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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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AUG 09 2006

August 9, 2006

Vol. 74, No. 32 Hertford, North Carolina 27944

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Man charged with abusing grandchildren

SUSAN HARRIS

A Virginia man was arrested in Florida for allegedly molesting his two grandchildren in Hertford.

Robert Rush of 2902 Bente Way, Virginia Beach, Va. was charged with two counts of first degree sex offense with a child on July 26. He is presently being held in Albemarle District Jail under an \$80,000 bond.

Investigator Marlo Reel with

the sheriff's department said she received initial information on the case from the local Department of Social Services. That agency was contacted by St. Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach, Fla. that Rush had come to their facility in a suicidal state, resulting, it appeared, from his feelings about molesting his grandchildren, Reel said.

Reel began investigating the case on July 10. She learned that the Rush's spent a lot of time

with their children and grandchildren at a second home owned by the alleged victims' parents in Perquimans County.

Interviews Reel conducted with family members revealed that a teen grandchild confided in Mrs. Rush sometime around the first of July that Rush had been touching the teen and a pre-teen sibling inappropriately for about five years, on several occasions in Perquimans County.

Mrs. Rush allegedly confront-

ed Rush about the accusations, Reel said. She told Reel that she had told her husband that if the accusations were true, she wanted him out of their Virginia Beach home. Reel said it appears that Rush left Virginia and headed to visit a family member in West Palm Beach, where he ended up at St. Mary's Medical Center.

Reel said she spoke with both of the alleged victims, and both disclosed the abuse to her during separate interviews.

Reel sent the case before the grand jury on July 24. Rush was indicted and warrants for his arrest were faxed to Florida, where Rush was picked up and held until he could be brought to North Carolina to face charges. He was initially held without bail, but did get his bond set at \$80,000 at a bond hearing.

Reel said Rush has indicated he will plead not guilty to the charges when he appears in court.

Sheriff defends gun permit decision

CHRIS WHIPPLE

The Daily Advance and
SUSAN HARRIS
Editor & Publisher

Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley said he is not second-guessing his decision not to issue a handgun permit in light of the fact that the person to whom he denied the permit has taken her fight to the U.S. Supreme Court. He is confident he made the right decision.

Tilley denied a handgun permit to Eve Anne Clark when she applied for one on Nov. 15, 2005, several months after a home she and her husband, Michael, own in Snug Harbor was destroyed by arsonists.

The home at 109 Walnut Street, which was occupied by their son, burned on Sept. 7, the third house in Snug Harbor to be destroyed by arsonists in 2005. Since then two other homes in the community have been burned.

Officials have not made an arrest in the arson cases.

In her application for a handgun permit, Clark said she needed a weapon to protect herself. Tilley denied the application the day after it was filed.

Tilley cited several reasons for turning down the permit, including Clark's involvement in a volatile dispute with a group of neighbors and her husband's status as a convicted felon. Michael Clark was convicted of kidnapping.

"It is a public safety issue," Tilley said Monday. "Why as sheriff am I going to throw a handgun in the middle of a feud? And I think putting a gun in her hand gives him access to a weapon and he's a convicted felon I'm not putting a gun in that situation."

Tilley added that to his knowledge, no one has directly threatened Clark. He said Clark has told him that those she feels are responsible for burning the mobile home she owned where her son lived ride by her home, make obscene gestures and gawk

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NOT GETTING AWAY



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

Hertford police officers nab Armen Hodges after he ran from officers and tried to hide under a house on Dobbs Street. Drugs and money were confiscated. Officials from local agencies conducted a sweep Friday night to serve warrants and crack down on crime.

Cops make 'pop calls' in crime hot spots

MARGARET FISHER

After numerous complaints at recent town meetings about increased crime activity, law enforcement officials from five agencies swept through the county Friday night in an effort to keep criminals on their toes.

Their efforts paid off. Three individuals were arrested. Hertford, Winfall and Edenton police departments, Perquimans County Sheriff's Office and Perquimans County Probation and Parole worked together to raid areas where drug activity is prevalent.

"If all these entities are working together," said Rhonda Waters, director of Hertford Housing Authority, "it thrills me to see that (the crime) is getting the attention it needs."

Waters said she has been battling ongoing problems at Wynn Fork Apartments. Last week, she put up new "No Trespassing" signs in the complex.

Officials, accompanied by Hertford Mayor Sid Eley, swarmed Wynn Fork Apartments to serve a warrant and curb loitering and drug activity. Officers came in on foot through an area on U.S. Highway 17 where a portion of the fence had been smashed down. Other officers came in through

the entrance and exit by vehicle.

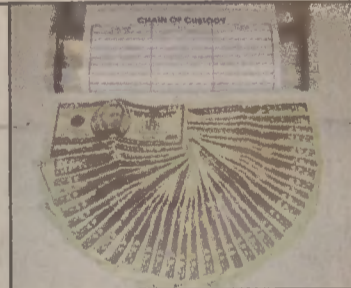
While no arrests were made there, the individual they were seeking was later found in a raid at 329 Market St. At about 9 p.m., officers approached a group of people in front of the house when one man ran to the back of the house.

An officer chased him down as other officers surrounded the area on Dobbs Street. The man was found trying to roll under a house on Dobbs Street directly behind 329 Market Street. Officers seized 10 grams of crack cocaine and \$150 from Armen Lavell Hodges, 22, of 107 Pine Ridge Road.

Hodges' warrants included driving with license revoked, failure to stop at a stop sign, careless/reckless driving, exceeding posted speed limit and resisting a public officer. Friday, he was charged with possession with intent to sell/deliver cocaine and resisting arrest.

Hodges was taken to Albemarle District Jail on a \$12,000 secured bond plus \$1,500 bond for his previous charges.

Officers seized \$790 from another man, Brandon Dunbar, who was apprehended in front of 329 Market St. Dunbar was not arrested, but was given "a reasonable amount of



Almost \$800 was seized Friday night when law enforcement agencies made some unexpected house calls in areas known for a high incidence of drug activity.

time" to prove that the money was obtained legally, and not drug money, said Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy.

Most of the problems in that area are centered around the house on Market Street, and officers are monitoring the activities going on there, Vanscoy said. In fact, he has spoken to the owner, William Davis of Elizabeth City, about putting a stop to the activities. The town council can have the house seized and turned over to benefit the school system, he said.

Town Manager John Christensen said that a nuisance abatement process has just begun, but he didn't think that Davis had received a letter from the

town as of yet.

At about 9:15 p.m., another group of officers went to 215 Meads Circle to attempt to serve a warrant. When officers approached the door, a resident, Joshua Felton, 21, opened it.

Felton told officers that the man they were looking for wasn't there. The officers entered the mobile home and found the man they were seeking hiding under a bed. They also saw a small amount of marijuana in an ashtray in plain view, Vanscoy said.

Jamie Dwayne Walker, 17, the resident found under the bed, was charged with possession of marijuana. His previous charges include motor vehicle theft, burglary and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was taken to Albemarle District Jail under an \$18,000 secured bond.

Felton was charged with possession of marijuana less than half an ounce and resisting a public officer, placed on a \$1,000 secured bond and taken to jail.

The purpose of the raid is to be seen by the public and keep criminals off-guard, Vanscoy said.

"We're showing the good people out here that we're giving 100 percent," he said, "and we're showing the bad people that we're not playing -- what we're saying is what we mean."

Jury: Jordan guilty

SUSAN HARRIS

The fourth man involved in holding a Beech Springs household at gunpoint in December 2003 was found guilty at a jury trial in Superior Court in late July.

Andrew Jordan was sentenced to 89 months with the N.C. Department of Corrections after being found guilty of first degree burglary and second degree kidnapping. A charge of attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon was dismissed.

Jordan, Rashie Belfield, Quinton Porter and Christopher Hinton knocked open the front door of a home in the Beech Springs community on Dec. 12, 2003, according to Sheriff Eric Tilley and court records. Once inside, they held four adults at gunpoint. An infant was also in the house.

Shortly after entering the house, one of the group realized they were not in the house they were looking for, and they left.

Weapons recovered from the suspects were determined to have been stolen about a month before the incident during a break-in in the New Hope Township.

Belfield, Porter and Hinton all pleaded guilty to first degree burglary and attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon. Belfield got 133 months in Aug. 2004, while Porter and Hinton each received 71-month sentences, Hinton in June 2005 and Porter in July 2005.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 91, LOW: 73
ISOLATED T'STORMS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 91, LOW: 73
ISOLATED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 84, LOW: 70
PARTLY CLOUDY