

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

DECEMBER 17, 2014 - DECEMBER 23, 2014

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April storm still impacting some in county

STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

While the rubble of Leonidas Parker's home remains, there are signs of better things. The foundation blocks have been laid for a new home to replace the one destroyed in a tornado in April.



(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the first part of a series on disaster recovery in the wake of the April tornados in Perquimans County.)

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

If all goes right, by October of next year Stephanie Hunt will have worked herself out of a job here in the Albemarle area.

That doesn't mean she won't have work to do

somewhere else.

Hunt is the disaster site coordinator working for the N.C. Conference of the United Methodist Church. Since last summer she's been moping up storm damage in Perquimans, Pasquotank and Chowan counties. Tornados in April caused more than \$10 million in damage, killed one person and left a dozen or so homeless in the three county area.

Hunt's job is to get those people back in a house and last week she was busy

trying to get two homes repaired in time for families to move in by Christmas.

"I'm stressing about it," Hunt said on Friday. "I admit I've been real pushy this last week with some of the people who have been my best volunteers."

"When you can get somebody back home it's a great day, but there are a lot of days where you're stressing out."

Hunt hopes everybody on

See RECOVERY, 2

Support strong for kettle campaign

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Strong support from Albemarle Plantation residents and local volunteers ringing the Salvation Army bell helped push local donations over the top this year.

Skip Matthews, who heads the local kettle campaign, said it may be a week or so before the final tally is in, but he's sure it will top the \$11,625 raised last year in Perquimans County.

"Collections may be down elsewhere, but the good people here, with the very generous support of the people at the Albemarle Plantation, have, once again, demonstrated the love and generosity for which they are known," Matthews said in a letter to the editor.

As of last week Elizabeth City Salvation Army Major Butch Mallard was reporting the kettle drive was off by \$7,000 from last year. Mallard said 25-to-30 percent of their annual income is generated through the kettle donations.

What really pushes Perquimans County over the top are donations from residents of Albemarle Plantation, Matthews said.

"We really appreciate the small change or anything we get but the fact that Albemarle Plantation is there really makes a difference," Matthews said. He's been coordinating the kettle drive for more than 10 years.

The Plantation has a tradition of holding an annual Christmas party. Christmas cards for neighbors are left on a tree, and the cards

See CAMPAIGN, 3



Winfall Mayor Fred Yates (above, back row, middle) stands with members of the Perquimans County Middle School Show Choir. The choir won a trophy at the Winfall parade.

Andrea Greene, principal of Perquimans County Middle School, and Melissa Fields, principal of Perquimans Central School, wave back to the crowd during Winfall's annual Christmas parade on Dec. 6. Greene was the Grand Marshall for the parade. For more pictures of the Winfall parade, please see page 8.



Pagels: Trip to Israel was 'indescribable'

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Jacque Pagels still can't really describe it.

After returning from her third trip to Israel in four years she still struggles putting the experience into words.

"Several people have asked me if I'd give a talk about it, but there is no way you can convey the feeling. How can you describe the

indescribable?"

Pagels got her first taste of the Holy Land in 2010. She went with her daughter and a group organized by her former pastor from Kernersville United Methodist Church. Pagels is a Perquimans County native who graduated from Perquimans County High School in 1962.

"It was like it (Israel) just grabbed a hold of me. I knew I wanted to go back."

Dr. Jeff Patterson makes the journey every two years and Pagels went back again in 2012 and then again in November of this year. "The pastor stresses this is a pilgrimage, not a vacation and we take our Bibles wherever we go. Now that I've been, when I read the Bible it is so much more alive to me," she said.

She has made notes in her Bible that deal with specific regions to remind

her when she visited that place.

Given the tension in the region, she often gets the question "weren't you scared?"

At least when it comes to Israel, Pagels shakes her head "no."

"In Israel I had no concerns whatsoever. I don't know if it's faith or whatever. But when we crossed over into Jordan, there was a wash of fear. I know my

family was concerned this time, but I never had any doubts. While I was over there I didn't see anything, or hear any gunshots or anything."

That's not to mean there isn't violence there, but Pagels wonders if the perception in the U.S. is the same as the reality.

This last time Pagels visited, the group started in

See ISRAEL, 4

Murder suspect pleads guilty

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A man who admitted to killing a 28-year-old Perquimans County man in 2012 plead guilty last week to second degree murder.

Michael Helms, a Myrtle Beach, S.C. construction worker, was arrested in February 2012. A



HELMS

second man, Brian King of King was arrested about a year later and charged with accessory after the fact in the murder.

An autopsy showed Chad Austin Colson had been stabbed 90 times.

Helms plead guilty in Dare County to second degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder. He was sentenced to between 22 and 28 years in

See PLEA, 3

Winfall supports swing-span bridge along with Perquimans

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Town of Winfall joined the Perquimans County Commission last week in voting to support another swing bridge to link the towns of Winfall and Hertford.

Winfall's board took the action on Dec. 8, a week after the county commission made the same decision. Both boards want DOT to se-

lect what is known as Alternative B, a new 15-foot-high swing span near the spot of the current S-Bridge.

"What it's going to take is all four of our boards, Winfall, Hertford, the county and the school board to all sign a letter, the same letter," said Winfall Mayor Fred Yates.

DOT favors building a new fixed span bridge, not a swing span. State engineers argue that the option known as Alternative D-Mod is not only the least expensive in terms of construction, it doesn't have the ongoing maintenance costs of staffing and maintaining a bridge that moves.

D-Mod is expected to cost \$19 million and Alternative B is estimated to cost \$32 million. DOT would maintain that D-Mod would also require a far shorter disruption in traffic between the two towns.

The Hertford Town Board heard from a speaker regarding the replacement of the S-Bridge the same night Winfall took its action. The Hertford board listened to speaker Nancy Theodore, but took no action.

Theodore lobbied the Hertford board to throw support behind the option known as Alternative

See BRIDGE, 4

GRAND ILLUMINATION HELD



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Members of the Hertford Grammar School Chorus sing with a glow of a Christmas tree behind them during Grand Illumination in Hertford on Dec. 5.

