

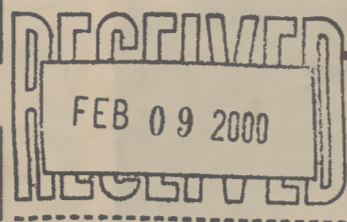
Lady Pirates make playoffs  
page 7

PCHS, PCMS honor rolls  
page 6

Vaughan on Campbell board  
page 5

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# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## Ward is challenger in state House race

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

A Perquimans County commissioner and state Transportation Board member has filed for the 86th House District seat, setting up a May showdown with incumbent state House Rep. William T. "Bill" Culpepper III.

Charles Ward said last Wednesday that, while he considers fellow Democrat Culpepper a friend, he feels he can do a better job representing the 86th District in the state house.

"I just feel like I have the experience and the background to do a good job in this district," said Ward, 62. "I'd rather be running the ship."

Owner of several businesses in Perquimans County, Ward

also says that one of his strengths is that he, unlike Culpepper, is not an attorney.

"I am a businessman," Ward said. "I think we have enough lawyers in the state House."

Ward said he's been mulling a run for the state House for several months. Based on feedback he's received from supporters, he feels "pretty good" about his chances of defeating the three-term incumbent.

An Elizabeth City native who practices law in Edenton, Culpepper, 52, said he was not surprised to learn Ward had filed for the 86th District seat.

"I had heard some talk that he was interested in the position," said Culpepper, who filed himself for reelection several weeks ago.

Culpepper said he and Ward have enjoyed a friendly relationship over the years.



Ward

The state's District I representative on the state Board of Transportation the past four years, Ward has two years remaining on his third term as a Perquimans commissioner. He currently serves as vice-chairman of the commission board and has served as a board member of both the Albemarle Commission and the Northeast North Carolina Economic Development Commission.

According to Perquimans County Elections Director

Eula Forbes, Ward is not required to resign from his post as a county commissioner to run for the state office. State law requires resignation at the time the oath of office for the higher position is administered. Therefore, Ward will not have to resign unless he is elected in November's general election.

Ward said education, roads and responsible growth planning will be the key issues of his campaign.

"I'd like to see us do a little better job at handling our growth," Ward said. "We need to plan better. (And) I'm going to be 100 percent behind education."

Ward said the 86th District has secured new roads, but could take better care of its older highway system.

"I feel like I could make a

difference with some of our road matters," he said.

Culpepper said if he's re-elected, he will continue to seek improvements in the district's economic development efforts, in education and environmental issues.

"The major issues don't change," said Culpepper, who believes his chances of returning to office are "extremely good."

The 86th House District is comprised of Chowan, Dare and Tyrrell counties, and three of the four voting precincts in Perquimans County.

Asked how critical the populous Dare County vote will be to his re-election campaign, the incumbent said very critical.

"I do feel confident in saying I have enjoyed a wide range of support from Dare County vot-

ers in the past," Culpepper said.

However, the current chairman of the state House's Rules Committee says he won't seek a public endorsement from Dare County's most powerful political leader, state Sen. Marc Basnight.

"I don't think it would be fair to put Senator Basnight in a position (of having to choose between two candidates)," Culpepper said.

Culpepper, who was appointed to the House in 1993, has had election challenges before. In his most recent he defeated Dare County Republican George Embrey in 1998.

Cheryl Byrd, a Republican Dare County Commissioner, filed for the seat on Jan. 12. She will take on the winner of the May primary in November.

## Local races develop

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

The race is on.

The last week of filing for the May election brought out enough candidates to create general election races for both the school board and board of county commissioners.

Former county commissioner Mack Nixon, who was defeated in his re-election bid in 1998, will seek to return to that board. Nixon made the third Democrat to file for the office.

Present school board member Wallace Nelson was the last to file for county commissioner, submitting his papers just as the filing period closed Monday at noon. Nelson is a Republican.

With Nixon and Nelson on board, there are five candidates for the three county commissioner seats available. Democrats seeking the office include board chairman Shirley Wiggins, political newcomer Randy Lassiter, and Nixon. Running on the Republican ticket are Nelson and another newcomer to local politics, Vernon Hammons.

Perquimans County Elections Director Eula Forbes said there will be no ballot for county commissioner in May. The county electoral system is set up so that the top three Democrats and top three Republicans in the primary advance to the general election. All five candidates will therefore automatically go on the November ballot.

The school board race took a late interesting turn when William E. Byrum, a popular retired school administrator, filed for one of three seats last week. Byrum recently retired as an assistant to the superintendent.

Another challenger also stepped up in the filing period's waning days. Iris Byrne signed up for a seat on the school board.

On May's ballot for the school board election will be incumbents Helen Shaw and Tommy Lynn Riddick, as well as Ramona Murphy, Byrum and Byrne. The top three voters will be seated on the board in June.



Daily Advance photo

No one was seriously injured when a Hertford woman drove into the back of a stopped Perquimans County school bus on U.S. Highway 17 north of Hertford last Wednesday afternoon.

## No one injured in car-bus wreck

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

No one was seriously injured when a Hertford woman drove her vehicle into the back of a Perquimans County school bus last Wednesday afternoon.

Stacey Hoffman, 27, of Dobbs Street, was traveling

north on U.S. Highway 17 when she hit the back of a stopped school bus with her 1994 Ford. The car went up under the left rear portion of the bus.

Neither Hoffman, her daughter, the bus driver, Patricia Whidbee, or any passengers were seriously injured, according to the report filed by N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper W.D. Shepherd.

Hoffman's young daughter was properly secured in a child safety seat in the correct position in the back seat at the time of the accident.

Estimated damages to the bus totaled \$6,000. Hoffman's car sustained an estimated \$5,000 in damages.

Highway Patrol records show that the accident is still under investigation.

## County OKs rent, sale bids

Perquimans County commissioners accepted three bids Monday in regular session.

A 1987 Ford truck was sold to high bidder Calvin Lacy for \$400. Three bids were received.

Rent on the county's farmland on both the county home and Granby (commerce centre) properties plummeted with the acceptance of two three-year bids. The county home property, about 9 acres, will be rented to present renter Thomas Roach for \$50 per acre. Choice Acres kept the Granby property for rent of \$63 per acre, down from \$73 in the last rental agreement. The bids were the only ones submitted for the land.

Falling farm product prices and a couple of bad years were blamed by commissioners for the lowered farm rent bids.

## Ashley charged with Bethel area robberies

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

A Perquimans County man was arrested Saturday and charged in connection with several break-ins in the Bethel community.

Perquimans deputy Nathan Zachary said Donald Wayne Ashley, 28, of 62 Bethel Fishing Center Road, Hertford was charged with two counts of felonious breaking and entering, larceny and possession of stolen goods.

Zachary said the department received information that Ashley may have been involved in reported break-ins in the Bethel area. A deputy was dispatched to question Ashley at his home.

During the visit, Zachary said the deputy recognized a

red gas can that matched the description of one reported stolen. The person who reported the gas can stolen was picked up and asked by the deputy to accompany the deputy to Ashley's residence to identify the gas can. The victim said the item belonged to him.

Later that day a search warrant was executed for Ashley's house. Several items reported stolen were found inside the house, Zachary said.

The deputy added that other items were recovered from a pawn shop and from a person in the community who allegedly bought some of the stolen items.

Bond was set at \$15,000 secured. Zachary said Ashley was still detained in Albemarle District Jail at press time.

## Hertford Police set up child safety seat inspection days

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

Hertford police officers continue to increase their efforts to protect children riding in vehicles.

Chief Dale Vanscoy said the local police department will observe National Child Passenger Safety Week, Feb. 13-19, by kicking off a new service this month. A certified child safety seat inspector will be on duty at the police department the last Friday of each month, 8 a.m.-noon, to perform free child safety seat checks.

The Hertford Police Department hosted a child safety seat workshop last fall. The last session was performing courtesy seat checks in the Food Lion parking lot. Vanscoy said several parents and grandparents stopped to make sure the seats in their vehicles met current safety standards and were properly installed. All said the inspection gave them peace of mind about the safety of their young passengers, he added.

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, studies have found that as many as four out of five car seats are installed or used incorrectly. Factors contributing to the difficulty of using seats correctly include a variety of age and size requirements, incompatibility between car seat and vehicle design, and improper seating position.

"One of the most common mistakes parents make when restraining children is that they don't alter the type of child safety seats they use as children grow," said Insurance Commissioner Jim Long. "When children out-grow forward-facing convertible seats, they need to be restrained in belt-positioning booster seats until they are big enough to fit properly in an adult seat belt."

Nationally each year, approximately 1,800 children are killed and 280,000 are injured as passengers in motor vehicles. According to the NC Division of Motor Vehicles, 53 children age 11 and under were

killed in automobile crashes in 1998. Of that number 35 were unrestrained.

The latest revision to the North Carolina Child Passenger Safety Law went into effect Oct. 1, 1999. This law requires:

- All children less than 16 years old must be buckled properly in either the front or back seat.
- Children younger than age 5 and who weigh less than 40 pounds must be properly secured in a child passenger restraint device (CRD) appropriate for their weight.
- At age 5, a seat belt may be used instead of a safety seat.

The North Carolina law also requires that in vehicles with front seat passenger air bags and rear seats, the safety seat for children under age 5 and less than 40 pounds must be installed in the rear seat, unless the seat is designed for use with air bags. Safety studies recommend that infants in rear-facing child safety seats should never ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger side air bag.

For information on child safety seats, visit the Hertford Police Department on inspection days or call the Buckle Up Kids program of the N.C. Department of Insurance at 800-634-7854.

### WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
High: 65  
Low: 45  
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY  
High: 67  
Low: 45  
MOSTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY  
High: 62  
Low: 37  
MOSTLY CLOUDY