenue mailed intangibles tax reimbursement distribution checks totalling \$128.9 million to municipalities and counties recently.

The money is distributed to counties and municipalities based on the amount of ad valorem taxes each local government levies.

Perquimans County received \$74,485. The towns of

Hertford and Winfall got \$5,634 and \$1,061, respectively.

The intangible personal property tax was repealed during the 1995 session of the General Assembly, effective Jan. 1, 1995 for personal taxes filed in 1996; however, local governments will continue to receive reimbursement distribution checks paid from the state's General Fund.

Merchants group plans tour

Homes, shops to open doors to tourists for "Our Town" on Oct. 21

The Downtown Merchants Association is gearing up for an October event.

Themed "Our Town," the group will sponsor a walking tour of the downtown area, including tours of several homes and gardens in the Church and Front street areas. It is scheduled for Oct. 21.

The tour will include the Perquimans County courthouse, the oldest courthouse still in use.

The homes of Mary Alice Brinn, Andrew Toxey and Bill Darrow will be on the tour. The Brinn and Toxey homes look out over the Perquimans River. The Darrow home features newly-restored gardens and a widow's walk.

Hertford Hardware will feature a tour of its facilities, including antiques and the former State Theater, now used for storage. One of the theater remain the embellishments of theaters of a by-gone era.

Darden Department Store will welcome people to Aunt Arlene's Attic and Merchant Museum, a collection of goodies set up in the store that has been in the Darden family for three generations.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

An antique bed in the Andrew Toxey home is reminiscent of Hertford's early days. It has provided a place of rest for the weary for over 200 years. The Toxey home is one of five to be on tour on Oct. 21 when the Downtown Merchants sponsor "Our Town."

Among the exhibits will be Ben Hobbs demonstrating 18th century carpentry and Mary Danchise demonstrating the art of caning. Hobbs is known up and down the Eastern

Seaboard for his quality hand-made furniture.

Art exhibits, antiques booths, displays and more are planned for the day.

Telephone fraud up in North Carolina

Telephone fraud is on the rise in North Carolina and Attorney General Mike Easley is leading a crusade to educate the public about this crime.

In the past two years, 5.5 million Americans have purchased something by telephone that they now feel was a definite rip-off.

Easley has contacted media outlets, and even produced a video which can be loaned to civic and church groups to warn about this rising problem. The video discusses three types of fraud - fraudulent charities, recovery companies and contests and promotions.

Recovery companies are the newest type of telephone fraud. Recovery companies sound very legitimate. Some have official sounding names such as "Bureau of Consumer Awareness" or "Federal

Consumer Protection." They convince the victim that they are legitimate because they have details about money that has been lost.

The companies claim that, for an up-front fee, they can recover all or part of the money the consumer has lost. According to Martha Drake at the N.C. Consumers Council, there is no such thing as a legitimate recovery company that charges for its services. Some local government agencies will help people who have lost money, but they will never charge fees and will not guarantee recovery.

Unfortunately, past victims of fraudulent telemarketers are perfect targets for the recovery companies. Through a practice known as "reloading," names, addresses and telephone numbers of victims

are placed on what is known in the trade as "sucker lists" and are sold from one fraudulent telemarketer to another. Once a person has been a victim of a scam, a "recovery company" may call to help them reclaim their funds.

There are legitimate telemarketing firms and businesses that use telemarketing as a means to reach potential customers. But people should be careful about giving out their credit card numbers or sending money to agencies about which they have never heard.

If in doubt about a telephone deal, ask for a telephone number and address, and check with a Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau to make sure a business or charity is legitimate.

Write Box 3401, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514 to borrow the video.

Next Week

Our annual Indian Summer Festival section will be published in the Sept. 21 Perquimans Weekly

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 80s Low: 60s VARIABLY CLOUDY	High: 80s Low: 60s CHANCE OF RAIN	High: 80s Low: 60s CHANCE OF RAIN