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Retaliation threatened for murder

HPD beefs up patrols after receiving threats for Overton death

From Staff Reports

Threats of retaliation for the murder of an Elizabeth City man have put Hertford police on the alert.

At a Hertford Town Council meeting Monday night, Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said calls had been made from Elizabeth City threatening revenge for the murder of Terrence Overton, 20, near the Upright Social Club in Hertford on March 5.

"I would like to say we don't have to worry," said Vanscoy.

However, Vanscoy said the threats had been too detailed to ignore. As a result of the threats, Vanscoy said he has sent 14 officers to patrol the streets of Hertford.

"So far we have out guessed them," said Vanscoy.

Vanscoy said he contacted the fire marshal and the build-

ing inspector to inspect the Upright Social Club Friday for possible code violations that would shut the club down until further investigation into its operation could be completed.

The club was shut down at a little after 4 o'clock Friday afternoon. It cannot be opened until a licensed electrician can repair what the officials found to be in violation and the club is reinspected. Upright Social Club manager Kevin Foreman said last week that he intends to reopen soon.

Violent incidents from the club have escalated throughout the past two years, said Vanscoy.

Town Council members discussed what needed to be done to permanently close the club.

Complaints against the club can be carried to ABC officials to get the club's license to sell alcohol suspended, said Vanscoy.

Vanscoy said he contacted North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement eight months ago to send a Nuisance Team to the area.

ALE spokeswoman Sarah Kempin confirmed last week

that the bureau was contacted by Vanscoy and an investigation was requested.

"We have an ongoing investigation," Kempin said. "The (Hertford Police) chief called and requested the investigation before the shooting. After the shooting, we administered the investigation."

The scene of several reported shootings and assaults before the fatal incident, the Upright Social Club has been cited only once for an ALE violation. However, Kempin was unable to say what the 1998 citation concerned.

The ALE Nuisance Abatement Team has their own attorneys, conducts interviews and talks around the community to find out about illegal operations, said Vanscoy.

Nuisance Abatement Teams around North Carolina collect information that leads to a civil action by the state to close an illegal operation.

One potential violation that could cost the club its ABC permit is the alleged dice game that Overton participated in inside the club prior to the

shooting. Dice games are illegal under state law.

Foreman said last week that law enforcement officials are following a bad lead if they are looking for evidence that a dice game started the altercation at the club.

"(Allegations of) illegal gambling and dice games (taking place inside the club) are false," Foreman said. "Whatever problems (arose, they) weren't over any dice game. It was a personal problem. The boy (Overton) was drunk, he had an attitude problem and whatever happened, happened outside, it didn't happen in the club."

Foreman did not address the issue of Overton being drunk in the club when he was too young to be served and to consume alcohol. One must be 21 in North Carolina in order to purchase or consume alcohol. If Overton was served in the club, it is a violation of state law, and possible cause for an ABC license revocation.

Foreman acknowledges that an argument involving Overton did originate inside the club. And he admits escort-

ing Overton outside. However, because the shooting occurred outside, Foreman said there is no reason to blame the club or to beef up security.

"The problem is not in the club. The problem is outside the club," Foreman said. "That's when all the problems start, on the way out. That's the police department's responsibility. There's no reason for me to boost security if there's no problems inside the club."

Vanscoy said he's received reports of assaults and shots fired in the area around the club, which is located near the corner of Edenton Road and Market streets. But the chief hasn't received any reports of disturbances inside the club.

Problems outside the club, however, prompted Foreman to ask for police presence when the club closes around 2:30-3 a.m. on weekend nights. He didn't call on the weekend of the shootings, but he thinks police presence would have averted the tragedy.

Foreman said when police have been present, there were no problems at all.

Meanwhile, results of the current ALE investigation will be forwarded to the Alcohol Beverage Commission, the group that issues ABC permits. ALE investigators are currently working to obtain enough sworn affidavits and prepare enough evidence to ask the ABC board to summarily suspend the Upright Social Club's permit, Kempin said.

If a summary suspension is granted, the club's permit could be suspended until the case is brought before the ABC Commission for a hearing, Kempin said.

As officials continue to look for ways to close the club, the search for suspects in the shooting incident that left Overton dead and Jeremy Riddick, 22, hospitalized with a serious leg wound goes on. Both the Hertford Police Department and SBI are investigating the incident.

(Correspondent Anna Goodwin McCarthy, Daily Advance Staff Writer Jeremy Desposito and Perquimans Weekly Editor Susan Harris contributed to this story.)

Juvenile joyride ends in New Hope

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Two joy-riding juveniles were picked up by Perquimans Sheriff's deputies last week. The pair allegedly stole a boat in Hertford County and set out for Virginia. Their cruise ended in Durants Neck.

The investigation began when the owner of a New Hope store called sheriff's deputies to report that two juveniles may have been kidnapped. According to sheriff's deputy Nathan Zachary, Deputy Marlowe Reel was called to investigate a report that a black male had kidnapped two white male teens and had taken them in a boat against their wills.

Further investigation revealed a far different story. Deputies allege that the two stole the boat from Winton and were on their way to Virginia. They made it to the Albemarle Sound, between the Perquimans and Little rivers, before coming ashore, Zachary said. It was dark at the time they came ashore.

Reel, Deputy Shelby White and Sheriff Eric Tilley began searching for the boat, following the suspects' sketchy directions. They found it in the Carolina Shores area. White and Tilley pulled the boat ashore. Zachary said it has been returned to its owner. Because the alleged crime was committed in Hertford County, Zachary said details such as the name of the boat's owner are not available.

The juveniles were released into the custody of their parents after the incident.

Zachary said he does not know what, if any, charges were filed against the two.

DIAMOND GIRLS



Daily Advance photo

The Lady Pirates softball team started play last week, taking a loss to Edenton before taking Northeastern (above). All spring sports team are now in competition at Perquimans High and Perquimans Middle schools. PCHS fields baseball, junior varsity baseball, softball, girls and boys track, and golf teams. At the middle school, students may play baseball or softball.

Gossage, Rudy to visit PCHS for Old Timer's Day in May

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Goose Gossage and Joe Rudy will come to Perquimans for the annual Old Timer's Day on May 13.

The baseball legends were the first to accept invitations to be on hand to help raise awareness and funds for the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation.

Old Timers Day will open with a prayer breakfast at 7 a.m. at Perquimans High School. Barbecued chicken plates will be served from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Hot dogs, popcorn and other concessions will be available throughout the day.

Softball and baseball games, a homerun derby, silent auction, autograph sessions and ALS sportswear sales are on tap for the event.

Old Timers was initiated about 20 years ago by Hunter and his 1963 state championship teammates. They organized a game against the high school team to help raise funds for the sport. From there, the event has grown to include JV baseball and softball games. State champions from two 1950s teams even come back for the day of family fun. Old Timer's has continued to benefit sports programs at the high school as well as the middle school.

With the diagnosis of Hunter's ALS in 1998, the Bear Swamp-Beech Springs Ruritan Club initiated an effort to set up the ALS Foundation in Hunter's honor. Because of Hunter's continuing support for athletes and athletic programs in the schools, the Ruritans asked the Perquimans Athletic Boosters to work with them to kick off the Foundation on the annual Booster-sponsored Old

Timers Day in May 1999. The Boosters received \$5,000 of the proceeds from the event, which was the average they had profited from Old Timer's over the past three years. All other proceeds, about \$70,000, went to the Foundation. The event will be organized the same way this May.

A committee of Foundation members and Athletic Booster Club representatives has been formed to organize Old Timer's events. Jim Pagliaroni, a Foundation board member and the catcher who caught Hunter's perfect game, is taking the lead with corporate sponsorships and donations.

Tickets for the meal will be distributed in the next few days.

Volunteers are needed to help serve plates, take up money at the gate, and operate concessions. If you would like to volunteer, please call Keith Vaughan at 426-7460, Edgar Roberson at 426-5663, or Susan Harris at 426-5728.

Facelift in progress at town park

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The trees donated to the town of Hertford for its park on Academy Square are opening tender buds in the spring sunshine.

Jo Ann Morris was asked by Council before her November election to that board to chair a committee to coordinate and oversee restoration of the park.

Now, two Japanese cherries and eight dogwoods are budding along with the azaleas planted by volunteers last fall. The azaleas were part of a beautification grant the town received.

Morris said the park is showing a new, attractive

image with the work done by her committee and the county through its recreational facilities matching grant monies. With grant funds, the county has built a new tennis court and horseshoe pit, has revamped part of the old tennis courts for a half-court basketball facility, and is in the process of installing a kiddie slide. Landscaping around the upgraded area adds to the overall attractiveness of the area.

There will be no parking in the town's portion of the revamped park area on the Market Street side of the library and tennis courts. It was formerly used for boat ramp overflow parking.

The park has undergone the facelift following the removal of the majestic oak trees that

were once sprinkled across it. Disease in the trees forced the town to have them removed. Morris and other town residents asked that the town move to replant trees in the park.

Trees are still being sought to plant in the park. Morris said the committee would like to see more planted before summer's heat prevents it. A list of needed species and prices is available at the town office. Trees may be purchased in memory or in honor of someone. Prices include a donation plaque at the foot of the tree.

Civic organizations are also being sought to help water and tend newly-planted trees.

For more information or to volunteer to help, call Pam at the town offices at 426-1969 or 426-5311.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 79
Low: 53
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 62
Low: 36
RAIN

SATURDAY
High: 51
Low: 41
PARTLY CLOUDY