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## FOCUS ON CHILD MOLESTATION In Caroline County

By Eric Miller Editor

Mary was a single mom who had been divorced for two years. She struggled to pay the rent each month.

She and her two daughters, both in elementary school, lived in a modest apartment and her only car was often in the shop. Mary worked as a legal secretary in a small law firm that didn't pay well, and she often worked late to keep up with an ever-increasing caseload.

Her friends regularly told her she should get out more and meet some guys. But she had all but given up men, especially after five years of being married to an abusive husband who had a drinking problem and was often between jobs.



*This is part 1 of a 3 part series on child molestation in Caroline County. This article focuses on one of the most common ways in which child molestation occurs. The next article will focus on recent cases and those that happened years ago.*

### Often times children are molested by acquaintances

At 32, Mary was very attractive, but seldom dated. So one night, her friends placed her daughters in the care of a trusted friend and went by the office and persuaded Mary to go out on the town with them.

They went to Richmond to a dance club that Mary's friends frequented. Near the end of the evening, Mary met John, a nice looking guy and a real gentleman. The bartender brought free

drinks to his friend, John and his new acquaintance. She wished she had dressed better for the occasion.

John and Mary talked for hours and they had so much in common. They both liked '80s music and Chinese food and had both voted for all the same presidents. He had a prestigious job in information technology and he offered to give her a ride home. At first she was reluctant, but the

bartender vouched that John was fine.

As John opened the passenger door and Mary slipped into his sleek, late-model Corvette, she felt she had transferred to another world. She was getting hooked

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## County officials make no decision on joining PRTC

By Christina Lopes Reporter

MILFORD—The Caroline County Board of Supervisors once again revisited the topic of joining the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) during their regular meeting on Nov. 26.

Joining the regional transportation panel would mean Caroline would impose a local 2.1 percent fuel tax to generate revenue for transportation projects.

After hearing a presentation from PRTC representatives, Supervisor Calvin Taylor asked, "What is the next step?" if Caroline officials want to become a member of the PRTC. A representative noted that Caroline would be placed on a resolution, and that the PRTC board would present the county with a set of terms and conditions.

After the discussion, Floyd Thomas, chairman of the Caroline board, told the representatives that the board would later "deliberate and make a decision, and then talk more with VRE and PRTC."

The PRTC is a joint governmental entity formed under the State Transportation District Act of 1964. The commission provides a regional approach to the planning, development and funding of transportation systems, programs and facilities, including highway improvements, in the participating localities.

The PRTC has a 17-member board made up of 13 elected officials from the six member jurisdictions, as well as a state senator and two delegates, and one representative from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

Part of the equation is how Caroline would be treated differently on the PRTC board because of its small population compared to the other counties, Caroline Supervisor Jeff Sili said after the meeting. This would give it less clout on the board, particularly because it would contribute less in fuel tax revenue.

Another concern is the way Caroline would be assessed for commuter rail tracks, Sili said. Caroline would be set apart because other localities would derive no benefit from the additional 20 miles of track to Caroline and would not feel it necessary to fund the tracks to Caroline.

During the meeting, a discussion on PRTC benefits and responsibilities was had with the supervisors by VRE Chief Executive Officer Doug Allen and PRTC Executive Director Al Harf.

The two representatives attended the meeting due to the PRTC

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## Marines prepare for a new mission at Fort A.P. Hill

By Bob McElroy  
USAG Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs

FORT A.P. HILL, Va. – Marines from I Company, 3rd Battalion 8th Marines, Camp Lejeune, N.C. conducted an exercise here Nov. 17-22 that tested their ability to perform a new mission that requires discipline, area familiarization and quick response.

Dubbed "the new normal," the mission breaks from past doctrine that stationed Marines only at permanent bases and on ships and focused

on combat operations.

Under "the new normal," select Marine infantry units will be deployed overseas to respond to trouble spots in a geographic area. If an American embassy in their area is threatened, the Marines could deploy to protect it or evacuate American citizens if the ambassador deems the situation too dangerous.

Capt. Brian Hronchek, an operations officer with 8th Marine Regiment Headquarters, said the exercise was designed to help Marines tran-

sition from fighting wars to being a force in readiness, able to respond quickly if a situation develops in another country that threatens American lives.

"Basically we're adjusting our readiness and focus to new areas, adjusting the organization a little bit and now we're training to that new standard," said Hronchek.

"Everyone has been focused on combat operations, and now we have to change the whole mentality

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These Marines from Camp Lejeune, N.C. recently trained at Fort A.P. Hill to be deployed to trouble spots around the world.

## The Songs and Sounds of Christmas!



Photos by Dawn Hawn

Local churches and organizations are celebrating the Christmas season. Above photo left: Nathan Pitts, Logan Chinault and Riley Beale use signing and singing at the performance at the Salem Baptist Kid's Choir Christmas Program last Sunday. Right photo: Madison Hall (in red dress) and Danielle Drumm (green shirt) sign and sing "Go Tell it on the Mountain." See page 6 & 7 for local seasonal events.



## Oil company president says environment is No. 1 concern during drilling

By Eric Miller Editor

Oil is definitely in Caroline County, and a Texas oil company president says the environment will be his No. 1 concern during drilling.

Stan Sherrill, president of Shore Exploration and Production Company, said his company found evidence of oil from test drill sites on property along U.S. 301 near the Luck Stone quarry. If all goes well, Shore Exploration could be operating productive oil wells in 2015.

But all may not go well. Two conservation groups, Friends of Rappahannock and Caroline County Countryside Alliance, have scheduled a meeting at the Bowling Green Town

Hall for 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 11. Another meeting is set for 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 12 in the General District Courtroom in Montross.

Sherrill is aware that opposition to oil drilling in Caroline may be forming, he said in an interview.

However, the environment will be his No. 1 concern when drilling for oil, he said.

A news release from the two groups says, "Leases for gas and oil drilling in Caroline County cover over 40,733 acres, nearly half of the total of 84,390 acres leased in the region since 2010, according to a search of county courthouse records this summer, said FOR Executive Director John Tippet." Tippet, in the FOR news release,

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# Police arrest CHS student for allegedly hitting teacher



The Caroline County Sheriff's Office charged a 16-year-old Caroline High

School student with assault and battery of a teacher on Nov. 21.

The juvenile was also charged with disorderly conduct.

The Sheriff's Office also made the following arrests for the week ending Nov. 23:

◦ Jeremy R. Toney, 21,

of Ruther Glen, and charged with driving under the influence.

◦ David W. Swisher, 29, of Ruther Glen, drunk in public.

◦ Lisa M. Swisher, 27, of Milford, driving under the influence of drugs and improper left turn.

◦ Ashley M. Call, 26, and

Mitchell J. McKinney, 24, both of Ruther Glen, grand larceny, larceny with intent to sell, and conspiracy.

◦ Brandon M. Minns, 20, of Bowling Green, indecent exposure.

According to Sheriff Tony Lippa, Caroline deputies made one drug arrest,

two DUI arrests, two domestic violence arrests, 46 other criminal arrests and issued 16 animal control summons or arrests during the past week. The deputies served 367 civil papers, issued 190 traffic summonses, handled 26 motor vehicle crashes, responded to 42 alarm calls,

and dealt with five juvenile offenders.

The CCSO Communications Center dispatched 546 calls for service and handled 1,459 telephone inquiries. The CCSO also logged 31 calls assisting outside agencies and had 548 self-initiated calls.

## Molestation from page A1

by everything—John's cologne, the new-car smell of a nice sports car and his true gentleman behavior. But it was a little strange that he kept asking questions about her daughters—their ages, whether they played video games and how often their real dad saw them.

One night, John invited Mary over to his house for supper. He cooked salmon and they had a romantic candlelight meal together in his beautiful well-furnished house overlooking a lake. She soon discovered they liked the same kind of wine. He put on some '80s music and they danced for an hour. It was a blissful evening and they spent the night together. The next morning, he invited her and her daughters to move in with him.

During breakfast, he explained that her daughters would be in a gated community with girls and boys from upscale families. They could transfer to a better school. He would teach them to water-ski and pay for ballet lessons and. Also, Mary could drive his late-model SUV. It all seemed too good to be true.

A week later, Mary and her two daughters, Caitlyn, 11, and Hannah, 8, moved in with John. "This is going to be great," she told her friends. "No more rent. Plus, I've got free babysitting and a nice SUV to drive." Her friends were happy for her.

John worked odd hours and he was sometimes home when the girls got off the school bus. He spent quality time with them. He helped them with their math homework and played video games. He often bought them nice gifts, including a name-brand jacket that Caitlyn had always wanted.

One night, however, when the younger daughter had gone to bed, John drew Caitlyn close to him and put his arm around her as they watched a movie. At first, Caitlyn felt a little uncomfortable. But she looked over and saw the

nice jacket he had bought for her. Plus, she had made an A on the math test (her worst subject) after he had patiently shown her how to work the problems. Mom was so proud. John actually treated her better than any adult had ever treated her, including her mom or dad.

A week later, Mary called and said she wouldn't get home until 8 p.m. No problem, John said. Hannah was at a birthday party. John cooked a nice meal for Caitlyn and helped her with math. As they watched a movie, she snuggled up with John. She was wearing shorts and he gradually placed his hand on her thigh. She didn't tell him to stop.

A few days later while watching a movie, he crossed the line and touched her where he shouldn't. He had calmly and deliberately broken the law. He politely explained that if she told anyone, including her sister, she and her mom and sister would have to move back to the apartment. She agreed not to tell anyone.

Diane Abato, the deputy commonwealth's attorney for Caroline County, said the above fictitious story rings true and is a classic example of how so many single moms get caught in a trap of dating a guy who is dating them mainly because of his interest in having sex with her children.

Child molestation cases have made the headlines in Caroline County in 2013 in this publication and in other newspapers.

Abato issued a warning to single moms who are in the dating scene: Beware of guys who ask questions about your children shortly after you meet. In fact, Abato suggested that single moms avoid talking about their children when they first meet a guy, just in case he is among the small percentage of guys seeking sex with children.

Once a guy with an interest in sex with children develops a relationship with a single mom, he

"gets close to the child and does grooming," Abato said. "Grooming is where the adult abuser is getting behind those boundaries and starts by touching the child on the back. Next time, it's on the hand or leg. The abuser is getting closer to private areas. If the abuser started with a private area, it might get a different reaction from the child."

During grooming, the child might think, "I don't feel right about this, but I trust this person and I like them. A lot of times, it starts with the abuser giving gifts. It might be a single parent and the friend or relative of the parent who spends time alone with the child. The abuser plays video games with the child and it's a lot of fun for the child to be with this adult. A single mom might be gone a lot and work a lot."

"In my experience, it's pretty much always the case of someone the child knows—maybe the mom's boyfriend or a teacher or a coach," Abato said. "There is not a bar where the abuser can go to meet kids. These guys will often meet them in other ways." Preachers, priests and coaches have been known to pursue children in this way, she said.

"Some folks have very specific ages that they like," Abato said. "It sort of depends on the predator and what they are looking for. Maybe this guy likes 13-year-old girls or that age range."

"An adult male might go after a 15-year-old girl," Abato said. "If you have sex with someone under 13, it's forcible rape. With ages 13 to 15, that's statutory rape. With ages 16 to 17, that is contributing to delinquency of a minor. But if it involves a teacher or supervisor, that is indecent liberties by someone in custodial relationship."

Abato is quick to point out that it's not just men who molest children. She has prosecuted women—some who had molested boys and some who had molested girls.

And molesters don't always molest children, she noted. "Some victims were on oxygen. Some victims were in nursing homes. The oldest was 84."

One of the problems with child victims, however, is that they often delay in reporting what is happening to them. Some wait years, even 25 years, before reporting the crime.

"You can ask someone on the street what they think about child abuse and they will say it's terrible, horrible," Abato said. "But what I've found with juries is that people don't want to believe this happens in their community. They understand it happens in California, but they don't want to believe it happens in their neighbor's homes. I find that people don't like to believe kids, especially juries" when it comes to child molestation cases.

Even a single mom might have trouble believing her own daughter when she comes to her and says her mom's boyfriend is touching the girl inappropriately. "I've had women say to me: I know he didn't have sex with my daughter. He has sex with me and therefore he must be normal."

These days, "people decide to live together after knowing each other a short time," Abato said. "A dude wants to live with you because he doesn't have a job. You tell your friends: He watches my kids for me. She is working two jobs and he starts acting like he's a dad and your children listen to him."

All parents of underage children should keep the lines of communication open, Abato said. "Teach your children at a very young age. Teach them what is good touch and what is bad touch and say, 'If someone touches you in this way, you must tell me.'"

Finally, "you don't start out introducing a strange guy to your kids, and you don't move in with this guy until you know him well," Abato said.



## Marines from page A1

and turn over to a more of a peacetime and security mission," he said. "The purpose of this exercise is to help everyone change that thinking."

Hroncek said one of the key differences between combat and the new normal are the rules of engagement. Marines protecting an embassy must exercise greater restraint when attacked and may not be able to shoot back when someone shoots at them.

"Combat rules of engagement allow for more of an ability to protect yourself; in this type of situation you may not be able to shoot back," he said.

Hroncek said the Marines under fire will have to take cover and not shoot, a challenge to a force trained to return fire when fired upon.

"They may have to stand fast and hold their cover... allow it to happen just so they don't cause an international incident. It's a very different way of thinking, a different mission with different boundaries and different controls."

During their training exercise, more than 100 Marines and local security guards protected the embassy compound while about 70 local national role players shouted threats and entreaties from the other side of the fence.

The role players were born and raised in the area in which the Marines will operate. They speak the language,

know the culture and can offer valuable insights to the Marines.

Capt. Jim Oliveto, the commander of I Company, 3rd Battalion 8th Marines, said he and his Marines deployed to A.P. Hill on Sunday Nov. 17; they were followed by a platoon of Marines from K Company to reinforce their numbers.

The exercise scenario called for the situation to escalate quickly and become hostile. Given the threat to the Americans in the embassy, the ambassador decided to begin the noncombatant evacuation.

The Marines rounded up the noncombatants and moved them securely to landing zones to await evacuation by V-22 Ospreys flown by pilots from VMM 162 and 264 based in New River Marine Corps Air Station, N.C.

Oliveto said the last evacuees departed Friday morning Nov. 22. All that remained was to redeploy his company. As his Marines waited by the landing zone, Oliveto said he was very pleased with the training exercise.

"It was fantastic training and the facilities here are outstanding," he said.

"This is the first time an infantry company has done this, prepositioning small Marine units around the world to respond," Oliveto said. "This is the wave of the future for the Marine Corps."

## PRTC from page A1

board's knowledge of Caroline's previous interest in exploring a possible membership with the PRTC.

Current members of the PRTC include the counties of Prince William, Stafford and Spotsylvania and the cities of Manassas, Manassas Park and Fredericksburg. Spotsylvania was the last locality to join. Manassas Park is probably the smallest location, according to Allen.

Supervisors had considered joining the PRTC in 2005. Then, it would have cost the county about \$49,000 to join the commission. Now, the cost could be as high as \$65,000.

If Caroline did join, the county would be looking at making one yearly payment of \$107,000 to \$150,000 to the Virginia Railway Express, a 90-mile service that has a Fredericksburg line and a Manassas line to Union Station in Washington, D.C.

Sili said he was curious as to what percentage of the cost Spotsylvania was picking up. Harf replied that the Spotsylvania is paying for the cost of the station and parking lot. Harf went on to say that the cost of track work is financed by a combination of state and federal funding.

Allen spoke with the supervisors about the \$30 million rail project from Spotsylvania to Washington, D.C. Spotsylvania is responsible for the system cost, including rail car, track, and infrastructure, according to Allen. The share is determined by how many riders will be from Caroline.

Caroline currently has 86 residents who commute to jobs via the VRE. That could work out to \$1,700 a year for each rider. Caroline also has nine van pools and seven car pools that travel to the D.C. area daily.

"We're not here on a sales mission," Harf said. "The county has to decide if it is in its own best interest."

In May, supervisors voted 5-1 to direct the county staff to study the possibility of Caroline County joining the PRTC. Supervisor Jeff Sili voted against the motion.

The fuel tax "can be used for any qualifying purpose, for a variety of transportation purposes that are meaningful to the county," Harf said.

The city of Fredericksburg uses fuel tax revenue for transportation issues, such as traffic lights, secondary roads, road repairs, and the Fredericksburg bus service.

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