

THE PERQUIMANS COUNTY WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Prison worker charged with larceny

SUSAN HARRIS
Editor & Publisher

"People working FOR the prison trying to get IN the prison."

That's how Sheriff Eric Tilley describes a recent case investigated by his office.

Nancy Britt of 143 Cannons Ferry Road, Tyner, was arrested and charged with four counts of larceny by employee and four counts of embezzlement on Jan. 31 after allegedly helping herself and her friends to gas from state pumps in July.

Tilley said Britt was an employee at the Pasquotank Correctional Center. She allegedly stole a key which allowed access to state fuel pumps, and offered to fill the tanks of others for \$15. She also allegedly filled her own tank on occasion.

She was caught in Perquimans County, Tilley said, when Department of Transportation employees saw her gassing a car that was not a state vehicle at the pumps in Winfall. She was identified and the car license plate number of the car which was being filled was turned in. Tilley said the car was traced to a Gates County owner, who told Tilley that Britt had offered to fill the car with fuel for \$15.

Supposedly, Britt told those whose tanks she filled that she had been named Employee of the Month and was granted unlimited access to fuel.

Tilley said he interviewed Britt, who admitted what she had done and wrote a statement. She was allowed to resign from her job and later indicted and arrested.

Tilley said during the course of the investigation, Britt tried to implicate her sister-in-law, but while the sister-in-law admitted receiving gas, she told investigators she had played no other role in the incident. In fact, she agreed to take a voice stress test, which she passed.

Others who either got gas or saw suspicious activity at state gas pumps involving Britt, came forward during the investigation, Tilley said.

In addition to the four incidents in Perquimans County that resulted in the eight charges against her, Britt was allegedly involved in 20 more fill-ups that could result in charges in Pasquotank, Gates and Chowan counties, according to the sheriff.

Gas records reviewed during the investigation show that the key Britt allegedly stole was used 24 times for a total of 355.8 gallons of gasahol, for which the state pays \$2.509 per gallon, for a total theft of \$892.70.

The most Britt could have received was \$360 if she received \$15 for each time she used the key.

WIND BLOWS



Perquimans Weekly photos by PHIL HARRIS

CHARLES AND TRISHA SAWYER feel fortunate that the straight-line winds that blew out a window in their Holiday Island Road home (above), picked up a dog box from a truck in the yard and set it on the ground (above), demolished and scattered many of their three children's outdoor toys (right), and killed four puppies didn't do more damage to their home or harm their children.



Straight-line winds damage Bethel home

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Charles Sawyer and his wife, Trisha, heard the strong winds that he said "wouldn't let up" so they gathered their three children into their bedroom.

Minutes later, wind blew out a window pane in their son's bedroom, blew the shutters off the house, scattered the children's outside swing set and toys "as far as the eye can see," and blew over the dog pen, killing four puppies.

"It all happened so quickly, less than 10 minutes tops," said Sawyer.

Heavy rain, thunderstorms and strong winds woke local residents early Monday morning with damage reported on Sawyer's property, and one lightning strike reported in Hertford.

Emergency Manage-

ment Coordinator Jarvis Winslow said Sawyer's property, located at 949 Holiday Island Road, was damaged around 5:35 a.m.

"I can't say for sure that it was a tornado that touched down," said Winslow, "but I had already been notified of a warning for possible tornadic activity eight miles southwest of Hertford. I called the National Weather Service and told them what I found here."

The National Weather Service sent a meteorologist to the Sawyer property Monday afternoon and determined the damage probably came from straight line wind rather than a tornado.

"They couldn't rule out a small tornado because of where some things landed, but they think it was straight line wind instead," Winslow said.

Siding around the soft areas of the Sawyer home was damaged, and the children's swing set, sandbox, and trampoline were scattered in a field as much as a quarter of a mile from the house. A dog box in Sawyer's truck was blown out of the truck into the back yard, yet garbage bags of trash didn't move at all. A child's plastic bat lying in the yard wasn't moved by the wind either, Winslow said.

Four deerhound puppies were found dead about 100 feet from their puppy house, which was four feet off the ground. Both the puppy house and dog pen were damaged. Two puppies and the mother survived.

"It's been a right rough morning," said Sawyer who, along with his family, had been suffering from

the flu for three days.

Winslow said he rode around the neighborhood, looking for other damage, but didn't see any.

Earlier Monday morning, Mary Harrell's house, located at 307 Artie Street in Hertford, was damaged when lightning blew a hole in the gas line leading to the home's gas heating system at 4:42 a.m. No one was injured.

Robert Reed, Hertford Fire Chief, said lightning struck high on the house, then ran down the gutter and into the gas line.

Luckily, a neighbor quickly cut off the gas flowing from the propane tank, averting a potentially dangerous fire or explosion.

Members of Hertford, Winfall, and Bethel Volunteer Fire Departments responded.

Resident tip leads to drug arrest in Hertford

SUSAN HARRIS
Editor & Publisher

One local resident got tired of seeing what appeared to be drug deals going down in a parking lot.

The resident saw it one time too many, called it in, and shortly thereafter, the sheriff's department made an arrest.

Robert Brandon Jenkins of Georgia, was subsequently arrested and charged with possession of a Schedule VI and possession of a Schedule II controlled substance on Jan. 25.

Jenkins was visiting relatives in Perquimans County, Tilley said.

The information received by the sheriff's department was that a blue, two-door Suzuki vehicle was pulling into the parking lot at Perquimans Centre, known casually here as the Food Lion parking lot. People would pull up to the vehicle for a few minutes, then leave, Sheriff Eric Tilley said.

Sheriff's Investigator Shelby White and Tilley went to Perquimans Centre, and saw the vehicle. Upon their approach, a male subject ran across the field in the direction of the mobile home park on Ocean Highway near the shopping center. The Suzuki, with a driver and a passenger inside, then pulled out of the parking lot and onto Highway 17. White followed the vehicle and stopped it for a traffic violation.

White asked the driver to step out of the vehicle. Tilley walked to the passenger side of the vehicle and saw the passenger reach into his left pocket while watching White speak with the driver. Tilley opened the passenger door and asked the suspect if he was reaching for a weapon. The subject agreed to a search, and Tilley found a small quantity of crack cocaine and a small bag of marijuana in the vehicle.

Jenkins was arrested and transported to Albe-Marle District Jail.

"We appreciate the citizens of Perquimans County getting involved and calling in suspicious activity," Tilley said.

White to lead town's 250th celebration

Long-time volunteer is events coordinator

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Mary Mc White is planning a party and the whole town is invited!

As the town's temporary events coordinator, she is coordinating the planning of Hertford's 250th birthday celebration which begins May 4.

Members of Hertford Council voted last week to contract with White, who has voluntarily organized and planned events around the county for years.

"The town selected Mary White as our coordinator because of her past involvement with community projects and her long-time relationship with the people in our community," said Town Manager John Christensen. "She has unselfishly contributed to our community for many years and we are pleased that she is going to contribute her talents to our celebration."

In the past, White has helped coordinate the Indian Summer Festival, the Appraisal Fair, Christmas parade, and the annual Garden Party, all events sponsored locally by various organizations. She also helped organize the Farm Tour this year, which included a stop at the historic Springfield Bed and Breakfast owned by White and her husband, Joe.

In addition, she helped plan events through her association with various organizations in the area including serving as an EMT with Perquimans Rescue and as a volunteer firefight-

er with the Hertford Fire Department.

"I'm looking forward to this," said White. "Right now, I'm catching up on what's already been started since the town has been working with a citizen committee to plan the events."

Council passed a budget amendment last week authorizing \$25,000 for the birthday celebration.

The town was chartered May 4, 1758. The celebration is expected to last for a year, with special events planned monthly including some to piggy back on annual events already planned for the area.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 41 LOW: 38
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 57 LOW: 44
RAIN

SATURDAY
HIGH: 50 LOW: 36
FEW SHOWERS