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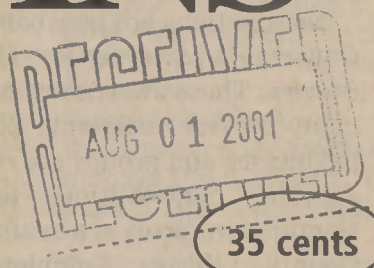
**Senior activities set**

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**Arrests**

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# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



35 cents

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## Gentile gets 38 years for sex offense

### Hertford man pleads guilty to child rape

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A Hertford man will spend at least the next 32 years in prison after being convicted of two counts of first degree rape of a child.

Martin Gentile of 171 Mill Road pleaded guilty to the offenses in Perquimans County Superior Court on July 17. The Hon. Clifton W. Everett Jr. of Greenville

sentenced Gentile to 38 years in prison.

Perquimans Sheriff Eric Tilley said the conviction stemmed from a referral to the Department of Social Services that there was suspected inappropriate behavior taking place in the Gentile home. Gentile was initially arrested on Feb. 26 and charged with first degree statutory rape of his minor child. He was charged with nine counts of first degree rape of a child and first degree sex offense of a child on May 31.

The investigation, Tilley said, revealed that the

minor had been sexually abused about once a week for a year.

Tilley said Gentile accepted a plea bargain, admitting guilt on two counts of first degree rape of a child. Everett could have sentenced Gentile for up to 61 years, but gave him the minimum sentence, 38 years. The sheriff said Gentile must serve at least 85 percent of his sentence before being eligible for parole.

The Gentile case was only one of four investigated this year by the sheriff's office. Two other men await trial on sexual abuse

charges, while yet another investigation is underway. A fifth case stemming from December charges has also not gone to trial.

On Feb. 5, Dennis Elwell of 54M Holly Street, Hertford and Virginia was charged with statutory rape. He was also charged with first degree statutory sex offense on Feb. 28.

Tilley said the Elwell investigation began when a mother and father brought their minor child to his office to register a complaint against Elwell. Elwell is not a family member of the alleged victim.

Also, Paul Stokely of

1708 New Hope Road was arrested after his own testimony in a March 19 child custody hearing gave law officers cause to charge him with first degree statutory sex offense.

Tilley said Stokely was arrested in the courtroom "as a result of his own testimony." The minor children who were the subject of the hearing are now living with relatives, Tilley said. The children's mother has moved out of the state.

Investigation in the case led to more charges on March 30. Stokely is charged with two counts of first degree rape of a child,

four counts of taking indecent liberties with a child, four counts of attempted sex offense in a parental role, and two counts of statutory rape/sex offense with a child over 6 years old.

Robin Lane, an employee of the Clerk of Superior Court, said neither Elwell nor Stokely has been tried. Superior Court is scheduled for Sept. 10, but Lane said the district attorney's office schedules trial dates and the clerk's office has not yet received the docket for the September court.

Another sexual abuse case is under investigation.

## Hertford Credit union robbed

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A lone gunman pocketed an undisclosed amount of cash during a robbery at the Perquimans Credit Union Friday morning.

Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said credit union employees reported that a male entered the credit union on Dobbs Street around 11:45 and demanded money from the two employees. He allegedly produced a gun and pointed it at one of the employees. The employee said she took money from her cash drawer and handed it to the robber, who put it in a bank bag.

The robber then took the employees to the back of the building where there are two restrooms. He put them in one of the restrooms and secured the door with a chair. Employees heard the alarm go off at the front door, indicating that the robber had left the building. They managed to break out of the restroom and call police.

Vanscoy said the suspect was a male, probably in his early to mid-20s, about 5'10"-6' tall and thin. He was wearing something dark over his face, a hooded silver or gray jacket with the hood pulled tightly around his face, silver or gray pants, work boots and gloves.

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## ALL SMOKE, NO FIRE



Hertford firefighters responded to reports of the smell of smoke in the Hall of Fame Square Monday morning. Building co-owner Lynn Lassiter said that an empty pot left on a hot burner for several hours caused the problem. There were no damages to the building, she said.

## Plant vandals cause huge sewage spill

54,000 gallons of solid waste poured out

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Vandals were responsible for about 54,000 gallons of solid waste flowing into a canal that leads to the Perquimans River last week.

Town Manager John Christensen said equipment readings at the sewage treatment plant on Meads Circle showed that tampering with sewer valves in the plant began around 11 p.m. on July 22. Based on meter readings at the plant, officials believe about 54,000 gallons of solid waste was spilled.

Maintenance employees found the problem when

they reported to the plant at 8 a.m. on July 23, a Monday. The plant gates were locked when employees arrived.

Waste comes into the plant and goes through a series of chambers, separating the solids from the liquid, Christensen said. The treated, disinfected liquid flows through a canal and into the river. The solids are dried and hauled to the landfill.

Last weekend, valves were opened and closed, resulting in liquid waste flowing into the solids chamber. Because solid waste is not supposed to flow out of the treatment plant, there is no outlet from the digester, the 30,000-gallon in-ground concrete tank that holds solid waste. Therefore, the tank overflowed.

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## Mold growth tackled at Central School

MARIEL BETANCOURT  
 The Daily Advance

Although the exact cause of the mold found at Perquimans Central School is not yet known, school officials said they have learned how to prevent its growth.

On Tuesday, Perquimans County Schools Superintendent Kenneth Wells met with representatives from three companies that built the school two years ago — M.B. Kahn Construction,

Cheatham and Associates and Boney Architects — to examine the fungus problem. The group agreed on at least three key solutions, mainly focusing on better use of the school's HVAC system, according to Wells.

"Each of the (representatives) went around the school, making their own inspection," Wells said. "Then they got together and collectively walked around and looked at what they found. ... They asked, 'What can we do with the HVAC system that's in

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Mike Spong, the manager of ServiceMaster of the Albemarle, sets out fans to dry the carpet in a Perquimans Central School classroom last Thursday afternoon. The carpets and classrooms were cleaned because of a possible occurrence of 'Summer Mold Syndrome' at the school.

## School starts next Thursday

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The days of sleeping late and summer jobs will end soon, as the 2001-2002 school year gets underway in Perquimans County.

Monday is the first required day for 10-month employees. They will gather at the high school to meet Superintendent Kenneth W. Wells, who took over the reigns at the school system on July 1, before attending the annual Opening Day Convocation. Wells will serve as speaker for the morning.

Students report back on Thursday, Aug. 9. Starting and dismissal times at each school are: Central, 8:05—2:50; Hertford Grammar, 7:50—2:55 (walkers/private vehicles) or 3:00 (bus transportation); Perquimans Middle, 7:50—2:50; and Perquimans High, 8:00—2:55.

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## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
 HIGH: 84  
 LOW: 66  
 SUNNY

FRIDAY  
 HIGH: 85  
 LOW: 67  
 SUNNY

SATURDAY  
 HIGH: 82  
 LOW: 69  
 PARTLY CLOUDY

## INTO THE STORM

The Marching Pirates gave the traditional show preview Saturday to end band camp. The show, titled "Into the Storm," features "Summertime," "Into the Storm Ballad: The Eye" and "Touch the Sun." This year's band is composed of 62 musicians and a 10-member color guard corps. Drum majors are Felicia Vaughn and Fallon Winslow. Chris Whitehurst is the director.

