

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Reward set for grave vandals

SUSAN HARRIS
Editor & Publisher

Cash can be a powerful incentive, and Hertford Town Council members hope it will induce someone to reveal who vandalized Cedar Wood Cemetery on Nov. 28 and 29.

Council voted Monday night to pay a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the vandal or vandals that damaged 25 grave sites in the newest section of Cedar Wood Cemetery. Police Chief Dale Vanscoy told council there may also be money donated by private individuals to increase the reward.

Town Manager John Christensen said Tuesday morning that Vanscoy has received at least one \$500 pledge from a local business that will increase the reward to \$1,000.

Mayor Sid Eley read from a prepared statement that 21 stones, six vases and four angels were damaged during the two-night spree.

He said the town contacted its insurance provider and found that the insurance company would not cover the damage.

Further, Eley said the deeds of sale signed by those who purchased the cemetery plots from the town contain a clause that states the town is not responsible for malicious damages to grave sites in Cedar Wood.

The mayor reported that the town has added lights in the cemetery and that the police department has increased patrols since the incidents.

Vanscoy said Monday night that his officers now check the cemetery every 30 minutes and he has had surveillance details, at least one all night, since the vandalism.

Davis Monuments, from whom many of the damaged stones were originally purchased, has reset all over-turned stones.

Elsie Wilson presented the town with a petition signed by 156 people asking that the town review its deeds and policies regarding the cemetery.

Wilson said the petition resulted from a meeting held after the vandalism. In her prepared statement made on behalf of those who met, Wilson said the group was concerned that actions be taken to prevent further incidents. Suggestions included more lights and police patrols, and possibly cameras.

The group also requested that the town review its cemetery policies, including the damage disclaimer in the deeds, setting aside funds from the sale of lots to cover expenses from loss or damage from vandalism or natural disaster, and making the cemetery a perpetual care operation. She requested a written response from the town within 30 days.

Eley expressed his concern over the cemetery vandalism to the about 15
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SEASON OF SHARING



ALBEMARLE ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION employees volunteered their time to shop for toys for those who need a hand in the Albemarle area this season. The toys were sorted and delivered to schools, where personnel had identified families in need and coordinated the delivery of the toys. Among those grateful for a little help this year was Rene Grady (below right).

AEMC toy drive successful: families grateful

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation's 3rd Annual Light Up Christmas toy drive has again proven to be a huge success.

More than \$7,000 was given to the program, much of it coming from corporate vendors who regularly do business with Albemarle EMC. When combined with a discount from Wal-Mart, total spending added up to about \$8,000. In addition, toy donations from the membership appeared to increase, and one other area toy drive contributed their toys to Albemarle EMC for distribution.

Albemarle EMC employees volunteered their time to purchase the toys, which filled more than 25 shopping carts. The toys were bagged, sorted and

delivered to local schools in the counties of Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank and Camden. From there school personnel, who had identified less-fortunate families in their school system, coordinated the delivery of the toys to the parents. More than



530 children received toys through this year's Light Up Christmas program.

"The generosity shown by our corporate part-

ners as well as members and employees really set a new benchmark this year," said Chris Powell, director of public relations for Albemarle EMC. "We want to thank all of the people who donated time and money as well as the school system personnel who participated with us in this effort."

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation, located near Hertford, is a member-owned, nonprofit electrical co-op that serves more than 12,000 members. The service territory includes the counties of Chowan, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Camden and a part of Currituck.

A grateful mother

Mother: Rene Grady
Single mom with six children ranging from ages 1-16

"The Light Up Christmas Program sponsored by Albemarle Electric is a blessing to my family. I can explain to my other children the reason there's no toys or clothes under the Christmas tree, but I cannot explain that

to my young children. "I am grateful to live in a community such as Perquimans County where programs exist to help those in need.

"It is a little embarrassing to have to participate in such programs, but as a parent I have to do what is best and necessary to provide for my children."

More holiday events on tap in county

Ramble

Two homes, a miniature shop and the Senior Center will be features of the 30th annual Christmas Ramble Friday night.

The Front Street home of Julian and Betty Lane Winslow overlooks the Perquimans River. Ralph and Lisa Hollowell's home is a country jewel in the Bagley Swamp community. The young and young at heart will delight in the displays at J.J.'s Miniatures on Howell's Lane just off Beech Springs Road. Finally, delicious refreshments and a silent auction of items made by local crafters await tourists at the Senior Center.

Ample parking is available at most stops, but at some stops, ramblers may have to walk more than a few steps to get inside.

Organizers recommend that tourists bring flashlights and wear low-heeled shoes for comfort and safety.

The Senior Center will have a shuttle van for the evening. Call 426-5404 for seat availability.

Tour passes will be \$5 for adults and \$1 for students. Tickets can be purchased at any of the homes on the night of the Ramble or in advance at the Extension Office, 426-7697.

The Ramble began in 1977 as a community out-

reach event. Proceeds from the Ramble are used for 4-H scholarships, youth programs and educational projects. In years past, donations were redirected to other community needs such as Hurricane Isabel relief, American Red Cross Disaster Services and local assistance to families that incurred damage from home fires.

Concerts

The PCHS band will present its Christmas concert tomorrow night, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

The school's chorus will present its Christmas Concert Sunday, Dec. 16 at 3 p.m. in the school auditorium.

Music for the season in a variety of styles from classical to contemporary will include settings of traditional carols such as "The Holly and the Ivy" and "Angels We Have Heard on High," the 17th century German work "Auf! Stimmet die Saiten," and jazzy arrangements of "Let It Snow!" and "Slow Dancing in the Snow." The PCHS Chorus will be joined for this performance by a string trio made up of Grace and Lily Park and Elizabeth Phelps, and a vocal ensemble.

Admission for the concert is free; however, donations will be accepted to assist the chorus in ongoing expenses.

County passes room tax

Hobbs sole vote against measure

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

County commissioners approved a 6 percent occupancy tax last week to help boost tourism in the county.

The tax, effective Feb. 1, will be charged to visitors staying in hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns, and rental condos in the county. Revenue generated from the tax will be earmarked to promote tourism in the county.

The vote was unanimous with the exception of Commissioner Ben Hobbs, owner of a bed and breakfast in the county.

"I oppose it," said Hobbs before the vote was taken. "I understand the economics of it, and it won't affect occupancy. The people will still come. But, it's a new tax, and I've been consistent against voting for any new taxes."

Vice Chair Tammy Miller-White voiced her support for the new ordinance, saying it was a very wise move in the right direction. Commissioner Sue Weimar, who made the motion to adopt the occupancy tax resolution, echoed Miller-White's feelings.

The approval followed a public hearing during which several people spoke in favor of the tax.

Chris Lane reminded commissioners that 87 out of 100 counties in the state already have occupancy taxes in place. She spoke of the benefits local merchants in the downtown area would receive with more tourism dollars brought in locally.

"We have a wonderful community here...but we need to find a way to let others know about it," she said. "The occupancy tax is a way to do that."

Muriele Harmon said the state's emphasis is on tourism, and she pointed out tourists are used to paying occupancy taxes when they visit in the state.

"You're not dealing with ignorant tourists," she said. "They don't resent paying it. The savvy tourists understand the revenues coming from it."

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 67 LOW: 48
FEW SHOWERS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 57 LOW: 42
MOSTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 48 LOW: 47
FEW SHOWERS