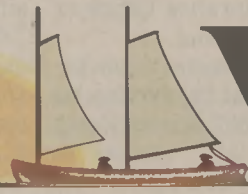


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

SEPTEMBER 30, 2009 - OCTOBER 6, 2009

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Driver injured in truck wreck on Harvey Point Road — See Page 2

## Absentee rate rises in local schools

Half sent home with flu-like symptoms

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

The absentee rate in Perquimans County Schools rose to 10 percent Monday with the majority of absenteeism occurring in the upper grades.

According to Brenda Lassiter, public information officer, 180 students were absent Monday including 60 from Perquimans High, 58 from Perquimans Middle, 35 from Hertford Grammar, and 27 from Perquimans Central.

Students were sent home during the day. Not all students who missed school were sick, she pointed out. In addition to flu-like symptoms, other viruses are going around as well, school officials said.

The school system averages about 80 students absent on a given day, she added.

According to school nurses Hope Stallings Ward and Claudia Bunch, 50 percent of the students being sent home due to illness showed signs of flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, headache, chills, and fatigue.

"School nurses are monitoring the attendance closely

*"School nurses are monitoring the attendance closely at all four schools and are following up on illnesses of students to determine and track the flu virus, especially if there is a large absenteeism in the same classroom."*

Brenda Lassiter

Spokeswoman, Perquimans County Schools

at all four schools and are following up on illnesses of students to determine and track the flu virus, especially if there is a large absenteeism

in the same classroom," said Lassiter.

The number of students absent in the local schools rose and fell during the pre-

vious weeks in September, but started to climb steadily beginning Sept. 23 when 96 students missed school. That number rose to 125 on Sept. 24, 128 on Sept. 25, and spiked at 180 on Sept. 28.

Ashley Stoop with Albemarle Regional Health Services told members of the Perquimans Board of Education Monday night that 99 percent of all flu in the country now is H1N1, more commonly known as Swine Flu. So far, flu cases have been termed mild to moderate in severity, she said. Symptoms include fever, coughing, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, body aches,

headache, chills, fatigue, and nausea and/or diarrhea.

"We have seen more flu activity this year than all of last year," Stoop said. "The H1N1 seen so far seems to be targeting children, age 5-24. So it's important that teachers take this seriously. But, don't panic. We have been planning for this for a year."

Stoop pointed out that employees of Perquimans County Schools have attended planning sessions held by the health department over the past year to deal with a possible flu outbreak. She

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## Students get active with gym initiative

SPARK to combat childhood obesity

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

Physical education instructor Kristie Thach gets down in the push-up position and demonstrates to her class how to do a push up while slapping your partner's hand in front of you at the same time.

She jumps back up, cranks up the music, and blows the whistle hanging around her neck signaling to the sixth-graders gathered in the gym that it's their time to do it, too.

Boys and girls of all shapes and sizes fell to the floor and at least attempted to perform the push up. Some mastered it with ease. Others didn't quite make it all the way, but they didn't seem to mind. They enjoyed slapping their partner's hand more. When finished, they sprinted back to the gym sideline where they were given the next task.

Run to mid court, jump up, high five your partner with both hands, and run back to the sideline.

Thach's whistle again started a flurry of physical activity punctuated with laughs and giggles. The physical activity and fun continued the entire class.

It's all part of the Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK) curriculum being shared with sixth graders in Perquimans County Schools through the In-school Prevention of Obesity and Disease initiative (IsPOD).

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## Into the Hall



PHOTO COURTESY PERQUIMANS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Tommy Matthews, (l-r) Susan Cox and Thomas Sharpe are show in front of Perquimans County High School Friday afternoon. The three former PCHS students, along with two others — Tanya Everett Queiro and the late Joe Towe Sr. — were inducted into the Perquimans Athletic Hall of Fame during half-time of Friday night's home football game against Roanoke.

## Hall of Fame inducts Class of 2009

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

The Perquimans County Athletic Hall of Fame has five new members including two women and three men.

The Class of 2009 was inducted Friday night during halftime ceremonies at the Perquimans County High School football game. This year's class includes: Susan Cox, Tommy Matthews, Tanya Everett Queiro,

Thomas Sharpe and Joe Towe, Sr.

Cox, a 1964 graduate, has done everything when it comes to high school sports. She played, coached on the middle, high school and college levels, taught, served as athletic director, and is now on the Perquimans Board of Education.

She served as captain of the girls' basketball team during her junior and senior years, making all-conference her final year

in high school. Her teaching and coaching career lasted 33 years including seven years at Williamston High School. While there, her basketball teams won seven conference and seven tournament championships averaging 23 wins a season. The 1974 team finished as the state runner-up.

She also coached softball, won four conference championships and competed in the state play-offs each of the seven years.

She even taught and coached on the college level. Her basketball teams at Peace College won two conference and two regional championships. At East Cary Middle School, her volleyball team had a six-year record of 60-4. Coaching at Cary High School, the volleyball team won four conference championships and competed in the state play-offs six out of

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## Walkers raise \$28K for ALS fight

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

About 300 walkers took part in Saturday's Walk to D'Feet ALS, raising over \$28,000 to help find a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

Overcast skies and a gentle breeze helped keep the walkers cool during the trek through town that began and ended at Perquimans High School (PHS). Before the walk began, members of the Carolina Walkers offered cooked sausages on the grill at the school and offered walkers a quick breakfast before hitting the road.

They came on foot, on scooters, in strollers, on leashes, and even on top of shoulders to help the cause.

"It was a perfect day," said Helen Hunter, widow of the late Jimmy "Catfish" Hunter who died 10 years ago from complications from the disease. "The clouds and breezes kept the walkers from getting so hot. We are just so happy so many people turned out to walk."

Saturday's event marked the 10th year of the annual fund-raiser sponsored by the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation. Over \$200,000 has been raised during 10 years of walking to help find a cure, provide respite care, and to raise awareness of the disease that's more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

"Catfish" Hunter, known in

See ALS on Page 9

## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
HIGH: 73 LOW: 57  
SUNNY

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 76 LOW: 59  
SUNNY

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 78 LOW: 62  
MOSTLY CLOUDY

## Stepney has a cancer-free year

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

Seven-year-old Jaedon Stepney has a lot to celebrate these days.

Turning seven Sept. 13 was pretty special for the J.C. Sawyer first-grader, but being cancer free for over a year is even better!

Stepney is all smiles now but in May 2007 doctors removed a lemon-sized malignant tumor from the back of his head. He was diagnosed with medulloblastoma and required surgery to remove the tumor at Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk. Intense radiation and months of chemotherapy followed for the little fellow. He received his last chemo treatment in August 2008.

"He's doing great now," beamed his grandma, Pam Stepney, who along with other family members, prepared a huge feast Saturday afternoon at her New Hope Road home. The party, complete with ribs, chicken, sausages,



Cathy Wilson/The Perquimans Weekly

Jaedon Stepney, 7, celebrates after being cancer free for more than a year, Saturday. Jaedon was diagnosed with medulloblastoma in May 2007 and underwent surgery at Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk, Va.

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