

Tabor-Loris Tribune

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SEVENTY-SECOND YEAR NUMBER 27

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10 PAGES TODAY

1) Florence

A ho-hum hurricane season in the Tabor-Loris Community got deadly serious in mid-September, lumbering ashore at Wrightsville Beach on Sept. 14 after wind shear had sucked much of the power of what had been a Category 5 hurricane to a Category 1 before it lumbered ashore.

That wind shear did nothing to reduce the water, and as Florence lumbered through the region for nearly three days it dumped tons of water, a record 35.93 inches recorded at Elizabethtown, she brought flooding that matched or exceeded that from Hurricane Matthew in

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TOP TEN: 2018

A year of turmoil, in review

By DEUCE NIVEN
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In the year just ended it seems the bad news, events just too tough and too heart-breaking, have dominated news in the Tabor-Loris Community.

We've seen heartbreak from hurricanes to the senseless killing of a law enforcement veteran, con-

trovery from trash to politics, and an alleged criminal enterprise shut down, the last chapter of that like so many of these stories still to be written.

A pair of Tabor City's most prominent business and civic leaders passed away within days, two prominent businesses were closed during the year, too, though

resurrection of one is now just weeks away.

There have been reasons for hope, too, including the possibility of tourism rail and an energetic effort to revitalize one downtown.

We'll take a look back at those stories that dominated headlines in 2018 in this, our annual and admittedly subjective Top Ten stories

list.

Here they are:

- 1) Florence
- 2) Political chaos
- 3) Trooper murder
- 4) Loris talks trash
- 5) School merger talks
- 6) Dr. Kim's arrest
- 7) Rail tourism
- 8) Bringing back main
- 9) Restaurants
- 10) Passing's

Town seeks bridge naming for ex-officer

By DEUCE NIVEN
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A new effort to honor a law enforcement officer who died in the line of duty nearly 24 years ago has been made by Tabor City Council.

Meeting last month, council agreed to a request from surviving family to as the North Carolina Department of Transportation to name a bridge in honor of Franklin Dale "Frankie" Perritte, who has served in law enforcement in Tabor City and Columbus County prior to his death on duty with the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles on Feb. 14, 1995.

Approval is not certain, the process is lengthy, Town Manager Al Leonard told council. Council, in its request to the state, notes "that the family would incur any expense involved," Leonard said.

"If initial reaction from DOT is favorable, additional steps would need to be taken in the future," Leonard said.

Previous requests from family and the town "went nowhere," Leonard said.

Brief chase

Perritte was 44 when he died, on duty with the state agency that was later absorbed by the State Highway Patrol.

Perritte was backing up a State Trooper in a chase that followed a traffic stop on NC 53, just off of Interstate 95 near Fayetteville, and was thrown from his DMV car which overturned and burned in the crash.

Trooper Curtis Toler had stopped a black Chevrolet Beretta he had spotted travelling south on I-95 at nearly 100 miles per hour, a highway patrol spokesman said at the time.

The driver pulled off at Exit 49 at NC 53 and stopped at the end of the ramp. Toler approached the car and asked the driver for his license and registration several times, but the driver did not respond.

Trooper Toler then opened the driver's side door and asked the driver, Eric Leo McKoy, 19, of Fayetteville, to get out.

Instead McKoy took off and headed down NC 53.

McKoy was also killed, his car striking a pine tree at the end of the pursuit.

Columbus native

A Columbus County native, Perritte was a police officer in Tabor City from 1979 to 1981, when the late Sterling Cartrette was Police Chief.

"Frankie was an outstanding police officer," Cartrette said at the time. "He worked for me there in Tabor City and did us a fine job. He came over to the Sheriff's Department when I did. I always found him to be a very efficient, conscientious officer. He loved his work and enjoyed policing. He was a very good officer."

'He still brings us together'



Family members of the late Randy Gerald, including his widow Gwendolyn, front at right, enjoyed a lighter moment during a program celebrating his life Saturday.

Fallen officer celebrated 17 years later

Story & Photos
By DEUCE NIVEN
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It snowed on the day 17 years ago that Lt. Randy Gerald of the Horry County Sheriff's Office was buried, temperatures were frigid at

the cemetery on the 16th anniversary of his death a year ago.

Shirt sleeve weather greeted family, both professional and personal, who gathered at the graveyard on Flag Patch Road near Loris Saturday, though the ground was wet

and the tent under which some sat was set up on a dry spot in the driveway.

There were few tears, though some still come from time to time, Gerald's widow Gwendolyn said after comments from colleagues, including Sheriff Phillip Thompson, were shared.

"Hestill brings us together," Thompson said of the man he described as a "gentle giant" who was shot and killed on his way home from a shift at the J. Reuben Long Detention Center.

Gerald, who was 47, never got out of his car, his life taken in the center of an awful domestic dispute. As Gerald was remembered, his killer remains in prison serving a life sentence.

The killer's name was not mentioned, the focus on this day not on how Randy Gerald died, but on how he lived.

"He could

make you feel so good about doing what is right," Thompson said. "That's the legacy of Randy Gerald."

Joey Johnson, Deputy Director at J. Reuben Long, said his most vivid memory of Gerald was off duty, when he joined a group of family members for a trip to Darlington drag strip, watching as the big man kept close watch over young nephews, one particularly who seemed to want to climb a fence at his peril.

There was no color barrier, Johnson said, though he was white and Gerald's young nephew reacted in disbelief when he got in the car with the black family.

"That's a white man," one of the nephews exclaimed, in Johnson's telling. "Hush your mouth" was Gerald's terse reply.

Gerald, Johnson said, was focused on taking care of all of the children.

Capt. Susan Safford said those at the jail who remember Gerald focus "on all the good times."

"Randy's smile would melt you," Safford said. "And he had the softest skin of any person ever."

On the last day of his life, Safford said, Gerald wished her a good night as he left work, promising to dance with her like Fred Astaire in the new year.

"We never got to do that,"



Horry County Sheriff Phillip Thompson and Capt. Susan Safford

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