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No such thing as healthy tan

Page 4

Lady Pirates get first win

Page 7

Students Kick Butts

Pages 8

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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Armed robbery

McDonald's robbed at gunpoint Thursday

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A lone gunman robbed McDonald's in the early morning hours of April Fool's Day.

According to a press release issued by the Hertford Police Department, a masked black male dressed in black entered the fast-food restaurant located at the Perquimans Centre on Ocean Highway South (U.S. Highway 17 Bypass) around 5:04 a.m. last Thursday. He robbed the store of an undetermined amount of money and fled on foot in an unknown direction.

There were three employees in the restaurant at the time of the robbery, but police say no one was injured.

The man was described as approximately 5-foot, 10 inches tall with a thin build.

Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said Tuesday that the investigation into the case continues, but no additional information is available.

Anyone with information about the case is asked to contact the Hertford Police Department at 426-5587.

Primary election scheduled

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The U.S. Justice Department's approval of the new voting districts in North Carolina has paved the way for a July primary.

Board of Elections Director Eula Forbes said the primary election is set for July 20. The election was originally scheduled for May.

The filing period for office will open on April 26 at noon and close on May 7 at noon, Forbes said.

Local elections include county commissioners, school board and Register of Deeds.

County commissioner seats available are presently held by Democrats Mack Nixon, currently the board chair, and Shirley Wiggins and Republican Wallace Nelson.

On the non-partisan school board, seats held by Chairman William Byrum, Vice Chair Helen Shaw and Iris Byrne are up for re-election.

Deborah S. Reed, a Democrat, is the present Register of Deeds.

Forbes said if necessary, a run-off date of Aug. 17 has been set.

The general election scheduled for Nov. 2.

WINFALL BLAZE



Winfall and Hertford firefighters battle a house fire on Loomis Street in Winfall Monday morning. The initial investigation suggests the fire began at the water heater. The home appears to be a total loss.

Winfall couple loses home in Monday fire

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A faulty water heater may have caused a Winfall couple to lose their home Monday morning.

Winfall Fire Chief Kelvin Roberson said the initial investigation indicated that the fire started at

the water heater. He said he believes the home was a total loss, including all personal property inside the dwelling.

The occupants of the home, Shirley and Jonathan Ferebee, were not at home when the blaze was reported at 112 Loomis Street. Roberson said a

passerby saw and reported the fire on the side street which runs parallel to Winfall Boulevard near Winfall Landing Park.

The Winfall Fire Department was dispatched around 10 a.m., and Roberson said the fire was under control in about 45 minutes. Firefighters

from both Winfall and Hertford responded and used air packs to get into the house, which was full of dense smoke.

The Winfall Police Department, Perquimans County EMS and Emergency Management Coordinator also responded to the blaze.

County board to study occupancy tax

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The county commissioners made no decision on implementing an occupancy tax in the county during regular session on Monday night.

The chamber of commerce has appeared before the commissioners on at least two occasions to request that commissioners approve a 6 percent occupancy tax on overnight lodging. The tax would be charged to all who obtain overnight lodging in the county, including those in motels, bed and breakfast establishments and condominiums.

Funds collected would be spent on tourism promotion, sponsorship of tourism-related events and activities in the county, and

financing local tourism-related capital projects.

A seven-member board appointed by government and private agencies would oversee the funds collected, according to the resolution presented to the county by the chamber.

Monday night, commissioners held a public hearing on the issue.

County resident Pete Perry spoke against the tax. One of his reasons for not supporting the tax is that it would be controlled by a private board.

"We should not levy taxes for a private organization," Perry said.

He said if the county feels that the tax is needed, the tax should be implemented and the funds collected placed in the general fund for dispersal by the

county commissioners.

"I feel that this is unnecessary at this time," Perry said. "I urge you not to do this. It is unneeded, uncalled for."

Later in the meeting when the matter came up on the agenda for discussion, some commissioners questioned how much could be generated from the tax and if it would deter people from visiting Perquimans County.

The chamber estimated that \$14,000 could be collected in the first full year of tax collection.

Past chamber president Larry Johnson said the tax doesn't stop people from staying overnight in other counties. Only three other counties in the state do not have the tax, Johnson added.

Commissioner Ben Hobbs, owner of a bed and breakfast in the county, said he is against the occupancy tax.

"I don't think it'll affect business, I'm against it because it's a new tax," Hobbs said.

County attorney John Matthews said the resolution as presented by the chamber could not be acted upon by the commissioners because he had some concerns about its legality. Matthews said the resolution needed further study before action.

Commissioners also said they wanted to thoroughly review the resolution before taking action. It will be discussed at the commissioners' next work session.

Periauger project beamed worldwide by webcam

The historic construction of the periauger, a Colonial era log boat, is being beamed worldwide by a webcam installed at the N.C. Maritime Museum's Watercraft Center, the site where the boat is being built.

The progress of the boat's construction can be viewed at the site www.estuarylive.org. The webcam is coordinated by

Marine Grafics and the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve (www.ncnerr.org) as part of their EstuaryLive program. The site refreshes every ten minutes.

The periauger will be featured during Estuary Live Spring 2004, an electronic field trip focusing on the ecology, history and culture of North Carolina's

coastal areas. The segment on the Periauger is scheduled for April 28 at 9:30 a.m. For information on registering for the EstuaryLive, visit estuarylive.org.

The construction of the periauger is a joint project with the Perquimans County Restoration Association, which operates the Newbold-White House Historic Site, NC Maritime Museum,

Perquimans County, and East Carolina University's Program in Maritime Studies.

The periauger will be located in Historic Hertford harbor following completion and eventually at the Newbold-White House Historic Site as part of its hands-on educational programming. The project is funded in part by

Continued on page 10

Board to define vote recording policy

SUSAN R. HARRIS

County commissioners will discuss their voting policy at the board's next work session.

County attorney John Matthews said Monday night that commissioner Tammy Miller-White abstained from a vote at the board's March meeting, which prompted a call to Matthews from board secretary Mary Hunnicutt as to how to record the vote in the official minutes.

Matthews said that traditionally, silence has been recorded as an affirmative vote.

The question, however, prompted Matthews to review state statute regarding recording votes. He found that commissioners are required to abstain from voting under certain circumstances, such as in situations in which a board member would personally benefit from a decision. But in all other cases, board members are required by law to vote. In fact, it is a criminal offense for a board member not in a situation where a vote would personally benefit them not to vote.

Matthews said commissioners must state prior to a vote that they are abstaining; otherwise, a vote must be recorded.

Miller-White said she would not have personally benefitted from the vote in question.

Matthews said how to record a no-vote is essentially up to the commissioners.

Commissioners Chairman Mack Nixon said the board should adopt an official policy to document how votes will be recorded when a commissioner does not audibly vote. He said how votes are recorded should be a matter of written policy, not just a vote that requires research when in question.

He placed the issue on the board's work session agenda for further discussion.

HOLIDAY WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 69
Low: 54
SCATTERED T-STORMS

FRIDAY
High: 68
Low: 45
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 64
Low: 45
PARTLY CLOUDY