

Vaccinations important

Page 2

4-H centennial

Page 3

Sports updates

Pages 6, 7

THE
PERQUIMANS
WEEKLY

P4/C3*****5-DIGIT 27944
 PERQUIMANS COUNTY LIBRARY
 110 W ACADEMY ST
 HERTFORD, NC 27944-1306

RECEIVED
 OCT 16 2002
 10/14/2002

106

35 cents

October 16, 2002

Vol. 71, No. 43 Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Guardians ad Litem are voices for children

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Children who are abused or neglected have many needs. And those who volunteer in the Guardian ad Litem program answer one of those needs. The volunteers provide a voice for the child in court.

Guardians ad Litem are not social workers or foster parents. Instead, they are gatherers of information from a number of agencies and individuals involved with an abused or neglected child. Once guardians have spoken with social workers, family members, teachers and others involved with the child, they write a report for the judge who will hear the case, recommending what they believe is in the child's best interest.

Natalie Bero is a volunteer in Perquimans County. She spends an average of



Natalie Bero volunteers as a voice for abused and neglected children through the Guardian ad Litem program.

two-three hours each week on a case, interviewing those involved and looking objectively at the facts to determine whether the family can be reunited or

whether the child should be removed from the home permanently.

"It takes a lot of commitment, it takes a lot of time, but if you can get that one

child into a stable environment ... then you're rewarded," Bero said. "And I think I have been (rewarded) many, many times."

While Bero said the preferred outcome would be to provide the child and parents services to allow them to overcome the circumstances that brought them into contact with the court system, then reunite them, that is not always possible. Sometimes the parents are just not able to provide a safe environment for children, and for those children, permanent placement in a positive environment may be best.

"It can be depressing, but hopefully you have the child get to point where he or she can go into a stable environment and have the childhood that he or she deserves," Bero said.

Bero has been assigned to one of her present cases for about three years,

although many cases are resolved within a matter of months.

After 32 years working with the juvenile court system in Virginia, Bero said she was not ready to give up her love of working with children when she retired and moved to Hertford. She has been able to continue to help families through her Guardian ad Litem volunteerism.

Veola Spivey is the district administrator of the Guardian program, which is administered through the Administrative Office of the Courts.

She said at present, there are five cases in Perquimans involving nine children being handled through the Guardian program. The average case takes from one month to one year to resolve, she said.

Spivey said when the Department of Social

Services files a petition on behalf of an abused or neglected child, or one who is in a high-risk, unsafe environment, a Guardian ad Litem is assigned to work with the attorney to help determine what is in the best interest of the child.

While Spivey said Guardians always hope that the family's situation can be made safe for the child, 60 percent of the children who are assigned a Guardian do not return home.

There is always a need for Guardians to advocate for children who need support. Training is planned for Oct. 24 and 31 and Nov. 7, 14 and 21. Those who would like information on the training or the program should call Spivey at 331-4755.

The life of a child could depend on a volunteer.

POLITICKIN' AT THE PLANTATION

Republican Greg Dority visited Perquimans last week, stopping to meet with supporters at Albemarle Plantation. The candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives will face Democrat Frank Ballance in November's general election. Political observers say the North Carolina races could be key to the balance of power in Washington, D.C.



PHOTO BY ALICE BREWIN

Library celebrates 65th anniversary

The Friends of Perquimans County Library will hold a Silver Tea as a fundraising event on Monday, Oct. 21, at 7 p.m. The Tea, open to all, will be held in the library and will feature instrumental music, delicious homemade refreshments, a drawing for door prizes, and a time to socialize and celebrate the 65th birthday of Perquimans County Library.

Perquimans County Library first opened its doors on June 25, 1937 as the Hertford Public Library. A project of the Women's Welfare Club of Hertford, the funds needed to establish the library and to pay for other civic projects of the Club were raised by "serving dinners, sponsoring plays, silver teas, flower shows and fire-sales," according to a newspaper report of the day.

The library was reorganized in 1942 and the name was changed to Perquimans County Library. The building that presently houses the library has been expanded on two occasions and was originally a school lunch room. A section of the building next door, the Perquimans Senior Citizen Center, was the original home of the library, although that building, too, was much smaller at the time and was known as the Community House.

When members of the Friends were planning ways to recognize the milestone of 65 years of providing library service to the citizens of Perquimans County, they realized that having an old-fashioned fundraiser would be in keeping with the history of the library. So, it was decided to revive a practice of old and hold a Silver Tea.

The Friends are working to raise money to purchase a new microfilm reader-printer for the North Carolina Room. The new

machine will replace the ancient microfilm reader that has aided so many genealogists and other researchers over the years. The new reader-printer has a hefty price tag - approximately \$10,000!

Used book sales, a raffle, and other activities have moved the Friends along the road to the needed funds, but there is still a long way to go. It is hoped that all who attend the Silver Tea will contribute not only silver coins but also green bills and checks to this worthwhile effort.

Those who will be unable to attend the Silver Tea on Monday evening may make contributions throughout the week when visiting the library by placing their donations in the glass container so marked. Or they may mail a check to Perquimans County Library at 110 West Academy Street, Hertford NC 27944. All donations are tax deductible.

For more information about the library or about the Friends of Perquimans County Library, call 252-426-5319 or email Perquimans@pettigrewlibraries.org

Schools get \$32K technology grants

Funds to expand public access to computers, internet

Perquimans County Schools' continuing effort to expand technology to the community will get a boost from \$32,000 in grant funding from the Rural Internet Access Authority.

Perquimans County Schools Technology Director Victor Eure was recently notified of the funding.

The Rural Internet Access Authority (RIAA) was created in August 2000 with members being appointed by the general Assembly and the Governor. Some of the ongoing goals of the Rural Internet Access Authority and the e-NC initiative are to provide high-speed Internet access at competitive prices to North Carolinians and to significantly increase the number of individuals, businesses

and organizations who own computers and computer devices and who subscribe to the Internet.

Eure was appointed to spearhead the e-Communities effort in Perquimans County. In December 2001, Perquimans received a \$10,000 e-communities planning grant for Phase I of the program. The grant was used to develop a steering committee and solicit input and participation from community representatives to prioritize the technology needs for Perquimans County. The two highest needs identified by the steering committee were public access and training.

During the initial planning process, the development of local web content was also noted as a critical component essential in helping with economic development in Perquimans County. As a result of the initial phase of the e-Communities effort, both the local county government and schools were able to develop user-friend-

ly interactive websites that can be viewed at www.co.perquimans.nc.us and www.pcs.k12.nc.us.

A Public Access Grant of \$12,000 recently received will be used to address the concern of lack of public access areas to the Internet. A survey conducted by East Carolina University indicates that over one third of county residents do not have access to the Internet at home. Funds will be used to purchase computers and help provide technical assistance for the county library, and continue the work of the Community Technology Learning Center at Perquimans High School.

"The population that we hope to target with the additional public access site is those citizens of Perquimans County who do not own home computers or have high speed Internet access at home or in their business," said Eure.

When citizens in Perquimans County were surveyed, results indicated that 96 percent of the

respondents would take classes to learn how to use computers and the Internet more effectively if classes were available at no charge. Keeping this in mind, Eure applied for and received the Digital/Internet Literacy Training Grant. Perquimans County Schools was one of only two public school systems that received the \$20,000 funding which will be used to continue technology training during evening hours and on weekends at the local high school, an initiative which began last year through a Community Technology Learning Center grant.

Eure said that the receipt of these grants is timely. It will allow continuation of a technology training program which began last year that was very successful for the school, community and business people. In addition, it will assist in providing technology training for teacher assistants and other non-certified staff to comply with the new federal legislation, No Child Left Behind.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 72
LOW: 50
MOSTLY SUNNY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 68
LOW: 46
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 67
LOW: 45
PARTLY CLOUDY