

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



SCAN ME

"News from Next Door"

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

\$1.00



**PAGE A2**  
Bland sworn in as District Court judge



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Firefighters, farmers save soybean load after truck spill



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Hunter, Perquimans football come up short in shootout against Tarboro.

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## Hunter ALS Tournament billed as 'final farewell'

Tourney named for local legend may be rebranded

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Staff Writer

The 22-year history of the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Softball Tournament might not be coming to a close but it has come to a pronounced fork in the road.

The event this year is being billed the "Final Farewell." But Guy Webb, who is heading up the tournament this year following the death last year of co-founder Joan Hunter, said his hope is that the tournament may continue

in some fashion, though with new leadership and perhaps slightly different branding.

This is the 21st time the tournament has been held.

The event includes a barbecue and chicken plate sale on Friday, a gun raffle on Saturday, and the softball tournament during the same weekend.

Webb recalled that when Catfish Hunter contracted ALS in 1998 he started a foundation to help ALS patients.

Hunter died on Sept. 9, 1999, and the first Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Tournament was held just a few weeks later.

Webb said that at the time

he was parks and recreation director in Perquimans County and Joan Hunter, a niece of Catfish Hunter, was doing the same kind of work in neighboring Gates County. He said the two of them had started talking earlier that year about organizing a softball tournament to raise funds for the foundation and the event was eagerly received by area softball teams.

Although Catfish Hunter died before the foundation's first softball tournament was held, Webb noted that he knew about the planning for the event and endorsed the

See **TOURNEY, A3**



THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Bob Stallings of Belvidere watches the ball soar during a past Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Softball Tournament in Winfall. This year's event is being billed the "Final Farewell."

## Ford to speak at FCA banquet

Former UNC great will speak at Camp Cale Oct. 25

From staff reports

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes will hold its first of two back-to-back fall fundraiser benefits on Monday, Oct. 25, at Camp Cale in Hertford, followed by the second benefit, Tuesday, Oct. 26, at the Ramada Plaza in Kill Devil Hills.

This year's event will feature Phil Ford, former UNC Tar Heel player, who was part of two ACC Championship teams, as well as ACC Player of the Year in 1978.

Ford was a first team All American in 1976, 1977 and 1978, and named National Player of the Year in 1978 by the Wooden Award, USBWA, NABC and Sporting News.

Ford was also a part of the 1976 U.S. Olympic Gold Medal basketball team and a member of the NBA All

See **FORD, A3**

## Remembering Michael

Friends, family mark Higgins' 24th birthday with balloon release

Scholarship fund in Higgins' name has surpassed \$5K

BY BRENDA LASSITER  
Perquimans Schools Foundation

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Most of us have heard the quote and perhaps even been inspired by it. Michael Higgins embraced it and his life continues to remind others how everyone has the power to make an impact.

Whether by volunteering, starting a nonprofit, serving others, what we do today can lead to lasting change. Michael worked to change lives one day at a time, and his actions continue to have a meaningful impact — even today through his family and friends as they raise money to endow the Higgins Scholarship Fund established to benefit students seeking a career in law enforcement.

The Michael Steven Higgins "Changing the World" Scholarship pays tribute to a young man who departed this world too soon.

Michael was a 2016 graduate of Perquimans County High School and graduate of East Carolina University where he received a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a minor in security

See **HIGGINS, A3**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A balloon release in honor of Michael Higgins' 24th birthday is held outside Captain Bob's BBQ & Seafood Restaurant in Hertford. Bobby and Sharon Lane, owners of Captain Bob's, established a college scholarship fund in Higgins' name following his death in a car accident. The fund recently surpassed \$5,000, the halfway mark toward its endowment goal of \$10,000.

## COVID cited for grad dip at PCHS

5 area schools below state 4-year cohort rate of 86.9%

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Staff Writer

The challenges presented by remote learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic not only affected students' test scores but also hampered graduation rates, according to state and local school officials.

The state's 4-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2021 declined slightly, to 86.9 percent from 87.6 percent for the class of 2020. Compared to the class of 2019, the 4-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2021 represented an increase from 86.5 percent.

The 4-year cohort graduation rate is the percentage of the class that enrolls in high school in ninth-grade that graduates from high school within four years.

Across the area, five high schools were below the state rate of 86.9 percent for the 4-year cohort graduation rate: Perquimans County High School at 86.1 percent; Camden County High School at 85.6 percent; Currituck High School at 80.1 percent;

See **SCHOOL, A3**

## History museum to open soon on Dobbs Street

County to cover part of cost of Pirates' championship rings

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Staff Writer

Plans for a Perquimans County Heritage Museum are moving forward.



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ward. County Manager Frank Heath told the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners Sept. 7 that the Perquimans County Tourism Development Authority will be operating the new history museum at 104 Dobbs Street in Hertford.

The museum will include the collection of memorabilia from the Jim "Catfish" Hunter collection that previously was on display as the Catfish Hunter Museum in the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce building.

The new history museum will incorporate the Hunter collection and also provide displays about

other aspects of the county's history.

Heath said he hopes county officials will be able to announce the opening of the new museum in a month or two.

Commissioner Alan Lennon said the new museum will provide a great opportunity to showcase the county's history.

The Chamber recently donated the Catfish Hunter collection to the county.

Also at commissioners' September meeting, the board voted to cover the cost of championship

See **MUSEUM, A3**

## TOASTING THE PERQUIMANS



REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Shawn Ervi and Tina Copeland offer their own toast to the Perquimans during the Toast the Perquimans event Saturday evening at the Dobbs Street marina in Hertford. The event, which raises money for the programs of Historic Hertford Inc., was attended by more than 250 people.

**CHOWAN COUNTY REGIONAL FAIR**  
AMERICAN LEGION FAIRGROUNDS  
US 47 Business (1317 West Queen Street)  
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Tuesday, September 28 -  
Saturday, October 2, 2021