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Elderly woman scammed last week

Cash, items totalling \$4,000 stolen from home

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

An elderly woman in the Bethel community was apparently robbed of \$4,000 in cash and valuables last Wednesday by two possible scam artists.

According to the woman's

niece, the woman allowed the men to come into her home to measure for floor covering. The niece described the pair as "distinguished-looking" men driving a late-model, mid-size tan car.

About an hour after the men left, her niece said the woman checked her purse and found her money missing. A lock box containing the woman's car title, will and other important documents was later found to be missing. The total value of

the money and other items stolen was estimated by the niece at \$4,000.

A Perquimans County Sheriff's Deputy investigated the incident, but the niece said the officer was not optimistic about catching the alleged scam artists.

Sheriff Ralph Robinson said Friday that the apparent scam should serve as a warning to people, especially the elderly, not to allow strangers into their homes.

"People have got to be aware of who they let in their homes," Robinson said. "They can be taken advantage of."

If people need home repair or maintenance, Robinson said they should call individuals or companies they know or that are known in the community. Scam artists generally work an area for only a short while, then leave before law enforcement authorities are alerted to the problem. By the time officers are called in, the scam

artists usually have moved on to another area.

The niece of the woman scammed said she was publicizing what happened because she wants to alert the public. She said her aunt asked that her name and other identifying information not be published. According to the niece, the woman feared that the men would return if she were identified.

Robinson said the incident is still under investigation.

WEEKEND WINNERS



PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS

The PCHS Marching Pirates claimed the prestigious Marvin Shaw Award at Saturday's Peanut Festival in Edenton. The award is given to the band with the top combined scores in both the parade and field show competition. Perquimans claimed first place in the parade category and third place overall in 3-A field competition. Accepting the awards were drum major Kim Stallings (center); understudy drum majors Elonda Jones and Courtney Harris; horn line captains Adam Swindell, Dail Nixon, Lee Thach and Natalie Long; percussion captains Kera Johnson, Nick Litterst and Tabitha Warener; and color guard captains Stacie Overton and Danielle Hurdle. The band performs under the direction of David Ziemba with assistance from several instructors.



Brandy Hollowell was crowned Queen and Andre Moore, King, during halftime homecoming festivities Friday night at PCHS (left). Both candidates represented the senior class along with LeAnn Ferrell and Paul Spence. Crowned prince and princess were juniors Blair Winslow and Clifton Jenkins, who represented their class along with Shara Leigh and Johnny Warren. Named Mr. and Miss Class of 2001 were Shanna Nixon and Darion James. David Byrum and Starr Stepney were also sophomore candidates. Hannah Winslow and Justin Roberson were voted Mr. and Miss Class of 2002. Also representing the freshmen were Candace Bonner and Kevin Gordon. The crowning ceremony capped a week of fun activities for students, including Opposite Sex Day, Career Day, Blast From the Past, College Day and Black and Gold Day. A pep rally ended classes Friday.

Winfall man charged with selling crack

By GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Advance

A Winfall man was arrested on Sept. 25 after the Pasquotank-Elizabeth City Drug Task Force discovered 16 grams of crack cocaine in the man's home.

William Payton, no age available, of Route 2, Box 346, Winfall, is charged with possession with intent to sell and deliver crack and with the felonious maintenance of a dwelling to sell cocaine, said Pasquotank County Sheriff Randy Cartwright.

He was taken to Albemarle District Jail after a \$40,000 secured bond was set.

The drug task force started investigating Payton at the request of Perquimans County Sheriff Ralph Robinson.

"Sheriff Robinson has been receiving numerous complaints from (Winfall) residents that Mr. Payton could be selling drugs from his home," Cartwright said.

Task force Agent John Forbes initiated an investigation. On Sept. 25 task force agents and Perquimans County deputies obtained a search warrant for Payton's home, Cartwright said.

The search turned up 46 rocks of crack, \$661 in cash and a pistol, Cartwright said.

The search also turned up some jewelry that appears to match the description of several items reported stolen earlier in September from a Perquimans County residence, said Perquimans County Chief Deputy Eric Tilley.

Deputies are investigating to see what, if any, connection Payton may have to the burglary, Tilley said.

Early Tuesday morning, task force officers arrested Andrew Eugene White, also a resident of Perquimans County, on drug charges, according to Tilley.

Cartwright was not available with details at press time.

Town gets state grant for wastewater treatment upgrade

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The town of Hertford got a little help from the state last week that will reduce the amount of money the town will need for its planned infrastructure improvements.

Gov. Jim Hunt notified the town that it will receive an \$850,000 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Community Revitalization award to be

used to upgrade the town's wastewater treatment plant.

The funds will be applied against the \$4.8 million the town needs to finance expansion and renovation to both its water and wastewater treatment systems.

Town Council voted in September to hold a referendum in November to let voters decide whether the town should issue up to \$4.8 million in bonds to upgrade its outdated, undersized and deteriorating systems.

Hertford Town Manager John Christensen said during that meeting that the town is actively seeking grants to bring down the amount the town will need to borrow to upgrade both systems.

Although the bonds, if approved by the voters and issued, would be general obligation bonds backed by the town's taxing power, Christensen said water and sewer fees should provide the revenue with which to repay the bonds with no increased

property taxes.

If the bond referendum does not pass, councilmen said they will be forced to find funds from other sources because the systems must be improved.

The improvements are needed to serve present customers and allow the town to expand to serve the county's commerce centre on Harvey Point Road. Hertford also plans to treat Winfall's wastewater and to receive some grant funds from Winfall's project.

In addition to the water and sewer improvements, the town is poised to borrow \$850,000 to finance a major overhaul of its electric system. Council approved loan application in September, and anticipates approval from the Local Government Commission this month.

Christensen said the town needs to increase its electric load capacity and improve efficiency. The loan is expected to be paid with savings in line losses.

Vandals destroy campaign signs

Candidate asks boss for full investigation

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Campaigning is in full swing for the November general election in Perquimans County, and with it has come not only stumping for the candidates of choice, but the destruction and theft of political signs.

According to sheriff's candidate Billy Spruill, he was alerted last week that over 30 of his campaign signs had been vandalized, severely damaged or stolen outright. Spruill said Tuesday that 13 more signs were damaged this week. The first group of signs to be damaged was located along Snug Harbor Road and U.S. Highway 17.

Spruill, who is running against his boss and political opponent, Sheriff Ralph Robinson, in November, said he filed an official complaint about the signs with the sheriff and requested an investigation. Chief Deputy Eric Tilley verified Tuesday that the department is investigating the incidents. He said all deputies have also been advised to watch for destruction and theft of political signs during their patrols.

Spruill said that in addition to theft and property damage laws, the theft and destruction violates the Voters Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, the Perquimans County Board of Elections regulations, the U.S. Bill of Rights and the constitution.

During the May primary, incumbent sheriff's candidate David Lane was a victim of vandalism, and also hate mail and telephone harassment. Lane told this newspaper in July that he had signs stolen and thrown in his yard. Both Lane, his wife and his deputies received anonymous hate mail during the campaign. Lane had his telephone number changed and unlisted the day after the primary due to the

receipt of harrasing telephone calls.

Robinson, who retired as a sheriff's deputy in December 1995 under Lane's tenure, was under contract as the county's D.A.R.E. officer through May 31. He ran against Lane in the May primary, defeating the incumbent 1,012-832.

In late May, Deputy Billy Spruill announced that he had decided to run for sheriff as an independent candidate. Because the primary election was over, Spruill was required by law to submit petitions endorsing his candidacy signed by at least 300 registered voters to the Perquimans County Board of Elections by June 26. Spruill met the deadline, and his name will appear on the ballot in November's general election.

On June 2, Robinson told The Perquimans Weekly that Lane had fired him. But Lane countered that Robinson could not be fired because he had resigned in 1995, and was under contract as a D.A.R.E. officer only through May 31.

Lane resigned in mid-July, effective July 31. He said he left to pursue other job opportunities outside the area, however, he declined to say where he was going or what his new position would be.

In a special called meeting on July 27, the county commissioners appointed Robinson to fulfill Lane's unexpired term. Robinson was sworn in by the Hon. J.C. Cole in a midnight ceremony at the courthouse on Aug. 1.

At that time, Robinson chose former Perquimans County sheriff's deputy Eric Tilley to serve as chief deputy, and also brought former deputy Ersal Overton Jr. back to the department. Kevin L. Byrd, Darlene M. Jacobs, Homeria V. Jennette and Billy Spruill, deputies under Lane, were also sworn in to serve under Robinson. The new sheriff also brought David Layne on board.

Lane's chief deputy Dean Cartwright was not asked to serve under Robinson. Deputies Chris Whitmore and Darrell Felton were also not sworn in.