

The Perquimans Weekly

35¢

Vol. 64, No. 16

The only newspaper for and about Perquimans County people

Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Commissioners meeting briefs

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

In addition to articles run in this newspaper on April 4 and 11 concerning the April meeting of the Perquimans County Commissioners, the following items were on the agenda:

- The county will purchase a Ford F-150 truck for the water department at a cost of \$12,476.50.
- A-1 Roofing Company will replace the sloped, shingled portion of the roof on the Albemarle Commission building at a cost of \$6,995. A-1's bid was the lowest of the four submitted. Others were Williams Danchise—\$8,400, Bateman Roofing Company—\$8,996, and Jackson Construction Company—\$10,510.
- Dr. Larry Donnithorne, president of The College of The Albemarle, presented an overview of COA programs, and provided enrollment figures for the county. The county gave \$1,000 to COA in its 1995-96 budget. Donnithorne asked for continued financial support, and said the school is dependent on local support for facilities maintenance and repair.
- Personnel from the local Natural Resources Conservation Service presented a slide show depicting their work over the past year.
- The commissioners will meet as the Board of Equalization and Review on May 6 at 10 a.m.
- Susan Gibbs Mansfield was hired as a tax department clerk.

• Sheriff David Lane presented a monthly report and told commissioners he received two letters commending his officers' performance.

• Refinancing the 1988 county bonds for school facilities and water department hit a snag when the county discovered that the bonds are not tax-free. Wachovia Bank cannot offer the 5.5 percent rate previously discussed because the bonds are not tax-free. County manager Paul Gregory is still working with Wachovia to lower the rate of the 10.75 percent bonds. Chairman Mack Nixon said the county might consider consolidating the bonds with the proposed loan for water department renovations.

• Kathy Wynn of CableVision met with commissioners to discuss renewal of the company's franchise agreement with the county. Negotiations are still in progress.

• Goose Nest Lane resident William Beck spoke on behalf of subdivision residents, asking the county to consider running water lines to the subdivision. Nixon told the group that the county had worked on a 50-50 pay plan with some other subdivisions and would discuss that option for Goose Nest Lane.

• Economic Developer Robert Baker updated the board on progress at Perquimans Commerce Centre, the 2020 incubator grant application, efforts to revitalize downtown Hertford and updating the tourism brochure published by the Chamber of Commerce.

• Tammy Miller White, a member of the NAACP's education committee, asked why the county has not applied for Smart Start funds. Schools representative Susan Winslow said an application for Smart Start funds is in progress.

• The commissioners again supported the recommendation of the dispatch board not to allow the school system's security guard to tap into the county dispatch system. Chief dispatcher Homerla Jennette said she had spoken with an FCC representative who agreed with the decision due to licensing problems. The commissioners suggested that the security guard be given a cellular phone for fast communication with the dispatch department.

• The resignation of recreation director Lee Hoffman was accepted effective May 15.

• Approved hiring Susan Gibbs Mansfield as a tax clerk.

• Moved tax supervisor Cheryl Phillips up two steps on the pay scale.

• Negotiations are almost complete on leasing space in the Carolina Telephone office on Grubb Street for use as a dispatch office. The county will pay for approximately \$4,000 worth of renovations to the building. A final lease has not been signed.

Inside

- OM teams compete at state.....Page 8
- Central forms Parent Team.....Page 8
- Johnson is noted volunteer.....Page 3
- Spotlight: Perquimans Schools promote parent involvement.....Page 10

PIRATES WIN FIRST TOURNEY TITLE



PHOTO BY BRIAN VANDERLIET, THE DAILY ADVANCE

Brock Nixon slides under the tag by Camden catcher Brad Johnson in the title game of the Albemarle Invitational Easter Baseball Tournament at Hicks Field in Edenton Friday night. The Pirates claimed

the series trophy with a 14-3 win over Camden. The final round was reached by Perquimans with a 7-5 win over Currituck in the semis. For a full report on the final and semi-final games, please see page 6.

The journey to foster care

Written collectively by DSS Social Workers in the Albemarle Area

Imagine that it is the middle of the night. You are awakened by a commotion in your living room. A stranger is there. She tells you that you must leave your family and go with her. She does not tell you when you can come back home, no matter how you beg to know. She may not be able to tell you when you can see your parents and your brothers and sisters again.

Suppose that the stranger puts you in a car and drives for many hours through the night. You are getting further and further away from home. You see nothing familiar to you. You know that you will not be able to find the way back home by yourself. How are you feeling? How do you think a child who has suffered abuse or neglect would feel in this situation?

This scene is far from imaginary for many of the children in the Albemarle area who must be removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Not only are they physically separated from their families, they are separated by great geographical distances as well due to a lack of foster homes. While they are protected from a harmful home environment, their relationships with their brothers and sisters, extended family, teachers and schools, ministers and babysitters suffer from loss of contact. Since personal identity is very much derived from our relationships with the people in our lives, children sometimes lose their sense of self when these contacts are limited or

lost altogether.

People outside the child welfare system seem to have a vague idea that there are homes, owned and managed by the state, to which children go until they go home, are adopted, or reach age 18. In fact, most of the children who are taken into custody go into family homes with volunteer foster parents licensed by the state. Some children, usually those with severe emotional or psychological problems or those who have been involved in criminal activity, receive treatment for a limited time in state institutions. Most group homes for children are managed by churches, fraternal organizations or other non-profit groups. Care in these facilities is very expensive and most specialize in the care of children with specific needs.

Social workers, foster parents, judges and other professionals who work in the child welfare system know that foster care is the beginning of a journey, not a destination. It would be the beginning of a process of healing for the child and the family. Foster care should lead to a permanent healthy family situation for the child, whether with the child's natural family, or with an adoptive family. Too often, however, it is the continuation of a cycle of heartache and loss. This is especially true when children are cut off from everyone and everything familiar to them.

We are fortunate to have some wonderful foster parents in our area who have helped to heal many children and guided them to lead healthy, productive lives. Caring,

dedicated foster parents have a greater positive impact on foster children than any of the other professionals involved in their lives. There are just not enough of them. Every county in the Albemarle region is in need of more foster homes. Emergency homes are needed for children whose entry into foster care is abrupt and, due to a crisis, unplanned.

The typical child who is placed in this type of care will not be in the placement for an extended period of time. There is a need for foster parents who can provide respite care for children who must spend some time away from their foster family due to an emergency in the foster family, or a crisis situation with the child. There is also a huge need for foster parents who can manage children with difficult behaviors, psychological problems, special medical needs or other special needs. Foster parents such as this work closely with public and private agencies to provide the services that these children need. These people, called therapeutic foster parents, receive a great deal of specialized training.

Imagine, again, that you are that child awakened in the middle of the night. What kind of person would you want to see waiting for you at the end of the ride through the darkness?

Can you be that person for a child? If you think you would like to try, please contact Debbie Spence, 426-1806, at the Perquimans County Department of Social Services. Someone will be waiting.

Foster homes needed

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

There is no room in the inn. That's the message Debbie Spence, Social Worker with the Perquimans County Department of Social Services, wants to get to the public.

Perquimans County presently has 11 children in foster care, but only two of those children can be housed in Perquimans because the county has only two licensed foster homes. Six children are living out of the county. Three are living with relatives.

Because the primary goal of foster care is to work with families to over-

come problems so that the family can ultimately be reunited, it is very important that foster children be housed in Perquimans County, Spence said. Social workers need to have regular contact with foster children, and sometimes those children are housed hours away from Perquimans County. In addition to the difficulties social workers face trying to work with families split by problems as well as miles, Spence said losing school, extended family and community relationships can add to the stress of a foster child. These factors make having local foster care crucial.

(Please see care, Page 10)

SADD promotes drug-free driving

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Two big events in the lives of teens all too often end in tragedy: prom and graduation.

In an effort to educate the public, especially youth, and prevent the drunk and drugged driving that claims the lives of so many youth, the Perquimans County High School Students Against Drunk Driving Club is sponsoring its annual Prom Promise campaign.

Activities are planned from now until the end of the school year to reinforce the club's anti-drunk driving message.

Yesterday (Wednesday), Patrick T. Grady spoke at the Prom Promise kick-off event. The date was chosen because April 17 was National Prom Promise Day. An assembly was held for students at 9 a.m., with a 7 p.m. program set for the community. During the student assembly, 100 T-shirts, purchased by the SADD Club with donations from local merchants, were distributed.

Grady is dedicated to helping others to improve themselves through the use of each person's individual talents, skills, abilities and mental attitude. The motivational speaker uses true stories and humor to make serious points. His talks cover topics from the challenges of growing up to dealing with circumstances encountered while dating. He addresses the benefits of having a positive mental attitude, and taking advantage of opportunities to espouse the danger of abusing drugs and alcohol.

A candlelight vigil is planned on April 29 at 7 p.m. on the courthouse lawn. Guests will include Brad Hurdle and Ann Smith, both victims of drunk drivers. The students hope the community will support the program.

Smith will return to Perquimans High School to speak on May 3 at 9 a.m. as a final reminder to students not to drink and drive before the May 4 prom. SADD will also place a wrecked car on the school grounds on prom night to remind students of the dangers of drinking and driving.

On May 28 at 9 a.m., just prior to the June 7 graduation, Hurdle will speak at the high school.

Prom and graduation weekends should be memorable because of the fun had and wonderful memories made. To have such special times in the lives of youth marred by tragedy is senseless.

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 70s Low: 40s SUNNY	High: 70s Low: 40s MOSTLY SUNNY	High: 70s Low: 40s MOSTLY SUNNY