

Happy
Thanksgiving!

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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Bones found in church those of black female

MARGARET FISHER

Nearly eight weeks after the initial discovery of bones in the basement of a church, a few clues to the mystery have been revealed about them.

With merely a skull and two femur bones available to her, Megan Perry, assistant professor of anthropology at East Carolina University in Greenville, has concluded from a bone analysis that the strange find is likely the remains of a black female. The woman, who appears to have been about 30 to 40 years old, was probably no more than 5-foot, 10-inches. The skull has no evidence of being hit by any sort of blunt object.

But, the most intriguing question remains to be solved — how old the bones are.

"Based on the preliminary report, at this stage, all we know is that they are older," said Bill Taylor, autopsy manager at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU.

The bones, estimated to be at least five years old, could be much older, Taylor said. However, Perry said that they are not likely to be prehistoric.

The bones were discovered when Charles Eason, pastor of First Baptist Church, stumbled upon them as he was remodeling the church. After taking a ladder out of the basement, some of the stored items fell over. When Eason returned the ladder, he found the two leg bones next to the skull, which was in a bucket covered with an old cloth.

The forensic anthropology analysis that Perry completed includes determining age, sex, race, stature and abnormalities based on the characteristics of the bones.

"(Race) is actually very difficult (to determine). It's actually controversial," she said. Certain traits of the skeleton are genetic and are often found in particular areas of the world.

In determining the sex of an individual, the pelvic bones are the best indicators. But, the skull is also indicative. Male skulls tend to be more rugged and robust and are often somewhat larger, she said. The femur bones tend to be larger, as well.

"Age is more difficult (to determine)," Perry said. The sutures at the top where the skull bones meet start becoming more obliterated as a person gets

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Thanksgiving



PHOTO COURTESY PERQUIMANS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Breonna Fain and Gevin Nixon of Mrs. Patti Bittner's third grade class help to hang finished Thanksgiving art work in the hall. Students have incorporated history, art and character education into Thanksgiving studies.

Hot pot causes \$20K loss

MARGARET FISHER

A woman was unaware that a pot was sitting on a hot burner when she left her apartment with her two children last Friday. When she returned, the smoke was so thick, she couldn't get inside.

Alexis Warren, 20, said that she had planned to go out for lunch after fixing frozen dinners for her son, age 5, and daughter, age 1. She had taken them outside to wait for a ride when she was asked to watch the children of her neighbor, who was in the process of moving.

As she walked across the street, heading back towards her apartment at 124 Wynn Fork Court, she heard the smoke alarm.

"I couldn't walk in the door," Warren said. "...I couldn't see nothing. I couldn't even see my furniture or nothing."



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

A fire destroyed Alexis Warren's kitchen in an apartment at Wynn Fork Apartments last Friday. The American Red Cross and Salvation Army are providing accommodations for Warren and her two young children during the two weeks it will take to repair the damages in her home.

Warren ran to a neighbor's home and called Central Communications at about 10:50 a.m.

A young man told Hertford Fire Chief Robert Reed that he went inside, removed the pot and turned the stove off. Hertford Housing Authority had installed two fire extinguishers, the size of tuna fish cans, to the range hood. The magnetic extin-

guishers dump a baking soda compound when they detect a certain level of heat.

"(Fire officials) did say that these Range Queens are what saved the unit," said Rhonda Waters, executive director of the housing complex.

A maintenance man of the complex heard about the fire on his scanner and

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Wreck causes injuries

MARGARET FISHER

An accident involving eight people and two vans resulted in injuries on Sunday about 5 p.m. The wreck occurred on U.S. Highway 17 South near the Hertford Inn.

Robert Downing, 74, of Hertford was driving a 2002 Dodge van owned by New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. Six passengers were riding in the van. Downing was preparing to make a right turn into a private driveway.

Bennie McLawhorn, 59, also of Hertford, was driving behind the church van in a 1996 Mercury van. He told Trooper K.R. Briggs of the N.C. Highway Patrol that he glanced down at his cell phone, looked up, didn't see a turn signal on the church van and collided into it.

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Miller faces dog fighting charges

MARGARET FISHER

Shelma Miller Jr. was charged with nine felony charges after police and animal control took nine pit bulls from a house where he was residing.

The house at 329 Market St. was boarded up on Oct. 27 with no trespassing signs and is now patrolled by police. A wildlife rescuer took 34 pigeons and three turtles off the premises where dog-fighting equipment was found. All of the dogs, except one puppy, had fighting scars on them.

The house has been a source of complaints from the public and discussed at town meetings for months because of alleged drug activity.

Miller's charges include eight counts of possessing and training of fighting dogs and one count of having material to train and fight dogs.

Eight of the canines, found to be dog-aggressive though people-friendly, have been put down. The shelter couldn't adopt them out because of liability issues, said Mary Bass, director of the Tri-County Animal Shelter. A ninth dog, a female no more than six months old, may have a chance.

"A professional rescuer will do a temperament test this week to make sure that she is not dog-aggressive," Bass said. "That's going to be her only hope of not being put to sleep."

One of the eight was pregnant, but the shelter doesn't have the facility to birth the puppies and raise them.

"Puppies don't do well being born in a shelter. Their immune system is too weak," Bass said. In addition, the shelter is at capacity now.

The turtles are temporarily in the care of wildlife rescuer Elizabeth Hanrahan. She will release

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Downtown to ring in holidays next weekend

SUSAN HARRIS

December will find Historic Downtown Hertford dressed in holiday style and filled with a variety of activities sure to evoke the warmth and joy of the season.

The grand illumination is set for the evening of Thursday, Nov. 30, when the downtown block will glow with white lights on the buildings and from the tree on the courthouse lawn. Hertford Mayor Sid Eley will flip the switch for the building lights at 5:30 Thursday afternoon, with the tree lighting at 5:45.

The illumination will be followed by caroling on the courthouse green at 6 p.m.

Select merchants downtown will welcome shoppers with holiday

refreshments that can be enjoyed while browsing for unique gifts for those on Christmas wish lists.

On Friday, the Chamber of Commerce will host an open house at the Visitors' Center on Market Street, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

The Perquimans Arts League will also hold its holiday open house, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

At 5:15, there will be a ribbon cutting and grand opening at the Hertford Restaurant and Bakery on Church Street.

Again on Friday, several downtown merchants will welcome shoppers until 7 p.m. and offer tasty holiday treats.

The streets will be alive with the sights and sounds of the holidays on Saturday, when the annual

Perquimans County Christmas Parade moves through the streets of downtown. Bands, floats, Santa and more will help ring in the holiday season kickoff weekend. The parade is themed, "the Joys of Christmas."

After the parade, those with Christmas wishes can have a photograph taken with Santa at Intelipoint.

On Sunday, both Hertfordshire Antiques and Simply Southern will be open for afternoon shoppers, while Hertford Restaurant and Bakery will provide sustenance for hungry shoppers, 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

Throughout the season, downtown businesses will offer a variety of unique gifts. Shop in Hertford for personal, friendly, service — often from the owners themselves — without the hassle of traffic and elbow-to-elbow crowds.

WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 62, LOW: 47
RAIN

FRIDAY
HIGH: 59, LOW: 46
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 62 LOW: 45
PARTLY CLOUDY