

## The Perquimans Weekly

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## Trails of the Thunder tribe

I do not believe in coincidence. To me, everything has a purpose and a meaning, and what we call "coincidence" is merely when a human being is given a brief spiritual glimpse into what a higher power is hard at work bringing



Nature in a Nutshell  
Gail Roberson

about for us to carry matters full circle, as planned. There have been uncountable "coincidences" here at Morningstar Nature Refuge, and many moments of personal revelation that something gives me the extra physical strength and emotional conviction it takes to do this. We call it angels. The Indian called them "winged one" from the "Solar Clan" or "Thunder Tribe." And I have one. And some days two. Among their assignments are "coincidences."

I have very severe asthma. I no longer take chances like I used to do, but instead, carry my inhaler and medicine all the time. One day I was hard at work on the back side of the refuge, grubbing up stumps and stubbles and moving around heavy moss-covered logs to make a new trail less dangerous and more interesting to visitors. Without prior warning, as is usual, my breathing changed abruptly, and I sunk to the ground gasping for air. My airways closed tight and I began to suffocate. My hands frantically searched my empty pockets. I crawled to my cast-off sweater, but found nothing in the pocket there either. I had left everything back at the museum, in my coat pocket, which I had shed earlier when visitors were here and left on the picnic table. Panic struck. I had to get back to the house. I had to get my medicine, or I would die. I crawled up the trail a few feet, grasped a small tree and pulled myself upright. I recall stumbling along half of the trail, and then nothing. The only recollection after that was collapsing within sight of the little bridge near the main trail. Then my world grew dark.

I woke two hours later in the comfort of my own bed, my inhalers by my side, my breathing labored but constant. I have absolutely no idea how I got there; I know nothing of it. I do remember, however, a rustling sound that surrounded me at the same time of the darkness - and a distinct whisper, "I am here."

Much less dramatic "coincidences" occur all the while in my life, like the day I was speaking to

the local rotary club during lunch. For months I had searched for a larger than life rubber roach for a very important exhibit on the main trail to be

done by an Eagle Scout this spring. I had spent much time and energy tracking one down, without luck, and had finally given up the worry over to a higher source, having made that statement aloud the day before. When telling the club members about the new exhibit containing the one creature that is capable of living for two weeks without its head, I asked if anybody might just happen to know where I could find one. To my utter delight, a man in the very back announced to us that he had, not one, but two large rubber roaches in his pocket! "Coincidence?" I think not.

One day I sat by the river's edge, daydreaming about my Indian ancestor, "Morningstar," and the story I had heard of how she taught her white husband how to hollow out a tree to make a canoe for their fishing excursions. I tossed a pebble in the water as I left, watching the ripples grow and wishing I had such an item for the museum about to be constructed. Two days later I received a call. "Gail, how big is your museum going to be?" a man asked. "How big does it have to be?" I responded. And the first item to be placed in the newly constructed building was a beautiful old canoe, hollowed by ancient hands, come to final rest exactly where it should.

"How will I ever save enough money for that now?" I asked myself as I stood in the hot steam of my shower one Sunday morning pondering a tremendous refuge need and no money left to buy it with. The tears of exhaustion mixed with soap. An hour later, a woman I've never met, called from her home in Virginia to say she and her sons were going to take care of that need for me.

"Coincidence?" There is no such thing. It's just part of the plan. Even the "coincidences" that cause me to step backwards are there for the purpose of self-growth. You call them angels. I call them winged ones from the Thunder Tribe. And the Thunder Tribe has walked my trails.

## So you wanna run for office?

Local politics can break your heart. It is not for the thinned or those with easily bruised egos.

On the morning after election day last year, I stopped by the courthouse on the way to work to see how the candidates fared in the previous day's balloting. Actually I stopped to see how the people I voted for stacked up against the rest of the field. As I read the names and numbers so precisely printed on that poster board hanging on the courthouse



All Over the Map

Tony Key

door, I couldn't help but marvel at the efforts put into the campaign by each candidate, all the handshaking all the telephoning, all those placards and posters, all those meetings, all that smiling, smiling, smiling, all reduced to numbers on a piece of paper. So this is how your friends and neighbors feel about you, huh?

Local politics is a different kind of animal. Everybody more or less knows everybody else. The candidates are familiar with one another and often

are friends or close acquaintances.

Likewise with the voters. They attend the same churches, shop at the same stores, eat at the same restaurants, skip the same PTA meetings, and so on. How does one choose from among friends and associates?

And contrary to the axiom, familiarity does not always breed contempt. Being an incumbent helps. Unless an office-holder has proven to be demonstrably incompetent or dishonest, he or she can count on being re-elected. Minority candidates continue to find the going tough, as do women. And since local officials are often limited in their policy making

because of strictures from Washington, D.C. or Raleigh, innovation or creativity can be a liability rather than an asset. Better to know how to work within the existing system than to make waves.

So a cold shoulder at the drugstore, a sympathy card after a recent loss, a helping hand at a church function, a poorly timed bit of criticism, the use of a set of jumper cables, a neatly trimmed lawn, delinquent taxes, any or all of the above could be deciding factors on who to vote for.

In May, we get to vote again and I humbly tip my hat to each and every person running for office. You're made out of tougher stuff than most of us!



## April is the month for lots of celebrations

It's April, and spring is surely just around the corner. There are so many things to do in April. We have in our reference collection a book called *Chase's Calendar of Events*. It's a wonderful compendium of celebrations and holidays for each day of the year. I've been looking through April to see what's coming up, and I thought you might like to know about some of the observances.

April is International Amateur Radio Month. It's also International Guitar Month, Keep America Beautiful Month, Listening Awareness Month, Mathematics Education Month, Month of the Young Child, and National Anxiety Month. In addition, April is National Garden Month, National Humor Month, National Welding Month, and Stress Awareness Month. I think I'll focus on the humor, and maybe that will help me overcome my anxiety and stress.

In addition to dedicating the month to various causes and celebrations, there are of course many weeks to be acknowledged. I think my

favorite is National Reading a Road, Map Week, which has as its theme,

"Happiness is knowing how to read a road map," I think maps are quite interesting, and I know you cartophiles out there agree.

Then there's Egg Salad Week, Astronomy Week, Week of the Ocean, Wildlife Week, Gospel Music Week, Coin Week, Lingerie Week, and Volunteer Week. But the week I'm most looking forward to is National Library Week, April 14-21. The library staff and I have been working on plans to celebrate this week, and it looks like it's going to be a busy one. On Monday, April 15, at 3 p.m., Rev. Jon Strother is going to be our guest storyteller. He'll be telling stories suitable for all ages, so make plans now to come for one or all of his wonderful tales. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, Pat Phillips will be conducting microbiology workshops for sixth graders on behalf of the Albemarle Environmental Association. The Perquimans Arts



Snapshots  
Jeri Olman  
Perquimans County  
Librarian

book sale will begin on Tuesday, April 16. We have lots of books - 50 cents for hardcovers, 25 cents for paperbacks.

We are also planning a "Computers for Seniors" workshop and a thank you tea to honor our outgoing library board members. Details for those events are still being worked out, so keep an eye out for posters announcing dates and times.

Besides specific weeks, there are lots of special days in April. April 6 in Plan Your Epitaph Day. April 7 is No Housework Day, with the motto, "No trash. No dishes. No making of beds or washing of laundry. And no guilt. Give it a rest." Now there's my kind of day! April 10 is Siblings Day, when we can honor our brothers and sisters, living and deceased. My sisters will be celebrating this day. I'm sure, and I hope they celebrate No Housework

League Members Show will close on Monday, April 15. Our annual spring used

Day, too.

Professional Secretaries Day, Kiss-Your-Mate Day, Moment of Laughter Day, and Hairstylist Day are all waiting for our attention. There are so many reasons to be happy in April.

One day I'm planning to celebrate in a special way this year is April 25, "Take Our Daughters to Work Day." This is the result of a national public education campaign to focus attention on the needs of girls ages 9 to 15. Many girls see limited opportunities for their futures. Spending a workday with an adult can open their eyes and minds to career possibilities. If you have an opportunity to mentor a girl, I hope you'll say yes. A young lady asked if she could come to work with me, and I'm really looking forward to sharing my workday activities with her. You don't have to have a daughter to participate. Just a "daughter for a day."

I didn't mention nearly all the occasions that are listed, so if you didn't see anything in my list of possibilities, maybe you'll want to spend a few minutes looking for a day or a week that suits your fancy.

## Ah, the joys of writer's block

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

It's 1:15 a.m. on a Tuesday. I have tried to write a column off and on for several hours. It's not going to happen.

Those of you who are unfamiliar with writer's block are fortunate beings.

There is absolutely nothing, I mean nothing, worse than watching the clock approach deadline - or bedtime - and not being able to write a word.

The worst part is, there's nothing you can do about it. You can start to write something umpteen dozen times,

only to end up erasing it, or now in the age of the computer, deleting it.

I wish you all a blessed Easter. May your kids not spill chocolate milk on their new clothes before you leave for church and you not oversleep due to the time change.