



# Happy Easter



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## Domestic abuse case turns deadly

### P.C.H.S. coaches, softball players witness suicide

By GINGER LIVINGSTON  
The Daily Advance

One day after pleading guilty to assaulting his estranged wife in January, the estranged husband of the Perquimans County High School head softball coach went to the school's gymnasium and shot himself to death in front of her and some others associated with the team. The incident occurred around 5 p.m. last Thursday.

Glenn Marvin Spiess, 37,

died from a single gunshot wound to the head. He did not harm his wife, Karen Booker, or any of the team members, assistant coaches and parents who were at the school at the time.

Hertford police would not say what triggered Spiess's action or if he had gone to the gym to harm his wife.

The softball team was practicing in the gym Thursday due to bad weather. Practice was breaking up when a parent, who knew of the couple's problems, saw Spiess behind the school near the cafeteria and gym, said Hertford Police Chief Bennie Murphy. The parent called Edgar Roberson, an assistant softball coach

whose daughter is on the team, to get a description of Spiess.

When Roberson realized Spiess was at the gym, he told the caller to get the players away from the area. He called the police and drove to the school himself to warn Booker.

Parents moved quickly and loaded children into cars and trucks. When Roberson arrived, he went into the gym and told Booker and the players to leave through the gym's school entrance, Murphy said.

Police Officer Clarence D. Richards arrived at this time and saw Spiess moving toward the gym. He repeatedly asked Spiess to stop, but Spiess ignored him and entered the gym. Richards followed.

By this time, Booker and most of the others in the gym had moved to the opposite end of the gym. Witnesses at the scene said at least one student and Roberson were near Spiess's location.

Murphy said when Spiess entered the gym, he stopped near the door and turned to Richards. Richards told Murphy that Spiess reached into his pants' waistband and pulled out a .45 Colt semi-automatic handgun. Murphy said he does not know if the weapon was fully loaded, but a Colt clip normally holds 14 to 15 rounds.

When Spiess pulled the weapon he told Richards, "I'm not here to hurt you." He then

indicated he would kill himself, which he did, Murphy said.

The softball team, coaches and parents were taken to the band room.

Spiess had been stopped by N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper T.M. Lassiter about 3 p.m. Thursday in the Food Lion parking lot because Lassiter spotted him and knew that his drivers license had been revoked. Spiess was arrested and taken before magistrate Todd Tilley. He was charged with driving while license revoked and released under a \$200 cash bond.

Sgt. R.H. Early, Lassiter's supervisor, said Spiess was depressed.

"He indicated he had some problems, and he said it was the last straw and he didn't have anything left to live for," Early said. "But that is not unusual. There are times when people say things in hopes of soliciting sympathy."

Spiess was searched before being transported to the magistrate's office, Early said. He did not have the handgun at the time.

Neither Early or Murphy knew whether Spiess called a friend or left the magistrate's office walking.

Spiess was transported by Perquimans County EMS to Chowan Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

## DOWNTOWN EASTER EVENT



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Peter Cottontail hopped down his bunny trail to downtown Hertford Saturday morning, much to the delight of the youngsters who gathered for the Hertford Downtown Association's second annual Easter egg hunt. Dozens of boys and girls arrived with baskets in hand ready for the egg hunt, bicycle

and bonnet decorating contests, games and picture-taking with the Easter bunny. The egg hunt is one of several events sponsored by the downtown merchants each year to bring attention to the unique shopping experience in a small, friendly downtown area.

## Students, staff cope with tragedy

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

A caring community pulled together last Thursday night to help a group of teenagers, coaches and parents move through the initial shock, fear and sadness that resulted from the suicide at Perquimans High School.

"I think it's just one more time I've seen people in this county pull together," said schools superintendent Randall L. Henion. "I've lived in a lot of places, big and small, but I think this community is unique in the way people here pull together and offer support. I've seen it many times since I've moved here."

Henion credits quick thinking and quick response on the part of the adults on the scene for avoiding what could have been an even greater tragedy.

"There were several heroes in my book," Henion said. "I appreciate the work of the police department, the officer's quick response; the quick thinking on the part of the parent who was aware that something was suspicious; and Edgar Roberson's quick response."

"I think the Good Lord was looking out for our students, staff and parents who were there."

Henion said parent volunteers, school staff, law enforcement and Booster Club members mobilized immediately to offer support to all those who had been at or near the scene.

Bob Butkizwicz, a counselor with Albemarle Mental Health spoke with all those gathered in the school's band room after the shooting. He stressed the importance of talking immediately after a violent incident. Butkizwicz explained to the softball players and parents who were in or near the gym at the time of the shooting the several types of stress reactions they could experience following the incident. He also said it is important to make sure there are family members and friends available to talk to

and care for the victims.

In addition to speaking with the group, the counselor spoke with several of those on the scene individually.

Butkizwicz met again with the softball team and parents who were in the gym at the time of the shooting on Monday at the central office for what he termed a debriefing session. These sessions, he said, allow victims to talk at length about what happened and allows a counselor to monitor their stress reactions.

School opened as usual on Friday morning. Parents said most of the team members attended school. Butkizwicz had stressed the importance of the girls being together and staying in their normal routine during his talk in the band room on Thursday evening.

Henion said Monday that one of his greatest concerns in the aftermath of the tragedy is that students may no longer feel safe.

"Churches, schools and certain other institutions were considered sacred in the past," the superintendent said. "More and more, we read about people coming in and violating those places."

"Someone came in and violated our space, took the innocence of our youth."

Henion said he had spoken with law officers about the situation and the school's security. Officers told Henion that they did not think there was anything that the system could have done to prevent the occurrence.

"It was a situation that you couldn't predict," Henion said. "As one officer said to me, 'There was an armed police officer on the scene and that didn't prevent it (the shooting) from happening.'"

Most parents interviewed by The Daily Advance newspaper said they felt the school system responded to the situation well. Overall, they agreed with Henion that there was nothing that could have been done to predict it.

## Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 70s Low: 50s PARTLY SUNNY	High: 70s Low: 40s CHANCE OF RAIN	High: 50s Low: 40s CLEAR, COOLER

### It's time for a change!

Don't be late for sunrise service Sunday morning. Set your clocks ahead one hour before going to sleep Saturday night.

## Bank loan may finance water system upgrade

The Perquimans County Commissioners are exploring all avenues to finance the \$4-\$4.25 million Bethel water plant project.

County manager Paul Gregory reported to the commissioners Monday that he held a meeting and invited area banks to review the project and bid on making the loan. Branch Bank & Trust, Centura Bank, NationsBank and Wachovia Bank all submitted written proposals.

Gregory broke down each bank's proposal for the commissioners, and also presented estimated water department collections which would sup-

port the payments on the loans.

The commissioners have also worked with RECD, formerly FmHA, on loan and grant proposals for the project. Commissioners chairman Mack Nixon said Monday that going through RECD would require more up-front time and money than borrowing the funds through a bank.

Gregory said he will continue to negotiate with the banks and bring final proposals back to the commissioners for review. He estimated that it would take 60-90 days to complete paperwork, then 9-12 months for plan construction.