

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

JULY 18, 2012 - JULY 24, 2012



The library is where the fun is this summer! See photos - 8

50 cents

Firefighter recovering after April accident

STAFF PHOTO
BY CATHY WILSON

Darwin Saunders (left) talks with his buddy Steven Bengé who has helped him recuperate following a devastating April car crash that broke his back and left him in a wheelchair. Saunders keeps a positive attitude and believes he will walk again one day.



Saunders works to regain use of his legs

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

By all accounts, Darwin Saunders should be a bitter and depressed young man.

At the age of 25, he finally got a good-paying job at the Newport News shipyard, had joined the Hertford Fire Department to help his community, and was looking forward to becoming a new father. Life was looking pretty good.

Then in the early morning hours of April 30, his fifth day on his new job, Saunders fell asleep while driving to work at 4 a.m., wrecked his truck, and broke his back. He suffered a number of additional serious injuries, spent six weeks in a hospital, and now sits in a wheelchair, unable to use his legs.

But the young man with a contagious grin is not bitter, not depressed, not asking "Why me?" Instead, he's working hard in physical therapy to regain the use of his legs, keeps a positive attitude, and is extremely thankful for the love and support he's received from friends, the community, and his family.

"I'm starting to get sensation back in my feet now, so that's a good sign that things are starting to regenerate. I don't plan to stay in this thing for long," said Saunders, fingering his manual wheelchair. "I will walk again."

He doesn't remember much about

"I remember the initial roll, then the next thing I remember is waking up laying in a yard. I was in a lot of pain, but I couldn't feel my legs."

Darwin Saunders
Recalling his automobile accident

the accident, he says.

He had gotten a job to be an outside machinist in order to work on submarines at a shipyard in Hampton Roads. But, he wanted to save gas money so he signed up to ride a commuter van that travels from Gates County to Newport News. He was traveling to meet that carpool van when the truck he was driving ran off Highway 37 in Chowan County and overturned several times. He was ejected from the truck.

"I remember the initial roll, then the next thing I remember is waking up laying in a yard," he said. "I was in a lot of pain, but I couldn't feel my legs."

His best friend Steven Bengé received a phone call from friends in whose yard Saunders had wrecked.

"All I knew is that Darwin had wrecked and I had to get there," said

See SAUNDERS, 4

Dalton pledges support for rural areas

Candidate for gov was here Thursday

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

If elected, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Walter Dalton says he will work for all citizens in the state — including those from rural areas — despite facing what at least one state senator terms "an urban legislature" in January.

Dalton, along with his wife Lucille, made a campaign stop at the county courthouse Thursday and pledged his support of rural areas like Perquimans County.

Moments before Dalton arrived, N.C. Sen. Stan White, D-Dare, also spoke briefly to the crowd and painted a bleak picture for any political pull for rural areas when the state legislature convenes in January with newly-redistricted elected legislators. Sen. White will represent Perquimans County in the state senate come January 1 due to that redistricting.

"The main issue we will be facing is an urban legislature come January," said White. "Rural areas will have an uphill battle to get anything done...they (legislature) just don't understand rural issues."

But Dalton, who is currently the state's lieutenant governor, says he supports



STAFF PHOTOS BY CATHY WILSON

Commissioner Janice Cole, chairman of the Perquimans County Democratic Party, welcomed Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton during a meet and greet Thursday afternoon in the Perquimans County Courthouse. Dalton is the Democratic candidate for governor.

rural areas - and programs that would help local citizens like Rural Center's New Generation youth leadership program, Early College educational programs, and opposing any scaling back of the state's community college system.

Fifteen-year-old Dasheika Spence, a sophomore at Perquimans County High School and a member of the Perquimans County Mentoring Focus Group, told Dalton more students would

See DALTON, 4



Sen. Stan White, D-Dare, told a gathering at the county courthouse Thursday that the state will see an "urban legislature" when the General Assembly convenes in January. White will represent Perquimans County Jan. 1, as a result of statewide redistricting.

Waste disposal drops; recycling by residents up

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Waste disposal tonnage decreased in the county this past year, mirroring trends seen both in the state and nationwide.

Brad Gardner, manager of the Perquimans Chowan Gates Landfill, told county and town leaders recently that Perquimans County produced about 7,455 tons or 372 tractor-trailer loads of waste in 2011.

"Overall waste is down both locally, statewide, and nationally by about 15 percent," said Gardner. "This is often attributed to slower economy, reduced construction, better recycling, and more responsible manufacturing and production, etc."

Locally, the waste is trucked from the county's transfer station in Belvidere to the regional Republic Services Landfill in Bertie County for disposal which costs the county \$66 per ton.

The county has five convenience centers where citizens deposit trash including sites in New Hope, Hertford, Belvidere and on US Highway 17 north and south of Hertford. The site on 17-South is the county's busiest site using a second waste compactor while the Belvidere site is the least busy with the lowest volume of waste handled.

Swap shops have opened at the 17-South and New Hope sites while electronics waste is collected at the 17-North site.

All used fryer oils (peanut, vegetable oils) are now collected at every site and asphalt shingles can be dumped and recycled free with Barnhill Paving in Elizabeth City, Garner noted.

Each site also collects used oil filters and have had new used motor oil drums installed in 2011. Gardner says no drop-off sites in the county

See DISPOSAL, 4

Bathroom fires smoke up cafe

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Two small fires were found burning Thursday afternoon in bathroom trash cans inside the Dockside Cafe located in Albemarle Plantation.

The small blazes were quickly extinguished by firefighters at the scene. The

small restaurant located near the marina has been closed for almost a year.

Sheriff Eric Tilley said arson is the cause of both small fires and investigation is continuing.

Tom Ponte, assistant chief of the Bethel Volunteer Fire Department, said smoke was the main damage resulting from the fire reported around 4 p.m.

"We didn't know what we were facing when we first arrived because there was so much smoke," he added.

"We pulled a line and went in but very little water was drawn—two or three gallons at most. We ventilated and cleared the scene in just over an hour."

Ponte said that while the cafe is closed, the bathrooms were open for use by visitors at the marina. The cafe is owned by the Albemarle Plantation Property Owners Association, he added.

Bethel and Hertford fire departments and Perquimans EMS responded to the fire.

Get ready to stroll Friday

From staff reports

Grab a friend and bring a chair. This week's Friday Night Stroll is bigger and better.

Sponsored by the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce, Friday night's stroll will close a portion of Church Street from Woodard's Pharmacy to Grubb Street from 5-8 p.m. More vendors offering food, good, and services will fill the street including Vidant Chowan Hospital which will offer free health screenings.

The popular Sojourner Band playing pops and jazz will keep the crowd jumping from 5-5:45 p.m. and again

from 6-6:45 p.m.

Taking the stage at 7:15 p.m. will be the Lighthouse Tabernacle Youth Group singing Christian music.

The variety of foods available Friday night includes funnel cakes, barbecue sliders, hot dogs, and drinks. In addition, look for deserts, crafts, jewelry, etc. from local vendors.

When the downtown events are finished, stroll over to Hertford Baptist Church where the free movie "Soul Surfer" will be shown outside on the church lawn immediately after the Friday Night Stroll. Bring a chair or blanket and enjoy lemonade and popcorn.

