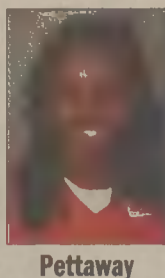
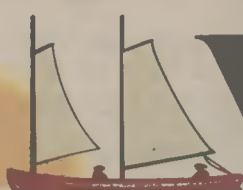


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Perquimans' Pettaway is making her mark at Clemson, Page 6

"News from Next Door"

JANUARY 2, 2013 - JANUARY 8, 2013

50 cents

## Cold weather brings memories of disasters

From staff reports

The coldest two months of the year bring back memories of the three largest disasters in the history of Perquimans County.

All three happened in Hertford.

January 10 will be the 35th anniversary of the Winslow Oil fire that occurred on Grubb Street back in 1978. January 13 is the 79th anniversary of the Eastern Cotton Oil explosion that happened back in 1934 where Missing Mill Park is now located. February 21 is the 56th anniversary of the military jet crash into the school bus shop and garage at Perquimans County High School back in 1957.

Each leaves its own legacy, written forever in county history books and in the memories of those who lived here when each occurred.

### Winslow Oil fire

Most notably is the Winslow fire that, according to the 1978 edition of The Perquimans Weekly (TPW), is remembered as the worst fire in this little town's history.

An initial explosion in an oil tank reportedly set off at least four more explosions and resulting fires that destroyed nine of 11 oil tanks at the facility. Also destroyed were the company's office, warehouse, three oil transport rigs, and three service trucks. The local feed and seed store located adjacent to the oil company was also destroyed, and Reed Oil Company, located nearby, received damage to its warehouse, dock, and pier.



NAVY JET PLANE CRASH PERQUIMANS HIGH SCHOOL FEBRUARY 1957 Tail Section of Plane

PHOTOS COPIED FROM 1957 SCHOOL ANNUAL

This 1957 photo of the Navy jet crash at Perquimans County High School bus garage is from a cook book published by Hertford Fire Department Auxiliary.

Hertford Fire Department responded quickly with 19 men and three pumpers. The fire chief Charlie Skinner immediately called for help from the brotherhood of firefighters in the area.

Approximately 125 firefighters from the surrounding areas and some even from Virginia responded to help contain the blaze that sent thick black smoke billowing into the air that could be seen as far away

as Elizabeth City and Edenton. Many firefighters stayed on the scene for up to 51 hours. At least six firefighters were injured.

As a result of their heroic efforts, a fire that could easily have destroyed the small town was contained to the immediate area. In fact, the residential home located just in front of the oil company was saved although its garage in the back was destroyed.

There were no deaths result-

ing from the initial blast and fire even though employees were inside the building at the time of the first explosion.

According to published news accounts, two employees crawled from the office building and plunged into the Perquimans River without injury. Authorities believed that a spark (perhaps from static electricity) may have set off the first explosion as two transport tankers were loading fuel at the facility.

Approximately 16,000 gallons of burning fuel also spilled into the adjacent river. Members of the Atlantic Strike Force responded to help contain the spill.

Many law enforcement and military agencies responded to help as well.

The Winslow fire saw the local community rally in support and assistance during a difficult time.

See DISASTERS, 2

## Guardrail impales van on U.S. 17

Woman loses a foot in morning accident

From staff reports

One woman was seriously injured Dec. 27 when the minivan she was riding in struck a highway guardrail that impaled her passenger's seat and pushed the front seat to the back of the minivan.

According to the North Carolina Highway Patrol, passenger Martha Taylor, 72, of Galloway, N.J., was trapped inside the van for about two hours while firefighters worked to free her from the single vehicle crash.

Trooper J.F. Bray said Taylor suffered a severed foot and other injuries during the crash, which occurred around 11:25 a.m. in the northbound lane of U.S. Highway 17 between New Hope Road and the state's transportation shop in Winfall.

See WRECK, 4



PHOTO COURTESY MICHAEL HURDLE

Firefighters from Winfall and Hertford extricate Martha Taylor, 72, from a van she was riding in after it ran off the northbound lane of U.S. Highway 17 and struck a guardrail near the state's transportation workshop in Winfall, Thursday.

## Firm hired to plan new sports complex

From staff reports

The Perquimans County Board of Education has agreed to pay an engineering firm to develop plans and costs estimates for building a proposed high school athletic complex in phases rather than in one large construction project.

The board agreed recently to pay Albemarle & Associates, Ltd. \$14,800 to come up with a preliminary engineering design and cost estimates dividing the proposed complex into two phases.

Phase I would include a competition football field with scoreboard and lighting, an eight-lane running track, stadium seating for 1,000 home fans, and seating for 500 visitors.

Also included in Phase I would be a press box/storage/restrooms facility, a more conservative main entrance/concessions/restrooms building, a smaller, more conservative field house, grade and seeded soccer and practice fields, and stone parking lots.

Education leaders don't want Phase I to cost over \$3 million.

Phase II would include building a competition

See COMPLEX, 2

## Roberts gives records, tapes to museum

By GENE DENISON

Special to The Perquimans Weekly

Frank Roberts of Hertford recently donated a collection of more than 2,600 LP records and 8-track musical tapes to the Brady C. Jefcoat Museum of Americana located in Murfreesboro.

Roberts, a local personality

known throughout Tidewater Virginia and northeastern North Carolina for his witty reviews of area music events and his deep baritone voice on radio, has collected everything over the years from classical to rhythm and blues, ballads, pop, folk, country and much more.

"I'd rather give my collection to this wonderful museum than have the items disappear and be unappreciated," said Roberts with a twinkle in his eye.

His varied career took him

See ROBERTS, 4



PHOTO COURTESY GENE DENISON

Valeria and Frank Roberts enjoy a display of Frank's recent donation of more than 2,600 LP records and 8-track tapes to the Brady C. Jefcoat Museum of Americana in Murfreesboro.



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