

Free music festival

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'Catfish' Hunter honored

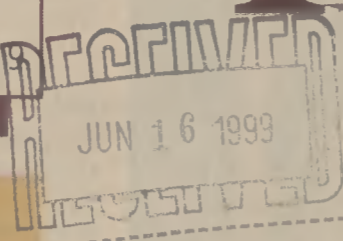
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Graduation marshals

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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Hertford Town Council approves budget

10 percent hike in water, sewer services only budget increase

SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

The Hertford Town Council unanimously approved Town Manager John Christensen's fiscal year 1999-2000 budget Monday night, including a 10 percent hike in water and services.

The budget goes into effect July 1.

Christensen told the board that the increase was needed to balance the town's water and sewer fund. In addition, the Water Department staff was increased by one position in the upcoming budget. The street department also had funding added in the budget for a new staff position.

"We're losing money in our water/sewer department," Christensen said. "This 10 percent (increase) will just (allow the town to) break even."

Christensen said that the average residential household uses 5,000 gallons of water per month and that the increase will add a mere \$3.15 to each water/sewer bill.

Christensen also said the budget does not include a transfer of water department funds into the general fund.

"We want to discontinue that procedure," Christensen said.

The budget did include an \$11,000 transfer from the electric fund into the general fund. But that practice will also soon be phased out, the Town Manager said.

"This \$11,000 will disappear in the next two budget years," Christensen said.

Councilman Sid Eley considered amending the budget to place the nearly \$34,000 in general fund contingencies into a capital equipment fund. After discussing the issue with Christensen and Winslow, Eley agreed to leave the money in the contingencies fund until at least next June at which time council could explore using any remaining funds for possible capital equipment purchases.

The approved budget includes a \$1,058,735 general fund, the bulk of which, slightly more than \$450,000, will pay for the town's police department operations.

One resident questioned council if it would be cheaper for the town to consolidate its police department with the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department.

"We will possibly be getting back into that issue," said councilman Billy Winslow.

The electric fund was the budget's largest item at \$2,221,000. Christensen said that fund included a \$12,000 line item for rate stabilization, should increases in electric rates occur during proposed electric industry deregulation.

The water/sewer fund was budgeted at \$555,500 in the upcoming fiscal year.

The town's ad valorem tax rate of 49 cents per \$100 valuation remained unchanged.

MEET THE CLASS OF 1999

98 Pirate graduates receive diplomas

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The first PCHS class to face must pass senior projects and end-of-course tests celebrated Friday night at commencement exercises on Memorial Field.

Principal Elaine Pritchard said the class of 1999 met the challenges of testing and senior projects, exceeding expectations in some areas. Thanks in part to the seniors' leadership and hard work, preliminary indications are that the high school will achieve exemplary status for the school year, she said.

As has become the custom, honor graduates served as speakers for the occasion.

"Valedictorian Dail Nixon challenged her classmates to do the right thing in life, regardless of any negative consequences or its unpopularity. She advocated helping the helpless, cheering for the underdog and going the extra mile for others.

Andrew Harris, co-salutatorian, said the PCHS class of 1999 is a remarkable class, both individually and collectively. He said each classmate is "destined to be great in our own

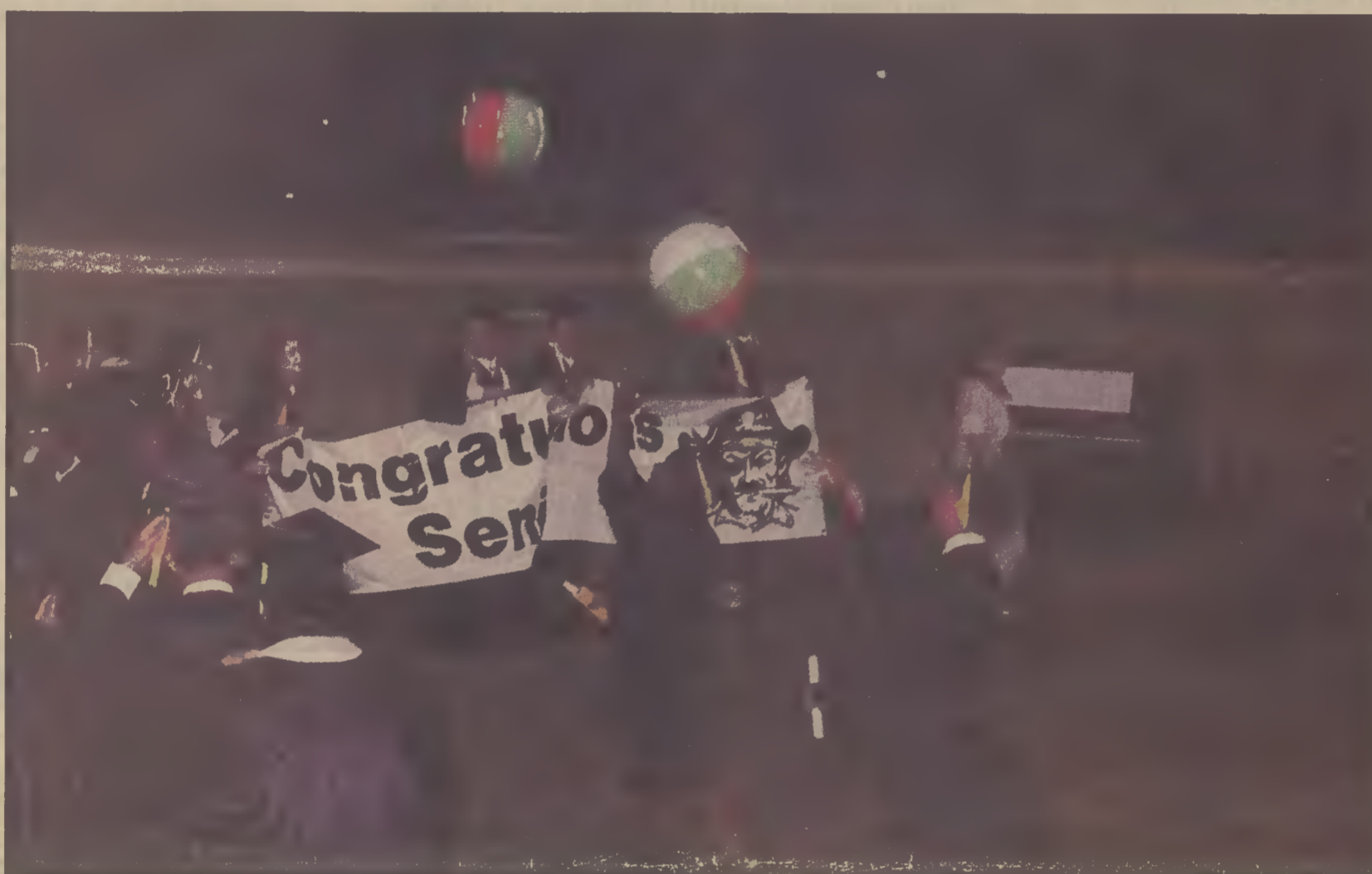


PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Perquimans County High School seniors celebrate with beach balls, silly string and the congratulatory sign confiscated from the front of the school as they leave graduation ceremonies Friday night.

way." Harris closed with this advice: "And no matter how tough the future may be, always remember this: The road of life is long and bumpy, but even the greatest of racers must take pit stops along the way."

Co-salutatorian Ashley Hurdle used her original poem, "An Awesome Power," describing the power of the ocean. "As each of you walk across the stage tonight, know that the

power the ocean possesses is in each of you and like the ocean's waves, with God and your faith, you can all make an impact on everyone's life around you and even find your true destiny."

Also taking part in the program were Joseph Manning, invocation; April Owens, welcome; Natalie Long, farewell; and Kimberly Stallings, benediction.

Ninety-eight graduates received diplomas from school

board chairman Wallace Nelson.

The class was awarded over \$370,000 in scholarships. Almost 50 percent will enter a 4-year college or university next fall.

In addition to those on the program, honor students were Angela Manley, Brandon Hollowell, Terilyn Ross, Amanda Byrum, Lee Thach, Michael Jarvis, Matt Winslow, Brooke Mickelson, Jermaine

Mallory, Adam Swindell, Candace Downing, Regina Boone, Markeita Boyce, LeAnn Ferrell, Timothy Long, Neil Eure, Michael Roberts and Lauren Hill.

Marshals, the top students in the freshmen sophomore and junior classes were Chief Courtney Harris, Amanda Drozdowski, Rebecca Hyde, Ashley Copeland, Shellie Hurdle, Miche'le Harris and Heather Godfrey.

Cousins earn top graduation honors

JEREMY DESPOSITO
Staff Writer

If it's possible to corner the market on a high school graduation ceremony, the Dempsey Winslow family sure did at Perquimans County High School Friday night.

Three Winslow family cousins claimed the top three academic spots in this year's graduating class, and each gave a commencement speech during Friday night's ceremony.

Third-cousins Ashley Hurdle and Andrew Harris were the class' co-salutatorians while their fourth cousin, Dail Nixon, was the valedictorian.

And if that wasn't enough, a fourth member of the Winslow clan, Courtney Harris, served as chief marshal for the graduation and is likely to be next year's valedictorian.

That three members from the same family would head a high school graduating class is indeed something to be proud of, 18-year-old Ashley Hurdle says. But it's also not that surprising.

When it comes right down to it, Hurdle said, each of the Winslow cousins accomplished no less than what's been expected of them.

"I didn't really think about (graduating tied for second in

my class). My parents just told me to do my best... That's what I tried to do. We all did."

Hurdle said she was especially honored to be named co-salutatorian along with third-cousin Andrew Harris.

"We've always been good friends," she said. "It's really special because Drew and I, we've been really close since babies. We've grown up together."

Each of the cousins share a common ancestor: Dempsey Eugene Winslow, their great-great-grandfather. A total of 14 of Winslow's descendants were in the Perquimans County High School graduation class Friday.

Eighteen-year-old Andrew Harris agrees that this year is unique, but says his family has had a tradition of success in academics.

"The whole family has generally done really well (in school)," he said. "Mom (Susan Harris) was a salutatorian (at PCHS) when she graduated. Somewhere down the line we were blessed with some decent genes, I guess."

Adds his sister Courtney, "We have a lot of master's (degrees) in our family, and people that graduated at the top of the class who have gone to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and

graduated with honors."

Despite finishing one, two and three in their graduating class, Dail, Hurdle and Harris never saw themselves as competing against each other, Andrew Harris said.

"Ashley and I may say a little something (to each other) - she'll get mad because she only made a 94 (on a test) and I'll say, "Oh, that all you made?" Dail always makes 100 (on her tests).

"We try to do the best (we can) in whatever we do," he said. We all are in a ton of clubs, and I play sports. That's proven to be a key for us... Look where we are now."

Although the list of their extracurricular activities is extensive - and all four of the Winslow cousins either compete in sports or are involved in a number of school clubs - each still finds time for a life outside of school, Andrew Harris said.

"One of the hardest things (when) maintaining good grades, playing sports and working is having spare time for yourself and friends," said

Andrew's sister, sixteen-year-old Courtney, says her cousins have helped her a lot at school, and that she'll miss them once they're graduated. Like her cousins, she credits

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PHOTO BY SAM WOLFE

Dail Nixon (top left), valedictorian of this year's Perquimans County High School graduating class, poses with her fourth-cousins, Courtney and Andrew Harris. Courtney Harris was chief marshal for the graduation ceremony and her brother Andrew was co-salutatorian.