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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 Cents

Briefs Crime is on rise in Hertford

Benefit meal planned

The American Cancer Society will host an All-You-Can-Eat Pancake and Sausage Day on Saturday, Jan. 25, at Perquimans County High School. Breakfast will be served from 7-10 a.m., lunch from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., and supper from 5-7 p.m. Entertainment will be provided during the evening meal. The cost is \$3.50 per person.

Fresh Start begins

Albemarle Hospital will be sponsoring the American Cancer Society's "Fresh Start" smoking cessation program which will be presented on four consecutive Tuesday evenings Feb. 4-25.

The registration fee is \$10 payable to the American Cancer Society. The fee will be refunded to participants who attend all four sessions.

Pre-registration is required. Call 335-0531 ext. 5239 for more information or to sign up.

Library Board meets

The Pettigrew Regional Library Board will meet on Monday, Jan. 27 at 8 p.m. at the Tyrrell County Public Library.

Hearing rescheduled

The Utilities Commission Hearing for Holiday Island has been rescheduled for Thursday, Feb. 6 from 2-5 p.m. at the county courthouse. This hearing is to determine whether or not the Holiday Island water system,

now presently exempt from Commission regulation, should be again subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission. At the request of the president of the Holiday Island Owner's Property Association, the Commission will also consider the submetering of electricity and water service for the Holiday Island Campground.

AARP to meet

The Perquimans Chapter #4118 of AARP Inc. will meet on Monday, Jan. 27 at 2 p.m. at the Senior Citizens Center in Hertford. There will be a board meeting at 1 p.m.

Come and join our Chapter for the latest information on people over 50. We are here "to serve and not be served."

For more information call Mona Sadler at 426-7044.

Notary class offered

College of the Albemarle will offer a one-night Notary Public Training class on Feb. 6 in Elizabeth City.

The class will be held from 7-10 p.m. in room 229 of the A Building. Jeanne C. White, with the Perquimans County Register of Deeds office, will teach the course.

The cost of the course is \$30 plus \$6.36 for a required manual. A social security number is needed to register. For more information, call COA's Continuing Education office at 335-0821, ext. 250.

Drivers course set

A Commercial Drivers License course will be offered in February through College of the Albemarle's Continuing Education Department.

For more information, interested persons may call COA's Continuing Education office in Elizabeth City at 335-0821, ext. 250.



Photo by Gary Cosby Jr.

Supporting the Pirates

The Perquimans varsity cheerleaders and their mascots keep up Pirate morale and cheer the basketball teams to victory. Here, Nicki Whitehurst, Tamara Robinson, Carol Lewis and Tara Thach wait for the varsity team to take the floor.

Complaints lead to drug bust

Complaints about possible drug dealing led to the arrest of a Hertford man on four drug charges.

Ahmed Lateef, formerly Gary Welch, of 311 Dobbs St., was arrested by the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department on Friday, Jan. 10. Lateef was charged with possession of a Schedule VI controlled substance (marijuana) with intent to sell and deliver; maintaining a dwelling for the manufacture, sale and delivery of a controlled substance; selling and delivering

of a Schedule VI controlled substance within 1000 feet of a school; and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Lateef was confined to Albemarle District Jail under a \$20,500 secured bond. Judge J. Richard Parker reduced the bond to \$1,000 secured at the recommendation of the state in Perquimans County District Criminal Court on Jan. 15 at a bond reduction hearing.

According to sheriff Joe Lothian, his office received complaints about heavy traffic at

Lateef's residence. The sheriff's office was also told that visitors to the Lateef residence sometimes went to a nearby vacant lot after they left, allegedly to smoke marijuana. Lothian said surveillance of the Lateef dwelling, which also houses the business Lateef Imports, and a marijuana purchase by law enforcement officials led to obtaining a search warrant and the resulting arrest.

No other arrests were made during the raid.

U.S. 17 bypass contract is awarded

The North Carolina Board of Transportation awarded a \$3.6 million contract to a Tarboro firm to widen 3.2 miles of U.S. 17 in Perquimans County.

The contract was awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co. by the board at its Jan. 10 meeting in Raleigh. It calls for adding two lanes on the south side of U.S. 17 to form a four-lane highway bypassing Hertford.

Philip P. Godwin of Gatesville, who represents Perquimans County on the board, said the widening will begin in February.

The road construction will begin in Winfall, where U.S. 17 Highway presently narrows from four lanes to two, according to Hertford city manager W.D. "Bill" Cox, who has worked for

many years lobbying for the upgrade of U.S. 17 throughout North Carolina. The four-lane will stop at the north end of the bypass bridge and will begin again at the south end of the bridge. Cox said information received by the town from the transportation department indicates that the new four-lane section will stop near the southern border of the Hertford city limits.

The two new lanes to be constructed will lie to the east of the present roadway. Stakes have been set out by the state. Cox said, to indicate where the new road will come through.

Godwin said the contract is one of several to widen 11.3 miles of U.S. 17 from Edenton

to Winfall to four lanes.

A contract to build a two-lane bridge to carry traffic northbound on U.S. 17 over the Perquimans River is expected to be awarded by the board in April. The bridge will be 2,900 feet long, Godwin said.

During construction, safeguards will be taken to protect small streams and wetlands from contamination by soil or construction materials. Grass will be planted to cover bare ground caused by construction, Godwin said.

The widening of the Hertford bypass is scheduled to be completed in May 1993. The bridge will be completed in August 1994, Godwin said.

Arrests in Hertford are on the rise according to the 1991 annual report completed by the town's police department recently. The document reflects an overall 2.9 percent increase in arrests over the previous year, and a 2.5 percent increase in reported incidents and investigations.

Chief Aubrey Sample is not surprised with the increase (the increase) basically indicative of everywhere else," Sample said. "We're short on police manpower to handle the rise in the crime rate. It (the increase) might surprise people living here, but if you talk to the average (police) officer out here on the street, it won't surprise them. We knew it was coming."

Sample said national statistics point to a continued increase in crime.

"It's going to get worse," the chief said.

Topping the list of crimes for which arrests were made in Hertford was drug violations. Suspects were apprehended and charged with a total of 94 drug violations in 1991, compared to seven violations in 1990. Charges ranged from possession of drug paraphernalia to trafficking cocaine.

Arrests were made on 26 charges of possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine and 25 charges of selling and delivering cocaine. In 1990, one arrest was made for possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine and two were made for selling and delivering cocaine. No arrests were made in 1990 for trafficking cocaine. A dozen trafficking arrests were made in 1991.

"We knew the drugs were here," Sample said. "We just had to depend on some outside help to get those arrests."

Many of the drug arrests in 1991 were made with the assistance of the Edenton-Chowan Task Force. An undercover operation begun last spring resulted in the apprehension of at least eight individuals charged with a variety of drug violations in the fall of 1991.

Fear is one of the biggest obstacles law enforcement officers have to overcome in making cases now, Sample said. Because of the chance of retaliation by those arrested and charged with drug violations and

violent crimes, witnesses are often afraid to come forward. Lack of evidence means that criminals stay on the street, committing other crimes, because law enforcement officers cannot make a case that will stand up in court.

"Without the help of citizens and their information, it's difficult for us to pursue a case," Sample said.

Sample said examples of fear to come forward are seen in murder and other violent crimes where officers are certain

there were witnesses, but those witnesses refuse to supply information. There is even a problem getting people to admit they witnessed a wreck on occasion, Sample said.

There are no cut and dried answers to problems in the judicial system, Sample said. There must be changes on all levels in order to curb the rising tide of crime.

"We've got a problem in the correctional system, a problem in the court system, a problem in the bond system, at our level, and there's a big problem at the citizens' level," Sample said. "The judicial system all the way around is in trouble. You can't point the finger and put the blame on any one agency. It's a combination."

The judicial system guarantees those accused of a crime certain rights, Sample said, such as the right to have a bond set and the right to have a case continued. When these rights are added to federal prison caps and an overload in court cases, the result is chaos.

Judges often send those convicted to prison, only to have them turned back onto the streets early because of prison caps. Some people are arrested three or four times and released on bond before ever having one case heard in court. There are cases where arrests are made and the alleged perpetrator is out on bond before the law enforcement officers can complete the paperwork.

"There's got to be a change," Sample said of the entire justice system.

If not, it appears that the arrest report for next year will be even grimmer.



File photo by Susan Harris

Drugs, drug paraphernalia, money and weapons are regularly confiscated by law enforcement officials during drug raids and routine arrests. The photograph shows contraband confiscated by the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department, however, similar items have been recovered by the Hertford Police also.



Photo by Susan Harris

Honoring the dream

The Perquimans Chapter of the NAACP observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day with a motorcade through Hertford and a service at Riddick Grove Church. About 20 cars participated in the parade.