

Spruce up for spring
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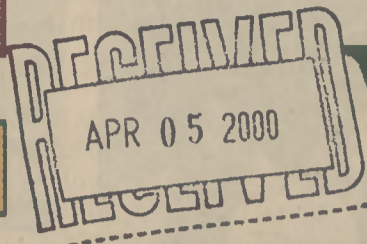
PAL art show a hit
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Paul on marriage
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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 cents

County proposes sewer system

System would serve Plantation, Holiday Island

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Perquimans County has applied for grant funding to cover most of the cost of a proposed \$4 million sewer system that would serve Albemarle Plantation and Holiday Island. At a public hearing held last

Tuesday in compliance with grant application requirements, speakers were overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed project.

Dick George, interim director of the Albemarle Commission and a consultant on the project, said the county will apply for \$3 million in state money to fund a sewer system to serve a portion of the Bethel community known as Harvey's Neck. The county would chip in about \$330,000, and the remaining funds would come from hook-up fees from prospective customers. George

said the estimated tap-on fee is \$2,400 per dwelling.

The first step in the process would be to create the Minzie's Creek Water and Sewer District, which is larger than the area that would be covered by the \$4 million project. George said the grant would provide sewer service for all of Albemarle Plantation and existing dwellings in Holiday Island, and would represent what he tagged Phase I of the Minzie's Creek project.

At this point, he said, it is not projected that the system would allow for the develop-

ment of vacant lots in Holiday Island which presently cannot be developed because they will not perk.

The project would entail the county purchasing the present septic system from Albemarle Plantation. Mark Bissell, an engineer from Kitty Hawk who is designing the project, said several components of the Plantation's system would be used, primarily the storage and irrigation pond. A treatment plant would be added to treat the effluent, then put it back in the wetlands to seep back into Minzie's Creek. The

spray field used with the Plantation system would be used as back-up only, he added.

The system would work using residents' present septic tanks and installing new pumping stations and lines back to the plant.

George said the monthly fee would be based on operating costs, but would be at least \$30 per month.

George stressed that the final plans, tap-on fees and other information will be discussed at a second hearing if the grant is funded. He expects an answer around July 1.

New hoops court funded

ANNA GOODWIN MCCARTHY
Correspondent

The sounds of perfect shots swishing through the net, the shuffling of sneakers on a concrete court and the smack of a blocked shot from a tight defense will soon be heard on King Street.

The Board of Commissioners approved funding for the construction of a new basketball court in a meeting Monday afternoon.

The idea for a new basketball court was prompted by the success of a newly built court for the Recreation Department. The new court, which was built on a portion of the former tennis courts on Grubb Street, has been a hive of activity since it opened around the first of March.

"It has been one of the most highly utilized areas that we have constructed recently," said Perquimans County Manager Paul Gregory.

The second new basketball court will be built on King Street.

Gregory said the location was "easily accessible and out in the open." Several members of the community have asked that the court have a fence, he added.

The Grubb Street court is open every day until dark. It opens after school on weekdays, around 10 a.m. on Saturdays and around 1 p.m. on Sundays. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are reserved for players 15 and under; Tuesday and Thursday for those 16 and over. There is free play on weekends.

Gregory said that the construction of a new basketball court will cost in the range of \$17,000 to \$20,000. About \$14,000 will be allocated from the Hertford Housing Authority and funds from the Governor's Crime Commission. The commissioners approved funding for the remaining cost.

At the Recreation Department site, the horse-shoe pit and equipment may be used during business hours, as may the automatic machine to be used with the tennis courts.

Author visits Perquimans

SEAN JACKSON
The Daily Advance

Luis Rodriguez was once a lot like one of his audiences: a poor student, constantly in trouble and dead-set on leading "la vida loca" - "the crazy life."

A gang member by the age of 11 and a drug user by the age of 12, Rodriguez grew up in the fast lane of East Los Angeles in the 1970s, spending half his time in a drugged-out haze, the other half behind bars.

"I got to the point where I didn't care about anybody," Rodriguez, now in his 40s, recalled Saturday. "The street called me."

Rodriguez believes he was headed toward almost certain death when a strange but also very ordinary thing happened: He discovered there was more to life than taking drugs and being a gang banger. He also found he had a hidden talent: he could write.

Today the author of three books of poetry as well as an award-winning memoir,

"Always Running, La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.," Rodriguez travels the United States, Europe and Latin America, lecturing and reading his poetry.

Although he left the gang-banging streets of East Los Angeles long ago, he still enjoys meeting and talking with youth who've gotten into trouble and are on the verge of spending the rest of their lives in incarceration.

Saturday, as part of his seven-day visit in the Albemarle, Rodriguez made such a visit to the Perquimans Juvenile Detention Center in Winfall and the library.

"You have to find out what is your particular passion in the world," Rodriguez told the detention center's six young inmates, each of whom was garbed in gray sweat clothes and orange sandals. "Most people are told they are never going to amount to anything."

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KEEPING KIDS SAFE



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Hertford Police officers had a full morning Friday performing child safety seat inspections, demonstrating the proper way to secure the seats and children, and offering replacements for seats that did not meet current safety standards or had been recalled. The safety seat inspection/replacement program will continue on the last Friday of each month from 8 a.m. until noon as long as funds last. The safety seat inspection/replacement program is funded through a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

White, Barrett honored by Chamber of Commerce

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans Chamber of Commerce honored two local businesses at its annual membership meeting last week.

Mary White, owner/operator of The Wishing Well on Church Street, was named Outstanding Business Person. Earning Outstanding Small Business recognition was Tommy Barrett of Tommy's Pizza and Tommy's Family Restaurant.

Chamber president Gay Murray said both White and Barrett are positive influences on the small business community. White served on the Chamber board last year and has been instrumental in planning both chamber and Historic Hertford Business Association events designed to promote and support economic development and heritage tourism. Barrett recently opened the second location of his eatery at Perquimans Centre on U.S. 17 Bypass. Murray said his expansion was one of the reasons he was chosen for his honor.

The annual meeting also included the installation of officers for 2000, as the



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Mary White, owner/operator of The Wishing Well on Church Street, was named Outstanding Business Person by the Chamber of Commerce last week

Chamber chose to use this year's banquet as a social event and fund raiser. In addition to Murray, officers are Jack Taylor, vice president; Brenda Lassiter, secretary; Jeri Oltman, treasurer; and board members Doug Layden, LuAnne Pendergraft, Harriette Woodard, Steve Lane, Margie Nixon and Anne White.

The past year has been difficult for the chamber, punctuated by the resignation of former executive director Sandra

Smith. An audit around the time of Smith's departure revealed that the chamber was in debt and there were no funds with which to pay the bills.

Board members immediately ordered a formal audit by an accountant and began meeting each week to review records, assess the situation, and make plans to regain financial stability. Several chamber members, including Perquimans County, agreed to pay dues early in order to increase cash flow.



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

The Chamber's Outstanding Small Business award went to Tommy Barrett, owner of Tommy's Family Restaurant and Tommy's Pizza and Subs.

The county also increased its dues and paid three years in advance to help the chamber over its crunch.

Through early dues renewals and fund raisers, the chamber has been able to pay its debts, improve its cash flow and begin to repay itself for the facade improvement mini-grant fund. Murray said the board hopes to reopen applications for facade mini-grants soon.

During its review, the chamber also examined its focus and

programming. Murray said board members agree that the chamber should offer seminars and other programs to help small businesses, and be involved in community/business partnership activities such as Indian Summer Festival, 4th of July celebration, and Christmas parade. In addition, the chamber has re-established the community calendar. The calendar is housed in the chamber office. Groups

Please see CHAMBER, page 16

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 76
Low: 53
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 80
Low: 54
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 76
Low: 50
ISOLATED T'STORMS