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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 63, No. 11

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, April 7, 1994

35 Cents

Hertford to be sued

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

A businessman who said he was assaulted by a Hertford Police Department officer in August filed a civil suit against both the officer and the town.

Joseph I. Meads Sr., 63, said last week that he filed a lawsuit in December. Papers were served on the town and the officer, Andre Alfred, before Christmas. Meads' attorney, Branch W. Vincent III of Elizabeth City confirmed last week.

Vincent confirmed that Meads had filed the suit, charging that Alfred used excessive force and assaulted Meads. The suit also claims that Meads' civil rights were violated. Vincent declined to name the monetary compensation Meads is seeking. He did say that Meads is "suing for damages in an amount in excess of \$10,000."

The lawsuit stems from injuries Meads said he suffered as a result of an altercation with Alfred on Aug. 24, 1993 at Meads' business, Joe's Place in Hertford.

Meads maintains that he was having a conversation with Hertford Police officer Ray Jedebe outside Joe's Place when Alfred approached the two. Meads said Alfred made a remark that Meads considered an attempt to engage the two in a verbal argument.

Meads said he held up his hands, took two steps backward and told Alfred, "Look, I just can't talk to you."

Meads maintains that Alfred began punching Meads in the forehead with his finger and threatened to assault him.

When Meads reached up and pushed Alfred's finger out of his face, Meads said Alfred pushed him with both hands, knocking him 6-8 feet backward and slamming him onto the pavement on his back. Meads said Alfred got into his patrol car and left the scene before Meads could get up off the pavement.

Later that day, Meads said he contacted Hertford officials and asked that the incident be investigated and some type of action be taken by noon the next day. Meads said when he got no response from town or police officials, he met with magistrate Broughton T. Dail Sr. to swear out a warrant for simple assault against Alfred. Dail issued the warrant, but the charges were dropped by District Attorney H.P. Williams Jr., Meads said.

Williams said Tuesday morning that the charges were dropped pending an investigation by his office per the policy he has set regarding complaints received against officers for actions taken during the discharge of their duties. After an investigation by the DA's office, Williams said Meads was notified and told that Meads could swear out a second warrant against Alfred and that Williams' office would prosecute if Meads chose to pursue the assault charge in court. Meads said last week he did not obtain a second warrant.

Alfred left the police department last fall. Hertford Mayor John G. Beers said he could comment neither on the case or why Alfred left the department.

Injuries to Meads' hand and hip caused him to seek medical treatment the day after the incident. No bones appeared to be broken, but Meads said he was put on medication for the injuries.

Meads continued to experience problems with his back. He said he underwent back surgery on Feb. 10 in Pitt Memorial Hospital to repair two ruptured discs he attributes to the incident with Alfred. He remains under a doctor's care.

Vincent said no trial date has been set, but that the town of Hertford has requested that the case be moved to federal court in Elizabeth City because of the civil rights claims in the suit. Vincent expects the case to be heard in February or March.

Anything Goes!



The Perquimans High School Drama Department will present its spring production, *Anything Goes!* on Tuesday, April 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the school auditorium. Scholastic stage veterans will be joined by a few newcomers in this annual musical. The play is being directed by Lynwood Winslow. Admission to the play is \$3. (Photo by Susan Harris)

J.C. Cole to sit on state committee

RALEIGH - Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight has appointed J.C. Cole of Hertford to the Legislative Research Committee on Adult Guardianship. The committee will review issues such as House Bill 451 which focuses on the ways and means of improving guardianship services including: increased quality of services, the avoidance of conflicts of interest, the role of State agencies, the coordination of services statewide, and the adequacy of staffing and funding.

"J.C.'s legal expertise as well as his former involvement with the Guardian and ad Litem Program will be a strong addition to the Adult Guardianship Committee. I know J.C. will prove to be a valuable asset to the progress of the committee," said Senator Marc Basnight.

Cole currently has a private law practice and handles both criminal and civil matters. A graduate of Livingstone College in Salisbury, he continued his education with a Masters Degree

from Long Island University in New York and later attended North Carolina Central University law school. Cole is a member of the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers and serves as secretary-treasurer of the First Judicial District Bar. He is an active member of the community in various service organizations including the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee of the Governor's Crime Commission and on the Board of Directors of the Albe-

marle Mental Health Center. Cole is currently a candidate for District Court Judge of the 1st Judicial District.

"It's a pleasure to be appointed to this very important committee," Cole said. "I hope that my expertise in this field will add to the productive output of the committee. This is a critical issue to our senior citizens and this committee will work towards adult guardianship."

Record crack bust in Hertford

Agents confiscate cocaine worth \$250,000 on street

By MOLLIE WILDS SCHMIDT
The Daily Advance

Returning from New York last Tuesday, Gracie Jenkins was greeted by several drug enforcement agents ready to search her car.

Following tips from an ongoing investigation, officers from the Northeast Regional Drug Task Force had a hunch the car driven by Jenkins, 32, of 111

Wynn Fork Court, Hertford, contained cocaine.

"We had information (the drugs were) coming in from New York," said Lt. Joe Tade. "We didn't know who would be driving, but we were looking for a particular car."

Their hunch was correct: Two and a half pounds of crack cocaine wrapped in newspaper was in the car's trunk. Agents found

it crammed into the spare tire when they stopped Jenkins on Sandy Cross Road in the Belvidere community around 10:30 p.m. Tuesday.

"That's a record for North-eastern North Carolina," said Tade. Tade said the drugs have a street value of about \$250,000.

"By anyone's standards, that would be a lot of crack," he said.

Jenkins told authorities she did not know how the drugs got in her trunk, Randy Cartwright said.

She did admit she was coming from New York. Tade said ho-

tel receipts collaborated that story.

Agent Douglas Hooper found \$1,700 in Jenkins' car, but no other drugs were found.

Jenkins was charged with trafficking in drugs by possession. She was detained at Albemarle District Jail in lieu of a \$205,000 bond.

The only court records Jenkins has in Perquimans County are traffic violations. Police would not comment on whether other arrests might be forthcoming. Task force members said the investigation is continuing.

Hertford men arrested

Chowan narcotics operation nets nine

Two Hertford men were among nine people arrested for dealing drugs in Edenton last Tuesday during a narcotics sweep called "Operation ANT".

Police officers and sheriff's deputies spent the day gathering suspects and serving warrants. Those arrested were the subject of an eight-month investigation into Edenton and Chowan County's narcotics

trade, said Greg Hassell, commander of the Albemarle Narcotics Task Force.

"We're getting the drug pushers off the street whether they be high, middle or street level," Hassell said.

The targets of the raid were mostly street-level dealers.

Charged were Sherman Gray Nixon, 27, of Rt. 1, Box 91, Hertford and Marcus Forehand, no age or address available. Nixon was charged with one count each of sale and delivery of marijuana and possession of marijuana. Forehand was charged with two counts each of sale and delivery of crack cocaine and possession of crack cocaine.

Social services expands

County rents additional space for department

The Department of Social Services got some relief from its overcrowding problem Monday afternoon when the Perquimans County Commissioners approved leasing office space at Apple Tree Mall in Winfall.

Social services will occupy three rooms into the new offices, and will eventually house seven employees there. Initially, social services direc-

tor Chrystal Towe said four social workers and one clerical employee will be moved.

Overcrowding has been a problem at DSS for several years. In addition to the 23 people who occupy the present building, filing cabinets sit in every available area. The commissioners were concerned a few months back that the weight of the filing cabinets might cause structural damage to the building.

The cost of the new space will run about \$2,243 for the county for the last three months of fiscal 1993-94. The state will cover 60 percent of the cost. County Manager Paul Gregory said the county may have to hit its fund balance to cover the cost.

Caught short

County may owe deputies \$13,500 in overtime pay

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Commissioners may have to dig into county coffers to pay out over \$13,500 in overtime pay that may be due local deputies.

The commissioners hired local accountant Rhonda Gregory to review time deputies' time sheets from June 1, 1993 to the present to determine what overtime pay was due deputies under federal law. Gregory consulted the federal register and recomputed all time sheets to make her determination. She told commissioners Monday that the deputies must be compensated for the time.

The change in the pay requirements for the deputies kicked in in June when the county approved hiring a fifth deputy.

Under federal law, deputies may log up to 480 hours of compensatory time before overtime must be paid. Deputies must be kept informed of the number of compensatory hours they have amassed.

County Manager Paul Gregory said that in order for the pay system to work properly, he needs further documentation from Sheriff Joe Lothian. Paul Gregory said he needs a document signed by the sheriff that states that the deputies are required to work on 28-day, 171-hour cycles per the state personnel department. The sheriff must also sign a statement that the deputies must log 480 hours in compensatory time before being paid overtime. Individual statements must also be provided to each deputy stating that they have 480 hours over compensatory time on the books.

The county manager also asked the commissioners to determine if holiday pay would equal eight or 12 hours of pay because the deputies generally work 12-hour shifts. Paul Gregory said that information is essential before the actual amount of overtime can be computed. Deputies are due double time pay for holidays that they are on duty.

Assistant finance officer Sharon Ward said the \$13,500 estimate does not include FICA and retirement.

Rhonda Gregory gave recommendations on designing a new time sheet for deputies to make their hours easier to compute.

Commissioner Leo Higgins said he is concerned about the amount of money the commissioners may be forced to take from the fund balance.

"I'm concerned about protecting the public purse," he said.

Higgins asked county attorney John Matthews and Rhonda Gregory if the commissioners can ask for specific dates, times and duties being performed by deputies that caused overtime hours to be worked. He also asked if commissioners could find out if other deputies were also on duty, and if they were, why those deputies could not perform the duties that caused the overtime. Both the attorney and the accountant said the commissioners could request that information.

Higgins went on to ask if each deputy could be required to keep a daily work log. Commissioner Shirley Yates said there is a need for accountability, but the computations should be the responsibility of the department supervisor, not the deputies. Yates said so much information should be not required on the time sheet that the sheet becomes hard to understand.