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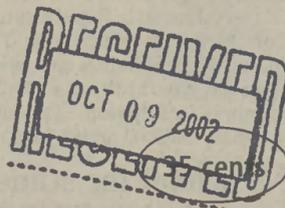
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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Darden is new assistant county manager

Virginia native glad to be back in small town

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Bobby Darden was ready to get back to his farm roots, small-town life and local government.

The assistant county manager position in Perquimans County seemed a good opportunity to fill those needs. And the local county commissioners felt Darden could ably fill the newly-created position.

Darden began his tenure in Perquimans County on Aug. 26, and is presently focusing on planning and zoning. He will eventually become more involved in economic development.

A native of Southampton County, Va., Darden grew up on a peanut farm. He earned his undergraduate degree in agricultural economics from Virginia Tech before pursuing a masters in business administration from East Carolina University.

Darden was zoning administrator for the town of Plymouth for a year, then was town administrator in the Hertford County seat of Winton for three years. From there, he spent over two years in Richmond, Va. at the Virginia Resources Authority, where he worked with counties and towns in financing water, wastewater and solid waste projects.

But city traffic, a desire to be closer to family and wanting to raise his children in a more rural environment brought Darden and his wife to Perquimans County.

"My family and I are tickled to death to get back in Northeastern North Carolina and back closer to family," Darden said. "It

was a chance to get back in local government and a quality of life issue. We're right in the middle of all our families now."

Darden's family still lives in Southampton County, while his wife has family in Currituck and Beaufort counties. The Dardens want Sam, 2 1/2, and Hayes, 10 months, to grow up with grandparents and extended family.

The assistant county manager said that Perquimans can expect growth as a result of the new Highway 17 Bypass around Elizabeth City. He is impressed that the county has enacted a zoning ordinance in anticipation of future growth along the corridor.

"The county staff is very friendly and very knowledgeable," Darden said. "I'm really impressed with the thought process that has gone into planning. The commissioners and staff are thinking ahead for development. The 17 Bypass will open up Perquimans, and the county has addressed things coming up over the next few years."

Darden said that the zoning ordinance, which went into effect Oct. 1, primarily affects Highway 17, making commercial development along the highway more restrictive, while for the most part not affecting bona fide farming operations.

Under the zoning ordinance, all new construction will require a zoning permit before a building permit can be issued. Darden said some lot sizes and dimensional areas will be affected by zoning, but any subdivisions approval prior to the effective date of the zoning ordinance are grandfathered.

As peanut dust fills the Perquimans County air, Darden is breathing in the familiar smell and learning about his new job and new home.

PCRA CELEBRATES JOLLIFICATION



PHOTOS BY ALICE BREWIN

Saturday night, the twang of bluegrass and other folk music could be heard amidst the revelers at PCRA's Jollification event, held at the Newbold-White House. The popular annual event was sold out and the "Ballhack Bluegrass Boys" composed of Edgar Lee Lane, Dickie Sanders and Ken Luton entertained the large crowd. Fear of mosquitoes kept the event indoors. A barbecue dinner was prepared by Tarheel Smokers.



NC reps back Craven for OLF

SUSAN R. HARRIS

County commissioners announced Monday in regular session that the entire North Carolina delegation in Washington, D.C. has supported split Super Hornet squadrons and an outlying landing field in Craven County.

"All the North Carolina delegation is on board," commissioners chairman Ben Hobbs said. "They all support alternate 4-A."

Senator John Edwards, according to county officials, would not at first commit to helping his constituents fight an OLF in Northeastern North Carolina and support Craven County's bid for the OLF and to have some of the Super Hornet squadrons home-based at Cherry Point. But Hobbs said Monday that he is now in support of that alternative.

Hobbs said the representatives of the Northeastern North Carolina counties that have banded together to fight an OLF in the area meet with their attorney and lobbyists last Thursday for an update.

Commissioner Charles Ward said the fight is not over yet, however. He added that political winds can change very quickly.

The commissioners approved the sale of a two-acre lot in the commerce centre to Lyl and Natalie Brown. The Browns will pay \$20,000 for the parcel, \$10,000 at closing and the balance at the end of one year with interest at the prevailing rate charged by Centura Bank at that time.

At the request of Winfall Mayor and Elizabeth City State University spokesperson Fred Yates, the commissioners declared Oct. 27 as ECSU Day in Perquimans County. Activities are planned at the university to raise funds for its capital projects program on that date. Yates said information would be available on the activities soon.

Teacher assistants return to school

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Teacher assistants are returning to school — as students.

Regulations in the federal "No Child Left Behind Act" require more education for teacher assistants. Present employees were not grandfathered and staff must be in compliance by Dec. 31, 2005. All new hires must have at least a two-year degree.

Perquimans County Schools Personnel Director Brenda Dail said she carefully monitored the discussion of the act, and the local school system

began meeting with teacher assistants last year to prepare them for the changes and offer ways to meet the new guidelines.

The system is working through the N.C. Department of Labor on an apprenticeship program, as well as through COA, ECSU and the N.C. Model Teacher Consortium to develop programs and courses to get all teacher assistants who choose to participate into federal compliance by the deadline.

There are 45 teachers assistants in the schools, 10 of whom have degrees.

Resident complains about new waste fee

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A small businessman complained to commissioners Monday about the solid waste fee bill he received for the first time last month.

Robin Trueblood said he located his barbershop in a residential area in the county to avoid taxes and fees generally charged within the city limits.

County manager Paul Gregory said all small businesses listed in the county tax office were charged this year. Gregory said the alternatives were to raise the residential rate or bill small businesses.

"Businesses should pay because that makes everybody's (fee) stay down," Gregory said.

The cost of going with a private solid waste company would be higher than the \$75 annual fee, Gregory said.

He added that farm operators are not presently being charged, and that commissioners needed to discuss that in an upcoming work session. Commissioner Shirley Wiggins said that if other small businesses are charged, farmers should be charged, also.

Gregory will have employees at the county convenience centers monitor dumping to determine if there are other small businesses using the centers that are not being billed.

"On the Edge" in place at PAL

ALICE BREWIN
Staff Writer

For the rest of the month, the Perquimans Arts League gallery will continue to host its member's show. It is worth a look, even if only to see what some artistic citizens' works are featured in this exhibit.

PAL Gallery Committee chairperson Nancy Reighard, an exhibitor herself, is quite pleased with the quality of the works represented.

One of the standouts in the show is artist Audra Orlikowski whose painting "Nightwatch" gives a tender representation of moth-

er and child.

However, the show is about to be replaced. Beginning in November, the gallery will feature a Christmas shop which will be home to all sorts of artworks and crafts available for purchase.

"Our quilters usually make things. We will have assorted Christmas decorations, and we usually have Christmas cards," a smiling Reighard says. Allowing for those last minute shoppers, she adds, "The shop will be here through the 31st of December."

Gallery hours are Tuesday—Saturday, 11 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

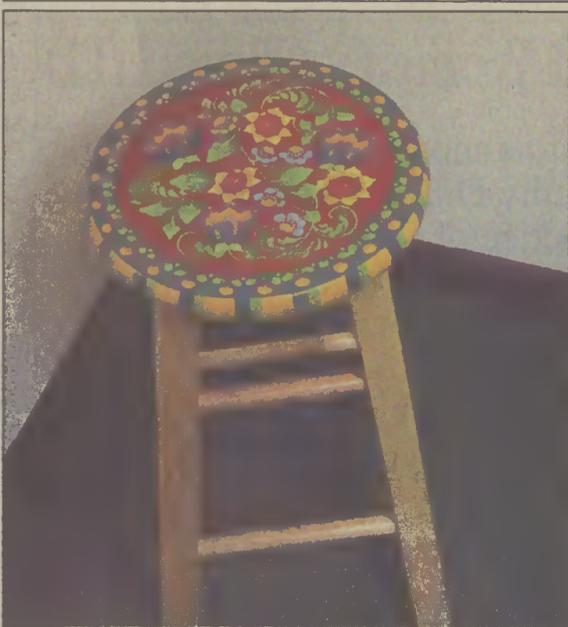


PHOTO BY ALICE BREWIN

Doris Reinheimer's tole painted stool is part of PAL's "On the Edge, Something Different" show.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 77
Low: 62
SHOWERS

FRIDAY
High: 75
Low: 64
RAIN

SATURDAY
High: 78
Low: 63
FEW SHOWERS