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Track team sprints to two wins

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Rose pens winning DAR essay

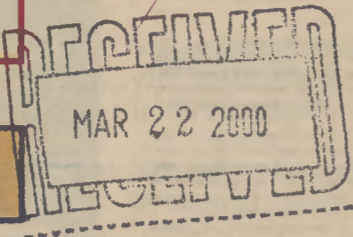
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It's not my fault

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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

ABC ruling closes Upright Social Club

State issues summary suspension of alcohol license

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Folks won't be meeting to have a beer at the Upright Social Club any time soon.

The state ABC Commission suspended the club's permits to sell alcohol Friday. Reasons for issuance of the summary suspension include the March 5 shooting incident that left one man dead and another seriously injured outside the club.

The club was closed by the local fire marshal and building inspector on March 10 for code violations including no fire extinguishers, no exit signs, no emergency lighting, electrical violations, and building code violations.

Mark Senter, Assistant Supervisor of the Alcohol Law Enforcement Office in Edenton, provided a copy of the ABC Commission suspension order to the newspaper. The document lists numerous problems at the club, based on sworn allegations and affidavits.

Senter said the first priority in the ALE investigation was the safety of the community. The information submitted to the ABC Commission resulted from ongoing investigation by the Hertford Police Department and Edenton ALE office, Senter said. Ultimately, the ABC Commission ruled activity at the Upright Social Club "poses a danger to the community and puts a drain on the resources of the City of Hertford."

According to Senter, the ABC Commission reviewed documentation about problems at the club submitted by law agencies last week. Based on the review, the Commission found that protection of the public health, safety and welfare required emergency action by the Commission.

The order states that the permittee, Earl Foreman, and his employees have a propensity to allow the presence of dangerous and unlawful activities on the licensed premises, creating an unreasonable hazardous situation for the public as well as the law enforcement officers called upon to inspect the licensed premises. Earl Foreman is owner of the club, which is managed by Kevin Foreman.

Senter said the suspension was effective as soon as the order was served on the club. The Permittees now have the right to request a hearing asking that the Commission decision be overturned. He added that it would probably be at least 60 days before a hearing could take place if one is requested.

The order states that when officers arrived at the club on March 5, "people were running frantically, screaming and yelling." Bullet casings were found on the street in and around the club on that date. In addition, interviews of about 35 witnesses revealed that the incident began inside the club with an argument over a dice game that allegedly took place in the back of the club. Club manager Kevin Foreman denied allegations that there was a dice game going on in the club in an interview with Jeremy Desposito, staff writer for The Daily Advance.

The March 5 incident was not the first time Hertford police officers have responded to "shots fired" calls at the club. According to the suspension order, officers were also called to the club on Feb. 19, Jan. 15 and Dec. 11, 1999.

In February, officers arrived at the club to the sound of gunshots, with a large crowd of club patrons scattering. Neither Kevin Foreman nor people around the club could provide any information about the incident, the report states.

Although Kevin Foreman told Desposito that there were no problems inside the club, the suspension report states that officers found bullet holes and a bullet casing inside the club when they responded to the Jan. 15 call. Witnesses allegedly told officers that the shooting happened inside the club. It took police action to disburse the crowd that night.

An officer stayed on the scene about an hour after responding to the Dec. 11 call. Earl Foreman allegedly told officers that several people from out of town were involved in the shooting, but no one in the crowd at the club could provide any information.

In addition to the "shots fired" calls, police have responded to calls of noise, personal safety concerns, fights and assaults, loud music, and intoxicated and disruptive persons. The report also alleges that the club is a "known hangout for drug dealers." Calls at the club required at least two uniformed officers, sometimes more, officers say.

ALE has received complaints at the Edenton Office regarding lewd and immoral acts, controlled substance use, gambling and unlawful possession of alcoholic beverages on the licensed premises of the Upright Social Club.

Senter said the investigation into activities at the club is ongoing.

No arrests have been made in the death of Terrance Daniel Overton, 20, who was killed a block from the club on March 5, or the serious injury of Jeremy Riddick, 22, in front of the club on the same date. The case is being investigated by the Hertford Police Department and the SBI.

SPRING CLEANING



PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS

Inmates from the Gates County Correctional Facility were in Hertford last week helping the town with spring cleaning and fix-up chores. While one crew edged and trimmed sidewalks on Grubb Street, a second group cleaned, scraped and painted the picket fence on town property. Details of the second annual Clean-Up, Fix-Up Month sponsored by the county are expected soon.



Firefighters train in New Hope

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

People just take it for granted that if and when they need firefighters, firefighters will respond.

And they do respond in Perquimans, not because they are paid to protect life and property, but because they desire to give back to the community, according to Durants Neck Fire Chief Jimmy Spivey.

Members of Spivey's department helped to ensure their readiness to fight fire Saturday when they hosted the final segment of a training class. The finale was the culmination of several nights in a classroom going over procedures and techniques. Saturday, turnout gear was put on and hoses drawn across the lawn for some real how-to learning at a house given to the fire department for training purposes.

Spivey said the North Carolina Department of Insurance requires all firefighters to have at least 36 hours of training each year. Most get many more hours. A lot of the firefighters involved in Saturday's training are trying to tally the 234 hours of classroom and hands-on work it takes to become a certified Firefighter I. Because firefighters in Perquimans are all volunteer, the only benefit there is



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Durants Neck volunteer firefighters hosted a training session Saturday. Live burns allow firefighters to get critical hands-on experience that can help save lives and homes.

to dedicating that many hours to training is to be better able to serve the community.

Spivey said with training, fire calls, equipment checks, and departmental meetings, most volunteer firefighters in Perquimans donate over 100 hours each year. And that 100 hours doesn't include the time spent by firefighters selling tickets, cooking, serving, or taking care of other tasks involved in fund raising. Although the county now provides some financial support for firefighting building and

equipment needs and each department applies for grants, much of the money to keep departments running is raised by the volunteers themselves.

The chief said both fire and rescue volunteers give a tremendous amount of time and energy to helping others. Both have state-imposed training requirements. Often fire and rescue personnel are cross-trained. Rescue/EMS and fire personnel also offer each other assistance when needed. In addition, Spivey said local law officers provide

a lot of support for fire and rescue agencies.

Spivey acknowledged that the cost of equipment and gear is skyrocketing. To equip a firefighter with coat, pants, boots, helmet and air pack costs about \$4,000, Spivey said — and that is not purchasing top-of-the-line gear. A stripped-down new truck runs about \$150,000 with no hoses or other equipment necessary to fight fire.

Participating in Saturday's class were firefighters from Durants Neck, Intercounty Hertford, Edenton, Nixonton and Providence. With all the training hours required, it is not unusual for departments to work together to offer enough classes to work with the varied schedules of firefighters, Spivey said.

Most of us just look out the window when we hear a siren. Fortunately, volunteer firefighters respond — just as we take for granted they will.

Census workers begin rounds

The North Carolina Office of the State Planning officials said participation in the Census is critical to the state.

The United States is required by law to take a Census every 10 years as a way of determining how the population is represented in the U.S.

House of Representatives, but Census numbers do much more, officials say. Information from the Census is used in calculating many federal grants including Medicaid.

Census forms have already been mailed. It takes only a few minutes to complete the short

form, and about 40 to fill in a long form. Officials ask that forms be completed and returned as soon as possible.

Enumerators will visit those who do not return forms, or those who need help with the information. Call (252) 355-0226 for assistance.

Art show

Move over, New York. The art world is coming to Hertford.

The Perquimans Arts League Fifth Annual Members Show will open Friday, March 24 with a reception, 6-9 p.m., in the Perquimans County Library on West Academy Street.

The exhibit features works of art by League members and will remain open through April 20 during regular library hours.

A variety of media have been a part of the show over the years. In addition to the more traditional pastel, watercolor, pen and ink, and oil renderings many people automatically expect to see at an art show, the PAL show has featured sculpture, musical instruments, string art, cloth and needle art, photography and more.

A Best in Show award will be presented along with first, second, third and honorable mention ribbons in several categories. Purchase Award ribbons will be presented by local businesses. Guests may cast ballots for the People's Choice Award.

With the help of member volunteers and a grassroots grant from the N.C. Arts Council, PAL is able to promote, nurture and preserve high standards of art and culture in Perquimans County. Membership is open to all.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 61
Low: 45
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 70
Low: 48
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 74
Low: 50
PARTLY CLOUDY