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Local & State

Smithfield, Isle of Wight, Surry, Suffolk

section B

Police troubles cited

Chief was asked to switch jobs

By MARK DAVIDSON
Staff Writer

POQUOSON — Management problems in the city Police Department were behind an effort to remove Chief John T. White from his position, city officials now acknowledge.

"There are some administrative problems the city wants corrected," Councilman Gordon C. Hibel Jr. said Thursday. "We want to have, I think, more harmony in the Police Department."

Earlier this month, City Manager Robert M. Murphy asked White if he would leave his chief's post and become assistant to the city manager, a job the City Council created Aug. 8.

White declined the offer, saying he wanted to remain chief. Afterward the chief was directed to correct administrative problems in the department, council members say.

Until Thursday, officials would not say whether the manager's assistant job was created solely for White. But now, after White discussed his situation publicly, some councilmen say the majority of the council had expected to shift White to the new job in hopes of changing management in the police division.

Councilman H. Gray Forrest, who along with Hibel voted against creating the position, said the council is concerned about a lack of cooperation within the department.

"I don't think he (White) has the respect of the officers," Forrest said. "I do know morale in the Police Department is very low. Whose fault that is, I really don't know. I don't think it's only the chief's fault."

White acknowledged that morale is "something we are working on," but said he does not think it is a "big problem." He said the lack of cooperation could be attributed partly to poor communication at the management level.

"Officers haven't had as much direction as they should have, perhaps from me," White said. ■ See White, Page B4

Slaying goes beyond worst fears

By DAVID CHERNICKY
Staff Writer

NEWPORT NEWS — Bonnie Edwards watched the Wednesday evening newscast with hopes that her daughter, missing since early Sunday, would be found safe, just as she had been on two previous occasions after running away.

The worst the Edwards family feared was that 14-year-old Robin had been injured or had accidentally drowned at the Ragged Island wildlife refuge.

"But we weren't prepared to learn that she had been murdered," Edwards said Thursday.

She said she was disappointed that investigators never told the family that they believed one of the two bodies recovered in a remote cove south of the James River Bridge was her daughter.

"Police never notified us. Not late of night, not the state, Smithfield or Newport News police," Edwards said.

"Unfortunately, we did not learn of the bodies until we saw it on the newscast at 6 p.m. It was a terrible shock."

Bonnie and Robert Edwards live on Willow Drive in the Brentwood area with a 12-year-old daughter.

Robin had run away twice this year, her mother said. In May she ran away with a friend and was gone for eight days.

In July, when a judge ordered Robin to undergo psychiatric evaluation, Edwards said her daughter "was afraid to go." After wandering the streets about 12 hours, Robin turned herself in to Hampton police.



Robert and Bonnie Edwards talk about their daughter Robin.

See Girl, Page B4



State Police divers J. A. Bayly (left) and R. W. Wesells look for evidence near the James River Bridge.

Victim got death threats, father says

By STEVEN WINGFIELD
Staff Writer

ISLE OF WIGHT — A Peninsula man found shot to death this week had received death threats recently, county Sheriff B. F. Dixon said Thursday.

The father of David Knobling has told investigators his son had received death threats from someone he knew in the days before he was slain, Dixon said.

"We're exploring that very closely, very much."

While officers sought clues at the Ragged Island wildlife refuge, where the bodies of Knobling and Robin Edwards were found Wednesday, detectives from the State Police Bureau of Investigation, Newport News and Hampton interviewed relatives and acquaintances of the two victims.

See Truck, Page B4

Lottery foes hope Baliles' opinion helps

By NANCY COOK
Staff Writer

RICHMOND — Gov. Gerald L. Baliles, who has promised he would have something to say about the proposed lottery before Election Day, could be a major factor in swinging votes, anti-lottery forces said Thursday.

"Baliles has it in his power to defeat the lottery," said Bob Wood, chairman of Virginia's Anti-State Sponsored Gambling. He said people on his side

personally to translate into votes," said Billy Sublette, chairman of Virginia's for the Lottery.

The major factor in what so far has been a low-key campaign, he said, would be voter turnout. Polls on the issue have consistently shown voters support the lottery 5:1.

"Our challenge is going to be mobilizing and turning out," Sublette said. There is no question that this was not year with a presidential and senatorial

election, we would win."

Baliles is one of the few major public figures in the state who has yet to take a stand on the lottery. Most have opposed it, including Attorney General Mary Sue Terry, former Attorney General J. Marshall Coleman, former Gov. Charles S. Robb, and more than two-thirds of the General Assembly.

But while Baliles has promised to address the issue, he has given no indication that he will take a firm stand one way or the other.

"All I've said is that I will have something to say," he told reporters this week when pressed on the issue. He said he would not make a statement until after he returns from a European trade mission in mid-October.

Baliles was at least partially responsible for the legislature passing the referendum that put the issue before voters last year. ■ See Lottery, Page B3

Program puts young drug users on straight path

By ROBERT GRAVES
Staff Writer

VIRGINIA BEACH — For Bob and Jennie, the tough discipline of a private drug program gave us back a son without the program he would have died.

The Virginia Beach couple is among dozens of families participating in Straight Inc., a nationwide program that began operation in the city in January. Straight takes complete control of teens on drugs for at least a year of strict, intense treatment, even if they do not want to participate.

But parents say they like the enforced regimen. "If you ignore the problem, the child will die," Bob said. ■ See Program, Page B4

Pig race hogs the show at state fair

By MELISSA WALL
Staff Writer

RICHMOND — And they're off! Heading out of the aluminum gates, it's No. 4 by a smut. No. 2 pushes close behind, rears, sprints, flutters, and the rest of the pack is right at their heels, ah, hoos.

Sawdust flies as the quiet stampedes beneath the first of two forward archers and turns the corner. They smell that finish line reward. Croo coodoo. The wooden bleachers rattle. The crowd squeals.

Step right up, ladies and gentlemen. What we've got here is the essence of the 141st annual Virginia State Fair held northeast of Richmond at Laborum Avenue.

Pig racing. It's the closest idea to genius under the blinking, electric Monday sun, which flashes from 8 a.m. to midnight every day. For the next 10 days, people from across the state can shell out \$5.95 for an experience no



Robert Ratzliff watches people go around on a ride.

theme park can give them: Exhilarating, 85 shows and rides, eight days, agriculture competition.

Don't forget the pig racing in three heats — from piglets to imported Chinese. Pie-Believed-

right animal. This was their first time as pig race operators, but they go to the fair every year. His mother says, "I didn't think pigs went so fast."

Ah, but in this world of half illusion, half real-life America, the pig race is the quintessential symbol. It combines the never-thought-of-else-this with appreciation-as-only-an-over-cake.

In the pig's case, the latter feeling comes from their trainers, Jim and Sandra Windland of Florida. The Windlands are carries, have been all their lives. He is "over 50," she is "under."

There have been years off for Jim's stint in the Navy and managing a roller rink in Newport News, opening a Florida Harley Davidson shop. But the showman's life beckoned, and they could not resist.

Such is the way of the fair. From the concessionaires to the ride operators, their siren calls offer lures of what mothers always warn against: \$1.25 candy. ■ See Fair, Page B5

Homeless shelter

By CHRIS YOUNG
Staff Writer

NEWPORT NEWS — An alliance of public and private groups is planning a shelter for homeless men and families in an old union hall on 25th Street.

The Friends of the Homeless Inc., a non-profit group made up of members of the Newport News-Hampton Board of Realtors, Peninsula Homebuilders

Shelter for homeless planned in old union hall

Association, the Peninsula Agency on Aging and the League of Women Voters, wants the city to acquire the AFL-CIO Labor Temple on 25th Street at Sycamore Avenue.

The building would be leased to the coalition for use as a shelter.

"About 40 cases are turned away monthly because the existing facilities are full," said Karen Burgess, city community development director. The group cleared a major hurdle Sept. 8 when the City Council approved the use of \$113,000 in Community Development Block Grant money to acquire and renovate the building and to cover some operating costs.

Nora Lambotte, president of the Friends of the Homeless,

said the Board of Realtors look on the project when neighborhood opposition persuaded the council to shelve efforts to turn the old Wickham Avenue fire station into a shelter.

"We felt it was going to be a good location," Lambotte said. "This building is so good be-

cause it is large enough, with separate rooms that could accommodate up to four families."

The shelter also will house up to 25 single men at one time. The site already is zoned for commercial use, which would allow the building to be used as a shelter, according to Burgess.

"The building, which is 66,000 sq ft, is in good shape," she said. ■ See Shelter, Page B6

