

The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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HOOLA HOOP/FIELD DAY FUN



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Perquimans County students are busy with end-of-courses tests, final projects and exam preparation, but there's still time for a break to have fun. Field Days at Hertford Grammar, Perquimans Central and Perquimans Middle schools offer

students the opportunity to show their athletic ability and have a great time. Here, eighth grade boys swing their hips in the hoola hoop contest Friday at the middle school. Miss Dobie's class took first place for the day.

Bus, car hit head-on south of Hertford

No students injured in wreck on Highway 17

By **SUSAN R. HARRIS**
Editor
and **GINGER LIVINGSTON**
The Daily Advance

Ann Lightfoot is being hailed as a hero for preventing a head-on collision between the school bus she was driving and a car from becoming a tragedy.

Lightfoot managed to keep Perquimans County Schools bus No. 59 upright and out of a ditch when a car traveling north on U.S. Highway 17 bypass about one mile south of Hertford pulled directly into the path of the southbound bus.

"The bus driver did a tremendous piece of driving," Perquimans Superintendent Randall Henion said. "I think my first reaction would have been to swerve which could have caused the bus to roll over. When I asked her about it she said she wasn't driving the bus at the time, it was a higher authority."

Transportation and maintenance secretary June Ritter said she was told by school transportation officials that when Lightfoot saw the car pull into her path, she locked the brakes, holding the bus at the right edge of the road. To her right was a dragline ditch.

Hertford Police Department Sgt. Dale Vanscoy was a member of the Hertford Fire Department response team that responded to the accident.

"I don't know who that driver was, but she did an excellent job," Vanscoy said. "She turned the bus just enough to keep it from taking the full impact of the hit."

Lightfoot suffered a cracked wrist during the accident, Ritter said. She will probably be unable to resume her driving duties for a week.

"For precaution and gratitude, we decided to give her a week off," Ritter said.

The driver of the car, whose name is unavailable, was not so fortunate. Her car was jammed under the front wheel well of the bus on the driver's

side. The response team used the jaws of life to remove her from the car, Vanscoy said. Emergency personnel on the scene suspect she suffered several broken bones. She was taken to Chowan Hospital for treatment. No word on her injuries or condition is available.

None of the seven high school and middle school students on the bus at the time of the accident were injured, school officials said. However, some parents indicated to school officials that they would take children in for examination as a precaution.

"I was really proud of their (the students') demeanor in pulling together," Henion said. He also praised the driver of a second bus caught in the traffic backlog caused by the accident. He said the driver kept the students calm and occupied during the delay.

Traffic was rerouted down several secondary roads while the accident was cleared.

Vanscoy said emergency personnel were anxious as they traveled to the scene, because the incident was reported as an accident involving a car, a school bus and a tractor trailer.

Upon their arrival, the response team found that the log truck driver following the bus had managed to avoid hitting the bus. Ritter said officials told her that the truck driver realized there was trouble ahead before impact and slowed down.

Traffic is normally heavy on U.S. 17, especially on the two-lane corridor connecting Hertford and Edenton. With road construction underway to widen the highway to four lanes, travel along the eight-mile stretch is often slow. Area residents regularly note problems with speeding, dangerous passing and construction vehicles pulling out in traffic.

The possible danger of travel down U.S. 17 is of special concern to Henion due to school buses transporting students on the route.

While N.C. Highway Patrol officers don't think the construction on U.S. 17 has made travel more dangerous, several local officials, including law enforcement officers, disagree.

PCHS to offer new breakfast program

Perquimans High School students will fuel up for success next fall with the expansion of the school's breakfast program.

Through the First Class Breakfast in a Bag Program, breakfast will be delivered to each classroom at the end of the first period class. Breakfast will be available to each student at the school at no charge.

The program is made possible through an \$8,000 grant from Share Our Strength and American Express. It is a part of the Charge Against Hunger campaign with American Express.

Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast receive nourishment required for proper growth, attend school more regularly, behave better in the classroom, have greater attention spans and improve academic performance.

Breakfast has been available at school for several years, however students had to arrive early to participate. Child nutrition personnel recognized a need to increase participation in the program for the benefit of all students.

County economic and social

factors helped to influence the grant approval. According to the grant application, Perquimans has a population of 10,701, with 1940 students enrolled in its school system. Of those students, 71 percent receive AFDC. The county's average per capita income of \$10,241 make it 89th in the state. About 25 percent of county families earn incomes below the poverty level. Almost 40 percent of students in the local schools live in single-parent households. Another 5 percent live with a guardian.

"Traditionally, both of these groups earn low wages," the application states. "These factors have a direct impact on children."

Many local students are from families dealing with unemployment, poverty, substandard housing, transportation problems, drug abuse, domestic violence and health crisis. As a result, numerous students are involved in the complex issue of hunger. Statistics indicate that students from low-income families depend on the schools' meal program for as much as one half of their daily nutritional intake.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Shirley McClain (center), executive director of North Carolina Hunger Network, visited Perquimans County Schools recently to present an \$8,000 anti-hunger grant. Through the grant, high school students will receive a free bagged breakfast next school year. With McClain are Student Alternative Services Coordinator Jeanie Umphlett (left) and Child Nutrition Director Donna Harris.

Records will be kept of the breakfast program to document its effectiveness.

The project will be a collaborative effort of the school system, the State Department of Public Instruction and the Perquimans County Health Department. The health

department will help make the community aware of the importance of eating a proper diet to preserve good health.

Funds will be sought from private, public and local funding sources to continue the program after the grant period ends in April 1997.

Inmate labor saves town on maintenance

By **SUSAN R. HARRIS**
Editor

Town Manager John Christensen doesn't know exactly how much money Hertford has saved over the past few months thanks to inmate labor from the Gates County Correctional Facility, but he's sure it's a significant amount for a small town.

The most recent project for which the town was able to secure inmate labor was cleaning out the drainage lines that link Church and Front streets through the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church property.

Heavy rains in late winter

and early spring brought major flooding at the intersection of Church and Dobbs streets, and complaints from motorists. The town determined that tree roots had grown into the drainage lines, and said fixing the problem would be labor-intensive.

With inmate assistance, the town maintenance crew finished the project last week.

Gates County inmates have also done work at the sewer plant, helped with the massive tire cleanup on town property adjacent to the sewer plant, and performed roadside cleanup in several areas.



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Hertford officials say inmates from the Gates County Correctional Facility have saved the town thousands of dollars on maintenance projects like this one on Church Street.

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 70s Low: 50s CHANCE OF RAIN	High: 70s Low: 50s CHANCE OF RAIN	High: 70S Low: 50s CHANCE OF RAIN