

ART ON THE LOOP

Pocosin Arts Center and Perquimans Arts League

By Claude Milot

Columbia and Hertford are two of the smallest towns on the Albemarle Loop, yet they both have one outstanding feature in common: thriving arts centers.

A short block up Main Street from Columbia's Municipal Marina is Pocosin Arts, a gallery and a teaching studio that has been offering programs and workshops since 1995. Its mission says it all: "Pocosin Arts seeks to enrich the lives of those in our local communities and beyond by providing opportunities for discovery, creativity, and lifelong learning through the arts."



The center conducts weekend and weeklong workshops for adults and children in metals, books, jewelry, ceramics, pottery, drawing, painting, textiles, and wood. Even more remarkable, it provides residences for artists who wish to develop their artistic talents over longer periods. Many of the artistic creations, such as paintings, jewelry, and sculptures are available for purchase at the center's Craft Gallery & Gift Shop.

Loopers who would like to visit the center or perhaps participate in a workshop are encouraged to contact the center by calling (252) 796-2787.



The Perquimans Arts League (PAL) is a non-profit organization affiliated with the North Carolina Arts Council. A hidden gem located in the Hall of Fame Building on N. Church Street across from Hertford's historic Courthouse and only a short walk

from Hertford Bay Marina, the League's gallery exhibits and sells works by local artists in painting, photography, sculpture, jewelry, woodcraft, and other genres. Even books by local authors are on exhibit. PAL volunteer artists are well-known for offering workshops in photography and painting, especially watercolor.

From April 3rd to April 29th the Perquimans Arts League will feature a show called Silver Arts, "a celebration of the creative expression of seniors in North Carolina." The exhibit is a major component of the traditional athletic competition of North Carolina Senior Games whose philosophy strives to keep seniors healthy, active, and involved.

PAL is eager to welcome Loopers who stop in Hertford and is willing to accommodate those who would like to visit the gallery in the evening. Call (252) 426-3041 to schedule your visit.

Additional Notes: Local knowledge for approach to Hertford Bay Marina:

A waterborne visit to Hertford requires a long, upstream trek on the beautiful Perquimans River. This stream breaks off from the northern shores of Albemarle Sound, west of Little River, and east of Yeopim River.

The Perquimans River is a gentle stream usually seen by only a few fishermen plying the waters in their small skiffs. It has just about everything cruisers could ask for except marina facilities. The river is deep almost to its shoreline and offers no navigational difficulties. It takes a heavy blow to raise a rough chop on the Perquimans. Generally, wave conditions are ideal for larger pleasure craft. The banks are lined with untouched belts of cypress and hardwood trees, broken here and there by picturesque homes. West, northwest of Barrow Point, you must cruise under the fixed, US Highway 17 Bypass bridge, with a mere 33 feet of vertical clearance. This span will not hinder a visit by most power craft to Hertford, but for sailors, it is a very different story indeed.

Next you must negotiate a swing bridge with 7 feet of closed vertical clearance. This span opens on demand from April from 8:00 A.M. to midnight but remains closed during the early-morning hours. From October 1 through March 31, the span opens on signal from 10:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. Depths here run from 12 all the way up to 20 feet of water. The Hertford S-Bridge Swing Span bridge tender is on duty on the following schedule:

Swing bridge of closed vertical 1 to September 30

April 1 - September 30: 8 a.m. - 12 midnight

October 1 - March 31: 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

To contact the bridge tender for a scheduled opening, use Channel 13 or telephone 252-426-7241 during the above noted hours.



The Hertford Bay Marina is located just beyond the swing bridge almost due south on your port bow.

Additional Notes: Local knowledge for approach Columbia

Columbia lies along the upstream reaches of beautiful Scuppernong River. This stream cuts into the southern shores of Albemarle Sound east of Mackeys Creek, and well west of the AICW and Alligator River.

Early explorers were so enchanted with the beauty of Scuppernong River that they named it "Hearts Delight." This lovely body of water is narrower than its sister streams to the north and is lined by heavily wooded shores. Old, gnarled cypress trees with their trailing beards of gray moss majestically guard the banks. Here and there, a few picturesque homes break the landscape.

The marked Scuppernong River channel holds minimum 7-foot depths to Columbia. The dredged entrance passage from Bull Bay is well outlined by aids to navigation, as is the remainder of the river.