

Hometown

Sunday, December 12, 2010

Woman dies in Friday wreck

Gastonia police say a woman died late Friday night after striking a utility pole in a single-vehicle wreck.

Shelia Ann Beason hit the utility pole in a private driveway adjacent to the 4000 block of West Franklin Boulevard at 10:54 p.m., according to a Gastonia police report. She was taken to Gaston Memorial Hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

The Gastonia Police Department's Traffic Unit is investigating the incident to determine a cause of the collision, but authorities released no other information about the wreck Saturday.

Efforts to reach Beason's family members were unsuccessful.

—staff reports

► **GOOD DEED REPORT**

Mount Holly's Meakin Forest purchased for conservation

Project brings conserved lands in Gaston County to more than 4,000 acres

By **Leo Hohmann**
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Catawba Lands Conservancy has recently acquired the 71-acre Meakin Forest in Mount Holly, bringing the total lands permanently protected in Gaston County through the Conservancy's efforts to more than 4,000 acres.

The organization is closing in on its goal of preserving 10,000 acres in the greater Charlotte region by year-end.

Due to the Great Recession, and a near depression in the home-building industry, the Conservancy has been able to acquire more land and

at cheaper prices.

"The Meakin Forest project is an important conservation success in Gaston and is instrumental in bringing us closer to conserving 10,000 acres of significant natural lands in our region before the year's end," said Dave Cable, executive director for the Conservancy. "Despite the recent lull in housing development, our region is becoming increasingly urban. Projects like this one are necessary to balance our region's long-term growth."

Meakin Forest is positioned between two subdivisions that have been cleared, but are currently undeveloped. The property provides valuable conservation benefits for wildlife habitat, water quality and open space preservation in an area facing significant development

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ELIZABETH EDWARDS REMEMBERED

Funeral of wife of former presidential candidate John Edwards took place in Raleigh on Saturday.

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Special to The Gazette

The 71-acre Meakin Forest in Mount Holly has been bought by the Catawba Lands Conservancy for preservation.

■ Cramerton Drug Co., 149 Eighth Ave., has donated toiletry items and other gifts requested by the seniors.

For more information, call the sponsor at 704-864-5500 or visit www.beasantatoasenior.com.

Pet food collection

And now for some help for our four-legged friends. In last Monday's *Gazette*, reporter Michael Barrett profiled Ashley Franks, a 13-year-old Belmont Middle School student

Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County, which has received \$45,925 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to help build a house in Gaston County in 2011 as part of Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity program.

The Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity is in its sixth year and, through that effort, Habitat-Gaston has built five homes.

"The Thrivent Builds partnership has helped Habitat-Gaston increase the number of families served in

the poverty and oppression because of the war-stricken schools in Uganda."

So far Forestview students have raised \$1,000. Checks can be made out to the Forestview High School Invisible Children's Club and dropped off or mailed to the school at 5545 Union Road, Gastonia, N.C., 28056.

Have you caught someone doing something good? E-mail Will MacDonald at wmacdonald@gastongazette.com. The Good Deed Report runs Sundays.

<< METEORS

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The best time to view the spectacular showing is late Monday to 5 a.m. Tuesday, he said.

A bright moon will not interfere with viewing, but light pollution can detract from the experience, said Craig, who recommends getting out of the city for the best show.

The Geminids meteor shower is especially bright because it is brought on by the asteroid Phaethon, rather than a comet like most meteor showers, said Craig.

The asteroid will cause brighter and longer lasting streaks in the sky that are visible without a telescope. Craig said using a telescope can actually narrow the view.

If you can't make it out after midnight Monday morning, a few days before or after will still offer some sights to see, said Craig, though from Monday to Tuesday will be the most brilliant spectacle.

Meteor showers are not a one-night event, he said.

"Shooting stars" are visible most cloudless nights, said Craig.

"You see meteor showers every night if you go out and wait long enough," he said.

Another astrological wonder to take in this month will be the full lunar eclipse expected on Dec. 20.

The eclipse will begin just before midnight on Dec. 20 and complete about 5:30 a.m. the following day, but the

major part of the event lasts just over an hour in the early morning, said Craig.

The moon will not be blacked out, rather create a red and orange color often seen in sunsets, said Craig.

A full lunar eclipse won't happen again until 2014.

Planets visible in the night sky right now are Venus and Saturn. Venus is brightest in the early morning, and Saturn is a breath-taking sight to see through a telescope, Craig said.

Craig encouraged all star gazers to check in at the Schiele Museum planetarium to find out more of what to watch throughout the year.

You can reach Diane Turbyfill at 704-869-1817.

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Meakin Forest is primarily wooded with 2,800 feet of frontage along Taylors Creek and 2,800 feet of frontage along two tributaries of Taylors Creek, providing important buffer lands to protect surface water quality in the Catawba River watershed.

Formerly owned by The Dales Group LLC, Meakin Forest was purchased by Conservancy board member Dr. Chuck Meakin who has donated a conservation easement for the entire 71 acres, protecting the land's numerous conservation values in perpetuity.

Catawba Lands Conservancy protects more than 8,000 acres in Catawba, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg and Union counties and is one of 24 land trusts

serving North Carolina. Catawba Lands Conservancy is the lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail, an initiative that links more than 2 million residents with hundreds of miles of trails that wind through 15 counties in North and South Carolina.

The Carolina Thread Trail is a 15-county, two-state initiative designed to inspire and facilitate the creation of

a regional network of trails, blueways and conservation corridors that is growing together to link more than 2.3 million residents. With technical resources and catalytic funding from The Thread, local communities plan and implement their portions of this green interstate system.

For more information visit www.catawbalands.org or www.carolinathreadtrial.org.

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