

## Student assaults stand-in teacher, appeals ruling

A Hertford youth was convicted in district court last week of assaulting a substitute teacher at Perquimans High School but filed for appeal to superior court.

According to court testimony, Delma Marcell Leigh, of 208 King Street, an 18 year old ninth grader at Perquimans High School, struck Mrs. Betty Jean Beers of Hertford after she attempted to break up a fight between Leigh and a 13 year old youth on Sept. 8.

Mrs. Beers was substituting for physical education teacher Calvin Webster when the incident occurred.

Different groups were taking turns playing basketball in the gym.

The altercation began when Leigh refused to leave the floor after his group's turn was over. He was confronted by another student, and according to court testimony, assaulted that student.

When Mrs. Beers attempted to step in and break up the fight, she was struck on the nose, cheek and arm and her glasses were knocked off.

According to testimony, Leigh struck Mrs. Beers with both his open hand and his fist.

The student was immediately expelled from school and principal William Byrum swore out a warrant charging Leigh with assault on a female.

Leigh received a nine month prison sentence suspended for two years based on a lengthy list of conditions. He was also fined \$250 and cost of court.

One of the conditions was that he not go on the high school premises for two years.

But the sentence was nullified when Leigh appealed his case to superior court.

## County declines land records management

Pleading too little funds, the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners elected Monday night not to initiate a land use management program, at least in the present year.

The commissioners had been awarded a \$7,000 grant from the state to begin a property mapping and parcel identification system that was hoped to improve county land records.

Initially enthusiastic about the program, board members began to get skeptical when they found at a special meeting last week that the three year program would cost some \$160,000, and that an employee would have to be hired to keep the maps up to date.

Though grant money was thought to be available to pay for part of the project, none had been approved except for the \$7,000 already promised.

In another matter, the commissioners endorsed five nominations to be recognized by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. for outstanding volunteer service.

The five were: Leslie Paul Smith, Sr., nominated by the Winfall Volunteer Fire Department; Beecher P. Chappell, nominated by the Belvidere VFD; William Edward Leicester, nominated by the Hertford VFD; Eugene Rountree, Sr., nominated by the Inter-County VFD; and Oliver Wayne Winslow, nominated by the Perquimans County Jaycees.

The commissioners were also visited by Cynthia Wortz, deputy director of the governor's office of citizen affairs.

Ms. Wortz encouraged the board to designate an involvement council to be a

clearinghouse for information on state programs and volunteerism.

The involvement council could also be utilized when federal grants for various projects require citizen participation and to get the word out when citizen input is needed at public hearings.

The board elected to form a council through the community schools advisory council and social services. Other civic and volunteer organizations may also be drawn into the council.

County water department head Keith Haskett reported to the commissioners that the departments quarterly meter reading effort had not worked well over the summer months.

Water bills are based on estimates over a two month period and in the third month, meters are read and bills are adjusted if any overcharge or undercharge has been made in the previous two months.

Haskett said the department is getting numerous complaints because the September billing is in many cases twice as high as bills for July and August.

He said that if the estimates do not become more accurate, the department might request meter readings every other month, rather than quarterly.

The commissioners also accepted a \$14,167 bid from Business Insurance Management for an umbrella style policy that will take care of virtually all of the county's insurance needs.

A total of \$15,000 had been budgeted for insurance, but the umbrella policy affords more coverage for about the same

price as the several individual policies the county presently holds.

"We're getting a whole lot better deal," said county finance officer D.F. Reed, Jr.

A representative of Business Insurance Management had provided an audit of county insurance, and compiled bid specifications for an umbrella policy.

The county was to pay some \$450 for the audit unless the firm won the bid.

Business Insurance Management's bid, however, was some \$5,000 cheaper than the closest competitor.

The commissioners also heard from Wayne Floyd of the engineering firm Rivers and Associates, who relayed a message that Holiday Island property owners had voted to seek county water for the community.

Floyd said that property owners agreed to pay the cost of running a six inch water line to the community and of installing meters, estimated at some \$100,000.

The commissioners agreed to continue to work with Holiday Island and to attempt to include the community in Phase II, an expansion of the system on hold pending the approval of funds.

Floyd said the county stands to gain 500 potential customers. He said that the community's water plant would probably not be usable.

Finally, board chairman Joe Nowell announced that Dare County is seeking to be included in the Albemarle District Jail, and that he would attend a September 22 meeting on the matter.



Suspected deed forger

Hertford Police chief Marshall Merritt escorts suspected deed forger Edwin Earl Lightfoot from the office of town

attorney William Bentley. Lightfoot was alleged to have sought \$4,700 for property that wasn't entirely his.

## Land scheme blocked

Concealing themselves in the home of town attorney William Bentley Sunday afternoon, Hertford police officers listened as a suspected deed forger attempted to obtain \$4,700 for a condemned piece of property that wasn't entirely his.

Edwin Earl Lightfoot, 35, of Newport News, Va., was arrested after he allegedly forged the names of three heirs to two lots condemned in the King Street Redevelopment project by the town of Hertford. Lightfoot was the fourth heir to the property, according to Hertford Police Chief Marshall Merritt.

While police officers Robert Morris and Mike Jasielum listened from another room, Bentley carried out the transaction with Lightfoot, Merritt said.

Had the suspected plot been successful, the three other heirs would have been defrauded of their share of the money.

But one of the forged names on the document was that of Myrtle Lightfoot, of Bethlehem, Pa. The estranged wife of the suspect, Ms. Lightfoot notified authorities that Lightfoot might attempt a forgery, Merritt said.

Lightfoot is being held under \$30,000 bond at the Albemarle District jail. A probable cause hearing is scheduled September 24.

## Agri-business cleaning up but concerns remain

Most of the several Winfall residents' complaints about Albemarle Chemical Company, Inc., have been corrected, according to the three women who brought complaints against the agri-business to the attention of the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY in July and the Winfall Town Council last month.

The women were unhappy about the frequency of ammonia spillages occurring at the company, as well as their method of drying corn, soybeans, and peanuts, which caused excessive amounts of flying debris, they said. Other complaints ranged from the speed at which employees and customers drove on Albemarle Street (the road leading to the business from Highway 37), the volume of the company's loudspeaker, and the smell coming from rotting corn and grain.

"My basic attitude is that I'm very pleased with the way Edgar Roberson (general manager of Albemarle Chemical) has cleaned up his property,"

she added.

Mrs. Williams said that no ammonia spillages have occurred since July, and that the problem of flies and odor had been eliminated.

Mrs. Lib Morgan, who also lives on Highway 37, indicated her overall approval of conditions at the business. "I feel like Albemarle Chemical has taken steps to eliminate some of the problems — like the smell and flies," said Mrs. Morgan, "and they ought to be commended for it if they continue to keep it clean."

But the problem with flying debris from drying corn still exists she said. "The chaff from blowing corn is really bad," she said, "there's a lot of noise and dirt from that."

Mrs. Frances Merritt, who lives on the corner of Albemarle Street and Highway

37, was also concerned about the company's grain-drying technique. While she said that traffic has slowed down on Albemarle Street, the loud speaker volume has been turned down, and the problem of odor and flies has "improved," she said she was still concerned about the company's grain drying procedures.

"I am not satisfied with that situation (grain drying) over there and we intend an extensive letter campaign contacting all agencies — state and national — that could possibly be of assistance to us," said Mrs. Merritt.

Mrs. Merritt said that while several state agencies have investigated the situation at the business, she was not satisfied with their follow-up because "nothing has been done."

"Last week the wind was due west and blowing the debris (from drying corn) back toward the company," she said,

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## Life is slow and easy for yacht dwelling couple

When Dana and Maggie Goodridge visited the county recently, they brought their house with them.

That may seem difficult for most people, but for the Goodridges, it was as simple as cruising their 37 foot yacht up the Perquimans River.

For the past three years, the couple has called their boat, the Sou'wester, home. Much of that time has been spent cruising up and down the east coast on the Intercoastal Waterway.

But for a recent stretch of about eight days, the Sou'wester stayed tied up at the Reed Oil Company dock in Hertford, some 30 miles off the waterway.

Was the Miami couple a little more than slightly off course? Well, no. They had visited the area by car and decided to return by boat. While here, they traversed the county with realtors, looking for a new "home base," a waterfront home with

docking facilities for the boat.

The Goodridges are looking for warmer (as in friendlier) climes from which to base their work with the Waterway Guide, a yachtsmens Bible to cruising on the Intercoastal Waterway.

Dana is a contributing editor, which means he rewrites and updates passages describing stretches of waterway and anchorages to insure that they remain accurate.

That involves a whole lot of what the Goodridges love most, "cruising," and getting paid for it.

Though their yacht appeared terribly lonely on the Perquimans River, the Goodridges say that cruising is a terribly popular pastime in other areas.

"The waterway at certain times is extremely crowded," said Dana. "At the right times you see almost no boats, but at the wrong times you almost need traffic signals."

The couple expressed surprise at the absence of yachts in the area. "It surprises me that such a great cruising country is so little used," said Dana. "Of course, we don't want to see a big crowd of boats in here. It would spoil the place for us."

The Perquimans gets top marks from a couple with plenty to compare it with. "I'd say this is one of three or four of the prettiest rivers along the entire east coast," said Dana, "and we've seen most of them."

## Crime workshop

### Robbery precautions are urged

A handful of town and county merchants met last week with a representative of the N.C. Division of Crime Prevention in a workshop designed to aid businesses in the prevention of robberies.

M.C. Teague, of the division headquarters in Raleigh, spouted a number of statistics that indicated that crime in North Carolina is definitely on the upswing. At the same time, however, he said the number of cases being solved is also increasing.

"In 1978 we had 3,646 robberies reported in North Carolina," said Teague. "Of these, 2 percent of the cases were solved." Teague said that some 4,000 robberies were reported in 1979, with 38 percent of the cases reported solved.

Robberies occur most frequently during the months of December and January, according to Teague, adding that this was unusual in light of the fact that all other crimes take place during warmer months.

In defining robbery, Teague said it was important to realize that the act is the "forceful taking or attempted taking of valuables directly from another person."

"It (robbery) is different from stealing," he said, "and you need to remember that because robbery is a potentially deadly act."

Teague proved some popular conceptions false when he asked the group where most robberies take place. While most of the merchants present guessed that robberies occur most frequently at all-night convenience stores or gas stations, Teague said that 36 percent of all robberies occur on highways.

"The open highway is where most robberies occur," said Teague, "and the robbers will do anything to get you to stop your car, even run you off the road." He said that roadside rest areas were especially attractive to robbers and hazardous to motorists.

He said the best way to prevent highway robbery was to keep all car doors locked, refuse rides to hitchhikers, and to keep on the road. "Do not let anybody force you off the road — wreck them, do anything to stay on the road," said Teague.

Businesses are the second most frequently hit targets by robbers, according to Teague, who said that a number of steps can be taken to prevent robberies. He advised the merchants to:

- Lock back doors to businesses (He said a surprisingly large number of robberies occur simply because thieves could enter businesses easily and without force.)
- Observe and report suspicious-looking characters

- Keep all areas inside and out well lighted
- Vary times money is taken to the bank
- Maintain high visibility of cash register so a robber can be easily observed and reported
- Post a sign stating that the business does not keep more than X amount of dollars in the cash register — and then keep only than amount.

One large chain of convenience stores trains all their employees to greet each customer with a look in the eye and a salutation, according to Teague.

"I'm sure it's very unnerving to have someone look you square in the eye and say 'hello,' if you're about to rob them," said Teague.

Teague said that a robber is more apt to strike a messy, sloppy looking business than a clean, well-kept one. "Discourage a robber before he hits — communicate to the thief not to rob you, to go someplace else," he said.

Those attending the workshop also offered some suggestions for discouraging robbers. John Beers, co-owner of J.C. Blanchard's Inc., said that he always leaves the cash register open at night, displaying the small amount of change left at the store. Betty Hare,

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Dana and Maggie Goodridge, full time yacht dwellers