

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

"News from Next Door" THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2020 \$1.00



PAGE A6
Tri-County Animal Shelter's Pets of the Week



PAGE B1
Copley returns to Pirates' volleyball sideline as assistant coach



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Tanya Turner named 2020 Person of the Year

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

Perquimans Weekly's 2020 Person of the Year is Perquimans Schools Superintendent Tanya Turner.

Turner's leadership paved the way toward dealing head-on with a COVID-19 pandemic that changed education in many ways.

A meal distribution system had to be organized and great strides were made to connect students to the

classrooms via the internet, particularly in places where web access is limited or nonexistent.

When school doors were closed in March, a plan was needed to feed a county full of school aged children – a daunting task that required God's attention, maybe a miracle. Perquimans Schools' administration had to do what had never been done before, so plans were set in motion that included drop-off sites and bus runs. More than 30 transportation and

school nutrition employees heeded the call to make sure that each child had a warm meal, whether they live in Bethel or Belvidere. Plans directed school buses to deliver meals in the community and to local churches for pick-up. Meals were at no cost to the students.

"I believe when you are in the hands and feet of Jesus, He blesses you in those efforts," Turner said. "He's blessing our community through unsung heroes. It's beautiful

to see." Since internet access is not available to many places in the county, Intelliport has been donating its time and the means to set up different locations to provide internet access to students.

"During a very difficult and stressful time, Intelliport's Steve Lane is trying eliminate that digital divide for our students that he didn't have to

See TURNER, A2



SUPERINTENDENT TANYA TURNER

Basnight' Legacy Echoes an Eternity for Eastern NC

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

Marc Basnight, a former state senator who was a strong advocate for northeastern North Carolina, died Monday at his home in Manteo.

Basnight, 73, was first elected to the North Carolina State Senate in 1984 and represented the First District until he stepped down due to health issues in 2011 that was later diagnosed as a form of ALS, Lou Gherig's Disease.

A Democrat who served 26 years in the Senate, Basnight's nine two-year terms as Senate president pro tempore made him the longest-serving head of a legislative body in North Carolina history.

Born in Manteo and graduate of Manteo High School in 1966, Basnight served as chairman of the Dare County Tourism Bureau from 1974 to 1976, before being named to the North Carolina Board of Transportation in 1977 by then-Gov. Jim Hunt.

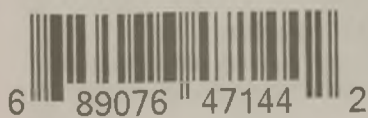
Basnight was a humble guy whose legacy will echo an eternity, particularly for folks who've seen the many changes that have taken place between Ahoskie and Manteo.

"It is likely that the breadth and extent of Mark's legislative career will never be matched," said Bill Culpepper, a former NC House Representative who represented 2nd House district, including constituents in Chowan, Dare, Gates, Perquimans and Tyrrell counties. "It is for sure that what he accomplished during his tenure in office will continue to benefit northeastern North Carolina generations to come."

State Senator Bob Steinburg (R-Chowan), who currently represents the First District, called Basnight a "legend" for his public service to region and state.

"It is likely no one individual will ever hold the reigns of absolute power in this state like he did," he said. "He utilized his position for much good and Eastern North Carolina, an area often neglected in budgets in the years preceding Basnight, was now securely a big part of the biennial budget discussions and ultimate appropriations.

See BASNIGHT, A6



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PHOTO BY SARA WINSLOW

At the end of the May day in Perquimans County, paradise was measured moment to moment, perhaps becoming memories that are forever etched in the mind's eye.

Council Battles, Hurricane Isaias, Racial Unrest, Gas Line Rupture

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

Editor's Note: Here is an annotated list of the Perquimans Weekly's most newsworthy stories of the 2020 through May. A story with the other part of 2020 will appear in the Jan. 6 edition.

January
Public records request reveals mayor's purchases

Perquimans Weekly filed a public records request Jan. 16 to learn more about the purchase of \$1,399 worth of furniture and related office accessories.

Town Hall responded by providing a list of the items purchased, photos and a memo from Mayor Earnell Brown explaining the reasons why the expenditures were made.

"Improved communication was one of my top priority campaign objectives," Brown writes in the memo dated Jan. 6. "Hence, one of my first accomplishments after election, with then Mayor (Horace) Reid's approval, was to set up my office to receive citizens, potential new residents and businesses, as to conduct effective meetings in a professional inspiring environment that encourages positive dialogue with all and to aspire our youth, through example, that they too can achieve their highest potential."

List provided by Town Hall includes purchases of a desk, conference table, computer monitor, TV mount, file cabinet, bookcase, pencil drawer, carpet floor mat, dry erase board, printer, paper shredder, etc. Biggest purchases were the Bowery Hill Executive desk for \$456 (price includes tax and shipping) and a 42-inch wooden conference table for \$227. Prior to the purchases, the mayor's office was a very simple, Spartan place filled with the bare essentials – a desk, a trio of 70s' era chairs, a bookshelf – space reminiscent of a junior grade army officer's staff office when



PHOTO BY MILES LAYTON

In March, Hertford Mayor Earnell Brown and Councilman Jerry Mimiłtsch gave out hot meals by First Baptist Church. The meals were prepared by Captain Bob's and McDonalds and served by Hertford Town Council among other dedicated public servants.



Perquimans Schools administrators met mid March to provide the Board of Education an update as to plans to provide learning access and distribute meals to students while schools are closed.

serving in a far flung theater of operations.

Brown's memo that echoes what she said to council during a back and forth dialogue she was having with Councilmen Frank Norman and Quentin Jackson, who first brought the matter to the public's attention during the Jan. 6 work session. Brown defeated Jackson's bid for mayor in the Nov. 5 municipal election in 2019.

Subsequently, there had been some question as to whether Brown would be able to take the oath as mayor and Jerry Mimiłtsch along with Ashley Hodges would be able to take their oaths as new council members.

Soon after the election, Jackson sought an injunction to halt the new council from being sworn-in so as to have more time

to address his issues from November's municipal election when he lost his bid for mayor. However, a Wake County Court dismissed Jackson's attempts to overturn the election, so the mayor and new councilmen were sworn-in Dec. 6.

During this contentious time period, Brown submitted a list of items on Nov. 14 for purchase to Town Manager Pam Hurdle, according to the mayor's memo. Jackson, who was then serving as mayor pro-tem, tried to block the purchase. Mayor Reid intervened and approved the requisition of the furniture and office accessories.

February
Town Council OKs Travel Policy, Lifts Spending Freeze

See 2020, A3

ROUND-UP

Happy New Year

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

A round-up of all things Perquimans County...

First, we'd like to thank Santa Claus for his assistance in providing the newspaper a website: PerquimansWeekly.com

Next, a nod of praise goes to Janice Butts, a longtime employee

for the Perquimans School system.

She works in the cafeteria as a cashier at Perquimans County High School and drives a bus for Hertford Grammar and the high school. Because of their (PCHS) COVID schedule, Butts

works at Perquimans Central School cafeteria on Thursdays.

"Ms. Janice is one of the sweetest, most humble people you will ever meet. She will encourage you when you are down, give you "the word" and keep you lifted in prayer-all the while, you will hardly ever know when she herself is going through something or down herself," said Kimberly Cullipher, PQ Schools' Nutrition Director. "She always has a smile for you! We joke that she keeps everybody in line and makes sure they are following the rules. The funny thing is; everyone listens. The students love her just as much as we do. She has touched so many lives in her years with PQ Schools. We (the School Nutrition Department) are so blessed to have Ms. Butts on our team! She is truly irreplaceable. I am so excited to hear about this surprise! What an amazing way to honor someone so incredibly special."

PQ Schools' Transportation Director Jeff Miller added, "Ms. Butts is everything a bus driver is supposed to be. Her attendance and dedication the last 27 years, only missing 7 days of work and completing her 12th year of perfect attendance this year speaks for itself. However, her job performance is much more than her attendance record. She is a mentor, role model and sets the standard for her students and fellow employees. She is a hard worker, but an even better person to work with. Her service and dedication to the safe and efficient transportation for our students does not go unnoticed. She's a tremendous asset to our team!"

In sports news, stories have been hard to come by because of the holidays, but here's this nugget.

The Perquimans County High School volleyball team defeated Manteo 25-14, 25-14, 25-17 Tuesday night at Perquimans County High School.

Perquimans (12-0, 6-0 Albemarle Athletic Conference) bested Manteo (0-9, 0-5 AAC) in the league match. Perquimans returns to action Jan.

See ROUNDUP, A3