

PERQUIMANS COUNTY LIBRARY  
110 W ACADEMY ST  
HERTFORD, NC 27944-1305

RECEIVED  
JUN 27 2007

White is princess for a day

Page 3

Readers speak in letters column

Page 6

Summer league updates

Page 7

# PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

June 27, 2007

Vol. 75, No. 27 Hertford, North Carolina 27944

## Return to roots

### Hertford festival to focus on forgotten history

SUSAN HARRIS

History abounds in northeastern North Carolina. The counties and small towns that dot the coastal region each have things about which they boast.

But Hertford has a historic first that is known to very few: The oldest memorial in the country — that's the whole United States — dedicated to black Civil War troops is located on the corner of Hyde Park and King streets.

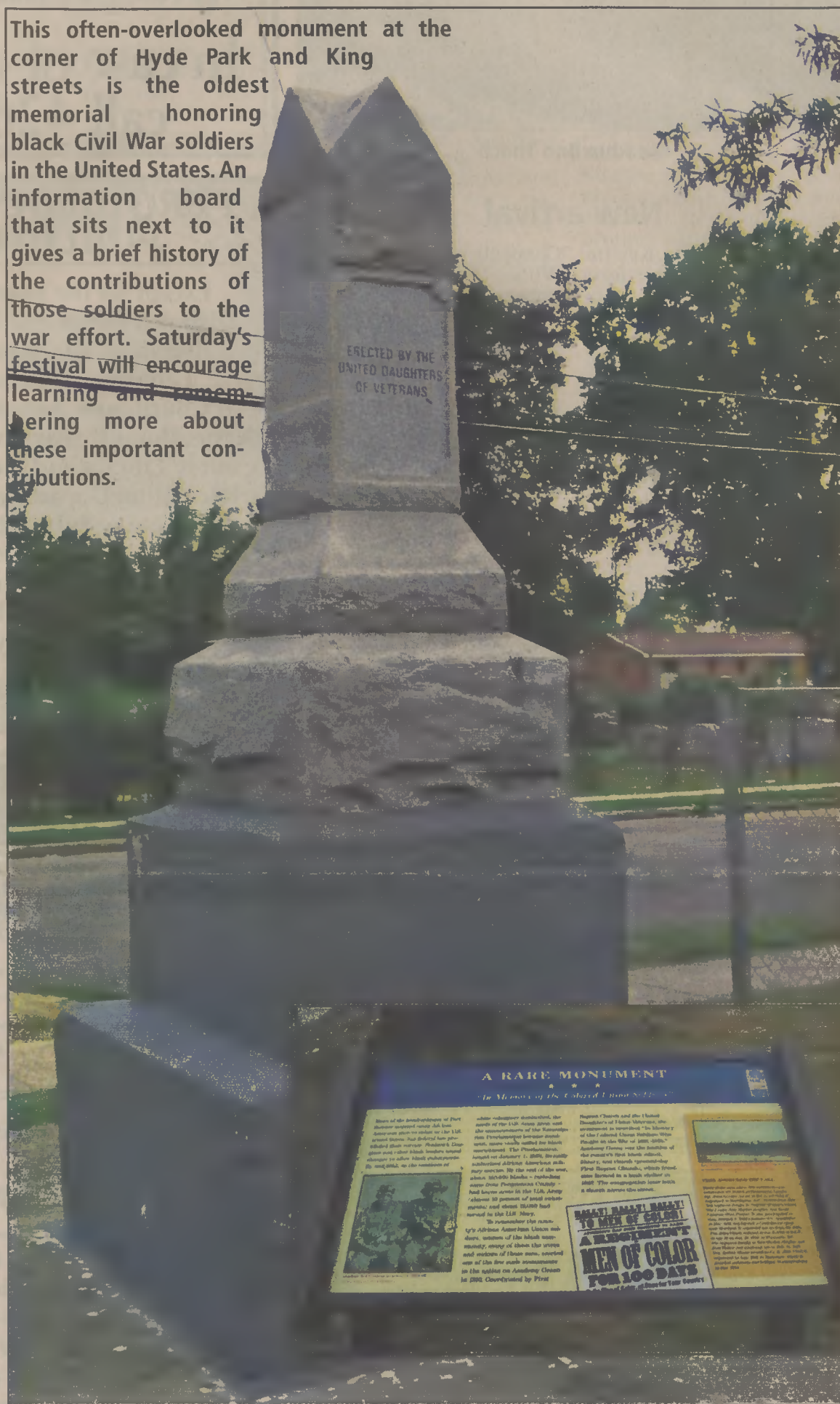
Saturday, the first Northeastern North Carolina African-American Festival will be held around the monument to help bring an awareness of this historic marker and the important contributions of African American soldiers in the Civil War to the region.

The festival is the brainchild of ECSU history professor Dr. Jahi Issa, who said Monday he hopes it will become an annual event. Its sponsor is T-Square Developers in Hertford, a real estate development company.

Issa has chosen as the symbol of the festival SANKOFA, a goose with its neck turned backwards. He said it means go back and fetch what you lost, or return to your roots. And returning to the roots of those black Civil War soldiers will be what Saturday is about.

Featured will be the Matunda African Dancers, a Chesapeake, Va. group specializing in Central and West African dances; a jazz band, a black Civil War reenactment; and a presentation at 4 p.m. by Nana Yaw

This often-overlooked monument at the corner of Hyde Park and King streets is the oldest memorial honoring black Civil War soldiers in the United States. An information board that sits next to it gives a brief history of the contributions of those soldiers to the war effort. Saturday's festival will encourage learning and remembering more about these important contributions.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS

Yikenkyi of Ghana, West Africa, who is a traditional high priest.

There will also be free games for children, including a moonwalk, potato sack race, double dutch

contest and more.

Several vendors will be offering a variety of festival-type foods, as well as what Issa termed "soul food."

Issa said organizers have

planned a day of family fun — and learning more about the area's rich history — from 2-7 p.m.

For more information, call T-Square, 426-7474 or Issa, 335-3201.

## 4th Fest nears

SUSAN HARRIS

Those who enjoy a relaxing 4th of July capped with a light show exploding in the night sky will find happiness at Missing Mill Park next Wednesday.

Thanks to the generosity of local governments, businesses and individuals, there will be fireworks on Independence Day after the sun sets over the Perquimans River. A detail of dedicated individuals led by Michael Hurdle will shoot the pyrotechnics, with the Hertford Fire Department standing by.

For the crowd that usually begins gathering in the early evening to get a favorite spot from which to enjoy the show, vendors will have festival-type foods available. The Forestburg Ruritan Club will offer hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries, funnel cakes, drinks and more from its mobile kitchen. Bagley Swamp Wesleyan Church will also grill hamburgers and hotdogs.

Non-profit or church groups interested in setting up a booth or game at the park may call Susan Harris at 426-5728 (day) or 426-5307 (evening) for information.

An update on 4th of July activities will be published in next week's paper, which will come out on Tuesday, July 3. Contact the newspaper with any planned public events.

## PROGRESS



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Steel is erected and concrete block walls are going up at the new high school gymnasium. Construction on the \$12 million-plus project is expected to take about a year, and began last December. In addition to the new gym, the auditorium is getting a much-needed facelift. Once the gym is complete, the present gym will be renovated to become a media center and the present media center, administrative offices.

## Bethel man murdered in his own bed

SUSAN HARRIS

A Bethel man was apparently shot and killed in his own bed as he slept Friday night, jump-starting a joint investigation by the local sheriff's department and SBI. The lifeless body of Thomas Woodrow White, 58, of 117 Mill Drive, was discovered by his wife in their home after midnight, according to Sheriff Eric Tilley.

Tilley said Monday that he and SBI investigators have not named any suspects or ruled anyone out as suspects in their quest to determine who shot White and why.

Officials were called to the scene at 12:57 a.m. Saturday to investigate a possible breaking and entering and an unresponsive subject, Tilley said.

Deputy Ray Fesperman responded, and found White deceased on a bed in the northeast corner of the house. It appeared that he had suffered a gunshot wound to the head.

Fesperman called Tilley and sheriff's investigator Shelby White to the scene. The officers assessed the situation and called in SBI officers to assist with the investigation. The SBI sent two agents.

Tilley said White's widow, Jenne White, told officers that she and her daughter had been at the Moose Lodge in Elizabeth City earlier in the evening. White, who had prostate cancer and post traumatic stress disorder resulting from his service in Vietnam, according to his wife of 27 years, did not go with the two.

Upon returning to the Mill Drive residence, the two found the door to their home open and their dog at the door. The dog wanted to go out, so Jenne White walked away from the house with the dog. Upon entering the house, she noticed items on a bed and some drawers that looked as if someone had gone through them, Tilley said Jenne White told investigators. She then went to awaken Thomas White and found him unresponsive. It was then that she called law enforcement.

Tilley said his officers and SBI agents assigned to the case have been conducting interviews and following up on all leads. Anyone with information should call the sheriff at 426-5615.

## Failed brakes lead to flipped truck on US 17

BOB MONTGOMERY  
The Daily Advance

A truck driver's quick reactions are being credited with preventing a traffic accident at a busy Hertford intersection Tuesday from becoming something much more serious.

Hank Chappell, a driver for C.A. Perry & Co., was driving north on U.S. Highway 17 toward the Church Street intersection about 2:30 p.m. when he noticed that the brakes on his spreader truck had failed, Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said.

Chappell swerved to avoid colliding with several cars at a traffic light at the intersection, and the movement flipped his truck, Vanscoy said.

"The driver did everything he could to alert traffic, blowing his horn," said Vanscoy. "He cut the wheel to the left to avoid striking any cars and it caused the vehicle to flip. He cut a hard left and landed in the middle of the intersection in the southbound lanes of traffic."

No cars were struck, and Chappell suffered only minor injuries for which he received treatment at Chowan Hospital, he said.

A spokesman for C.A. Perry & Co. said Chappell was en route from Edenton with a load of fertilizer for delivery to a farm field near Hertford when the accident occurred.

## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
HIGH: 92, LOW: 74  
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 82, LOW: 69  
ISOLATED T'STORMS

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 81, LOW: 66  
ISOLATED T'STORMS