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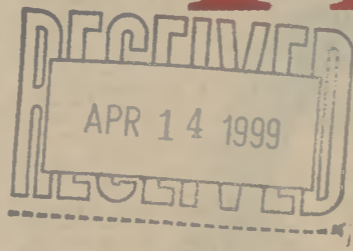
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# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35¢

## Hertford sells Keel building for \$1

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
 Editor

It's no longer the town's problem.

The Keel building that sits on the corner of Edenton Road and Grubb streets was sold by the town of Hertford Monday to developer Randy Lassiter. Town manager John Christensen said Lassiter paid the town \$1 plus back taxes totaling about \$1,500 for the building.

Town attorney Walter Edwards said the town included several restrictions in the deed regarding renovation of the property. Lassiter has 6 months to have the building completely secured and 1 year to completely rehabilitate it.

Edwards said Lassiter plans to renovate the bottom floor into business space and the second story into two apartments. Christensen said Lassiter already has permission from the planning board to go ahead with his renovation plans.

Lassiter is presently remodeling the former Darden Department Store building. He purchased the empty building last year and renovated it into small shops. The ground floor is filled with the exception of an eatery, which is under construction now and should open in early summer. Work is underway on the second floor of the building. One tenant has already moved in there.

The Keel building has been a thorn in the town's side for years. In July 1989, the town council met to discuss condemning buildings around the town. The Keel building was listed as a priority.

Negotiations with the building's owners, Lester and Janet Keel, were fruitless. Former building inspector Aubrey Onley declared the building condemnable. Lester Keel died and negotiations continued with his heirs. Finally, the town was able to get most of the nine heirs to sign their interest in the building over to the town of Hertford. Two refused, so the town petitioned the court to force the sale of the building. The town, already owning 7/9 of the property, then purchased the remainder at the sale.

Last spring, Council planned to tear down the building. Initial bids for demolition and clean-up exceeded \$20,000, prompting town officials to look for alternatives. Inmates cleaned out the building and the tri-county landfill worked with the town on tipping fees. The town authorized Christensen to negotiate demolition bids when Lassiter appeared before the board and offered to buy the building for \$1. Officials have worked for several months to iron out details of the sale.

**Don't forget —  
 April is  
 CleanUp/Fix Up  
 Month in  
 Perquimans**

## Hunter ALS Foundation to kick off on Old Timers Day

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
 Editor

He's just Jimmy in this neck of the woods.

Hall of Fame pitcher Jim "Catfish" Hunter is known across the country for his exploits on the diamond. But here, where he chose to spend his off-seasons and later to retire, he's just Jimmy, the neighbor, the friend, the classmate, the baseball coach who used his fame for good causes and never let his history-making success swell his head.

He's battled many odds over the years — a hunting accident that claimed some toes, a shoulder injury that might have retired a lesser competitor, diabetes. Now he's facing not a battle, but a war for his life. Hunter was diagnosed with ALS late last fall. The disease has already taken the use of his legendary arm, but his legs and his lungs remain strong right now.

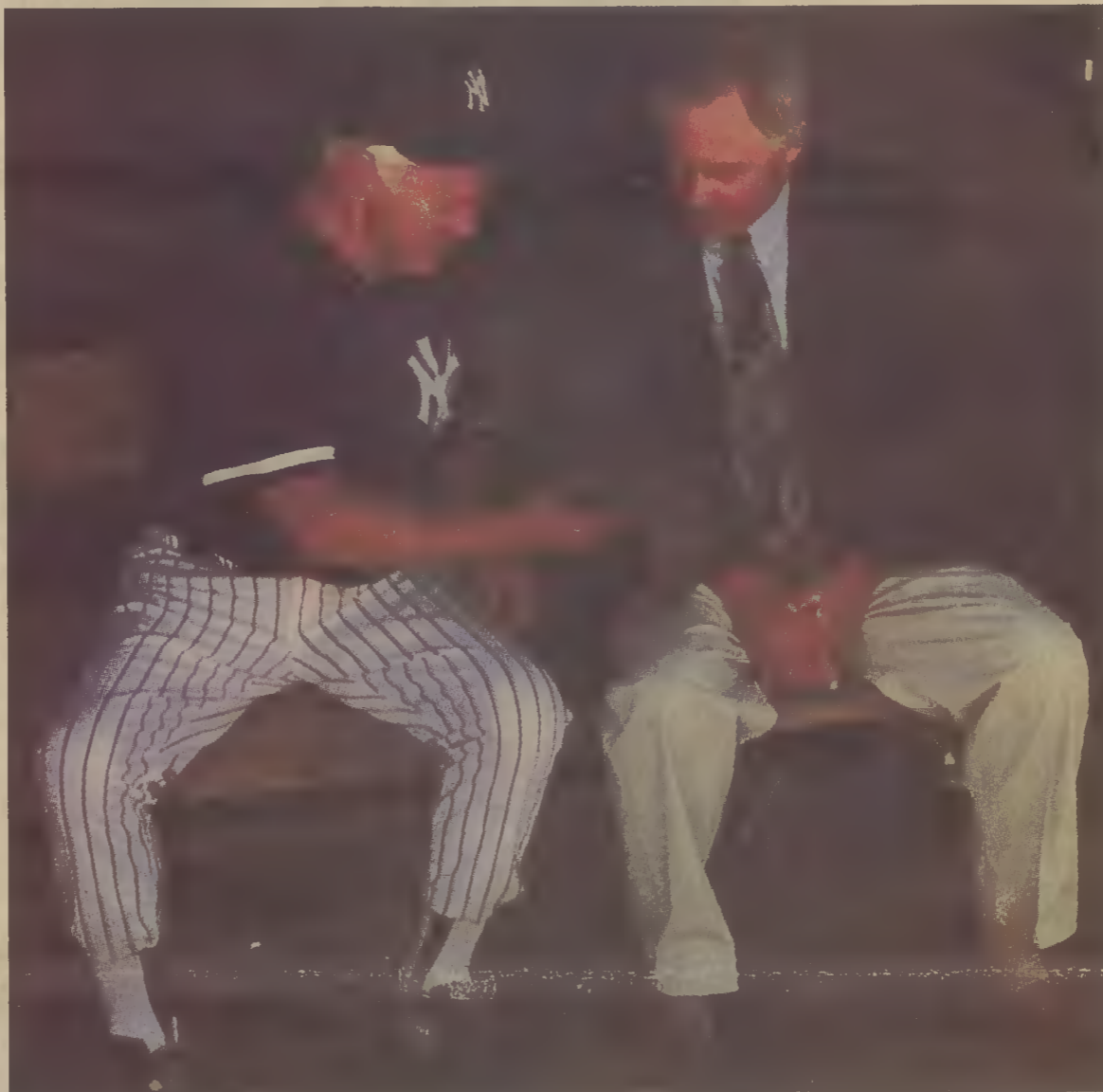
Hunter physically can't reach out any more, but the example he has set of lending a hand to others is now coming home to him. His friends and family have banded together to organize the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation, a foundation to raise funds for ALS research and education. The foundation is not a fund raiser for the Hunter family, but it is a hope raiser as all those working to organize it hope that Hunter's faith and fortitude will keep him up and about until a cure for the fatal disease can be found.

The annual Perquimans County Old Timers Day, set for Saturday, May 8 at Perquimans County High School, will serve as the kick-off of the foundation.

The 1963 Perquimans Indians, state 1-A baseball champions, have been coming home on Mother's Day weekend for years to take on the current varsity team. As the high school program grew to include a JV team, state champions from 1952, 1954 and 1960 joined in the fun — along with some PCHS stand-outs from later years. In the mid-1990s, Old Timers's softball was added to the day's events.

Hunter was instrumental in starting this event after his retirement. It initially served as a fund raiser for the baseball program, and now benefits the athletic programs on both the high and middle school levels. The games have become a Mother's Day weekend tradition in the county, a quasi-reunion for all graduates of the school and their families.

Guests for the day include Jim Pagliaroni, the catcher who caught Hunter's perfect game for Kansas City on May 8, 1968. (Old Timers Day is the 31st anniversary of this historic game.) Ron Davis, Sal Bando, Alvin Dark, Tommy John, Mike Hershberger and Jim Spencer will also be on hand. Several other associates of



AP file photo

Jimmy Hunter, AKA Catfish, enjoys a light moment with fellow former Yankee Whitey Ford (left) before a Yankee spring training game last month in Tampa, Fla. Hunter, who was diagnosed with ALS last fall, will be on hand for the annual Old Timers Day activities on May 8. This year's events will mark the kick-off of the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation which was started to raise funds for ALS research and education.

Hunter's from his major league days have been invited. Although some, such as Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, have conflicts, others are still trying to clear their schedules to be here for this tribute to a hometown hero and national icon.

A full day of activities is planned, beginning with a Prayer Breakfast in the high school cafeteria at 6:30 a.m. Tickets are \$5 and will be available at the door.

Pit-cooked barbecued chicken plates will be served from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the high school. Plates may be eaten in the cafeteria or picked up in front of the school. Tickets are \$5 each and may be ordered from the Chamber of Commerce, or purchased from Albemarle area Ruritans, Athletic Boosters and at businesses around the county. To order tickets, send a check or money order made payable to the Bear Swamp-Beech Springs Ruritans to Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 27, Hertford, NC 27944. Ticket orders must be

received by April 23 if ordered by mail.

At 10 a.m., the gates to the PCHS ballparks will open. Admission is \$5 for an all-day pass for everyone who enters. (This includes babies.) All tickets will be sold at the gate.

At noon, the newly-installed lights on the softball field will be dedicated. This will be followed by an Old Timers Softball Game.

Two homerun derbies are planned. Contestants in each will get 15 pitches. High school students will pay \$15 each for their contest, which will start at 11 a.m. All those out of high school will pay \$35. That derby begins at 2 p.m. The winner in each category will get 20 percent of that pot, the runner-up, 10 percent. The remainder will go to the ALS Foundation.

The PCHS junior varsity squad will face a team of former PCHS players at 3 p.m. Just last year, some PCHS baseball champions from 1952 and 1954 took their places on the diamond at their alma mater for this contest. Players from more recent years joined them in

this inter-generational game.

A ceremony honoring Hunter and his contributions to his community is set for 5 p.m. on the baseball field. The program will include a musical tribute presented by the Perquimans County High School band to Hunter and the Old Timers from 1952, 1954, 1960 and 1963, Perquimans' state championship baseball teams. All state champions in attendance, including the 1997 Lady Pirates 1-A Softball Team, will be recognized.

Hunter will be joined on the mound by his sons, Todd and Paul, who are also former Perquimans County High School baseball stand-outs, and his grandson, Taylor, for the ceremonial first pitch.

The headliner will begin at 7 p.m. when members of the 1963 state championship team — with a little help from stars from later eras — will face the high school varsity squad.

Information about the day's events can be found on the web site of the chamber of commerce — perquimans.com. A map will soon be posted on this site showing parking lots to be used on Old Timers Day. Trolleys and transit vans will make the rounds from parking areas to the high school during the day. In addition, a recommended traffic pattern will be issued from the Hertford Police Department by April 23. That information will also be posted. Call the Chamber at 426-5657 for information, or Susan Harris at 426-5728 (work) or 426-5307 (home) to volunteer.

## Overpasses requested on US 17

8-year wait for construction if approved by DOT

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
 Editor

It's a year slower than the seven-year itch.

Local officials asking for overpasses along U.S. Highway 17 Bypass have been told by the state that it would take at least 8 years to accomplish.

Hertford vice mayor Billy Winslow told council Monday night that the county has requested overpasses on U.S. 17 at the intersections of New Hope, Church/Harvey Point and Wynn Fork roads. He said even though it will take 8 years to get the overpasses built if they are approved, the county needs to make the request to get on the list of needed improvements. Winslow said both Hertford and Winfall were asked to support the request.

The bypass has claimed several lives, including those of children, youth and senior citizens. Those who have lost their lives on the roadway include drivers, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists. The state put traffic lights at the New Hope Road and Church/Harvey Point intersections and also changed the traffic pattern in front of the Perquimans Centre (Food Lion), but accidents, injuries and fatalities continue to add up on the roadway.

Meanwhile, Hertford police have applied for an \$80,000 grant to help with traffic safety. Chief Dale Vanscoy said the grant would cover equipment such as a new car and its equipment, roadside radar and other state-of-the-art items to help the department enforce traffic laws and encourage safe driving.

Council agreed to put up \$19,700 in local matching funds next fiscal year if the grant is approved. Both Vanscoy and Christensen told council that the police department would need to buy a new car next fiscal year whether or not the grant is funded. Vanscoy said a new car on state contract costs \$19,600 equipped. If the grant is funded, the town will spend \$100 extra, but will get \$80,000 in equipment.

In addition to U.S. 17, police have worked traffic in several problem areas in town lately, including King, Front and Church streets. Four-way stops have been in place a week at the intersections of King and Hyde Park streets and Church and Grubb streets. Vanscoy said Monday night that he and town superintendent Parker Newbern monitored the intersection Monday when students were returning to school from the spring break and also at the end of the day.

"The kids are doing a real good job," Vanscoy said. "They're slowing down. Now if we can get the aparents to do the same thing we'll be all right."

Vanscoy has also reported in the past putting emphasis on Church Street, where the speed limit is 25.