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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Primary elections Sept. 10

SUSAN R. HARRIS

North Carolina is finally going to have primary elections — put off since May by political and legal wrangling over district boundaries — on Sept. 10.

There will, however, be no second primaries, or run-offs, between the September primaries and the general elections in November due to time constraints.

Having no run-offs will not be a problem for those seeking local office. In fact, there will be no decisions made on local offices in September, barring a successful write-in candidacy for school board. That's because there will be no primaries for county commissioners, sheriff or clerk of superior court due to the number of candidates who filed, and there are three candidates running for three seats on the school board.

In September, local voters will see the names of Gloria E. Mason, Walter L. Leigh and Gary E. Saul on the non-partisan school-board ballot. Unless there is a successful write-in candidate, the three will take office in September. Had the primary not been postponed, candidates for school board would have been seated in June.

November will bring only one choice on the local ballots. Democratic incumbent Eric Tilley was the only candidate to file for the office of sheriff by the deadline. He is being challenged by David Shaffer, at present Winfall's police chief. Shaffer will be on the ballot as an unaffiliated candidate. He did not file by the deadline, but earned the right to appear on the ballot by petition.

Clerk of Superior Court L. Gail Godwin, a Democrat, is running unopposed.

For county commissioners, Republican Benjamin C. Hobbs and Democrat Charles H. Ward, incumbents, were joined by Democratic newcomer Tammy Miller-White for seats on that board. There are three positions available, at present held by Hobbs, Ward and Evelyn Stubbins.

Those wishing to file for state offices have only one week, July 19–26, to get on the ballot.

Voter registration will be open until Aug. 16. Absentee balloting will begin on Aug. 16, with one-stop voting commencing on Aug. 22.

For more information, contact the Perquimans County Board of Elections, 426-5598, in the county office building on Edenton Road Street, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.—5 p.m.

MAIN STREET CELEBRATION



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

About 40 people came out to celebrate the success of the Hertford Main Street Program at the organization's annual meeting last Thursday evening at the visitors center on Market Street.

Main Street honors volunteers

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The top five volunteers of the year were honored at the Hertford Main Street Program's annual meeting last Wednesday.

Liz Foster, Jane McMahon, Charlene Stoltenhoff, Ruth Lacefield and Sharon Powers were noted for outstanding service to the program.

Sid Eley, outgoing Main Street Board president, was also recognized for his contributions to the program.

Eley said the Hertford Town

Council should be commended for seeing the need for a Main Street Program and acting on that need, including providing financial support. The town initially hired Main Street Program Manager Belinda Washlesky on a part-time basis, but soon found that the job needed to be a full-time position, Eley said.

"That was a big decision, but it's paying off," Eley said, adding that Hertford has benefitted from the program.

Officers installed for the coming year are Frankie Eason, president;

Harriette Woodard, vice president; and Phil McMullan, secretary. The board was also expanded to include Ruth Lacefield, Diane Ronan, Barry Wallgren, JoAnn Morris, Charlene Stoltenhoff and Sylvia Wyatt.

It was announced during the evening that The Tin Rabbit and Hertfordshire Antiques will appear in the October issue of "This Old House Magazine." The magazine was doing a photo shoot in Edenton, and borrowed some items for the shoot from the two Hertford businesses.

Free breakfast program nixed

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Free school breakfast for every student in Perquimans County Schools is history.

The school board approved a recommendation Monday night to discontinue the program when presented with dismal financial information on the program.

Child Nutrition Director Donna Harris presented a study showing that the child nutrition department would lose almost \$74,000 during fiscal 2002-2003 if the free breakfast program is continued.

"It is with regret that I have to bring this recommendation to you," Superintendent Kenneth Wells told the board. "We've reached a recommendation we wish we didn't have to make."

"We just simply are not going to be able to continue financially to continue this program."

The child nutrition program, Wells said, is designed to be self-supporting. With such a loss in the breakfast program, equipment replacement needs will not be possible at this time.

While Harris said all equipment in the cafeterias is safe, there is a need to replace aging equipment.

Students will pay 50 cents for breakfast this

coming school year, with the cost of a reduced-price meal at 30 cents. Students qualifying for free meals will continue to get a free breakfast.

The full cost of breakfast is actually \$1, but both Wells and Harris said they felt it was better to reach that price over a two-year period, rather than raise it all at once.

Information packets and applications for free and reduced-priced school meals went out last week, Harris said.

This year, the child nutrition department is partnering with social services by using the direct certification method to determine the eligibility of students who qualify for free meals based on their enrollment in the food stamp or AFDC programs. Social services will provide a roster of children who receive food stamps or AFDC to the child nutrition department. After updating each student's file, a letter will be sent to the parent or guardian informing them that their child has been approved for free school meals.

Those not receiving food stamps or AFDC must apply to determine eligibility.

For further information, please call Harris at 426-5741, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Personnel prepare for school opening

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The lazy days of summer are slipping away from Perquimans County Schools students. Classes will resume on Aug. 8.

In the meantime, principals and other staff members have spent the summer helping some students brush up on skills and preparing for a new year of learning.

In addition, repair and renovation projects at each campus are being completed. Projects include carpet removal and tile installation in the classrooms at Central School, and major renovations in the high school weight room.

Convocation for all faculty and staff is Monday, Aug. 5.

High school students can pick up their class schedules through July 31. The drop/add period for courses will be July 29–31. For additional information, contact John Wells or Nancy Morgan at 426-5778.

Schedules will be made available to middle school students during the school's open house on Aug. 7. They will not be available before that date.

Class assignments for Hertford Grammar and Central schools were mailed on July 22.

Budget cuts threaten school jobs

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Schools Superintendent Kenneth Wells didn't mince words about state budget cuts in Monday night's school board meeting.

"There are going to be a number of fiscal constraints that are going to be faced by this board this year," Wells told the school board.

"Any further cuts will result in the loss of jobs in our schools," Wells.

Wells said Perquimans will sustain a \$104,000 cut from last year in its low wealth funds.

"We simply cannot withstand a \$100,000 cut," Wells said.

If the small schools money is also cut, Wells said, jobs will definitely be impacted.

"We're taking every single action we can" to offer quality programming within budget parameters, Wells said.

Wells added that the general assembly has not updated the state's budget and may not before it adjourns. That will mean the school system will continue to work from projections, not really knowing exactly how much money the state will send — or cut.

Four teaching positions were cut by the state earlier. Administrators were able to move present employees and make changes at each school so that no present employee lost a job.

The school board does have a reduction in force policy in place.

Wells said he wants the board, the community and employees to understand that there may be no choice but to cut jobs depending on state funding.

"It can't come from any other area," he said.

The only positive in the school budget picture for Perquimans is that the county, despite its own cuts from the state, funded the schools at the same level as last year.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 86
Low: 72
T'STORMS

FRIDAY
High: 88
Low: 72
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 91
Low: 73
ISOLATED T'STORMS