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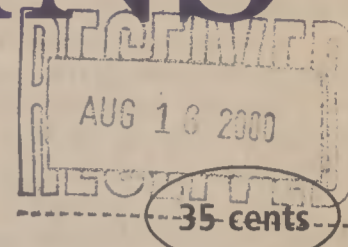
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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Infant playing on U.S. 17 rescued

Child uninjured; two cars totalled in incident

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Loretta Sawyer still imagines what could have happened.

The Edenton woman was traveling north on U.S. 17 just across the Perquimans County line last Thursday morning when she spied an infant, clad only in a diaper, happily pushing his toy lawn mower in the right lane of traffic.

The story had a somewhat happy ending as Sawyer saved

the child from danger — at the expense of totalling her car. Yet, there are some elements of the events that unfolded on that morning that perplex and deeply disturb the grandmother.

"I saved him this time, but who's going to save him next time?" she asked. "I am so angry. It really has got the best of me."

Sawyer said she saw the child about at the intersection of US 17 and Hopewell Road. Her first fear was that the baby would get hit by the morning traffic as people continued to make their way to work at 8:15. The speed limit is 55 miles per hour on that stretch of highway. A quick check of her

rearview mirror told her another car was some distance behind her. Trying to shield the child with the angle of her car until she could remove the child from danger, Sawyer stopped in the roadway. The child did not fight or show any emotion when she picked him up.

"He was just as happy as could be, had nothing on but a diaper," she said. "He was dirty. At 8:15 in the morning, this child was dirty."

"This child never uttered a sound. He showed no resistance to being picked up by strangers."

Sawyer said the car she had seen in her rearview mirror behind her before she stopped

swerved to avoid hitting her car.

Sawyer said her training as an Edenton-Chowan School System employee made her hesitant to put the child in her car. Employees are taught that it can be construed as kidnapping to put a child into a private vehicle without parental permission. She looked around, but saw no adults in sight. She knew she had to do something.

"I had to get him out the road. I just had to."

In the meantime, a Perquimans County school bus, making first-day-of-school rounds, pulled up to the stop sign at Hopewell Road. Knowing that most school

buses are equipped with some type of communication devices, Sawyer approached the bus to ask the driver to call for law enforcement. While they were talking, the baby in Sawyer's arms, they heard a tremendous crash. Another driver had plowed her car into Sawyer's, totalling both vehicles.

Even with the crash and the crowd that had begun to gather at the accident site, Sawyer said there was no activity at the house across the four-lane highway that the little boy had pointed to when asked where he lived. At least one person at the scene told Sawyer they knew where the child lived, and asked if Sawyer wanted

the child returned to his residence. Sawyer declined to let go of the child, and instead requested that social services be contacted. Sawyer said she was reluctant to hand the child over to anyone except a law enforcement officer or social services employee.

"Finally, a man wearing a yellow vest that said 'police' on it came over and said, 'Let me have the boy,'" Sawyer said.

Perquimans Sheriff Eric Tilley said a deputy he dispatched to the scene indicated that state DMV officer Tim Bunch had come upon the scene and picked up the child, taking him to his residence.

Please see **INFANT**, page 9

Plantation residents keep old addresses

Homeowners fight E-911 change

JEREMY DESPOSITO
The Daily Advance

Plans to set up an emergency-911 system in Perquimans County include designating new locator numbers and addresses for many residences and businesses.

And though residents support the emergency system, some believe changing addresses is a burden on them and the post office.

Monday, about 30 residents from Albemarle Plantation attended the county board of commissioners meeting to ask if they could keep their original mailing addresses along with the new e-911 numbers.

Residents said keeping their original addresses would save time and money for both themselves and the post office, Al Gesler told commissioners.

Gesler, who is president of the Albemarle Plantation's Homeowners Association, said keeping the original address means avoiding the hassle of changing mailing subscriptions, check book addresses, billing, and other postal-related items.

By having both numbers, Gesler said residents can avoid all mailing changes and still be easily located in case of emergency.

Commissioners unanimously approved a motion to let residents of Albemarle Plantation keep their original mailing addresses under the condition that postal officials agree.

County Manager Paul Gregory said he notified the post office and is waiting for a response.

"They will check with their supervisors to see if the system is acceptable," he said. "If they say yes, then (residents) can keep (their original mailing addresses). If not, then they can't."

The county has already mapped out homes for e-911. Please see **ADDRESS**, page 9

WELCOME BACK, STUDENTS!



Squeaky clean tennis shoes, brand new book bags, the latest lunch boxes and smiling faces filled the halls in Perquimans County schools Thursday when students traded the lazy days of summer vacation for the first day of the 2000-2001 school year. Winfall Police Chief David Shaffer assisted with traffic control at Central School. Both school officials and Shaffer remind motorists that the speed limit is 25 miles per hour in front of Central School when the caution lights are flashing, and the limit is 35 at other times. Student safety is a top priority with both school officials and Shaffer. For information on school safety committees, contact the principal at any school.

School year off to great start

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Many youth were up with the sun last Thursday, preparing for that annual rite of passage, the first day of school.

It's the day when freshmen finally have someone lower on the totem pole to pick on, seniors become top dogs and some mothers' babies experience their first day in school. It's a day of traffic tie-ups, new shoes, new teachers, excitement about the year ahead and fear that this year will be harder than last.

In Perquimans County, it was also a day when the planning and organizing that took place all summer resulted in a smooth first day for students and staff.

According to Perquimans County Schools Public Information Officer Brenda Lassiter, no major problems marred the first day of class for students. Aside from a few students who took the wrong turns in hallways of unfamiliar buildings, the first day of school was business as usual.

Personnel Director Brenda Dail said she was very pleased that school started with no teacher vacancies. Although Dail had a few teachers turn in resignations or opt not to take positions offered just before school started, she was able to fill all positions in time for students to return to class.

Hertford Grammar, Perquimans Middle and Perquimans High schools had open houses prior to the start of school. Central School will hold its open house and PTA membership drive on Aug. 17 at 7:30 p.m.



Winfall truck purchase irks town's auto dealer

Institute of Government said deal is legal

SUSAN R. HARRIS
editor

A Winfall automobile dealer thinks that a recent truck purchase by the town's council reeks of conflict of interest.

Johnny Webb, co-owner of WW Motors, said the town's July 26 purchase of a 2000 F150 Ford truck from Courtesy Ford in Elizabeth City is tainted. According to a copy of the bid for the truck, Winfall Town Councilman Cliff Towe was the salesman for the purchase. Webb said that, in his opinion, makes the transaction questionable.

According to minutes from the council's July 12 regular

meeting, council approved \$4,000 for the purchase of a used vehicle for the town's maintenance department. Minutes from a special meeting held on July 24 show that council opted instead to purchase a new truck from Courtesy Ford at a cost of \$15,908.60 plus taxes and tags, which brought the cost up to \$16,394.36.

Webb said the truck could have been purchased from

Capital Ford, Inc. in Raleigh on state contract cheaper. A fax from Capital Ford to Webb dated Aug. 10 shows the price of a 2000 Ford F150 to be \$14,250, about \$1,600 cheaper than the unit from Courtesy.

An informal bid sheet dated July 24 indicates that Winfall officials called Albemarle Ford, Performance Chevrolet, Biggs Pontiac, Edenton Motors and Courtesy Ford to get Please see **TRUCK**, page 9

Town to renovate ice plant

Plan provides needed space, preserves history

ANNA GOODWIN MCCARTHY
Correspondent

In their efforts to find new space, the Hertford Town Council has decided to restore a part of the town's history.

Hertford's ice plant will be rejuvenated to accommodate the expanding Public Works Department at a cost of about \$815,550.

A study that examined the structural reliability of the ice plant was presented to the Town Council Monday night. The author of the study, Gerald Traub, A.I.A., said that he thought the building should be saved.

Traub said the roof needed to be replaced. An addition on the back of the ice plant had burned in a fire, said Traub, but the blaze did not damage the structure of the main building. Traub said that the second floor of the building should not be used.

Town Councilman Dan Daneker asked Traub to estimate the cost and value of adding a sprinkler system to the ice plant.

Traub said that the cost of the sprinkler system would be about \$30,000, but he said he did not see the need for a sprinkler system because only Please see **ICE PLANT**, page 9

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 92
Low: 72
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 87
Low: 69
ISOLATED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 85
Low: 68
PARTLY CLOUDY