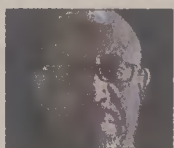


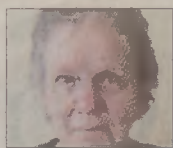
CHAMBERCHATTER
Lewis Hoggard offers assessment of two events.

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MEDITATING
Sylvia Hughes says don't confuse righteousness.

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BCS awarded \$490K Safety Upgrade Grant

JOHN FOLEY
Staff Writer

WINDSOR - The timing couldn't have been better.

As the Bertie County School District was preparing for their upcoming Gang and Gun Violence Forum, the Department of Justice awarded \$190 million in funding to school districts across the country

to improve the safety of schools. Bertie County Schools was awarded \$490,417 earmarked towards that effort. Bertie County Schools Superintendent Dr. Otis Smallwood announced the award.

"The grant will help institute safety measures in and around schools, support school violence prevention efforts, provide training to school personnel and stu-

dents and enhance coordination with local law enforcement," Dr. Smallwood said. "The 'Build Bertie Better' project will not only provide physical security enhancements such as surveillance cameras, door access control and training, but also consider the need to upgrade physical security while maintaining a positive learning environment.

"In addition, the security system provides another layer of safety protection by allowing local law enforcement officials to remotely log into the system if the need ever arises," he added.

The 'Build Bertie Better' project's main goal is to improve security at schools and on school grounds through evidence-based school safety programs and by

helping students and teachers recognize, respond quickly to and help prevent acts of violence and ensure a positive school climate, explained Dr. Smallwood.

"The safety of the students and staff of Bertie County Public Schools is a very important issue for the members of the Bertie

See **GRANT, A3**

Judge rejects Askew plea deal

JOHN FOLEY
Staff Writer

While everyone involved in the Bertie County Cherelle Askew cruelty to animals case expected the trial to end last week, Chief District Court Judge Brenda Branch had a different scenario in mind.

"An unusual thing happened in court last week," said Daphna Nachumivitch, Peta Senior Vice President in charge of investigations, in relation to the case.

The "unusual thing" surprised everyone.

Judge Branch rejected the plea deal that the District Attorney's office and

Askew's court appointed public defender, Walter Rand, had agreed upon.

Although the two sides reached the plea agreement, which would have included a "conditional discharge," it was rejected by the Judge.

Askew, 58, of Governor's Road was issued three criminal summons on June 22, charging her with a total of seven misdemeanor counts of cruelty to animals.

Six of the seven counts claim Askew intentionally deprived her animals of food and water which led to unhealthy conditions. The seventh charge deals with

See **REJECT, A3**

TGOW Project grants submitted

JOHN FOLEY
Staff Writer

The Bertie County Commissioners are moving ahead with the Tall Glass of Water project and have their eyes on Phase II of the Bertie Beach make-over.

The board unanimously approved TGOW Project Consultant Robin Payne's request to submit a grant application for a \$500,000 award going to Parks and Recreation Trust Fund accessibility for Parks.

Payne also requested approval, and received it unanimously, to submit a grant to the N.C. Department of

Commerce Rural Transformation Grant Fund for \$256,750. This is a no-match award for the county. Both grants needed to be submitted by the Nov. 1 deadline.

Construction of Phase I of the TGOW project began on Tuesday, Oct. 11.

The Bertie County Board of Commissioners awarded the \$1,271,000 contract to A.R. Chesson Construction Company of Williamston at their regular September board meeting.

The projected completion date of the project, according to project coordinator

See **TGOW, A3**



THADD WHITE/BERTIE LEDGER-ADVANCE

Music was a key component of the anniversary celebration.

'Bertie' turns 300

JOHN FOLEY
Staff Writer

All came together.

State, county and local officials, candidates hoping to become local officials, law enforcement employees, fire department first responders, school board members, school faculty, students, parents, visitors and those returning home for Bertie County's Tricentennial celebration

showed up Saturday and celebrated 300 years of the past while looking towards the future.

While the hub of the day's festivities and entertainment were centered around downtown Windsor, the Hope Plantation and the Roanoke/Cashie River Center hosted events to educate, inform and entertain.

Bertie County Commission Chairman, John Trent welcomed the crowd.

"Welcome everybody to celebrate 300 years of Bertie County. People ask me all the time what makes Bertie County, Bertie County. It is the people that make Bertie County, Bertie County," said Trent. "It is about the people of Bertie County that makes and moves this county forward."

"I want to thank all of the businesses that attended and all of the

See **300, A3**

'Critters' inspire art of Jana Marie Smith

JOHN FOLEY
Staff Writer

Merry Hill wire artist and clay sculptor Jana Marie Smith has a fondness for what she calls, 'critters.'

And she should hold her "critters" dear, they have attracted over 45,000 followers

on TikTok, her Etsy store has accumulated rave reviews over the past two years and her display is a favorite at local artisan shows in the area.

"I always enjoyed creating as a kid. Whether it was for fairs, school projects or just making gifts for family, I loved being able to bring ideas in my

head to life," said the talented artist.

But this isn't Smith's first artistic coup. In 2018, she captured top honors at the Chowan County Fair for her Pine Comb Sculpture that won Best of Show.

Others also enjoy the self-taught artist's creations. Her

Etsy page is full of favorable reviews, even though she did not sell anything on the site until two years ago.

Smith only began producing pieces three years ago. She was inspired by wire artists from OxanaCrafts. The wire

See **INSPIRE, A3**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Merry Hill artist Jana Marie Smith works on her craft.

In this edition



GOOD MORNING,
SHE FAIRLESS
OF COLERAIN

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