

# Happy New Year!

Hertford to honor those who helped during Winslow Oil Company fire 25 years ago

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Pirates win hoops classic

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## PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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### Fire damages Dobbs Street home Sunday

MARGARET FISHER  
The Daily Advance

When a fire broke out in a Hertford residence Sunday evening, the elderly woman who lives in the home didn't know her house was on fire until a neighbor knocked on her

door.

Three fire departments were called to 303 Dobbs Street after a call to Perquimans Telecommunications was placed about 6 p.m. on Sunday. Hertford and Winfall fire departments arrived shortly after the call when the right side of

the house was on fire. It took about 25 minutes to get the fire under control, said Parker Newbern, assistant chief of the Hertford Fire Department.

There were no injuries at the home where M.B. Taylor lives alone. Taylor was in the kitchen when a neighbor saw fire in an

upstairs room. Another neighbor also noticed the blaze. One of the neighbors knocked on the door and helped Taylor out of the house. Her four cats also ran out of the house.

"(Taylor) didn't have a clue that the house was on fire," Newbern said.

The house is heavily

damaged by fire, smoke and water, said Hertford Fire Chief Bob Reed.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation, although arson is not suspected, Newbern said. The Inter-County Fire Department was called in with a thermal imager to find hot spots and fire

extensions, or areas that the fire may have extended toward, he said.

Newbern said that fire officials would likely remain at the scene through the night and part of Monday to make sure the fire is completely out and to determine the cause.

### Suspicious fire destroys Belvidere mobile home

The Daily Advance

A fire that officials believe may have been set burned a mobile home to the ground in Belvidere on Dec. 21.

No one was injured in the blaze that cost Debbie Wiggins her home at 250 Cartwright Swamp Road, Perquimans Fire Marshal John Long said the day after the blaze.

The fire began around midnight, and had fully engulfed the secluded mobile home by the time neighbors spotted the smoke above the trees, Long said.

Four trucks and 20 firefighters from the Belvidere-Chappell Hill Volunteer Fire Department responded to the blaze.

The mobile home "burnt right on down to the chassis," Long said.

Because of Wiggins' recent behavior, fire officials initially believed that she might have set the fire to commit suicide, Long said.

"She told neighbors and family members that she was tired of living and was going to end everything," he said.

However, when a body couldn't be found among the mobile home's smoking ruins, officials discovered some of Wiggins' possessions outside the home that appeared to have been rescued from the fire.

Several objects from the trailer were neatly placed on a trampoline outside the structure, and Wiggins claimed she had taken the things from her home after the fire started.

But the neat placement

of the objects indicates they were taken out before the fire started, Long said. Wiggins would not have had time to be so fastidious if she was acting after the fire started, Long said.

Also adding to the suspicions that the fire may have been intentionally set was Wiggins' failure to seek help once the fire started. Wiggins did not have a phone, but, if the blaze was an accident, she would have most likely sought help from someone who did, Long said.

When they began looking for Wiggins around the perimeter of her former home, they found her "laying in the woods," Long said.

Long said when Wiggins was questioned, she told him the fire began with a kerosene lamp, and that because she was afraid, she ran into the woods.

"She said she heard things exploding and ran," Long said.

Wiggins, 50, was staying with friends after the fire. She declined to speak to The Daily Advance at the fire scene.

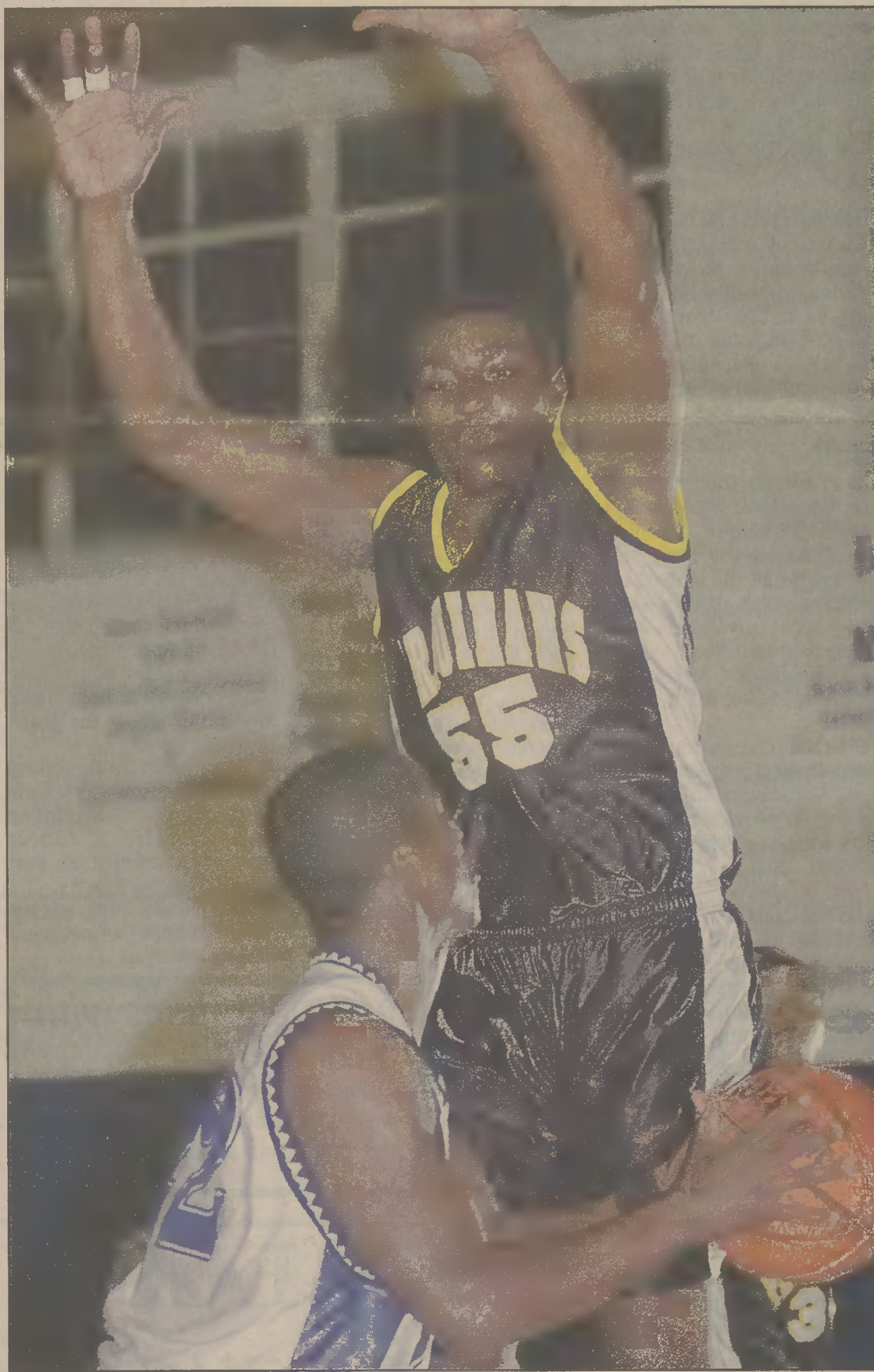
Long said he doesn't plan to charge Wiggins with any criminal offenses.

Wiggins' mother, however, does not believe her daughter intentionally set the fire or tried to kill herself.

"She did not try to kill herself," Doris Hollowell said.

Hollowell stood by her daughter's account of the events surrounding the fire, however. The blaze was an accident involving either the kerosene heater or kerosene lamp Wiggins used, Hollowell said.

### TOURNAMENT CHAMPS



Daily Advance photo by Sam Wolfe

Jerrell Foreman goes up to block the shot of No. 42 Devin Penny of Camdem during the boys final of The Daily Advance Four-County Holiday Basketball Classic. Perquimans won the tournament.

### Tourism group chooses slogan

"A Quiet Haven in a Busy World" is the winning entry in a Perquimans County Heritage Tourism Development Council contest to select a marketing catchphrase for Perquimans County.

Charlie Skinner submitted the winning phrase.

"Charlie's entry perfectly captures what is so special about Perquimans County and what we have to offer tourists," said Chris Lane, president of the Perquimans County Heritage Tourism Development Council.

The council sought entries from the public in coming up with a catchphrase to give it a recognizable identity for its marketing efforts. Elizabeth City has had success marketing itself as the "Harbor of Hospitality," and other towns and counties have also benefitted from a catchphrase. Over 120 entries were received.

Serving on the selection committee were David Webb, Harriette Woodard, and Jeri Oltman.

The first use of the marketing phrase will be in an ad for Perquimans County to run in the February 2003 issue of "Our State" magazine.

### PCHS students design web pages, get college credit

ALICE BREWIN  
Staff writer

There are some folks, of generations not defined by the last letters of the alphabet, who may think of spiders when they hear "web design." The students in Richard Davison's *Principles of Web Design*

class know better.

Working in teams, 10 students have designed professional quality web pages for Perquimans High School, Perquimans County Library and the Perquimans Arts League.

The class, part of College of the Albemarle's new Internet Technologies Program, is being taught at

Perquimans County High School.

No ordinary class at Perquimans, this college course is being offered for credit to both high schoolers and interested members of the community.

Antje Curphey, program coordinator for Perquimans County High School Community

Technology Learning Center, is the lone adult student. The rest of the class is comprised of high school juniors and seniors.

According to Curphey, some of the major benefits of the class, besides learning a valuable and marketable skill, are free college credits and enrollment at COA. This gives the high

school students an early start on their college careers.

In its first year, the class is made possible in part by a training grant from the Eastern North Carolina Rural Internet Access Authority. Open to residents of Perquimans County, a new Web Design

Continued on page 8

### WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
High: 61  
Low: 37  
PM SHOWERS

FRIDAY  
High: 54  
Low: 31  
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY  
High: 52  
Low: 31  
PARTLY CLOUDY