

Rotarians win awards

Page 3

Schools honor volunteers

Page 7

Remembering Grandmother

Page 6

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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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School board keeps religion policy

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The school board voted Monday night not to modify its religion in schools policy.

After months of review, board members voted 3-2 not to adopt an amendment to its policy which would have allowed religious materials to be offered to students on school property.

Board member Marjorie Rayburn said she opposed the policy change.

"I personally feel that this would be opening the door to any group that wants to come in the door and distribute religious material," she said. "I think it sets a precedent that does not need to be set. Once you let one group in, others can come."

Rayburn added that she attended a school board workshop regarding religious policies. During that session, she said, attendees were presented with case studies that showed that it could be problematic to allow the distribution of religious materials, especially to younger children.

Board chairman Walter Leigh and member Helen Shaw also opposed the measure.

"I've always had reservations about introducing religious materials in the schools," said Shaw, who added that she was the daughter of a minister.

Leigh, who is a minister, added that differences in the way people interpret the bible could also be a problem.

Iris Byrne made the motion to amend the policy.

"This has been done and is being done in other counties and this statement is legal," Byrne said. "I feel it's important that our children at least have the opportunity ... to pick up something."

Byrne said she did not feel there would be a problem in Perquimans County with changing the policy.

The motion was seconded by William Byrum, a board member and ordained minister.

"I'm supporting it," Byrum said. "I have two Gideon bibles in my house given to my children or grandchildren. Those bibles did less harm than I did."

Byrum also said that the policy stated that the superintendent and school principal "will grant" requests to distribute religious materials once per year. The amendment did not state that officials could decide on a case-by-case basis what group would be allowed to offer materials to students.

The change was proposed after the Gideons asked to distribute bibles to elementary students.

Bethel woman stabbed

Ex-boyfriend charged with attempted murder

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A Bethel woman is recovering in Chowan Hospital from injuries sus-

tained last weekend when her former live-in partner allegedly beat and stabbed her early Saturday morning.

Matthew Roy DeGray, 23, of 113 Levi Creecy Road, is charged with first degree attempted murder and first degree attempted burglary in the case.

The 21-year-old white female was severely beaten and stabbed in her home on

Oliver Street in the Bethel Fishing Center area, including a deep, serious cut in her abdomen and another to her throat, according to Perquimans Sheriff Eric Tilley.

Tilley said the woman was in surgery for over 6 hours to repair damage from the attack.

"There were stab wounds and cut wound all over her body," the sheriff

said. Tilley said DeGray and the victim had lived together and have a child. DeGray had reported moved out of the home he shared with the victim and moved into a residence with another female. The victim got a protective order against DeGray.

DeGray's present housemate allegedly told law officers who investigated the

stabbing that DeGray told her he was going to take a walk.

DeGray allegedly broke into the victim's home, where he beat and stabbed her. She was able to go to a neighbor's house for help.

Initially held in Albemarle District Jail without bond, Judge Grafton Beamon set bond at \$125,000 secured during DeGray's bond hearing.

Weekend activities draw hundreds

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The weather was chilly and damp Saturday, but the welcome was warm as tourists visited some of Perquimans most impressive historic homes.

From the Leigh Farm in Durants Neck to Layden's Store in Belvidere, formerly the Nichols Store, tourists visited an assortment of dwellings, churches and business properties Saturday and Sunday. Several of the buildings on the tour had been restored, while others are in the process of being renovated.

The tour, sponsored by the Perquimans County Restoration Association and Preservation North Carolina, is a biennial event showcasing the rich history of the county.

At then John White House in Belvidere, restored over the last seven years by Lynwood Winslow, there was even a reunion of sorts. Jack White, who was born in Perquimans County and still owns land here, bumped into his former college roommate whom he had not seen in 50 years.

The weekend of events began on Friday evening with Pig Out on the Green, sponsored by the Historic Hertford Business Association. Diners enjoyed pork barbecue dinners on the courthouse green while listening to the sounds of Loose Change. Several people were spotted on the benches in front of downtown businesses enjoying ice cream cones after their dinner.

On Saturday evening, the annual Perquimans County Restoration Association Garden Party was held at the historic 1812 on the Perquimans Inn. Almost 200 attended



PHOTO BY ALICE BREWIN

Margaret Brewin (left) serves guests at the annual Perquimans County Restoration Association Garden Party Saturday evening. Although Friday's warm sunshine gave way to gray skies and a chill in the air, almost 200 people attended the gala.



the gala which featured delicious food and guests dressed in spring finery.

The Garden Party has become the premiere fund raiser for PCRA. Proceeds



PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS

Everyone enjoyed the barbecue and music on the courthouse lawn on Friday evening.

benefit programs at the Newbold-White House, the oldest brick house in N.C.



Michelle Harris



Weston Curles

Honor grads are named

Michelle Harris and Weston Curles will lead the PCHS class of 2002 onto Memorial Field during graduation exercises on May 31.

Harris earned valedictory honors, while Curles is salutatorian. The two will deliver the graduation addresses at commencement. Graduation will be held next Friday night at 8 p.m.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 83
Low: 56
MOSTLY SUNNY

FRIDAY
High: 86
Low: 63
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 83
Low: 57
SCATTERED T'STORMS

White to leave Perquimans Middle School

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Perquimans Middle School principal Anne White will not serve in that capacity next school year.

Non-renewal of White's administrative contract was approved unanimously by the school board Monday night in regular session. She will retain her career teacher status.

White came to the school system in 1989 as Vocational Director and was reassigned to the mid-

dle school in 1998.

Superintendent Kenneth Wells declined to comment on the non-renewal of the contract, saying that administrators can not discuss specific personnel matters due to confidentiality laws.

Under state law, the contents of the personnel files of education personnel are confidential.

Other personnel action approved included:

Resignations: Davida Bines, receptionists/clerical, Central Office; Charles Cheezum, board member;

Melinda Connell, media assistant; Nickie Hurdle, pre-kindergarten assistant; and Thomasina White, bus driver.

Retirements: Carlene Hunter, custodial staff; Pamela Lothian, kindergarten teacher; Lenna Mansfield, kindergarten teacher; Percell McClenney Sr., custodial staff; and Brenda Umphlett, second grade teacher.

Terminations: Shirley Hickson, bus driver; and Dyrel Nowell, bus driver.

Administrative con-

tracts: Pam Price, two-year; Jeanie Umphlett, two-year; Edward Williams, two-year; and Tim Aydlett, two-year.

Tenured contracts: Stephanie Fuller, Terrie Mallory, Richard Thach, Leslie Alligood, Sylvia Johnson, Helen Lane, Lynn Partin, Leah Robertson, Alan Babcock, Susan Cox, Rodney Lassiter, Jeb Stuart, Virginia Allison, Lynette Baker, Tonya Little Williams, Betty Murdock, Patrick Reid, and John Wells.