

THE

PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

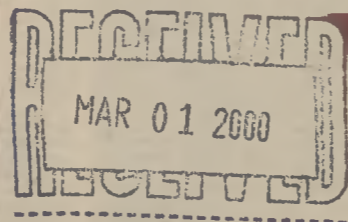
Central has special visitor
page 7

Rec. Dept. announces champs
page 6

PAL's Bootstrap premieres Sunday
page 3

March 2, 2000

Vol. 68, No. 9 Hertford, North Carolina 27944



Board okays school calendar

ANNA GOODWIN MCCARTHY
Correspondent

Summer got shorter for Perquimans County Schools students Monday night.

The Board of Education unanimously approved a new calendar for the 2000-2001 school year that will have the school year beginning on Aug. 10 and ending on June 6.

"We can't continue to do business as usual," said school board member Wallace Nelson.

Nelson and several other members said their approval of the calendar was prompted by concern for state mandated tests that students must pass in order to be promoted.

Board member Charles Cheezum said that the additional days are important, because they will contribute to providing the best possible instruction.

"We must accept the calendar so students will be better prepared not to fall short of meeting the scores required to be promoted," said board member Helen Shaw. "If it doesn't work, we will go back to the drawing board."

Board member Marjorie Rayburn said she supported the calendar, but suggested that the board appease critics of the calendar by starting on Monday, Aug. 14 instead of Thursday, Aug. 10.

The calendar year will provide for more days of instruction before the writing test is administered in the beginning of March to students in fourth, seventh and tenth grades.

The calendar was drawn up by 27 parents, teachers, principals and school administrators, said Brenda Dail, personnel director of the school system.

The new calendar includes teacher workdays on Sept. 21-22, Jan. 11-12, February 19-20 and March 12-13.

Superintendent Gregory Todd said he thought teacher workdays that had been scheduled before the school year started and after it ended were not as beneficial as the new calendar's scheduling of the work days during the school year.

Three parents voiced their opinions about the new calendar before the board.

A mother said that she disliked the shorter summer vacation, because it would mean less time spent with her children. She also said that the calendar would hinder high school students with summer employment.

Nelson said he recommended the calendar, because he thought people of the community had the opportunity to have input in the calendar, and the committee process was fair.

Many parents in the county said they did not like the calendar when it was proposed prior to the January school board meeting. However, only two got on the agenda to speak to the board in January, one against the proposal and one for it.

Bomb threat shuts down PCMS

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Perquimans Middle School students enjoyed some time in the sun Monday afternoon after a bomb threat was received.

PCMS principal Anne White said Tuesday morning that a teacher found a note that indicated there was a bomb in the school. Faculty and staff followed emergency procedures, immediately notifying authorities and evacuating the building.

White said that while the note "did not look that serious at first," school policy is to proceed as if the threat was real.

Students left the building and gathered by class in the ball park behind the school, where they stayed for almost an hour and a half.

A student confessed to having written the note Tuesday morning, White said. She said

the girl made a mistake and was sorry she had written the note. No action had been taken by press time as Winfall Police Chief David Shaffer was out of town Tuesday morning.

Sheriff Eric Tilley said he was notified at 1:38 p.m. that there was a bomb threat at the school. Tilley initially took charge of the investigation because Shaffer was unavailable when the call was received.

The sheriff set up a command post at the Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall adjacent to school property. He called for assistance from the Winfall Fire Department and Hertford Police Department. The SBI was also called in per protocol.

Tilley said the SBI policy calls for teachers to search their own classrooms as they are more likely to know if there is anything suspicious in the room. While staff searched Please see BOMB, page 12



Daily Advance photo

Perquimans Middle School students race back to the building Monday afternoon after it was searched for a bomb by law enforcement and school personnel. On Tuesday, a student admitted to writing the bomb threat note.



Hertford welcomed a new business Friday when the Ming Hing Restaurant officially opened. The Chamber of Commerce sponsored a ribbon cutting.

Chinese restaurant draws crowd

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

It doesn't take long for the efficient staff to whip up a Chinese meal, but you'd better time it just right because Ming Hing Restaurant has been pretty busy since opening in Hertford recently.

The grand opening ribbon cutting was held Friday, but those with a taste for oriental cuisine have been lining up at the restaurant at the

Perquimans Centre for days.

From appetizers to soups to main courses, there is something to please every taste bud at Hing Ming. Diners can begin with egg rolls, shrimp rolls, spare ribs or more, then move on to a variety of soups. Main courses run from chow mein to sweet and sour dishes. Entrees are served with steamed rice. There are also 25 chef's specialties.

Hungry visitors can choose combination plates that

include an entree with pork fried rice and an egg roll.

In addition, there is a special menu that featured steamed dishes served without salt, sugar, corn starch or M.S.G.

Lunch specials are 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Rice and wonton, egg drop soup or soda come with lunch specials.

Hours are Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; and Sunday, noon-10 p.m. Call 426-3397 for to-go orders.

Hertford family loses everything in blaze

JEREMY DESPOSITO
The-Daily Advance

A family here escaped safely from their burning two-story home late Friday night, but lost almost everything they owned.

Beverly Stokely was home with her three teenage children, ages 16, 14, and 13, when the fire started in the kitchen about 10:50 p.m. She and her children got out of the house uninjured, but spent the night in her car, she said.

"We're okay right now, but lost everything. We're just trying to see if we can get some help somewhere," Stokely said, adding that she intended to call the American Red Cross on Monday.

Stokely and her husband, George Stokely, a Daily Advance employee, were renting the home on the 400 block of Cox Avenue from Lillian Spellman.

The Hertford Fire Department received a call around 10:50 p.m. Friday night, Fire Chief Robert Reed said. The house was almost fully involved before fire crews were able to salvage anything, he said.

"The people lost everything they had," Reed said. "The people got out; nobody was hurt. All the furniture, clothes and belongings were lost."

The structure of the two-story, wood-frame house is still standing, but Reed said you can tell by standing outside that there was a fire. Inside, the first floor was completely burned and heat damage destroyed everything on the second floor, he said.

"There's a lot of heat damage," he said. "It was more than fire where TVs and other (items) melted. Downstairs is basically where the fire was, but it traveled up a bit."

Spellman, the owner of the house, hopes that insurance will cover the damage.

"It's terrible damage," she said. "I'm hoping it can be repaired. It may be a total loss."

Anyone who would like to donate money, furniture, household items including linen and kitchen needs, or clothing, may deliver them to The Perquimans Weekly office at 119 W. Grubb St., or call 426-5728. The 13-year-old boy wears large shirts and 28-30 pants with a 32-inch inseam. The 16-year-old boy wears extra large shirts and 33-34 pants with a 32-inch inseam. The 14-year-old daughter wears 1-2X.

The Hertford Fire Department was able to control the fire in about 45 minutes, with mutual aid from the Bethel and Winfall fire departments, and the Perquimans EMS Rescue Squad, Reed said.

Car flips on U.S. 17

A Richmond man was charged with careless and reckless driving after a high-speed crash Saturday afternoon sent both his car and his girlfriend's car careening into a ditch.

Witnesses said both cars were traveling at speeds between 70 and 80 mph, according to Winfall Police Chief David Shaffer.

Glen Shawndale Riddick, 23, was traveling south in the right lane of U.S. 17 in Winfall, when he struck a 1990 Geo in the left lane driven by his girlfriend, Yolanda White, 26, Shaffer said.

The impact caused the Geo to turn toward the ditch, forc-

ing Riddick's 1995 Neon in the same direction. White's car flipped over twice, landing upside down on a 5-foot bank just beyond the ditch, while Riddick's car landed in the ditch.

After the initial impact, both cars traveled about 340 feet before coming to rest, Shaffer said, adding that he was unsure what sparked the impact.

Neither driver was injured, said emergency personnel on the scene.

Riddick was released after posting a \$200 secured bond. Total damage to both cars is at least \$2,000 Shaffer said.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 67
Low: 39
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 65
Low: 41
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 62
Low: 37
PARTLY CLOUDY

Seuss celebrations planned

Perquimans children will join with millions of youngsters across the country in celebration of Read Across America today.

Held on the birthday of famed children's author Dr. Seuss, the observance celebrates and encourages the importance of reading. Read Across America is the brainchild of a small reading task force of the National Education Association, who came up with the idea in May 1997. The first celebration was held on March 2, 1998, and involved roughly 10 million adults and children across the country. Participation doubled with the 1999 observance.

The county library is hosting its third Read Across America with a one-hour program at 6 p.m. Children may dress up as a Dr. Seuss character or wear pajamas.

Library assistant Ann Carol White said 30 people participated in the activity the first year. The number mushroomed to 230 last year.

Perquimans Middle School will celebrate with a Community Celebrities Read-In, and a Dr. Seuss costume contest, lunch and book displays, according to local NEA president Brenda Hollowell.

Research shows the importance of reading outside of school to student achievement.