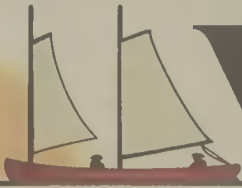


THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Parker earns London scholarship, 7

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2015

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REC'D

Last year's storm scars are slow to heal

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A year later, some Perquimans County residents still don't have a place they can call home.

Tornadoes tore through areas of Burnt Mill Road and Chapanoke Road on April 25, 2014. In all 11 homes were destroyed and 18 sustained major damage.

The total damage exceeded \$1 million.

About a third of those hurt by the storm had insurance to cover the damage but the majority — like Leondias Parker — did not.

"I didn't have a drop of insurance," Parker said last week. "I knew I needed insurance, I kept saying I was going to get insurance but I never did. If you ain't got

DONATE TO HELP

■ Donations can be mailed to United Methodist Disaster Response Ministries, 139 Main Street, Swan Quarter, N.C. 27885.

money to do it, you can't do it." Within a day of the storm

volunteers started pouring into Perquimans County. Among the first to arrive was a crew of Baptists from Virginia.

In August, Stephanie Hunt arrived. She works with United Methodist Disaster Response Ministries. The group tries to coordinate the efforts of a number of faiths to help with recovery.

The process, Hunt admits,

has been painfully slow for many.

"There were 59 homes on the list then. I think it's 22 now."

Leondias Parker is one of the 22, but he's at least close to the finish line. Once dry-wall goes in, cabinets and flooring can be installed and appliances.

His nephew and next-door neighbor, David Park-

er, isn't as lucky.

David Parker is holding out hope he will be a new home soon.

He had lived in his home for 42 years before the tornado flattened it to ground with him inside. Miraculously the 67-year-old wasn't injured. None of the residents of on Chapanoke Road and

See TORNADO, 2

Class of 95 to hold reunion

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A technology that didn't exist 20 years ago has played a big role in getting members of a Perquimans County High School class back together for the first time.

The Internet wasn't a major player when the 130 members class of 1995 graduated. Facebook wouldn't come along for another nine years.

But Billy McGuinness, a member of the class, said Facebook and the Internet made getting in touch with the class a whole lot easier. The group plans to get together June 27 at the Crawfish Shack, a meeting place at 335 Swing Gate Road.

McGuinness said his classmates "scattered like the wind" geographically.

"But with the modern miracle of the Internet, it

See REUNION, 3

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S EVENT HELD



STAFF PHOTOS BY PETER WILLIAMS

Sharon Keaton (top photo, left) helps guide Kadence Dougherty through a bicycle obstacle course Saturday during the annual Week of the Young Child event at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. The focus of the activity is to teach safety.



Hertford firefighter Rob Hollmier shows a girl how to operate a fire hose Saturday at the Perquimans County Recreation Center.

Nelson to head funding effort

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Wallace Nelson isn't sure what it will take to raise money to build a new athletic complex at Perquimans County High School, but he's sure it will involve thinking outside the box.

In 2010 Dr. William Nixon, a former county resident, offered to donate 32 acres for the project under the condition that significant process was made in five years. The land is across the street from the high school on Edenton Road Street. The deadline came and went. County officials sought and received a five-year extension.

"Dr. Nixon has been understanding," Nelson said. "This would be a wonderful opportunity for the county."

The hitch is the cost. As originally proposed it would take \$6.1 million to complete the project.

See COMPLEX, 2

Bittner accepted to study at The Julliard School



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Chris Bittner plays the saxophone on stage at an event last year. The 2011 graduate of Perquimans County High School has been accepted to The Julliard School in New York.

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Chris Bittner, a standout during his time in Perquimans County Schools, has done something most musicians only dream about.

He got accepted to The Julliard School.

Bittner, 21, will be among about 672 music students studying at the New York City-based school over the next two years. About 200 other students attend for dance or drama.

Gloria Gottschalk, a media relations specialist at

Julliard, said thousands of people apply for the musical program every year. Fewer than 7 percent get accepted.

Bittner admits he's a little surprised he was one of them.

"I didn't think it would actually happen."

Bittner's father wasn't that surprised.

"He always shortchanges himself," Richard Bittner said. "He beats himself up for not being good enough, but he is good enough."

His family and his teachers saw Bittner's potential early on.

Bittner's mother, Patty, said her son's interest music really goes back to his days at Hertford Grammar School.

"Heather Webb introduced the kids to the recorder. I think that really lit a fire under a lot of those children."

Band director Lynn Dale stoked that fire at Perquimans County Middle School. In high school band director Chris Whitehurst saw the boy's potential when he started at the high school. Whitehurst now teaches at Camden County

High School.

"Chris was a diamond in the rough," Whitehurst remembers. "He always had a very natural musical sense about him so I just looked for opportunities and ways I could help him expand that."

For about two and a half years, Whitehurst would turn the band room at the high school into something like a nightclub once a month. High school jazz musicians from area schools were invited to come and

See BITTNER, 4

Rotary honors top teachers

From staff reports

The Rotary Club of Hertford honors a teacher of the year from each school in Perquimans County along with an overall District Teacher of the Year. The teachers of the year are recognized for their dedication to their students, school and community.

Chiquita Sutton was

named as the Perquimans Central School Rotary Teacher of the Year as well as the District Rotary Teacher of the Year.

Sutton is currently the exceptional children's Pre-K itinerant teacher at Perquimans Central School. She also serves as the Individual Education Plan (IEP) chair, the Perquimans County Special Olympics coordinator, serves on the District Autism Team, the School Improvement team and Closing the Gap team.

"Ms. Sutton goes well beyond her day-to-day classroom responsibilities and

it is evident that she makes a difference at Perquimans Central School and in our community each day," said Melissa Fields, the principal at Central.

Marshall Pugh, the music teacher at Hertford Grammar School, was recognized for HGS. He has been serving students in grades three through five since 2012. Pugh has directed a variety of school musical performances and also started the Hertford Grammar School Panther Chorus. The Panther Chorus has performed

See ROTARY, 2

BIRD VISIT



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Sonny Donahue gets a close look at Macaroni last week during a pre-school program at Hertford Baptist Church. Macaroni is a Goffin cockatoo that is a fixture at Intelliport, a downtown Hertford business.



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Albemarle Master Gardener Spring Garden Show
 Celebrating 100 Years of Extension: It's the Buzz!
 Saturday, May 2, 2015 • 9am to 3pm
 Perquimans County Recreation Center • 310 Granby St., Hertford