

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Moth boat events set

Page 3

Turtle Tech Camp success

Page 7

Watch for invasive plants

Page 10

July 30, 2003

Vol. 71, No. 31 Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Body pulled from water

From staff reports

The badly decomposed body of a woman was pulled out of the Albemarle Sound near Harvey Point on July 24.

Sheriff's deputy Marlo Reel said Tuesday that officials are trying to confirm the identity of the body. The medical examiner in Greenville performed an autopsy this weekend, and Reel said the sheriff's department is waiting for information from the report.

Sheriff Eric Tilley told The Daily Advance last week that someone working at the edge of the Yeopim River off Goosenest Lane saw the body and notified officials around 5:25 p.m. last Thursday. It had washed ashore behind a section of bulkheading.

The body was initially thought to be that of a black female at Albemarle Hospital, but was determined by authorities in the medical examiner's office to be a white female, approximately 20-40 years of age, 5'2" and 100-110 pounds. She could have had brown hair, but had been in the water long enough that there was no body hair present.

She could have been in the water up to two weeks, according to the medical examiner.

The cause of death is still undetermined, although Tilley said no bullet or stab wounds were apparent from the initial examination.

The woman was wearing a gold band-type ring with four clear stones on the middle finger of her right hand and clear stone earrings in each year. She was wearing a bathing suit under cut-off blue jeans and a white T-shirt adorned with an American flag and the words "God Bless America." There was a tattoo of a tire with two sets of wings on the left side of her chest near the shoulder. The words on the design were unreadable.

Tilley alerted all county law enforcement agencies within 100 miles of Harvey Point about the body, asking officials to notify his department if they had any information.

Reel said that EMS, the water rescue unit and Emergency Management all arrived at the scene to assist.

"We're really fortunate that all the agencies here work so well together," Reel said. "You don't have that in every county. It's great the way everyone backs each other up and works together here."

Pit bulls maul Hertford woman

RYAN BURR
The Daily Advance

A Hertford woman was in critical condition at a Greenville hospital Friday evening after she was savagely mauled by four pit-bull dogs.

Zalene Bunch, 44, was initially treated at Chowan Hospital in Edenton but had to be airlifted to Pitt County Memorial Hospital because of the severity of her injuries, Perquimans Sheriff Eric Tilley said. Tilley said he did not know the extent of Bunch's injuries, other than that they "were bad" enough she had to be

transported to PCMH.

Roger Nelson, a nursing coordinator at PCMH, described Bunch's condition as critical.

Sheriff's deputy Marlo Reel said Tuesday that Bunch's condition has been upgraded to stable, and that she should be able to be interviewed by Wednesday.

The attack occurred in the yard of a mobile home on Third Avenue shortly after 2 p.m., and was reported by Daniel Roulhac, a Lowes Drive resident who identified himself as Bunch's boyfriend, Tilley said.

When animal control personnel and sheriff deputies arrived at the

mobile home, they found five pit bulls, three running loose in the front yard and two chained to a tree in the back yard, Tilley said.

"Two of the three dogs came running at us," Tilley said. "You could see blood on all three of the dogs, especially the white one; it (blood) was on their face and shoulders."

One of the dogs chained to the tree also was bloody, Tilley said.

"That one was apparently involved in the attack, too, because it could reach (Bunch) even with his chain," Tilley said.

Bunch had already been transported to PCMH by the time sher-

iff's deputies arrived at the attack scene, Tilley said.

The owner of the home where the attack occurred was visiting neighbors when deputies arrived, Tilley said. The man, identified as Kevin Foreman, told deputies the dogs belong to his son, who was not home at the time.

Foreman helped animal control officials secure all five of the dogs in cages for transport to the Chowan County Animal Shelter where they'll remain until a court releases them, Tilley said.

"They've been deemed vicious," Tilley said.
Continued on page 10

Wiggins earns state's top honor

Community activist receives Order of the Long Leaf Pine

JOANIE MORRIS
The Daily Advance

Known for speaking her mind, Shirley Wiggins is not someone who's usually at a loss for words.

But Saturday she was, when she was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine — the state's highest civilian honor — during the Perquimans County NAACP's annual Freedom Fund & Mother of the Year banquet.

"I'm at a loss for words," a surprised Wiggins told a crowd of about 100 at Saturday's banquet. "I'm so flabbergasted. ... Everyone is not privileged to receive such a high honor."

Wiggins said receiving the award at a banquet sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was an honor in itself.

"I feel great because I am a lifetime member of the NAACP and I've served with the NAACP since I was in my teens," she said.

Wiggins, the first African-American woman to ever serve on the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners, said it was the NAACP that helped mold her into a leader. She



Shirley Wiggins, known for her work in the community and local government, was presented with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Saturday night during the NAACP's annual Freedom Fund & Mother of the Year banquet. Charles Ward, who has served as a county commissioner with Wiggins for several years, presented the award.

says she now tries to pass on what she's learned to young people.

Wiggins' niece, Loretta Wiggins Buggs, said her aunt was very deserving of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, which is awarded by the state governor's office to individuals for service to their communities.

"She works with the young people in the schools and in the church," Buggs said. "We feel that she's very deserving" of this honor. "She has worked very hard."

Melvin "Skip" Alston,

president of the North Carolina State Conference of NAACP branches and the keynote speaker for Saturday's banquet, also praised Wiggins as "an excellent leader."

"She is somebody that has paved the way for African-American females and the race," Alston said.

Alston said Wiggins had been a pioneer in her community, just like civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was a pioneer during the 1950s and '60s.

During his remarks, Alston told those in atten-

dance not to wait to make a difference in their communities.

"Martin Luther King Jr. wasn't 65 when he made a difference," Alston said. "He was only 35 when he won the Nobel Peace Prize."

Alston urged listeners that "investing in our youth is the most important" thing the NAACP can do. "Our youth is our best resource," he said.

Debbie Jean Wrighton was also honored during Saturday's banquet as the Mother of the Year for 2003.

Teachers, students head back to class

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Summer break is quickly coming to an end for students and teachers in Perquimans County Schools.

While some teachers have already reported back to work for optional teacher workdays, all will be required to report Monday, when the annual convocation is scheduled at 9 a.m. The first day for students is Wednesday.

Work is in progress to prepare for the return of students across the district. At the high school, that includes having a contractor on site to repair air conditioning and heating units in the south end of the building, Superintendent Kenneth Wells told the

school board Monday night.

Personnel director Brenda Dail said all positions are filled.

There have been some personnel transfers and changes within the system. One of those changes was naming high school athletic director Susan Cox as athletic director for the entire system. Cox worked with middle school personnel to compose participation requirements that were approved by the board Monday night.

Wells said the requirements are in line with state requirements for high school athletes, and offer academic assistance to those athletes who may need additional help in the classroom. Athletes will be

required to have teachers check a simple progress report form every two weeks to submit to the coaching staff. Any student not performing at a passing level will receive immediate after-school assistance while taking a one-week break from athletic participation.

Both Wells and P.C.M.S. principal Melvin Hawkins said the measure is not intended as a punishment, but rather to help student athletes before they get too far behind in their classwork or lose eligibility to play sports.

Football players at the middle school should report to the gym on Aug. 4 at 3 p.m. Volleyball and soccer practices will start on Aug. 11 immediately after

school. All players must have physical and drug testing forms completed in order to practice.

High school football and volleyball practices start this week, and soccer and cross-country will begin when school starts.

Open houses will be held at each of the four schools. Times and dates are: Perquimans Central School (grades preK-2, Aug. 14, 7 p.m.); Hertford Grammar School (grades 3-5), Aug. 4, 6:30-7:30 p.m.; Perquimans Middle School (grades 6-8), Aug. 11, 5:30-7 p.m.; and Perquimans High School (grades 9-12) Aug. 5, 5-7 p.m.

See page 3 for information on school take-in and let-out times.

All students will be handbooks.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 84
Low: 73
SCATTERED T'STORMS

FRIDAY
High: 86
Low: 73
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 86
Low: 72
SCATTERED T'STORMS