

Varsity teams win hoops openers

Page 7

Sugar Plums are holiday tradition

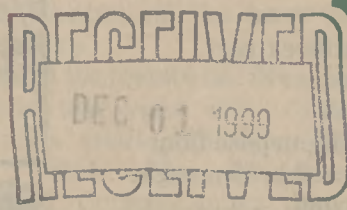
Page 2

Health issues discussed

Page 11

December 2, 1999

Vol. 67, No. 48 Hertford, North Carolina 27944



THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Sheriff Robinson dies Sunday at home

Memorial service set for Thursday at PCHS

CINDY COURBAT
 The Daily Advance and
SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

It seems fitting that Ralph Robinson will be eulogized in a school.

The 72-year-old sheriff of Perquimans County was known across the county for his love of children and commitment to making their futures brighter. His funeral

service will be held Thursday at Perquimans County High School.

Indeed, Board of Commissioners Vice Chair Shirley Wiggins said Robinson will be remembered most for the encouragement and support he gave to area youth.

"He served with D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and the Governor's One-On-One Program, and he had a genuine interest and concern for children," Wiggins said. "I've never heard anyone with anything but nice to say about him."

"He'll leave many fond memories," Wiggins added. "I am totally grieved by his death."

As the long-term D.A.R.E. officer, Robinson touched the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of local youth.



Ralph Robinson

Talking about youth brought a smile to his face; about the obstacles many faced, a tear to his eye.

Robinson lost his short battle with Mesothelioma, a disease resulting from exposure to asbestos, at his home Sunday. He was diagnosed with the disease on May 28. He subsequently underwent surgery.

A native of Patchogue, N.Y., Robinson was appointed sheriff on Aug. 1, 1998. He was elected to the post in November of that year. Prior to assuming the sheriff's post, he served as a deputy for 14 years.

"We all appreciate the good work he has done and will miss him," said Perquimans County Commissioner's Chairman Charles Ward. "Sheriff Robinson had a lot of young supporters...and also did a lot of good while serving as D.A.R.E. officer."

Chief Deputy Eric Tilley will step in as interim sheriff

until the Board of Commissioners appoints a permanent replacement. By law, the commissioners fill the unexpired term of a sheriff.

On Monday, Tilley described Robinson as "an honest, good person" who will be "greatly missed" in the department.

Tilley and Robinson served together as deputies under former Sheriff Joe Lothian. Robinson continued with the sheriff's department until his retirement, and even then continued to serve as the D.A.R.E. officer, while Tilley accepted positions with the Elizabeth City Police Department and later with the state as a probation/parole officer. He came back to the Sheriff's department on Dec. 1, 1998 as chief deputy at Robinson's request.

Memorial services will be

held today (Thursday) at 3 p.m. in the high school auditorium. Burial will follow at Cedar Wood Cemetery with Swindell Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

The high school will release students at 1:50 p.m. on Thursday. All other schools will release at regular time.

Ward said the commissioners have not yet met to make a decision on closing county offices, but he anticipates that offices will close during the memorial service. The flag on the courthouse lawn is being flown at half-mast in Robinson's honor.

Survivors include Robinson's wife, Dorothy Sutcliffe Robinson, four daughters, and three sons.

(See complete obituary information on page 3.)

Parade is Saturday

SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

Chamber parade organizers are making their lists and checking them twice as the big day approaches.

"We want this to be a community Christmas parade," said Chamber board member Brenda Lassiter, who serves on the Parade Committee. "We want people to come out and spend the day with us — enjoy shopping in downtown Hertford at our stores and with our vendors on the courthouse lawn, eat at the food court or one of our restaurants, and get in the holiday spirit with the parade and entertainment."

Lassiter said student musicians from the high school and middle school are tuning up for the Saturday parade, along with the Northeastern High School band.

In addition to the bands, over a dozen floats entered by civic groups, churches, schools and businesses; decorated cars; horses and more have signed up to participate. Floats in all categories will be judged with \$25 and a trophy going to the first place entry and \$15 to the second.

The parade, themed "Pitching a Perfect Christmas" in memory of Jim "Catfish" Hunter, will leave the high school at 1:30 p.m. Hunter's wife, children and grandchildren will serve as grand marshalls. They will leave their vehicle downtown and sit on the reviewing stand. Behind them will be members of the 1963 PCHS state championship baseball team.

The procession will move down Edenton Road Street, turn right onto Grubb Street, turn right onto Church, turn right onto Dobbs, turn left onto Edenton Road, then proceed back to the high school.

Santa Claus will get off his sleigh downtown and sit on the courthouse steps to hear the Christmas lists of boys and girls.

Downtown shops will be open all day, vendors will be open from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., and music on the courthouse lawn will begin at noon. The BPW Christmas tree will be lit after the parade, as will the town Christmas decorations.

SIGNS OF THE SEASON



PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS



All around Perquimans, it's beginning to look like Christmas. Wreaths, many like the large greenery ones decorated with bows adorning the windows at the Hertford town offices (above), are hung on doors and windows. Lights twinkle on outside trees and bushes, candles shine in windows and Christmas trees are going up daily. On lawns are sleighs, reindeer, snowmen, lighted characters and nativity scenes. After the parade Saturday afternoon, the town ornaments, like the new wreaths with candles downtown (left) will illuminate the downtown area.

Hertford residents get electric, cable interruptions

SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

The town of Hertford has announced that its electric customers will experience temporary power outages as a result of the town's switch to a new voltage system.

Town manager John Christensen said Tuesday that the original projected begin date of the outages was Dec. 6; however, at a meeting on Tuesday with all those involved in the project the outage dates were estimated at Dec. 14 and 15.

Christensen said the town has installed the transformers necessary to upgrade the town's present 4k volt system to 12k volts. A separate transformer serves each of the town's four circuits. During the switch, work crews will have to manually switch each transformer from 4k volts to 12k volts. The switch will take 4-5 hours at each transformer. Power will be interrupted on each circuit as the system is switched.

The plan is to change two circuits each day over a two-day period. Christensen said he is advocating that the work be done beginning at 10 or 11 p.m. to create as little disturbance to residents as possible. He said every effort will be made to minimize the outages, however, residents may want to set back-up alarm clocks on those dates if their alarms are shut off when the power goes off.

Christensen said he will try to notify businesses that generally have late hours when the circuit serving that area will be shut down. It would be impossible, he said to notify each residential customer.

Those with critical electric needs are asked to notify the town office at 426-5311 or 426-1969.

Mediacom customers in Hertford, Winfall and Edenton should get better cable quality for Christmas. The next few days, however, could make some nice folks think naughty thoughts.

Maggie Blythe, Mediacom's director of Government and Legal Affairs, said customers in the three municipalities could be experiencing inter-

ruptions of service as a result of an upgrade that is underway. Blythe said service problems could range from the signal going off and on for a few minutes to a 2-3 hour period with no service, or periods of poor picture quality. As the upgrade continues and service crews move down the line, some customers may experience more than one service interruption. Never should anyone be without service overnight, Blythe said.

In some areas of the affected municipalities, the upgrade is complete. Customers there should experience no more service problems from the upgrade.

Blythe said Mediacom recognizes that service interruptions are frustrating to customers, and therefore, the company has brought in more personnel to assist with the project.

"We essentially have jumbled the staff up there," she said. "We have up to 20 people working in that area."

Barring unforeseen delays, construction is expected to be complete by mid-December.

The upgrade takes Mediacom from a 450 MHz coaxial system with no fiber optics to a 750 MHz fiber optic system. Blythe said the technology upgrade provide the platform necessary for Mediacom to offer customers increased reliability, improved picture quality, and future additional services such as digital television and high speed internet access.

Blythe said Mediacom's long-term plans include the exploration of additional services through the new technology and expanding to unserved areas.

Actual work in progress includes replacing aerial lines and laying new underground cable. Blythe said that Mediacom will fix any damage done to property during the construction process.

Mediacom customers who experience prolonged service interruptions may call Mediacom at 1-800-946-5388. The customer service center is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can respond to questions or concerns. Customers may have a cable service.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
 High: 52
 Low: 26
 PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
 High: 60
 Low: 36
 PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
 High: 64
 Low: 44
 PARTLY CLOUDY