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# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## School board member loses cancer battle

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Perquimans County school board member Iris Z. Byrne was laid to rest Sunday under a sunny sky as warm as the smile students and staff in the local schools saw on a regular basis.

Byrne, 68, lost her battle with cancer last Thursday and was buried in New Hope United Methodist Church Cemetery on Sunday.

The native of Canada was elected to the school board in May 2000 and assumed her seat in July 2000. Her term of office was

scheduled to expire in June 2004, but due to her failing health she was not seeking re-election. She attended the board's most recent regular meeting on April 27, just prior to her hospitalization.

Byrne, a retired educator, was remembered by school officials as a board member who worked individually and collectively to improve education for local students.

In addition to her duties as a board member, Byrne was a regular volunteer in the school system.

"Byrne has been a faithful friend and resource to the Perquimans County

Board of Education and Perquimans County Schools," said Dr. Kenneth Wells, superintendent, in a news release. "Byrne was well known by the staff and students of Perquimans County Schools, having served as a volunteer on almost a daily basis. She played a vital role in the education of her grandson, Daniel, a fifth grader at Hertford Grammar School. This involvement gave her the opportunity to be very visible in our schools, after-school events, and the community."

Known fondly as "Miss Iris" by students and staff, Byrne's school visits were

treasured, especially by students.

"Once she said to me, 'Children need love, even when they do not deserve it,'" said schools Public Information Officer Brenda Lassiter. "This certainly exemplifies the way she felt about children as she was known for her affectionate and famous hugs. It was not unusual to see her in the hallways of the school building with students lined up to receive their warm wishes for the day from Mrs. Byrne."

Byrne's seat on the board of education will be filled following the July 20 election.



School board member Iris Byrne reaches across the board table to congratulate a student for one of the hugs for which she was famous. Byrne lost her battle with cancer Thursday, and was buried Sunday in the New Hope United Methodist Church Cemetery. Byrne was 68.



## TOURING HISTORY



Hundreds of people enjoyed a beautiful spring weekend in Perquimans Saturday and Sunday, touring beautifully restored historic homes and other buildings, and merry-making at the annual traditional Southern garden party on the grounds of Springfield Inn. Beechtree Inn, the home, bed and breakfast and furniture-making enterprise of Ben and Jackie Hobbs, was one stop on the tour (left). Another was the Newbold-White House (above.)

## Money key point in OLF battle

NITA HILLIARD SMITH  
The Enterprise

Third in a series

One of the main arguments both for and against a proposed Navy Outlying Landing Field (OLF) in Eastern North Carolina is over money.

And depending on the outcome of this battle, it could cost either the federal, state or local government millions.

The Navy is arguing that it needs the additional OLF to provide training for pilots landing on aircraft carriers. Eight squadrons of the Navy's multi-million dollar Super Hornets are planned to be located at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va., and two are headed for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina.

The pilots of these planes need a place to practice landing on an aircraft carrier. Because of the dangers of practicing at sea, Navy officials say they must have a remote land area away from towns or even lights to practice.

The Navy's earlier model F-14 (Tomcats) and F/A-18 C/D (Hornets) have been practicing on the East Coast at Virginia's Fentress Auxiliary Landing Field, a OLF that was built in 1940 in what was then a remote area. But because of urban encroachment, this area is no longer remote. People attracted by the availability of jobs and a good quality of life have built closer and closer to both Fentress and Oceana.

### Cost to federal government

But now that the Navy is bringing in bigger and louder aircraft, the people have begun to protest. The Virginia Beach government wants to keep the many jobs and families brought to the area by Oceana Air Station, but they do not want the noise of Fentress Field only seven miles away.

Recently, the neighbors in the area have begun to demand that if the Navy continues these flights that the federal government pay to soundproof the homes

and purchase land that can not be developed. This would be at an estimated cost of between \$1-1.5 billion.



But the Navy says it would be cheaper to relocate the OLF and maybe even the jets to a more remote area on cheaper land.

### Concerns of North Carolina

North Carolina on the other hand has concerns for its \$18.1 billion military industry with more than 320,000 related jobs in addition to more than 100,000 military personnel.

In 2005, the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission will once again look at the possibility of closing some military bases across the country. With five major bases in North Carolina and the third largest military population in the country, it is being whispered, but not exactly said out loud by state leaders that if North Carolina does not cooperate with locating the OLF in North Carolina that it could lose military jobs.

Obviously, this would be very costly to North Carolina.

Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, who was appointed by Gov. Continued on page 7

## Five file for school board

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Perquimans voters won't see many choices for local elected offices in July, but there will be a five-way race for three at-large school board seats.

Incumbents William Byrum and Helen Shaw will be joined by Ralph Hollowell, Gail Hill and Thomas Jones on the non-partisan school board ticket.

County commissioners Mack Nixon and Shirley Wiggins, both Democrats, filed to retain their seats. Republican Wallace Nelson opted not to run. Sue Weimar, a Republican, has thrown her hat into the ring. The three will be elected to the three available seats barring a successful write-in campaign.

Register of Deeds Deborah S. Reed, a Democrat, is unopposed in her bid to keep her job.

Also filing in Perquimans was Fred Yates, a Democrat seeking election to the State House of Representatives.

## Albemarle Red Cross restructures to better meets needs of area

When Hurricane Isabel struck Northeastern North Carolina last September, the Greater Albemarle Area Chapter of the American Red Cross took a front-and-center role in helping people recover from the devastation. Through the speedy provision shelter and supplies including food, water, ice, and clean-up materials, Red Cross personnel assisted tens of thousands of people in the agency's eight-county service area. And they did it all with only two staff members and a number of volunteers, many of whom worked around the clock for over a week.

Long reliant on volunteer personnel to meet the daily operational needs of the organization, the chapter's board of directors has taken action to reorganize the chapter and add a full-time position - that of Director of Community Services. Carolyn Self will

move into the new position, which will enable her to, focus on faster, more efficient delivery of services the Red Cross provides to the community - disaster relief, aide to fire victims, and aide to military families, to name a few, said David Bates, Board Chair.

"With the war on terrorism, the size of our service area and the wake-up call Isabel provided, our chapter has been too busy for just two people to handle," Bates said.

Last year alone the Greater Albemarle Chapter assisted over 150 victims of house fires.

As part of the restructuring process, the Board is currently seeking an administrator for the chapter.

"We're looking for a highly motivated, self-directed leader to continue the positive momentum this chapter has established since it took the spot-

light last September," said Dave Holton, Board vice chair and chair of the Search Committee.

The search process has been initiated and interested parties are asked to send a resume and cover letter of interest to Holton at [dholt@aginet.com](mailto:dholt@aginet.com). Holton can also be reached via telephone at 252-207-4099.

In addition to disaster relief services, the Greater Albemarle Area Chapter of the American Red Cross provides training in CPR and Lifesaving Techniques, swimming lessons, communication and emergency assistance services for military families, and blood services through blood collection and distribution. The Chapter serves Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, and Perquimans counties.

## Graduation to be held next Friday night

The uniforms on Memorial Field next Friday night will be black gowns, black mortarboards and gold tassels as the Perquimans County High

School class of 2004 graduates.

The ceremony begins at 8 p.m.

This year, seniors will each be issued 20 tickets

and all those who enter the stadium must have a ticket in order to attend. Children must be accompanied by parents during the entire ceremony.

## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
High: 87  
Low: 70  
ISOLATED T'STORMS

FRIDAY  
High: 90  
Low: 71  
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY  
High: 86  
Low: 69  
SCATTERED T'STORMS