

Bogus check scam strikes businesses

From staff reports

The Edenton Police Department is investigating a bogus check scam that has surfaced in town.

Bogus checks claiming to be payroll checks have been presented at Westover Deli and Papa's Meat Market, according to Police Chief Jay Fortenbery.

The police are studying surveillance video in an effort to identify the woman who presented the bogus checks, Fortenbery said.

The woman was dressed in scrubs, according to police.

"We're investigating it now,"

Fortenbery said.

The Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce this week notified members in an email alert that there had been a run of fake checks that had been cashed at five locations around the area, including two in Edenton over the last several weeks.

All the checks have Vidant Roanoke Chowan printed on them, but they are bogus, according to the Chamber email.

The Chamber message indicated the person passing these checks typically enters a place of business on a Saturday wearing nursing scrubs and says she is

in desperate need of cashing her payroll check since the banks are closed.

But the email states Vidant rarely uses checks anymore for payroll since most employees are required to utilize direct deposit.

Businesses are encouraged to contact the police if you encounter this situation or anything similar that seems out of the ordinary.

Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin said he was not aware of any of the bogus hospital checks being presented at businesses in Chowan County outside the corporate limits of Edenton.

CRIMEWATCH

Edenton Police

ARRESTS

• Jan. 8 — Kevin Lloyd Sawyer, 27, of Sunbury, was arrested for driving while license revoked, failure to stop for a stop sign and failure to wear a seatbelt.

• Jan. 6 — Sherika Michelle Jordan, 27, of Wedgewood Apts. was charged with making harassing phone calls.

• Jan. 5 — Chaz Dequan White, 26, of Philadelphia, Pa., was arrested on felony drug charges of possession with intent to manufacture, sell or distribute a Schedule VI controlled substance, sale/delivery of a Schedule VI controlled

substance and manufacturing, selling, distributing or possession within 1,000 feet of a park.

• Jan. 4 — Denita Lynn Elliott, 45, of Mexico Road, was arrested for having no operator's license.

• Jan. 4 — Phillip Allen Stovall, 18, of Iredell Drive, was arrested for larceny from buildings.

• Jan. 3 — Denzel Dequan Williams, 21, of West Church Street, was arrested for larceny involving a motor vehicle.

• Jan. 3 — Walter Lee Wood Jr., 40, of Hertford, was arrested for failure to comply.

INCIDENTS

• Jan. 7 — Obtaining money by false pretense on Badham Road.

MLK DAY

Continued from 1A

In regards to the point about black businesses, Davis remarked "we still have some black folks that believe that the white man's ice is colder."

Black-owned businesses and black professionals have to struggle against that perception, Davis said, "and so black businesses struggle and fail in our own community."

Davis, who is both an attorney and a preacher, delivered his remarks Monday in the form of a sermon on a biblical text from 2 Kings 4.

The biblical story tells of an impoverished widow who asked creditors planning to take her sons as payment for her debts.

Davis talked about the current threats against sons in the black community — including high-profile cases of young black men wrongfully killed and disproportionate imprisonment of young black men — and talked about how Elisha helped the widow do what she needed to do to protect her sons.

"I'm not saying that racism doesn't exist — it does, all around us," Davis said.

But gangs are killing each other and innocent bystanders, Davis said, and as you confront that reality you need to ask "What are you doing in the house?"

The question Davis placed at the center of his message was an echo of the question Elisha asked the widow. The widow told the prophet that she had a single jar of oil, and that one jar of oil became the basis of God's miraculous provision of enough oil for her to pay her debts and for her and her sons to live on.

The widow's one jar of olive oil was a good place to start, Davis said.

"Start the conversation with what you can do in the house," Davis said. "What are you teaching your sons in the house?"



The Judah Arts Youth Ensemble performs a musical selection during Monday's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance.

Davis challenged his hearers to teach their sons the importance of education and character, and to stress the goodness of marriage "rather than fornication."

Davis encouraged people to get away from the excuse of "nothing except" — referring to the widow's initial statement that she had nothing except a jar of olive oil.

People will say they have nothing except a high school diploma, nothing except a few friends, nothing except a little bit of experience from "a little piece of a job."

But God created the universe out of nothing, so he can do whatever he needs to do with whatever it is you have, Davis said.

"All God needs is what you have," Davis said. "Don't let your 'except' become your excuse. The Enemy wants to keep you from looking in your house to see what you already have for God to use."

The second thing the widow was told to do was go to her neighbors and borrow all the vessels she could borrow.

Davis cited that detail from the biblical account as an indication of the importance of networking.

You need to have some

friends that have some jars in the house, Davis said. These are people who have real wisdom to share, he said. It doesn't do any good, for instance, to seek advice on marriage from someone who has never been married, he said.

Networking requires a plan and a presentation, Davis said. You have to know the proper way to ask for what you need from your neighbors, he said.

It's the season for the people of God to stop living week-to-week and paycheck-to-paycheck, Davis said.

One way to do that is to save money by not spending it on things you don't need or can't afford, he said.

"I'm an old man and I've never had a \$200 pair of sneakers," Davis said. It was one of many lines in his message that elicited applause and shouts of approval.

Youth are being corrupted by gangsta rap, Davis said.

"I am not against rap music as an art form," Davis said. In fact, he added, "I may not look like it, but I'm a rapper myself." He said he has performed a Gospel rap, backed by a Gospel choir.

But Davis said he is against lyrics that "denigrate our daughters" and glorify crime and violence.

"We can no longer afford the luxury of blaming our shortcomings on other people," Davis said.

He said he realizes that

racism is alive and well, as evidenced, for example, by Confederate flags and racist bumper stickers.

But those in the black community "need to clean up our house," Davis said. "We've got to fix what is wrong with us."

Referencing the biblical account of the ancient Israelites rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah, Davis pointed out that Nehemiah instructed the people to carry a battle ax in one hand and a trowel in the other, because they had to defend themselves against their enemies at the same time they were building the wall.

"Our problem is we want to fight but we don't want to build," Davis said.

Nearly the entire crowd was on its feet shouting and clapping by the time Davis concluded his message.

"We have been blessed in a mighty way," said Diana Jones Wilson after Davis finished his message.

Wilson, who is president and chief executive officer of Faith Partnerships Inc., presided at the ceremony.

Angela Taylor Welch presented the Community Service Award to Jo Baker in recognition of Baker's work with the Reconciliation Group in Edenton.

The Reconciliation Group, which started through Edenton United Methodist Church as the Reconciliation Book Club, sponsored

the showing of the film "Racial Taboo" in Edenton last February and has continued to meet on Thursday evenings, growing to some 30 active participants.

Baker said she was honored to receive the award and would like to share the honor with the Reconciliation Group as a whole. The group has been studying local black history and will be preparing a display at the local library for Black History Month.

Although there have been gains in civil rights, blacks and whites still often approach one another with wariness, Baker said.

The Reconciliation Group is working to address attitudes in the community that lead to social exclusion of blacks, she said. The group also supports education as a way to improve income-earning opportunities for local residents and recruitment of business and industry that pays a living wage, she added.

Francis Inglis made a brief presentation on the purpose of the observance, which she said was to give thanks for the life and work of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. She said she was grateful for the hard and dangerous work that he did.

And many in Edenton also demonstrated and protested, Inglis said. "We're giving thanks for them, too," she said.

Even in this day, people of color — especially black men — continue to face great dangers, Inglis said.

Inglis said a major influence on her life and outlook had been the kindnesses shown to her by black people throughout her life. In particular, she recalled her appreciation for Harriet Gorham, who helped care for her as a child.

She explained that Gorham was the descendant of a slave who had suffered severe frostbite on both feet — they had to be amputated as a result of the frostbite — after being confined all night in the stocks when she was caught trying to escape from Somerset Plantation from Edenton in order to see her mother.

Inglis explained that she was descended from the owners of Somerset Plantation.

"It is not a comfortable heritage," she said.

Inglis also noted that Gorham was the granddaughter of John R. Page, who was the last state representative from this area during Reconstruction. Gorham was well educated, but because of her race could not find work except in domestic service, Inglis said.

Inglis said she had enjoyed being part of the Reconciliation Group in Edenton and has found it helpful as blacks and whites simply

learn to talk to each other. It has been said that all are recovering racists, Inglis said. If that is true, she said, "there are a whole lot more than 12 steps."

Chowan County Commissioner Alex Kehayes said he was glad the community was taking this time to remember the work of Martin Luther King Jr.

"History is important," Kehayes said.

He said that this past weekend he had been in Georgia with his wife, who was doing research on Kadesh AME Zion Church. She went to Georgia to interview 97-year-old Reva Brinkley Standifer, the older sister of Edenton resident Norman Brinkley.

Kehayes said he was struck by the way she spoke of Martin Luther King Jr. simply as "Martin," talking to him about "what I liked about Martin." She spoke of the civil rights leader as one who was humble, had the courage to say things people didn't want to hear, and rejected violence.

Kehayes encouraged young people to sit down with the gray-haired or hairless people around them.

"They'll give you a view of history you won't get from a book," Kehayes said.

Mayor Roland Vaughan said the kind of dream that is honored on Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a vision you hope, plan and work for.

Vaughan said the planning committee had done a great job on the event, which continues to grow in attendance and participation.

Serving on the committee for the event were Angela Taylor Welch, chair; Mildred Vanterpool, co-chair; Susan T. Brothers; Glorious Elliott; Carlton Griffin; Janet Hines; Anne-Marie Knighton; Jerald I. Perry Sr.; and Beatrice Stanley.

Vanterpool commented that the crowd at the event appears to be growing larger every year.

The benediction was pronounced by Sherlton Broadnax. Music was provided by the Judah Arts Youth Ensemble under the direction of Brandon Mayo; and by Alana Stevenson and DaJon Fleming.

A presentation on the meaning of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream was given by the Boys and Girls Club of Edenton/Chowan.

Jerald I. Perry Sr. introduced the speaker. Hadiya Bembry, a senior at John A. Holmes High School, led a litany. Bishop Landon Mason of Greater Saunders Grove Missionary Baptist Church led the prayer.

Elder Wilbert Tatem of Soul Chain Ministries read Scripture from Matthew 5: 1-12.

The colors were posted by the John A. Holmes High School JROTC.

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CHOWAN HERALD

(USPS 106-380) Vol. 81, No. 3

Published Every Wednesday
Cooke Communications North Carolina, LLC

Entered as a second-class matter August 30, 1934 at the Post Office of Edenton, North Carolina, under Act of March 3, 1879.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Daily Advance home delivery area \$27.00
(Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, Currituck, parts of Gates)
Elsewhere in continental United States \$46.00

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
The Chowan Herald • P.O. Box 207 • Edenton, NC 27932
Telephone: (252) 482-2623 Fax: (252) 482-4410
chowherald@ncweeklies.com