

The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

CROSSING THE COUNTRY



PHOTO BY BRIAN VANDERLIET, THE DAILY ADVANCE

Perquimans County High School cross country runner Mason Noordsy runs in the Pirates' match against Hertford County last week. Perquimans' Patrick Gregory won the race. See complete information on page 6.

4 face federal charges for bottle bombs

By GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Advance

A New Hope Road man escaped injury last Tuesday afternoon after a bottle bomb thrown into his front yard exploded near him.

The man, whom Perquimans County Sheriff David Lane declined to identify, reportedly picked up the bottle after seeing it thrown from a passing car. The man was going to put it in the trash he was gathering for dumping.

"When he saw the contents expanding and fizzing he threw it away," Lane said. The bottle exploded shortly after.

The man called the sheriff's department with a description of the car and one of its occupants. Deputies and Hertford police officers mobilized and quickly arrested four men driving into Hertford.

Those charged are John C. Ritter, 19, of Route 6, Box 198, Hertford; Jason E. Browning, 18, of Route 2, Box 66, Edenton; Jason E. Slone, 19, of Route 3, Box 617P, Hertford; and Eugene E. Moring, 28, of P.O. Box 34, Hertford.

All four men were charged with possessing a weapon of mass destruction, a Class F felony. They remain in Albemarle District Jail on bonds ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Ritter has also been charged with throwing a bottle bomb in Matthews Acres, a subdivision off New Hope Road.

Ritter and Browning were charged last Wednesday by the Hertford Police Department with four additional counts of possessing a weapon of mass destruction after police found the exploded remains of several bottle bombs in the Perquimans High School parking lot; Cedarwood Cemetery, which is adjacent to the school; and Jenny's Gut, a creek which passes through the high school property.

Because the bombs were exploded within 500 yards of school property, the charges against them have been upgraded to the more serious Class C felony, which has a maximum 10-year sentence. Ritter's bond was set at \$25,000 secured; Browning's at \$20,000 secured.

Hertford Police Chief Bennie Murphy said

Ritter and Browning confessed to Monday's incident after their arrest Tuesday. They said, however, that they were not responsible for a bottle bomb thrown onto the front porch of a Pennsylvania Avenue home on Aug. 18.

"From what they tell us a lot of kids know how to make these things," Murphy said.

Indeed, the incidents are among the growing number of bottle bomb explosions across the state, usually caused by teen-agers trying to pull a prank, say officials. So far, no one has been seriously hurt by the explosions.

When Hertford Police Sgt. Dal Vanscoy contacted the SBI about analyzing the first bottle bomb remains, SBI officials were able to describe the device without seeing it, Murphy said.

SBI officials reportedly told Vanscoy that the number of bombings has increased to the point that federal officials have been contacted for advice, Murphy said.

Murphy said that the bombs have the potential to maim a person if they explode near them.

The bombs are so potentially dangerous, as a matter of fact, that if a bottle bomb explosion results in an injury, no matter how minor, those responsible will be arrested and face federal charges of terrorism and possession of a weapon of mass destruction, officials said.

"It may seem extreme but people should realize the damage caused by these devices can be serious," Murphy said.

"It's not funny. It's not a joke. People are taking it very seriously."

When Deputy Jon Schultz responded to Tuesday's call, he met the suspects' car on the Winfall side of the S-bridge. The deputy turned around and followed the car into Hertford, stopping it at the One Stop Convenience Store. Schultz's report states that when he approached the car, he saw a plastic liter bottle, household cleaners and other materials apparently used to make the bottle bombs.

The four had their first appearance in court last Wednesday before District Court Judge J.C. Cole. Lane said Friday that Edenton attorney Sam Dixon will represent the defendants.

"It's not funny. It's not a joke. People are taking it very seriously."

Bennie Murphy
Hertford Police Chief

Annual festival promises fun for all ages

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The 15th edition of the Perquimans County Indian Summer Festival will kick off on Friday, Sept. 20 with a pork barbecue supper and the second Miss Indian Summer Festival Pageant.

Sponsored by Perquimans County Schools, Captain Bob's, Centura Bank and the Chamber of Commerce, the supper will be served from 4:30-7 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Tickets are \$5 per plate, eat-in or take-out and may be purchased from Chamber members and at local businesses. Chris Lane is ticket chairman.

Young ladies from 13-19 years old will compete for the title of Miss Indian Summer Festival at 7:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium. Participants will be judged on poise, beauty, citizenship and talent, according to pageant chairman Brenda Dail. Dail said there are already several contestants, but more participants are needed. Call her at 426-4039 for an application or



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The local alternative band Solar Corpse will make its Indian Summer Festival debut at the Waterfront Pavilion. Band members are (left to right) Mike Dail, Andrew Harris, Quinton Jordan, Terilyn Ross and Justin Beamon. The Waterfront Pavilion will cater to youth.

information.

Saturday will begin bright and early in downtown Hertford. Over 60 vendors have already reserved spaces to offer everything from jewelry to tupperware to homemade candles. Those who enjoy the tastes of the festival can feast on candy apples, pizza, seafood, Italian sausage, cotton candy, funnel cakes, popcorn, nachos, hot dogs and more at Corner Cuisine.

The decorating chairmen, Anna Smith and Harriette Woodard, have ordered beautiful fall banners to fly over the downtown area.

Judy Christensen and Suzanne Haste are organizing a Business of the Hour featuring specials by downtown mer-

chants.

Entertainers for the downtown stages include the Harbour Lites, August Band, PCHS Marching Pirates, Flatland Cloggers, Denim & Diamonds Dance Group, Jeanie Truesdale, Shades of Light, Rockin' Willie Band and EZ Blues Band. Flynn Surratt will serve as master of ceremonies.

Behind the town offices, the young and young at heart can enjoy Waterfront Pavilion, featuring Joy Untold, award-winning professional entertainers who will offer a petting zoo, clowns, magic, balloon art, puppets, costumed characters and more. There will also be games, canoe rides and story time. Local alternative bands

Hummer and Solar Corpse will perform on the waterfront stage, along with local DJs, the Phabulous Phelps Boys.

For early risers, Chowan Hospital will offer its annual Fun Run/Walk at 8 a.m. Registration is at the high school. Hertford Baptist and Methodist churches will also sponsor a Family Walk for Life to benefit the Albemarle Crisis Pregnancy Center at 9 a.m. Registration is at the Baptist Church parking lot.

The festival will climax at Missing Mill Park when Bill Deal and Ammon Sharp, the original Rhondels, take the stage for the street dance.

For festival information, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 426-5657.

County wetlands to be restored by state

The N.C. Board of Transportation will pay a Tarboro firm \$352,115 to restore 600 acres of wetlands in Gates and Perquimans counties.

Barnhill Construction was awarded the contract which will restore wetland on Folly Road east of Sandy Cross.

The land was once part of the Dismal Swamp. It was drained and cultivated by a private owner. NCDOT bought the land and will restore it to its natural condition. Work is scheduled to begin this month.

The project is part of the state's agreement with the

Army Corps of Engineers to recreate wetlands in kind when roadways are built through environmentally sensitive areas, according to Neil Lassiter, DOT Division Construction Engineer in the Elizabeth City office.

During construction, safeguard will be taken to protect small streams and wetlands from contamination by soil or construction materials. Grass will be planted to cover bare ground caused by construction.

Work on the project should be complete in December.

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 80s Low: 60s RAIN LIKELY	High: 80s Low: 60s STORMS LIKELY	High: 80s Low: 60s CHANCE OF RAIN

See The Perquimans Weekly on September 19 for our Indian Summer Festival preview