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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Hertford couple guilty of sex abuse

SUSAN HARRIS

Prospective jurors sat ready to be impeached when a Hertford couple pleaded guilty to child sex abuse charges in Perquimans County Superior Court last week.

Wayne Arthur Foberg, 39 and his wife, Krista Renee Foberg, 24, of 120 New River Drive, accepted a plea agreement that will see both spend 16-20 years in the North Carolina Correctional System.

Each pleaded guilty to statutory rape/sex offense with a minor and were sentenced by the Hon. Jerry T. Tillett on May 22. They will get credit for the 344 days they spent in jail awaiting trial.

The court also recommended payment as a condition of post release supervision or from work release earnings of attorney fees charged by the court-appointed attorneys assigned to the Fobergs. Wayne Foberg was represented by R. Andrew Womble and his fees were \$3,477.50. Hackney High represented Krista Foberg at a charge of \$2,925.

In addition, Tillett recommended that the defendants not be housed in the same facility during their incarceration. Krista Foberg was taken to Central Prison in Raleigh, while Tillett ordered Wayne Foberg be assigned to Craven Correctional Institution.

Sheriff Eric Tilley said the Fobergs accepted the plea agreement after a statement Krista Foberg wrote of her own free will outlining the couple's activities with the victim was cleared by the judge to be considered as evidence in the case. A motion was presented to suppress the statement, but Tillett denied the motion. A motion to suppress just a portion of the statement was also denied.

Shortly thereafter, Krista Foberg accepted a plea bargain and agreed to testify against her husband. Wayne Foberg decided after learning that his wife would testify against him to accept a plea.

The Fobergs were arrested on Feb. 8, 2006 for the sexual abuse of a 13-year-old family member. Wayne Foberg was initially charged with statutory rape, crimes against nature and two counts of indecent liberties. Krista Foberg was charged with statutory sex offense, crimes against nature and two counts of indecent liberties.

The initial charges stemmed from incidents that reportedly happened at an Albemarle Plantation home during the Christmas holiday period in 2005 when the victim and her parents visited the mother's father at the Plantation during the holidays. The Fobergs, who were also kin to the visitors and the homeowner, were living with the homeowner at the time.

The 13-year-old's mother told Tilley during a Jan. 10, 2006 phone conversation that several days after the family returned to their home in another North Carolina town, she learned of alleged sexual contact between the Fobergs and her daughter during the visit. The family traveled to Hertford to file a formal report on Jan. 12, 2006.

Subsequent investigation led to more charges, including statutory rape/sex offense that occurred during the period of June 26-July 2, 2005. It was those charges to which the Fobergs pleaded guilty.

Wishing Wells



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

PCMS assistant principal Lisa Byrum and PCHS principal James Bunch wish Dr. Ken Wells the best in his retirement at a reception in Wells' honor hosted by the school system last Thursday at Central School.

Wells reflects on tenure

Superintendent to leave June 30

ZAC GOLDSTEIN
The Daily Advance

When Ken Wells took over as superintendent of Perquimans County Schools six years ago he gave a speech that summed up his approach to the job.

"Change is required," Wells said. "Pain is optional."

Wells, 53, began his career in education in 1977 as a teacher in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. After a career that spanned three decades and three school systems, Wells is retiring at the end of June.

"I always told myself I would retire when I'm eligible to do so," Wells said. "Financially, this is the smart thing to do."

However, Wells said that retirement might not necessarily mean a complete end to his career. Since first announcing his retirement plans in January, Wells has received several offers to return to public education on a contractual basis, he said. While he plans to keep his options open, he said for the meantime he will enjoy fishing and spending more time at his home in Manteo.

Wells spent his first 18 years as a teacher and later as an administrator with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Dare County Schools, two systems that are much larger and

receive more state funding than rural Perquimans.

"Here, money is not even considered as a solution," Wells said.

The challenge for him

You have to be creative. I'm not going to let size or resources be excuses.

Ken Wells on meeting the challenges of a small school system

was finding ways to overcome not getting as much money from the state as larger school districts receive.

"You have to be creative," he said. "I'm not going to let size or resources be excuses."

One way Wells compensated was by reaching out to the community for support. He praised the Perquimans County Ministers Council for its work. The ministers council is a group of local pastors and laymen who work with students and parents. He also commended the area's retirees for being dependable volunteers, even when they had no children of their own enrolled at one of Perquimans' four schools.

"The wealth of this community is in the talent of the people," Wells said. "They are willing to roll up

their sleeves. This is a hands-on community."

Wells said among his proudest achievements while at Perquimans included his school administrative personnel, the \$12 million expansion and new gym construction under way at Perquimans County High and the school district's accomplishments in technology education.

Perquimans Central School was honored in April with the N.C. Association of School Administrators' Trailblazer Award for innovation in the classroom, which included several Perquimans technology facilitators receiving statewide recognition.

One area Wells said has been an ongoing challenge for the district is attracting and retaining teachers. He said locally paid teachers receive a 2 percent supplement, while other districts are willing to pay more. However, he said the teachers who do stay tend to be highly qualified: Perquimans has the highest percentage of nationally board-certified teachers in the state.

Wells also emphasized a need for both the school district and the surrounding community to stay open to new ideas.

"Schools should be a motivator and an impetus for change," he said. "My regret is that we're not. We are more responders to change."

(Contact Zac Goldstein at zgoldstein@coxnc.com)

Guthrie, Bryant to lead PCHS class of '07

SUSAN HARRIS

Callie Guthrie and Bridgette Bryant will lead the class of 2007 onto Memorial Field during commencement exercises on Saturday, June 9 at 10 a.m.

The valedictorian, Callie is the daughter of Wendy and Forrest Guthrie and plans to attend Campbell University to major in business administration.

Jasmine is the salutatorian. The daughter of Bridgette Bryant and Larry Felton, she will attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where she plans to major in biology.

Principal James Bunch said the pair will lead about 115 graduates. He also gave some particulars on the graduation ceremony and how things will be handled to make it a special day focusing on the students who have worked so hard to reach the milestone in their lives.

First, everyone attending graduation will need a ticket. Each graduate has been able to get nine tickets. Three of those tickets are gold tickets, and will be the only tickets honored should weather move the graduation inside, Bunch said. Graduates who think they will need more than nine tickets for family and friends for the outside ceremony will be able to request up to 10 more during graduation practice. Bunch emphasized that no one will be allowed to enter the stadium without a ticket issued by the school. Graduation announcements are not considered tickets.

Because of gymnasium construction, parking will present challenges, Bunch said. School officials are asking that graduates and faculty park in front of the school. Guests may park at the King Street Annex, the central office or on the band practice

Continued on page 2



Callie Guthrie



Jasmine Bryant

WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 88, LOW: 67
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 88, LOW: 67
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 87, LOW: 67
PARTLY CLOUDY