



The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

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Perquimans County an All of Us Community

September's theme:
Do Your Best

Juveniles suspected of robbery

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Criminals are getting younger, they say.

That's definitely true in Perquimans County, where three children, ages 6-12, are suspects in a robbery case in Snug Harbor, according to Perquimans County Sheriff David Lane.

The trio allegedly is responsible for a break-in at the residence of Celeste McHone of Snug Harbor. A .22 caliber rifle and cash were taken. The incident was reported Sunday afternoon around 3:30 p.m.

The sheriff said law enforcement authorities are seeking juvenile petitions in the case. The sheriff's department also recently arrested four people they suspect of breaking and entering four Snug Harbor homes in early August.

Arrested were Charlie McMellin, 20, of 53 Goosie Lane, Hertford; Robert Lee Johnson, 41, of 574A Pine St., Hertford; Benjamin Warrenner, 16, of 41 and 42F Shady Lane, Hertford; and Leonard Richard Sorrell, 24, of 116 Hemlock St., Hertford.

McMellin was charged with four counts of felony breaking and entering, possession of stolen goods, second degree burglary and breaking and entering. His bond was set at \$9,000 secured. The other three were charged with felony possession of stolen goods. Bonds ranged from \$3,000-\$6,000.

Chief deputy Dean Cartwright said a fifth suspect, Michael Shields, has been arrested and is in custody in Virginia. Cartwright had no other information on Shields.

Board gets mixed messages on personnel

Speakers split on board action regarding Tice

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Board of Education received mixed messages from the public on recent personnel issues at the board's regular meeting Monday night.

The latest personnel controversy involves the July 31 suspension without pay and dis-

missal proceedings initiated by superintendent Randall Henion against long-time Hertford Grammar School principal Bill Tice. Tice resigned on Aug. 15 effective Dec. 31. He is now suspended with pay until that time.

The school board issued a statement after Tice spoke with *The Daily Advance* and *The Perquimans Weekly* newspapers stating that the board had reviewed documentation supporting Henion's decision to recommend Tice's dismissal.

"The documentation is substantial and reflects serious performance problems which repeatedly were discussed with Mr. Tice over the last two years," the news release read. "The Superintendent gave Mr. Tice appropriate time, opportunity, guidance and resources to improve his performance, but little to no improvement was seen."

The release added that the proper procedures were followed at every stage of the process leading to his resignation.

Tice's suspension drew an overflow crowd to the board's Aug. 18 meeting, where several people spoke in his support.

Monday night, more speakers were among the full house. Three of those who spoke backed Henion and the board. Two said they had concerns about the issue.

Former school board chairman Ben Hobbs said he attended a school board convention in October 1995 where he heard a presentation by the Raleigh law firm Schwartz and Associates concerning person-

nel evaluations. Realizing the need for a mechanism to deal with teacher evaluations and in the process make the school system better, Hobbs was one of the board members who wanted Richard Schwartz to evaluate the performance appraisal process locally, he said.

Hobbs said the board received a preliminary report in the spring of 1996. He said the board was angry with the results and called principals in to discuss the issue.

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Hertford RR crossing to get safer

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

A Hertford railroad crossing should get safer.

Town manager John Christensen said the state Department of Transportation notified the town that it is eligible for a federal grant to add automatic warning devices at the railroad crossing at Dobbs Street.

Christensen said it will cost approximately \$90,000, and the town is eligible for 90 percent funding. The town would pay the other 10 percent, either all at once or over a 3 year period. There will also be an annual local maintenance fee of \$1,328.

Seven streets converge at the railroad tracks, which are only a block from Hertford Grammar School. The proximity of the school and heavy traffic related to the school make the crossing especially dangerous, councilman Sid Eley said before moving to apply for the funds.

Councilman Billy Winslow suggested that the town approach the school system asking for funds to help with the local match and annual maintenance because most of the traffic across the tracks is generated by the school.

The town has sought to upgrade the warning system at the crossing for 20 years, but could get no funding assistance, councilman Erie Haste said.

The crossing is presently served only by a flashing overhead light that cannot be seen clearly by drivers at all seven of the streets that come together at the track.

The track does have a warning signal at its Grubb Street crossing.

Miss Indian Summer crowned

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The excitement and enthusiasm of youth flowed from the stage at Perquimans County Middle School Saturday night during the Miss Indian Summer Festival Pageant.

Six talented Perquimans High School students sang and danced their way into the hearts of those gathered for the gala. Junior Terilyn Ross was crowned Miss Indian Summer Festival 1997 by the 1996 queen, Brandy Hollowell. Summer Warden earned first runner-up honors. Named second runner-up was Sarah Knehr.

New to this year's pageant was the contestants' selection of a Miss Congeniality. Courtney Harris earned that designation.

Julie Bunch and Keosha Beamon rounded out the six finalists.

"I consider all six girls who appeared in the pageant Saturday finalists," said pageant chairman Brenda Dail. "Several other girls completed applications or attended a pre-pageant practice, but these six were the ones who stayed with it throughout the days leading up to the pageant. They are all beautiful, talented girls. We are fortunate in Perquimans County to have such outstanding youth."

The pageant opened with a production number themed on the Broadway hit, "Grease," and the introduction of contestants. After watching a repeat performance of the dance performed by Hollowell in her successful bid for the Indian Summer crown in 1996, the audience enjoyed dancing, singing and instrumentals during the talent competition. Appearance and poise and public speaking competitions were also a part of the pageant.

"I know I didn't drive far enough to get to Broadway Saturday night, but wow, what



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Perquimans County High School junior Terilyn Ross was crowned Miss Indian Summer Festival 1997 at the pageant held Saturday night at Perquimans Middle School. For highlights of Festival '97, see the insert in this week's newspaper.

a production of Miss Indian Summer Festival '97!" said Chamber executive director Sandra Williams Smith. "Brenda Dail and her group put on an outstanding evening of entertainment at the Perquimans Middle School. We have some remarkable young people in Perquimans County."

After a final look at the contestants, Hollowell and James Hurdle, a 1996 graduate of Perquimans High School and a student at North Carolina School of the Arts, performed a special dance the pair choreographed. They received a standing ovation.

Lisa Dail, pageant youth coordinator, sang a song of thanks on behalf of the contestants to the contestants' parents and those who helped with the pageant.

Another change in this year's pageant was the inclusion of young men in the open-

ing production number and as escorts for the contestants' final walk down the runway.

Just prior to taking her final walk as Miss Indian Summer Festival, Hollowell presented the chamber with a portrait of herself in her gown and crown from last year's pageant. Smith said it will hang in the chamber's reception area.

Anna Wrae Smith and Douglas Umphlett returned to the pageant as mistress and master of ceremonies. Pageant co-chairman was Lynwood Winslow. Perquimans County Schools employees and students worked at the ticket table and behind the scenes as stagehands and technicians.

The pageant is co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Perquimans County Schools. It is the official kickoff to the festival.

A Festival program book is inserted in this newspaper.

Student gets left on bus

By SEAN JACKSON
Correspondent

For 4-year-old Denzell Hunter, the long bus ride to kindergarten at Hertford Grammar School wasn't a good time to sleep after all.

Denzell curled up in his seat near the back of bus 51 last Tuesday and drifted off to dreamland. When he finally woke up, Denzell found himself in a quiet, still and empty bus parked among the fleet of other empty buses behind the high school.

Denzell tried to exit the bus through the front and rear doors, but he didn't have the size or strength to pry them open. Luckily for the child, someone was already on his trail.

Earline Riddick, Denzell's kindergarten teacher, was surprised when fellow teacher Thelma Finch asked about the boy. Finch had dropped off her son with Denzell's mother Sheena Hunter early that morning. Mrs. Hunter had asked Finch to comb Denzell's hair after he arrived on the bus.

Riddick told Finch that Denzell was absent. She had assumed that Denzell was out sick. Both teachers quickly figured out the situation, correctly assuming that Denzell must still be on his bus.

Riddick called the schools' transportation director Richard O'Neal and asked him to check bus 51. When school personnel arrived, Denzell was waiting, and more than ready to be in school that day.

"I'm just glad that I asked her (Finch) to check on Denzell that morning," Sheena Hunter said, expressing her relief that Denzell was found so quickly and that he did not stay on the bus longer than he did. Even that early in the morning it was hot, she said.

Please see **Bus**, page 7

Harris fights NationsBank sale to Centura

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

It may be a case of David vs. Goliath, but Hertford businessman Jesse Harris said that's all right. In the biblical story, the underdog won the battle.

Harris is waging a war through the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond to try to halt the sale of Hertford's NationsBank branch to Centura Banks, Inc. The real estate developer and former town councilman said the acquisition would leave the county with only one full-service bank.

"I strongly object to turning over the above (NationsBank in Hertford) to Centura," Harris wrote to the Federal Reserve on July 31. "It would not be right/fair to return this

community to a one-bank town. Eliminating this competition now (we are growing) would not be protecting the consumer."

In a later letter, Harris said proof of the county's growth is evidenced by three successful waterfront developments, Snug Harbor, Holiday Island and Albemarle Plantation. He said Albemarle Plantation has a Dan Maples golf course and what is probably the largest marina between Norfolk, Va. and Florida. It is also steadily expanding, he added.

Harris also cited the opening of a fourth shopping center (Perquimans Centre), a second retirement complex, a third pharmacy, a new medical clinic with additional staff, and a commerce center under development as evidence of growth

in the county over the last few years.

Centura, however, contends that the sale would not give Perquimans County residents fewer banking choices. The bank submitted information with its application for acquisition that shows that the county is part of the Elizabeth City market, which includes Pasquotank, Perquimans and Camden counties, according to a letter written to the Federal Reserve by Centura's Chief Financial Officer Steven Goldstein.

"Hertford, the county seat and dominant city in Perquimans County, is approximately fifteen miles from Elizabeth City via Highway 17," Goldstein wrote. "Highway 17 acts as the major thoroughfare and is currently

begin widened to four lanes to facilitate the exchange of commerce between these two cities. Our application filed with your office provided an

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Outside

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