

Inside:
The 2007 Indian Summer
and
Hearth & Harvest
festivals guide

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THE PERQUIMMANS

WEEKEND

PERQUIMMANS COUNTY COURSE
180 W ACADEMY ST
HERTFORD, NC 27944
AUG 29 2007

35 cents

Off to school



PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

School buses were back on the roads Monday as Perquimans County schools opened their doors for local students. Central School kindergarten teacher Becky Houtz distributes coloring books as she welcomes her students (above).



One little fella needed a helping hand with tying his shoe before going into class Monday morning at Central School as physical education teacher Richard Thach greets the children getting off the bus in the background (left). New Principal Sylvia Johnson was also on hand to greet the children as they made their way into the school on their first day of class.

Superintendent Dwayne Stallings told board members Monday night that the school year got off to a wonderful start with only a couple of glitches, including two school bus break-downs. Enrollment is 139 students higher than the first month of school last year, with 1,872 students currently enrolled.

Mosquito bite changed little girl's life

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Gracie Blake said her first word a month ago.

What sounded like a simple "hi" was muttered, but her mutterings sent unspeakable joy through a family that wraps itself around the three-year-old like a warm blanket on a winter's night. While Gracie usually says little other than baby sounds, she speaks volumes in smiles.

Life for the Blake family changed drastically in 2004 when Gracie was bitten by a mosquito carrying the eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus. Before that normal-looking bite appeared on her foot, Gracie was a beautiful, energetic 11-month-old girl who delighted in her mom, July, grandparents, Bill and Mary, and older sister, Cheyanne.

"She was always a perfect baby," remembers Bill. "She was too perfect. I used to tell my wife, something is going to happen to her. I just knew



PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

July Blake bounces her 3-year-old daughter, Gracie, on her knee, causing the young girl to smile. Gracie was bitten by a mosquito when she was 11 months old and contracted Eastern Equine Encephalitis, causing brain damage. Gracie is now more alert and active since her medications have been reduced, but she equates to a 4-7 month old mentally.

it." That something turned out to be something that happens to mil-

lions of people every day during the summer
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HPD seeks gunmen

Pair breaks in, shoots at Hertford couple in their home

SUSAN HARRIS

Hertford Police are seeking two men for their alleged role in an armed household invasion Saturday night.

Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said his department obtained warrants for Laquell Fletcher, 21, of 417 King Street, and Devon Thatch, 20, last known address 113 King Street, on charges of first degree burglary, criminal damage and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. The pair was still at large Tuesday morning.

Vanscoy said officers responded to a shots fired call at 312 W. Market Street around 11 p.m. Saturday. The couple residing at the address reported to police that they were watching television in their living room when an individual wearing a ski mask-type hat kicked in the front door and began shooting. The husband said he jumped up and got into a fight with the shooter, and the two tumbled outside the damaged door. The resident was able to pull the ski mask off and told officers the man wearing the mask was Fletcher.

A second man, identified as Thatch, was waiting outside the house. When the resident and Fletcher tumbled through the front door, the resident said Thatch began shooting at them.

Officers recovered both 22- and 40-caliber shell casings and bullets from both guns. Vanscoy said the residents' car was struck three times during the altercation.

Anyone with information about the whereabouts of Fletcher and Thatch is asked to call HPD at 426-5887.

The case came on the heels of two incidents on

Friday. Vanscoy said his officers received a report of a vehicle stolen from 611 Pennsylvania Ave. Friday. HPD put out a be on the look-out notice in a 50-mile radius.

Elizabeth City Police spotted the vehicle and attempted to stop it, Vanscoy said. A short pursuit followed, during which the vehicle reported stolen was driven into a pole in downtown Elizabeth City, resulting in a loss of power to a small area. The three individuals in the car ran. Two were apprehended, but the driver got away.

Vanscoy said HPD obtained a warrant for the driver, Desmond Johnson, 19, of Southern Avenue, Elizabeth City. He will be charged with larceny of a motor vehicle and possession of stolen property.

Vanscoy said all three individuals will face charges in Elizabeth City.

The investigation into the incident is continuing, Vanscoy said.

Just after 7 p.m. Friday, officers were on routine patrol on King Street near the basketball court and saw a vehicle driving in a suspicious manner.

When officers attempted to stop the vehicle, it fled west on King Street, turned south onto Edenton Road Street, turned east onto Jimmy Hunter Drive, drove through the cemetery and turned back onto King Street and then onto Stokes Drive. Once on Stokes Drive, the driver got out of the vehicle and ran.

Officer Jeff Thomas pursued the driver on foot and apprehended him as he came from around building on Stokes Drive back toward King Street.

Andrew Devon White, 24, of 661 Sandy Cross Road, Belvidere was subsequently arrested and charged with driving while license revoked, felony flee to elude arrest and resist arrest.

He was placed in Albemarle District Jail under a \$4,000 bond.

EEE found in Pasquotank chickens

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

While Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) has been identified in a sentinel chicken flock in neighboring Pasquotank County, no reports of problems with a similar flock in Perquimans County have been noted.

There are three sentinel chicken flocks found locally: one in Perquimans, one in Currituck, and the one affected in Pasquotank County. According to county agriculture officials, sentinel chicken flocks are small flocks of chickens raised in selected back yards for the purpose of testing for viruses.

Local and state health officials remind residents
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New e-mail

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 89, Low: 70
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 88, Low: 69
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 83, Low: 68
MOSTLY SUNNY