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"News from Next Door"

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Free swim lessons for PCS kindergarteners



By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Kindergarten students at Perquimans Central School will participate in swimming lessons at the YMCA later this spring.

Monday night, members of the Perquimans County Board of Education learned that the school's 133 kindergartners will

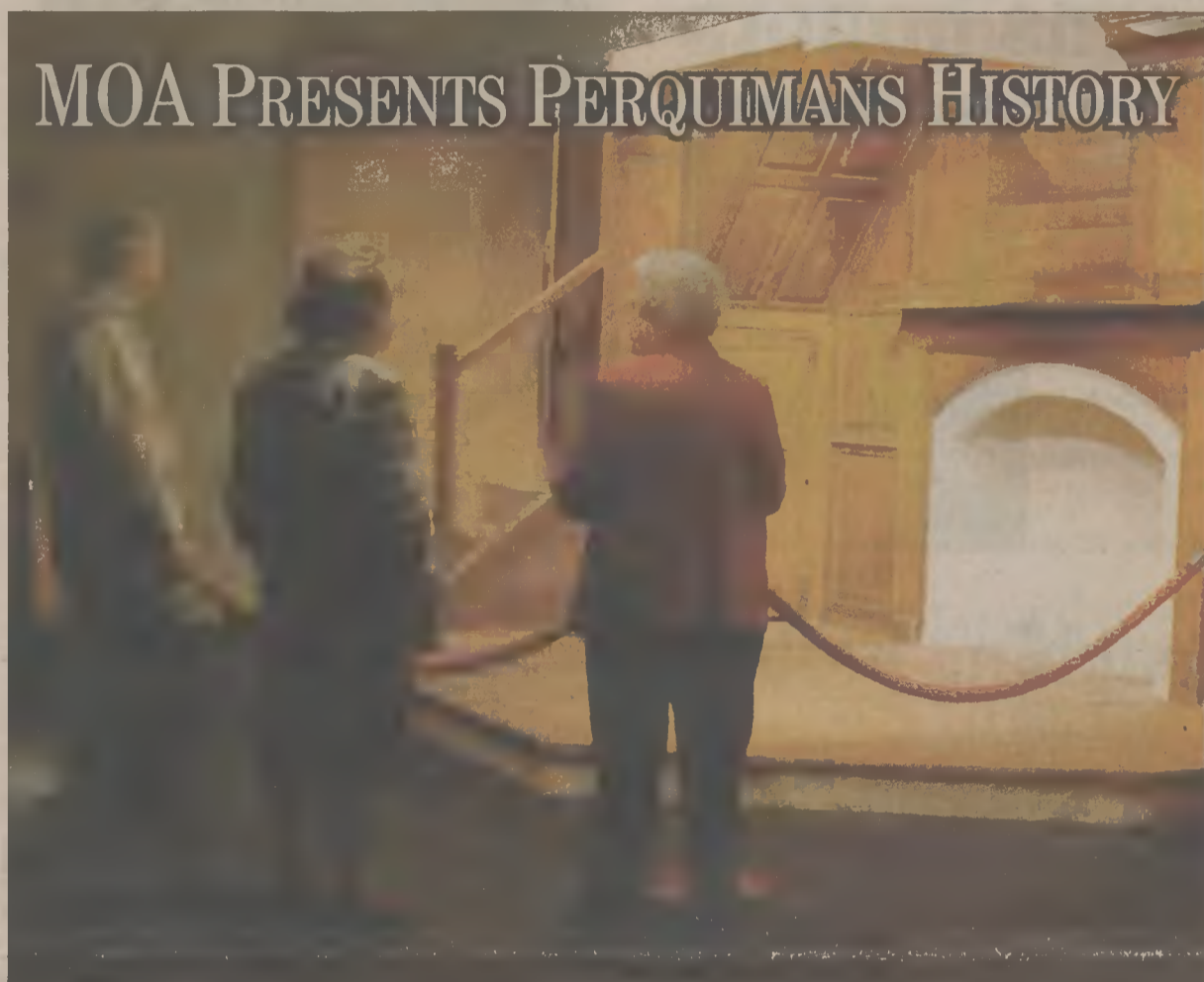
participate in the YMCA's All Kids Swim program held in partnership with the Albemarle Regional Health Services Child Fatality Prevention Team. From May 31-June 3, seven kindergarten classes will be bused from their school in Winfall to the YMCA in Elizabeth City to take swimming lessons from 9-11 a.m. each morning.

They will return to school in time for lunch.

"This swimming initiative promotes water safety awareness for students with classroom visits and four actual swimming lessons in the pool...," said PCS Principal Melissa Fields. "In a community like Perquimans that is surrounded by water, this type of education is of crit-

ical importance to prevent future child fatalities...Allowing our students to participate in the free swim lessons will provide many of them with life saving skills and strategies that they may not get otherwise. This would be a great benefit not only to the students and families in PCS,

See LESSONS, 8



MOA PRESENTS PERQUIMANS HISTORY

STAFF PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

Ray Winslow (l-r), Sylvia Wyatt and Anne McMullan look at the newest Perquimans exhibit addition at the Museum of the Albemarle – the Theophilus White house great room, circa 1735.

Locals discuss traditions

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Of all the historical data and artifacts talked about and shown Sunday afternoon during the county's special day at the Museum of the Albemarle (MOA), one of the oldest won't be found there.

The Durant Family Bible, dated in 1599 and believed to predate the King James Version by 12 years, was donated by the Durant family to the University of North Carolina Library. George Durant, who was born in England in 1632, eventually came to America and bought land in 1661 between the Perquimans and Little rivers that is now known as Durants Neck. His family Bible is believed to be one of the oldest in the United States today.

That historical tidbit, as well as many others, were presented during the Perquimans County Day at MOA that featured county residents speaking on things of a

See MUSEUM, 8



STAFF PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

Sybil Hobbs Skinner (left) discusses furniture making with Carlton Davenport (center) during Perquimans County Day at Museum of the Albemarle, Sunday. Doug Layden (right) traced the history and traditions of hog harvesting.

Friends seek help for animal shelter

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

A new group has formed to help the Tri-County Animal Shelter in Tyner which serves Perquimans, Chowan, and Gates counties.

Barbara Yates, from Edenton, is a member of the Friends of the Animal Shelter and recently appeared before county

commissioners asking the county to partner with the group to work towards a goal of having a model, rural shelter operated with the best management practices.

"Currently the shelter has dismal statistics – a high number of animals entering the shelter, low adoption rate, and high euthanasia rate," said Yates. "We are asking you to partner with us to help stop the bleeding at the shelter. If together we can reduce the number of incom-

See SHELTER, 8

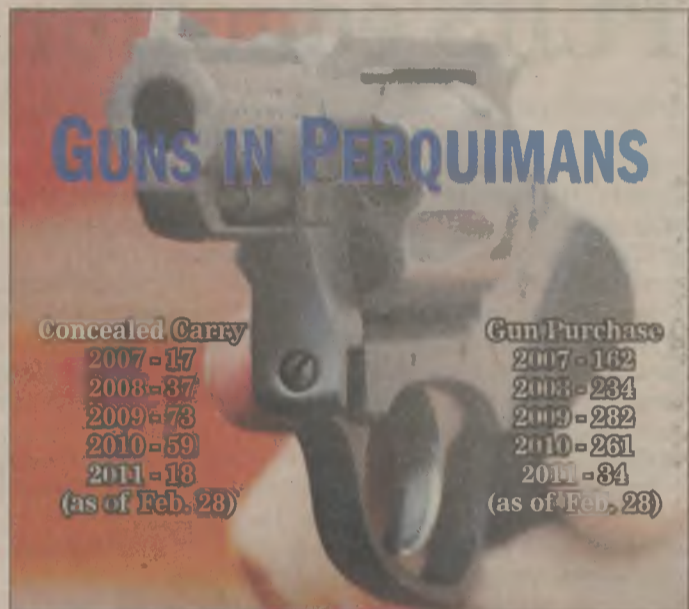
Children's Festival this Saturday

The Chowan/Perquimans Smart Start and the Albemarle Smart Start Partnerships will host a Children's Festival on Saturday at the Perquimans County Recreation Center to kick off the Week of the Young Child.

Children from Perquimans, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, and Pasquotank counties will enjoy free special events at the center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At least 10 free educational and safety instruction booths will

See FESTIVAL, 8



STAFF GRAPHIC BY CATHY WILSON

Concealed carry permits on rise

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Area instructors say more people are leaning how to safely carry concealed weapons out of fear for the protection of family and property.

Scott Perry, a NRA-certified instructor, says his requested concealed gun carry classes, held once a month, are scheduled through May. He's been teaching classes monthly since August.

"I see more men actually in class, but receive more calls from females," he said. "The reason for taking the class? They want to protect themselves."

Another local instructor, Hertford resident Lloyd Hodges, agrees.

"There is a lot of interest now that is fear-based," said Hodges who has over 50 years in law enforcement and military service. He has taught concealed carry classes here for the past six months.

"I see a number of older women who live alone and are afraid to go out at night without some type of 'help,'" he said. "I always ask my students why they feel they need to carry a concealed weapon. One student said because it was 'cool'. I told that student, you don't need one. You're not ready."

According to the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department, the number of concealed gun permits has increased drastically over the last three years. Based on figures for the first two months of 2011, that trend is expected to continue.

Concealed gun permits here rose from 17 in 2007 to 37 in 2008, then spiked at 73 in 2009 after President Barack Obama took office as president.

"There was some talk then about the fear of people losing their firearms rights after the president took office, so there was a big push to get weapons then," remembered Sheriff Eric Tilley. "But, that didn't happen, and people are still coming in here to get permits. There is someone at the front window every day picking up a gun permit application packet."

"I think people now are just more knowledgeable about what's going on around them," said Tilley. "Unfortunately, when the economy goes down, crime goes up."

Concealed carry permits here dipped to 59 last year, and as of Feb. 28, 18 concealed carry permits have been issued this year. If the trend continues for 2011, the

See CONCEALED, 8



FILE PHOTO

Lots of fun-filled activities will be available for area children Saturday during the Children's Festival sponsored by the Chowan/Perquimans Smart Start and the Albemarle Smart Start Partnerships at the county recreation center. The festival is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.