

## The Perquimans Weekly

Established 1932

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The Perquimans Weekly (USPS 428-680) is published each Thursday by The Daily Advance, 216 S. Hindexter St., Elizabeth City, N.C. 27909. Subscription rates are \$24.20 per year in-state, \$26.40 per year out-of-state, single copy rate 35 cents. Second class postage paid in Hertford, N.C. 27944. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to P.O. Box 277, Hertford, NC 27944.

Hootie's  
at home

A few weeks ago, a three-month old great horned owl was brought to Morningstar Nature Refuge by wildlife rehabilitators looking for a proper home for its release. Young as he was, "Hootie"



Nature in a Nutshell

Gail Roberson

was still large and powerful. I was amazed at his size for such a youngster, but then it's seldom even a seasoned naturalist gets to spend much time close to such a magnificent bird of prey. Hootie immediately settled in. He'd never spent a night in the woods, and had only a slight inclination towards killing his own prey, but it was time to learn. I listened to the instructions, Hootie was released in a special spot on the refuge, and I worried about him all night. There was a magical quality to this bird, a spiritual cord that stretched between him and humans, who had been his only family. I was already smitten.

The next morning Hootie was waiting for me to open my back door. No sooner had I stepped outside had he called to me from the limbs of the oak just above where my truck sat beneath the garage. As I spoke to Hootie, the owl bobbed back and forth on his limb and "talked," then flew down to my feet to make gurgling noises, not all that unlike a cat purring when it's stroked. These owls claim territory, and unless driven from it by hunger, live all year within it, extending or reducing the boundaries depending on prey available. I hoped he would stay within the refuge perimeter for several reasons. The first was because Hootie has had only human companionship and considers people his family. He was released here on purpose so he would be exposed to people on a daily basis until he gradually weaned himself and found his own natural life the way it's supposed to be. He will never be used as a pet, only enjoyed by others from a respectable distance when he chooses to do so. This is

an extremely dangerous bird, whose sharp talons and beak can tear a person into shreds.

I also wanted him to stay close by due to the danger involved in his being so human oriented. Hootie, when he hears the voices of people, want to go and be with them, and thus by establishing his territory on the refuge, perhaps he would not venture too close to other homes in the area. Also, when such a large bird of prey flies down to the ground near people, immediate thoughts are, "This owl is acting strange so it must have rabies. Go get the gun." Few people would understand.

Recently, Hootie has missed several feeding times, and it's my opinion he's finally hunting on his own a little. The last time I fed him, he "posterred," with his meal in a touch of territory defense symbolism. I looked into those huge golden eyes and smiled. This was a good sign his natural instincts were clicking in.

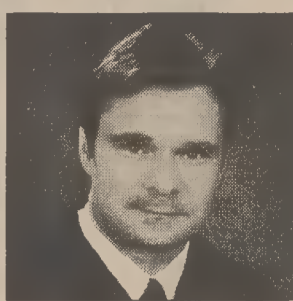
Usually only one fledgling survives into the second spring, so like most birds of prey, owls are protected by law. Great horned owls are one of the fiercest hunting birds anywhere, and can easily prey on mammals as large as porcupines, rabbits, skunks and great blue herons. Adults stand about twenty-five inches in height. It's large ear tufts give it its name. They hunt on silent wings, their soft feathers muffling their flight. The great, gold eyes detect movements far away. To experience one holding a conversation with me at my feet is one of the most unique experiences of my life.

I hope lots of people get to witness this great owl personally. It is difficult to do so and not feel total awe and respect. Meanwhile, Hootie seems to be at home here at Morningstar, and he has a chance to live a natural, long life. That's satisfaction enough for me.

## Letter to the editor policy

The Perquimans Weekly welcomes the opinion of its readers. Letters should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. Letters without signatures or telephone numbers will not be printed. Only the name and city of residence will be published. The subject matter should be of interest to the community, not a personal gripe. Letters may be edited for clarity and space limitations. Submit your letters to The Perquimans Weekly, P.O. Box 277, Hertford, N.C. 27944, or drop them off at our office at 199 W. Grubb Street. Call 426-5728 for more information.

## Good-bye, my friend



View from the Bench

District Court Judge Edgar Barnes

Recently a good friend of mine died. His name was Herb Schaefer. Herb and I had only known each other since January of 1996. During my election campaign of that year, I asked another friend, Sheriff David Lane if he knew anyone in Perquimans County who would be willing to help with my campaign. He suggested Herb. I requested David to ask Herb if he would help. The next thing I knew, Herb called me on the phone and said, "Judge I need some posters." He had never even met me. Over the next few months he worked relentlessly on my behalf and every time I

held court in Perquimans County he was there.

We quickly became close friends, the retired Navy man and the young Judge. Herb Schaefer was 70 years old when he left us. He had raised (4) four children with his lovely wife June, who had passed away several years ago, leaving an unfillable void in his life. Herb had a long distinguished career in the Navy, serving in World War II at Midway, in the Korean War and as a volunteer Merchant Marine in the Vietnam War. Herb was a

faithful member of the Catholic Church.

Herb was not a big man as statue goes. He was not a rich man as money goes, but, he tended to give more than he took from others; to his family, to his county, to his friends, thus making him a "Titan" among men. He always made it abundantly clear that my friendship was something he treasured.

I wish I could have told Herb goodbye. I wish I could have seen him one more time. I wish I could have told him how in the short time that we had known each other, he added depth, radiance and wisdom to my life. I would have told him that I admired the man he was and that his friendship was something precious to

me also. I would have brought him that Philly Steak Sub from Tommy's Pizza, like we had agreed the last time I visited my buddy.

I will miss you my friend and I give you this tribute from James Montgomery's *Departure of Friends*.

*Thus star by star declines,  
Till all we pass away;  
As morning nigh and high  
shines;  
To pure and perfect day;  
Nor sink those stars in empty  
night,  
They hid themselves in heav-  
en's own lights.*

God save this State and This  
Honorable Court.  
Court's adjourned.

## Being anonymous

It's so easy to be ugly when you do it anonymously. It takes no courage. It takes no strength of character. It takes no integrity.

Those who chose to send anonymous mail to Sheriff David Lane, his wife, his family and his employees during the campaign, therefore, I must assume lack all those qualities.

I appreciate and support the right of every registered voter to vigorously campaign for those candidates whom they support. I am also a believer in the right of the people to stand for or against public policy. These are precious rights, responsibilities and freedoms we enjoy as Americans. These are rights for which men and women have fought and died in this country and around the world.



Ramblin' with Susan

Susan Harris

The members of the "Ladies Group," the signers of some of the anonymous mail sent during the May primary, are not ladies. They may or may not be female, but they are not ladies by any stretch of the imagination.

And I would hesitate to call a "man" anyone who would send unsigned materials. A coward, yes. A man, no.

Tearing down campaign signs, throwing nails in a driveway, shooting in front of a house, sending anonymous mail — it all sounds like the antics of immature teenagers, not adults.

This infantile behavior is not over, either. Others have received anonymous mail since the primary.

I challenge you who sent this mail to stand up like adults and campaign for the candidate of your choice. Are you mature enough?



## Letters

To the residents of Perquimans County:

It is unfortunate that things go unnoticed, although this is the case in many situations. People do kind things for each other, and no one says a word. A person excels in his or her field, and they are left by the wayside. Today, however, Perquimans County will be noticed, and commended.

I have lived in this county for six years, attending the schools since sixth grade, and worked in the community for four years. I have helped a great deal, but in no way could I give back as much as this county has given me.

In the amount of time that I have here, I have amassed a circle of friends that is truly extraordinary. I have grown up with and around people whom I love and trust, and for whom I would do anything. It is not often that one has a group of friends like the one I had. That in itself, is a blessing. My friends include people my age, as well as those older and younger than I. From Keith Vaughn, the pastor of Hertford Baptist Church, to Bobby and Sharon Lane, my bosses for the past year and a half. The children I referee soccer for, the people with whom I risk my life on the volunteer rescue squad, and fire department, and who could forget the best director and friend I have ever had, Mr. Lyn Winslow III;

all of these people have left very vivid marks on my life here. My classmates with whom I graduated this year are also a lasting memory of what friends should be like. The senior family (class) of Perquimans High School was one of the greatest to walk the halls there. I know, because I was there.

I really love a community in which a perfect stranger waves and smiles, and without a thought, you return the gesture. In many places, people, are too afraid to look into each other's eyes, much less send a simple "Hello" across the street. People pass each other on the sidewalk, and before they go on their way, they smile or nod or even say, "Hi." That makes people feel very comfortable and welcome, even if they have lived there all of their lives. Everyone wants to belong to a group, and Perquimans County is quite a little group to belong to. A warm smile and a cup of coffee usually awaits all of the early birds ready to catch up on gossip, discuss farm prices, or just get out of the house. We live in a group that is so close, that people still honor personal charges, and still keep tabs. Our community is one that people will come out on a cold, rainy night just to cheer for the Pirates; or even travel the roads religiously in pursuit of the Softball State Champion Lady Pirates.

I guess most of all this is a thank you letter. You have

all taught me how to be a good member of society, and given me the morals and values that built America in the first place. I only hope that there could be more small towns in the world, or at least people with small town attitudes. God bless everyone who has made every day of my life a learning experience, and thank you for the happiness as well as the pain, for neither can exist without the other.

If I had a message for those I leave behind who just happened to look up to me, I would say, never stop learning. When you think you have learned all that you can, go somewhere else, you'll find that the chapters of your life get longer and more interesting as you continue to learn. Learning will help you be a better teacher when people look to you for help. Also remember: THERE IS LITTLE TO BE SEEN IN A SMALL TOWN, BUT WHAT YOU HEAR MAKES UP FOR IT. The key to learning is knowing when to speak, and when to listen, and in many cases, what to listen to.

Thank you very much.  
God Bless and Good Luck!  
Josh Turpin  
Hertford

Dear Editor:  
On behalf of the Downtown Hertford Merchants' Association, I would like to say thank you to everyone who helped make our Indian Summer

Festival Golf tournament a wonderful success.

I would first like to thank all of the participants, without them this tournament would not have happened. We had players come from Virginia and several surrounding counties. Sponsorships were received were from Biggs Pontiac of Elizabeth City, Cha'Pel's Hair Gallery, Culpepper & Dixon Attorneys At-Law, Dowd & Twiddy Insurance Agency, Pasquotank County Sheriff's Department, Robert Tadlock Insurance Agency, Tommy's Pizza & Subs, Trueblood's Plumbing & Woodard's Pharmacy. Our prizes and refreshments were courtesy of Albemarle Plantations Sound Golf Links, Captain Bob's, The Perquimans Weekly, The Wishing Well, Hertford Savings Bank, SSB, Layden's CB & Dog Supply, Crossroads Fuel Service, Ballahack Cards & Gifts, Frankie's Cafe, Gregory's 5&10; K-mart of Elizabeth City & JC Penny of Elizabeth City. A big thank you goes out to everyone at the Sound Golf Links, their patience and understanding was greatly appreciated. Everyone there went out of their way to help make this tournament a big success. Thank you to the volunteers who helped distribute refreshments and to the media for their help in informing the public of our fundraiser.

Jennifer J. Layden,  
Golf Tournament  
Coordinator