

Feature:

Library cat's disappearance has patrons, staff worrying;

Bookmarks: Pages 3

Sports:

Pirates take Currituck;

Lady Pirates improve play;

Tigers go for wins: Pages 6,7

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 Cents

Brian Center employees stop fire

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Teamwork and training held disaster at bay Friday night when an LP gas burner caught fire at Brian Center/Hertford.

Assistant Hertford fire chief Sid Eley credited quick action by two Brian Center employees with controlling a blaze in the boiler room and preventing injury to residents.

Lester Whitehurst, a certified nursing assistant, and George Robertson, an LPN, told fire officials they smelled an unusual odor in the back wing after 8 p.m. Friday. The two investigated and found flames spouting from a gas burner in the boiler room.

Both men began fighting fire with CO2 fire extinguishers.

Meanwhile, other Center employees sprang into action, calling the fire department and evacuating the 11 residents on the back wing.

"Everybody did exactly what we'd been training them to do," said Brian Center administrator Joe France. "The staff did a really good job."

France said he thinks the fire started when a water pipe burst near one of six LP gas burners in the boiler room. Flames evidently burned out the front of the burner.

He added that the center has had problems with the burners, used to heat water that flows to the residents' rooms. He said repairs had been made to the burners, and all were working properly when the maintenance staff left Friday afternoon.

The fire caused no structural damage to the building, France said.

All county fire departments were put on alert when the call came into dispatch. Hertford and Winfall firefighters responded to the blaze. They arrived to find the fire put out, and began organizing a clean-up effort. A one-half inch thick layer of chemicals coated the boiler room floor.

Whitehurst and Robertson were transported to Chowan Hospital by the Perquimans County Rescue Squad, where they were treated for smoke and chemical inhalation and released.

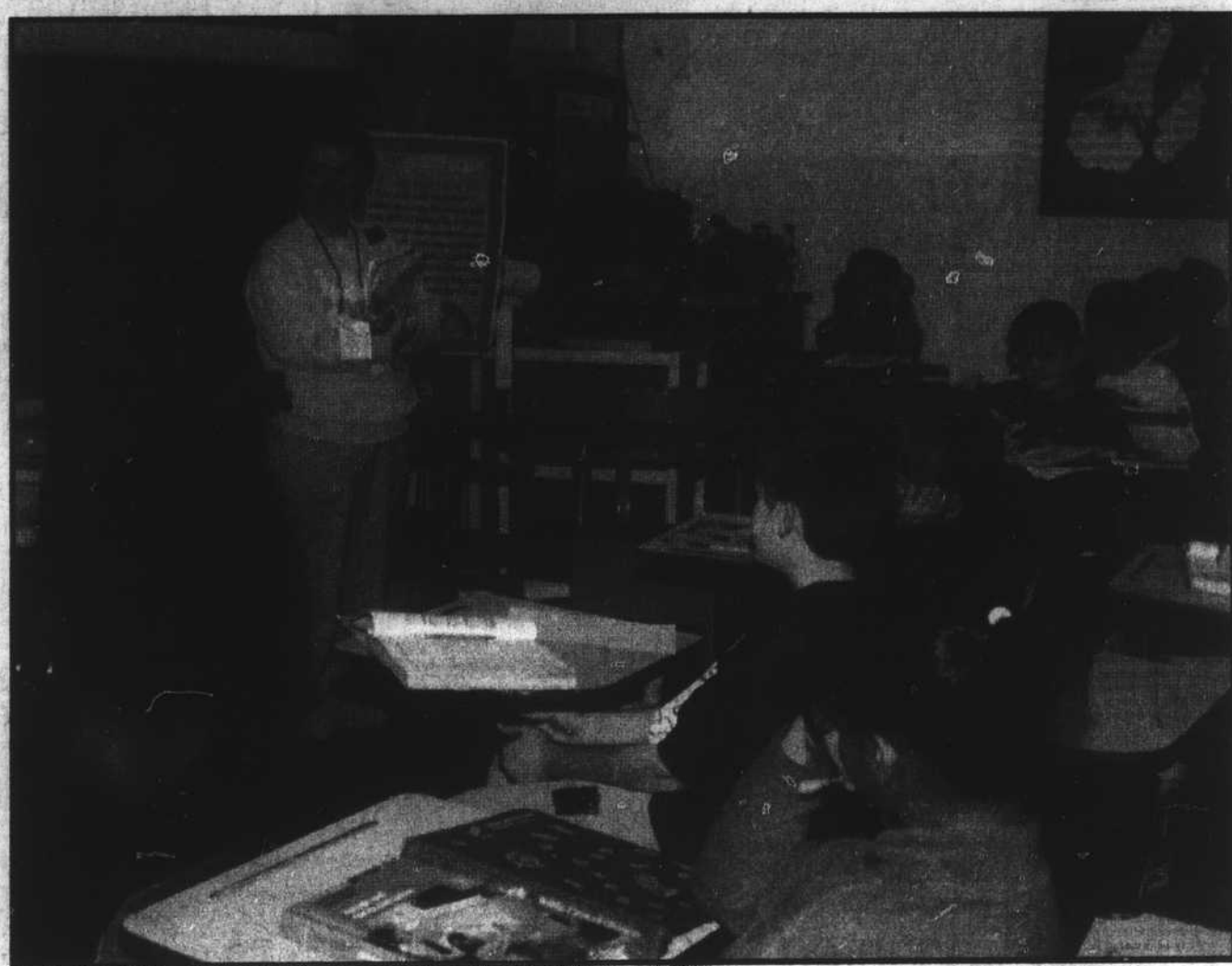
France and Eley said the fire safety training for employees offered by the Hertford Fire Department paid off.

"They've been doing a real good job with their fire safety program out there (at Brian Center)," Eley said. "Our training paid off. Brian Center did a super good job getting everybody from that hall."

France said fire captain Parker Newbern, training officer for the department, holds quarterly fire safety classes which include proper use of fire extinguishers. That training, France said, accounted for the quick action by employees.

While firefighters worked, the Hertford Police Department set up road blocks to keep people off the Brian Center premises until order could be restored. When the clean-up was complete and patients in the back wing resettled, officers allowed family and friends to check on residents.

France said volunteers and off-duty employees arrived to help get the center back in order.



U.S. Rep. Eva Clayton stopped by Perquimans Middle School Monday for a visit on her way from Washington, D.C., to her home in Warrenton. One class of sixth-grade social studies students got a short civics lesson as Clayton quizzed them about the upcoming inauguration and government functions. (Staff photo by Susan Harris)

Clayton visits school Middle school students see history first-hand

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Two history-makers brought social studies to life at Perquimans Middle School Monday.

1st District Congresswoman Eva Clayton and Perquimans County Commissioner Shirley Yates briefly visited two classes at the school. Both officials are the first black women to be elected to their respective posts.

Clayton gave students a short civics lesson, quizzing them on the recent swearing-in of Congress and the upcoming presidential inauguration.

She told the students to remember two important dates - Jan. 20 and Feb. 1. On Jan. 20, president-elect Bill Clinton will be inaugurated and on Feb. 1, Clinton will send his budget and other proposals to Congress for action.

The Congresswoman said that while Clinton and Congress don't

"Young people need to find Congress as people-friendly."

Congresswoman Eva Clayton

agree on everything, they should work together to "get the country moving forward." She added that both are committed to young people and their needs.

Clayton said she began visiting schools during her campaign. Pitt County school officials requested an audience with her while she was running for Congress. When she first considered the request, she said she felt her time was better spent talking to prospective voters. But later, she became excited about interacting with the youth and accepted the invitation.

Now she's hooked on spending time with students, and said Perquimans County Schools are the first she has visited since her election.

Clayton said her reasons for relating to students are varied. They are voters of the future, can have an influence on their parents who are already voters, need to know that there are lawmakers who care about them, and provide an opportunity for Clayton to sharpen her public speaking skills. "Young people need to find Congress as people-friendly," she said.

Clayton spent about 40 minutes at the school. She was welcomed by Yates, local NAACP president Fred Yates, middle school co-principal Henry Felton, and other school and community leaders.

The students might not remember by next week what they read in their social studies books Monday, but chances are they'll recall Clayton's visit for a long time.

The King sells well in Hertford

Post office sells 5,000 Elvis stamps

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Hertford Postmaster Dan Burch to steadily stamped a stack of envelopes "Return to Sender" last Friday at noon.

This might have seemed like an ordinary job duty of a postal worker to some.

But not to Elvis Presley fans.

The envelopes Burch marked in red bore Elvis Presley stamps, which went on sale Friday at noon. "Return to Sender" was just one of Presley's numerous musical hits - most about the wonders of love or the heartbreak of lost love.

Callers, too, got in on the post office's Elvis fun, as Burch answered the phone. "Graceland. This is the king speaking."

Several fans were waiting in line for their stamps when the clock struck 12. There wasn't a stampede and no lines wrapped around the

building, but the post office sold about 5,000 Elvis stamps in five hours.

The stamp issue came after the post office launched a publicity campaign, and asked the public to vote on which Elvis would appear on the stamps - the slim, slick-haired young man or the heavier, older Elvis. America chose young Elvis.

The singer, whose gyrating pelvis caused raised parental eyebrows in the '60s, died in August 1977. But his popularity was not buried with him. Elvis impersonators



Hertford postmaster Dan Burch marked envelopes bearing Elvis stamps "Return to Sender" Friday to kick off the U.S. Postal Service's Elvis stamp promotion. About 5,000 stamps were sold in Hertford between noon and 5 p.m. Friday. (Photo by Susan Harris)

abound, and thousands of fans flock to his former home, Graceland, each year. Elvis memorabilia is a multi-million dollar business.

Bomb threat ends PCHS ball game Monday

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Fans at Monday night's Pirate basketball game got double excitement for their entry fee.

Perquimans' Nick Stevenson nailed a buzzer shot from just over mid-court to put the home team up by two points at the half. About three minutes later, Perquimans High School principal William Byrum cleared the building due to a bomb threat.

As fans poured into the chilly drizzle, sirens and flashing lights arrived at the parking lot. Nineteen Hertford firefighters and two police officers secured the building and split up into teams to conduct a search. No bomb was found.

The call to the county dispatch office was traced back to the pay telephone just outside the gym door, Hertford Police chief Aubrey Sample said. It was made at 9:14 p.m.

Dispatch contacted Sample, who then had fire chief Edgar Roberson notified. Roberson said he decided to have his department respond to the high school.

School officials meanwhile postponed the game.

After the building search, the visiting Camden players were allowed to enter the locker rooms to retrieve belongings. Before the players got back on their activity bus to go back to Camden, it was also searched as a precautionary measure, Sample said. Hertford police officer Tim Bunch escorted the visitors out of town.

Perquimans players entered the gym to get their clothing after the Camden teams left the building.

Police and fire personnel stayed on the scene until about 10:30 p.m.

No suspects were questioned in connection with the case, but both Sample and Roberson said the call was recorded and will be heard by them, Sheriff Joe Lothian and school officials as the investigation continues.

Drug task force wakes up alleged dealers

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Three suspected drug salesmen got a surprise wake-up call last Thursday morning.

Members of the Northeast Regional Drug Task Force and Hertford Police officers raided the mobile home in which the trio was sleeping around 6:30 a.m.

While many Perquimans residents were getting ready to go to work the officers searched the home, confiscated approximately one-half ounce of crack cocaine packaged for sale. Task Force captain Joe Tade, estimated the street value of the drugs at \$2,500-3,000.

All three men in the mobile home at No. 3 Pine Ridge Trailer Park were arrested on felony drug charges.

Arrested were Eric Vincent Holloman, 21, the occupant of the mobile home; Ashley Riccardo Shepherd, 25, of Westbury, N.Y.; and William Allen Baxton, 24, of Roper.

Holloman was charged with possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine and maintaining a dwelling for the purpose of using or selling cocaine. He faces a 10-year sentence for each charge if found guilty.

Shepherd and Baxton were each charged with possession with the intent to sell and deliver cocaine.

All three were placed in Albemarle District Jail under \$10,000 secured bonds.

The raid resulted from information received by the Task Force earlier last week. Officers quickly acted on the information, obtaining a search warrant the evening of Jan. 6.

Reed Oil earns AADA award

Reed Oil Company received an Albemarle Area Development Association Economic Development Award.

Reed Oil Company has been operated in Perquimans County by the Reed family for 55 years. It has grown to serve seven Albemarle area counties with products ranging from agricultural fuels and lubricants to heating oil and LP gas.

Durwood Reed Jr. has been active in the company for 41 years, while his sons, Bob and Gary have been handling the ropes for about 20 years.

The Reeds are just as dedicated to the community as they are to their business. Durwood served 33 years as Perquimans County finance officer, was a county commissioner and currently serves on the College of The Albemarle advisory board. Gary and Bob serve the community through such organizations as the Hertford Fire Department and Perquimans Band Boosters. All are members of Hertford United Methodist Church.

In addition, the business supports worthy causes such as Special Olympics, youth T-ball and the Albemarle 4-H Livestock Show and Sale.

ATTENTION!!

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