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West Nile Virus has been found in area animals

The State Laboratory of Public Health and the Public Health Pest Management Section have announced this week that 18 more birds in nine new counties have tested positive for West Nile virus. A Red Tailed Hawk was found dead on August 6 in Gates County near Roduco. Curtis Dickson, Director of the Hertford-Gates Health Department said Thursday's report from the state lab confirmed the hawk was infected. "Thus far, we're the only area in our part of the state to have a West Nile case officially confirmed," said Dickson. "We sent the blue jay found dead near the Murfreesboro area at the same time we sent the hawk, but the

state did not release any information concerning the blue jay. That's normal operating procedure - they only announce the confirmed cases."

In a related story a 25-year-old pony in Pasquotank County was found infected and was euthanized. A report released by State Veterinarian, David Marshall late Thursday confirmed the presence of the virus in the pony. The pony became the first animal in North Carolina, other than birds or mosquitoes, to test positive for the virus.

State officials are urging horse owners to vaccinate their horses, keep the horses up during peak mosquito hours, and to check the areas

surrounding barns and pastures for containers, such as old tires, that contain standing water. Installing fans in barns will create air movement, a simple way of protecting horses. "I encourage all owners to be proactive in protecting their horses," said Marshall. "In 2001, six horses were found positive for the West Nile Virus in the north-eastern part of the state."

Although there have not been any reported cases of human infection in North Carolina there have been reports of West Nile related illnesses in other states including two men, ages 51 and 77, in Georgia. Reports indicate that of the approximately 270 hu-

man cases reported this year, 178 of the cases were in the coastal south.

State officials encourage the public to use caution and protect themselves, but not to overreact. They say West Nile usually causes only mild disease with most people who are exposed to the virus never become sick. The flu-like symptoms of the virus are more likely to affect the elderly, young children, or those with weak immune systems.

Public Health Warnings suggest people use a mosquito repellent containing DEET with concentrations of 30 percent or less. Concentrations for children should be no greater than ten percent. Children un-

der five should not use DEET at all.

"People are looking for dead birds and they are reporting them to us," said Dr. Leah Devlin, state health director. "Because we're looking for I, we're finding the virus."

By reporting dead crows, blue jays, hawks and owls, officials say the public can help health officials maintain surveillance on the virus.

This week's test results from the state lab include findings among the counties of Durham (one crow), Burke (a Blue Jay), Gaston, Guilford, Catawba, and Guilford where three crows tested positive.

Birds from Mecklenburg, Lincoln, and Surry Counties

had tested positive for the virus earlier this year. Although the species of mosquito sampled in Mecklenburg County is not the one that normally carries the virus from bird to human it does spread the virus from bird to bird, being the first test confirming the presence of the virus in mosquitoes in NC.

The West Nile Virus that originated from Africa, western Asia, and Europe was first found in New York City in the summer of 1999. The virus has spread down the Eastern seaboard of the country and been discovered in other states such as Wyoming and Colorado. It was first discovered in North Carolina in 2000.

Optimists support Rec. Dept., Cycle Speedway activities

BY HELEN K. OUTLAND
Staff Writer

The Edenton Chowan Optimist Club recently presented checks to two community organizations. The first was presented to Cycle Speedway CEO Brian White as sponsorship of the speedway's International Race Week, an event to be held in October. On October 5 'Under the Lights' will feature two-time world champion racer, Dave Hemsley from Great Britain.

Joining Hemsley will be racing star from Australia and Poland. International racing, called by Graham Sutton, will begin on October 4 at the Cape Colony Track with American Legion Families versus Great Britain.

"We are really excited about the upcoming events for Cycle Speedway," said CEO Brian White. "The support of the Optimist Club is greatly appreciated."



Mark Noneman, left, and Robbie Laughton, center, accept a check from Optimist Club Vice President William Davidson, right in support of the annual Colonial Invitational Tennis Tournament sponsored by the Edenton-Chowan Recreation Department. (Staff photo by Helen Kerr Outland)

The second check, representing two donations, was presented by the Optimist and went to Robbie Laughton Director of the Edenton Chowan Recreation Department.

Optimist Vice President William Davidson made the donation. The donations help with the SAFE KIDS Coalition and the Colonial Invitational Tennis Tournament. "The Optimist Club

has been a long-time supporter of the activities through the Edenton Chowan Recreation Department," said Laughton. "We really appreciate their support."

School system pleased with its SAT scores

The College Board released Scholastic Aptitude Test scores for 2002 on Tuesday, Aug. 27.

College-bound seniors taking the test last year at John A. Holmes High School received an average combined verbal and math score of 1001. The top ten-percent of Holmes students taking the test averaged a combined score of 1240. The average combined scores for the state was 998, and for the nation was 1020.

"We are very pleased with our students' performance on the SAT," said Edenton-Chowan Schools superintendent Allan Smith. "However, the SAT is one of many indicators of student success. Students at John A. Holmes have proven themselves on several levels as good citizens as well as scholars. We look forward to continued student achievement in all the areas that make for a well-rounded individual."

Edenton-Chowan Schools continues to narrow the achievement gap between majority and minority students.

The average combined score for black students was 916. The average combined score for white students was 1032, leaving a gap of 116 points. The state average combined score for black students was 839, lower than the state average combined score for white students by 207 points. Nationally, the black-white gap increased by two points last year.

Holmes principal John Williams echoed the superintendent's pride in the entire scope of student achievement at the school.

"I'm so proud of our seniors," Williams said, adding that it was not SAT results alone that indicated the school's success. "A look at our ABCS results will reveal a 12.5 percent increase in our performance composite over the last two years. We can thank our teaching staff for preparing these young men and women well."

Williams also singled out for special thanks Karen Molloy,

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Twine is arrested on drug charge

BY HELEN K. OUTLAND
Staff Writer

On Thursday, August 22, Edenton Police arrested 23-year-old Samantha Lynette Twine at her home on Reginald and Mary Avenue of Edenton on charges of manufacture of marijuana, a controlled substance. The manufacturing consisted of allegedly growing the marijuana in the curtilage located in the front yard of her home.

"The manufacture of marijuana, whether one plant or ten, is a felony," said Edenton Police Chief Greg Bonner. "It just goes to show how bold people are getting."

According to the charges filed against Twine a subsequent search of the residence revealed other drug para-



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Ruritans to host Blood Drive

BY CANDACE MORGAN
Yeopim Ruritans

The Yeopim Ruritan Club will once again sponsor an American Red Cross Blood Drive at the Edenton United Methodist Church from 2 to 7 p.m. on Sept. 3. Donors will receive a special candle honoring the victims of the 9/11 tragedy.

The blood drive held on Tuesday, July 9, was a lifesaving event that benefited many ill and injured patients in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The devotion of time and energy by the Yeopim Ruritan Club in promoting the drive resulted in 80 persons attempting to donate blood. The drive produced 74 units of blood collected, or 148 percent of the goal set by the

Red Cross. While each drive may produce one or two new donors, the July 9 drive produced eight first time donors.

The Yeopim Ruritans would like to thank Ima Jean Lane of Lane's Family Barbecue and McDonald's of Edenton for providing refreshments for our donors. We also thank Edenton United Methodist Church for providing the facilities for the drive and the Sign Shop for our directional signs.

Giving blood on Sept. 3 would be an excellent way to commemorate those who lost their lives and to honor those who were injured on 9/11-02. As a result of greatly exceeding our goal of 50 units of blood during the July drive, our quota has been raised to 60 units.

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