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Local Briefs

False alarms yield arrest

A Tyner man was arrested Saturday and charged with giving false fire alarms after allegedly causing to be called in four false alarms to the Perquimans Dispatch office.

Robert Earl Griffin, 18, of Route 1, Box 555, was arrested by Sgt. James Logan of the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department. Logan said the Belvidere-Chappell Hill Fire Department, of which Griffin was a member, received and responded to four false alarms Saturday.

When one call was placed, firefighter C.W. Overton was at the fire station. He observed Griffin pick up a phone book, place a call and ask the party to report a fire at the residence of Braxton Jones.

Overton alerted Belvidere-Chappell Hill fire chief Jimmy Chappell, who in turn informed the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department.

Griffin was placed under a \$500 secured bond and transported to Albemarle District Jail. He is scheduled to appear in District Court on March 15.

Causeway will close Monday

The causeway linking Hertford and Winfall will close on Monday, March 6, highway officials have told Perquimans County Manager Paul Gregory. Originally scheduled to begin in March, the extensive repairs are expected to take approximately six months.

Town Councilman T. Erie Haste, Jr. suggested at the council's February meeting that the contractor be asked to get the job done as quickly as possible. Haste cited the inconvenience of driving several miles due to the closing as a concern.

The traffic light at the intersection of U.S. Highway 17 Bypass and Church Street Extd. should also be installed next week. The light was deemed necessary due to the anticipated traffic increase expected as a result of the causeway closing.

Drug arrest made here

A six-month joint investigation by the Hertford Police Department and the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department resulted in the arrest of a Hertford man last Thursday.

The departments obtained a warrant to search the Route 1, Box 989F home of Johnny Ray Warren, 31. There they found over 61 grams of marijuana, a small quantity of cocaine and a host of drug paraphernalia. Kirby, the Sheriff's Department's drug dog, assisted in the raid.

Warren, who was not at home at the time of the raid, later turned himself in. He was charged with possession of a controlled substance schedule 6 with intent to manufacture, sell or deliver.

He is presently out of jail on a \$2,000 secured bond awaiting his first court appearance scheduled for March 15.

LP gas truck overturns

An LP gas truck overturned on U.S. Highway 17 south of Hertford near the intersection of Highway 17 and Bethel road Saturday afternoon.

The truck, operated by Joseph Wayne Hooker, 24, of Virginia Beach, was travelling north of Highway 17 when the driver attempted to pull off on the right shoulder. The shoulder and ditch embankment gave away, and the truck overturned on its right side.

Highway patrolman J.R. Strickland called for the assistance of the Bethel and Hertford Volunteer Fire Departments.

Approximately \$500 in damages was estimated to the truck owned by Merritt Trucking Company of Greensboro. No citations were issued.

Local boards, NAACP agree on electoral changes New laws should be implemented by early fall

After more than a year of research into the voting system in Perquimans County, the Board of Education, County Commissioners and NAACP agreed last Tuesday night on a change in the way members of the two boards will be elected.

The boards will be expanded from the present five members to seven members, and there will no longer be seats for each township. All candidates will run at-large.

These measures are designed to make it easier to elect black candidates. Theoretically, this will allow the blacks to support one candidate and get that candidate elected by single-shot voting. The other votes would be split among the white candidates, diluting the votes.

Although it was not the recommendation of the committee that reviewed the voting system, the NAACP requested that black residents be appointed to fill the positions that will be made available as soon as the state passes the necessary legislation to increase the number of board members.

One of those appointees from each board would come up for reelection in 1990, the other in 1992.

The committee, comprised of William "Buddy" Tilley, John Matthews, Emma Burke, J.C. Cole, Gloria Thomas, Cliff Towe and Paul Gregory, was appointed after the NAACP threatened to sue the county. The threat came after the county commissioners named Durwood Reed to fill the unexpired term of W.W. "Welly" White, rather than appointing one of the three black candidates they endorsed.

Working with Dick Brockett of the Institute of Government at UNC-Greenville and Michael Crowell, a Raleigh attorney who specializes in voting rights issues, the committee set out to update the election system in January 1988.

A house count was taken in the county to determine the numbers of black and white voters, and how they were dispersed throughout the county. The purpose was to put into place a system of voting districts. Because blacks do not live in any geographic concentrations, it was impossible to district the county in keeping with established guidelines.

"The remedy that has been used in many places in North Carolina

has been to vote in districts," Crowell said, adding that the system would not work in Perquimans. He said that Dick Brockett had tried to district, but to no avail.

Crowell said that 65 percent of the population in any district must be black in order to guarantee a black majority. "Historically, black voter registration is lower than white voter registration," he said. Only one district could be drawn adhering to that guideline generally used by the U.S. Justice Department in voting rights issues.

"Even if you adopted districts, you might have to change the lines after the 1990 census," Crowell said.

The new electoral system was unanimously approved by both the school board and county commissioners. "It seems to me this is about as equitable as we can get," commented school board member Cliff Towe.

Spokesperson for the NAACP, Elizabeth City attorney Ronald Penney, said that the NAACP would accept the proposed system, but that if it did not work by 1992, the county would need to deal with the situation once again.

"How do you determine if it's working?" "Buddy" Tilley asked Penney. Penney replied that the goal of the new system would be to elect minorities to the boards.

School board Chairman Clifford Winslow asked Penny, "What kind of discretion do we have in filling the vacancies (to be created by the new system)?" Penny answered, "We have significant concerns if it is not a minority" chosen to fill the seats, but "ultimately, the decision is the boards'."

Leo Higgins approached the assembly and said that he feels there are two sets of minorities in the county: blacks and people who have lived here less than 10 years. He said he sees no change for the latter group, and asked that the boards give citizens time to respond to the proposed changes.

County Commissioner Chairman Lester Simpson told Higgins that the boards were working under a time limit, and could not hold off a vote.

Mike Crowell advised both boards that the appropriate motions from the respective bodies would be to instruct board attorneys to draft legislation for each



Earlie and Connie Byrum of the Bear Swamp community built this huge snowperson Saturday afternoon after the winter sun had caused the fluffy snow to compact.

board to increase the board up to seven members, eliminate the residency requirements (township system), have board members elected in staggered terms with three and four members elected on alternate elections, have no run-off requirements and that the expansion take place as soon as legislation was effective.

Both boards made the proper motions, which were agreed upon

unanimously. The groups will officially vote on the proposed legislation on March 6 in their regular sessions.

County Cancer Society slates fundraising meal

By: Becky Winslow
President Perquimans County
Cancer Society

Cancer kills nearly 1400 Americans a day. It doesn't have to be that way. Even though statistics show that there will be 4,000 new cases of lung cancer and 3,400 new cases of breast cancer in North Carolina this year, these can be cured if detected early. So it is very important that the public be educated to the warning signs of cancer and cancer prevention.

The American Cancer Society provides education, patient support and research funding.

The Society provides public education programs (youth and adult) for clubs and organizations that are interested. School kits have been put in the libraries of all schools in the county for teachers to use in teaching about healthy bodies, cancer causes and prevention. Also, professional education is provided to doctors, nurses and other public health personnel.

The service and rehabilitation programs of the American Cancer Society are designed to help meet the emotional, as well as physical, needs of cancer patients and their

families. Gene Boyce is the Perquimans Co. Chairman for service and rehabilitation. Anyone who needs financial assistance for transportation to treatments, medication or counseling for patients and their families can contact him. In the year ended August 31, 1988, 15,825 cancer patients were reached through the service and rehabilitation programs in North Carolina. Many requests were received through the Cancer Response System, 1-800-ACS-2345.

In the last 40 years, the American Cancer Society's contribution to cancer research has grown from \$1 million to more than \$76 million. In North Carolina, more than \$5 million was spent in the state's highly acclaimed medical institutions such as Duke, Carolina, Bowman Gray, ECU and N.C. State.

The Perquimans Unit will be having "Pancake & Sausage Day" on Saturday, March 4 at the Perquimans Co. High School. The local Ruritan Clubs will be the cooks and they will be cooking good homemade sausage. Without good public support, the society's goals of eliminating cancer and saving more lives would be impossible.

Child care teleconference slated

A teleconference followed by a local panel discussion has been scheduled at College of The Albemarle to help area residents and childcare workers find out what is happening nationally and locally to provide quality, affordable care for children.

The teleconference entitled "When We Care for Children" will air from 12:00 noon-1:30 p.m. Friday, March 3. A 45-minute discussion will follow to provide participants an opportunity to ask questions of Vernon James, Democratic member of the House of Representatives; Doris Jacob, coordinator of Sex Equity with the N.C. Department of Community Colleges; Gwen Coleman, director of the Pasquotank County Department of Social Services; a representative from the Office of Child Day Care Licensing; and a local childcare provider.

"COA is offering this special event as a valuable training opportunity for area childcare providers and as an informational time for anyone interested in the quality and quantity of childcare available in the Albemarle area," said Lynn Hurdle-Winslow, COA's Student Support Services counselor who is responsible for the college's childcare program. "Not only will par-

ents be interested, business leaders who are discovering that quality childcare is an economic development issue for their community will also be interested in attending."

There is no charge for the teleconference and panel discussion. Participants are asked to bring a brown bag lunch. Drinks and dessert will be provided at the college.

The live, interactive teleconference will feature national leaders, via satellite, discussing legislation and programs being developed to break the barriers to affordable childcare. Conference members will be able to call national panel members directly to ask and receive answers to their questions.

"The teleconference will focus on the barriers we face as communities and as a nation to providing quality, affordable, accessible childcare," said Hurdle-Winslow. "Having a local panel will then allow us to discuss this further and find out answers to our questions on a more personal, local level."

The teleconference and panel discussion will be held in room 233 of the A Building at COA's Elizabeth City campus on U.S. Highway 17 North. Persons interested in attending should call 335-0821, ext. 281, to register.



An LP gas truck overturned on U.S. Highway 17 south of Hertford Saturday afternoon. Officials rerouted traffic to avoid danger to motorists.

Committee of 100 holds banquet Historic site proposal unveiled

By SCOTT YATES

Hertford-If members of the Perquimans County Committee of 100 have their way, Smithville, N. J., and Hertford will have much more in common.

Committee members viewed a videotape this week recounting the efforts of Smithville in establishing a historic village which is now a multi-million dollar success. The idea of such a village in Hertford is now being discussed.

"It is an ambitious task, but I think we should look into it," committee member Henry Carney said at the annual meeting of the committee Tuesday night at the Angler's Cove restaurant.

Carney said many old buildings in the county, such as old country stores and farm houses, are vacant and deteriorating. The idea is to bring all these buildings to one location and provide a village atmosphere where local craftsmen

could sell their wares. The buildings would not be restored, merely reconstructed, Carney said.

Committee Chairman T. Erie Haste Jr. said the idea has great potential. "We need economic growth and activities that will bring more people into the area to visit and live," he said, adding that the idea is to sell local crafts made by local people.

"We have a lot of talented craftsmen in Perquimans County, and we have a lot of talented people moving into the community. We would like to get moving on this as soon as possible. So far, we have not had any negative responses so I feel we are on the right track," Haste said.

Committee members will continue to discuss the idea with area residents to see if it is the type of development people would like to see in Hertford, Haste said. The next step in the project is to find a suitable piece of land that can be

purchased by the committee. Preliminary drawings for the village have been completed by the N. C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development at no cost to the town.

To acquire the funds for the project, Haste said the initial effort will be for the committee to establish the village as a non-profit organization and the buildings will be leased to craftsmen. As a non-profit organization, the town may be able to receive some grant funds for the project, Haste said.

Haste said the county's Industrial Development Commission has been approached with the idea and discussions of combining the efforts of the committee and the commission are being pursued. Haste said this would allow the two organizations to pool resources and work together on this and other projects to promote economic growth in the area.