Town News

Snowstorm wreaks havoc

BY SCOTT E. KINNEY
ATLANTIC NEWS STAFF WRITER

HAMPTON | Blizzard conditions created a traffic nightmare for drivers on Friday afternoon.

At 12:49 p.m. in the area of 413 High Street a 1990 Mercury driven by Brandon McNaughton, of Hampton, slid off the road and collided with a tree.

McNaughton, of Hampton, according to Gov. John Lynch, was the passenger in the vehicle, sustained what police described as serious back injuries. Both McNaughton and the girl were transported to Exeter Hospital, McNaughton having sustained minor injuries.

Heavy snow fall created a busy day for Hampton police, according to Capt. Jamie Sullivan.

Police responded to roughly 160 calls for service during the course of the day, many of them storm related. Among them were 12 to 15 calls for motorist assistance from 3:53 p.m., during the heaviest snowfall.

No other injuries were reported.

Reduce heating costs in NH

SPECIAL TO THE ATLANTIC NEWS

BY LIZ PREMO
ATLANTIC NEWS STAFF WRITER

HAMPTON | Developed by the Office of Energy and Planning, the online site includes practical information on how New Hampshire families can find important insight on reducing energy costs, heating safety, and on obtaining heating assistance. At www.staywarmnh.org, according to Gov. John Lynch.

“Dramatic fuel cost increases are making it harder for New Hampshire’s families to afford to heat their homes. My goal is to ensure that all New Hampshire families have a safe and warm winter,” Gov. Lynch said. “This Web site is designed to help provide New Hampshire families with easily accessible, practical information on how they can conserve energy and receive help if they need it.”

Developed by the Office of Energy and Planning, the online site includes practical steps that families and businesses can take to reduce their heating and energy costs.

For example, plugging air leaks with caulking, sealing or weather stripping can help families save 10 percent of their heating and energy costs.

Also, reducing heating costs can be improved with a tree.

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Brown named DES at USMA

BY LIZ PREMO
ATLANTIC NEWS STAFF WRITER

HAMPTON | Lt. Col. Bob C. Brown (pictured), formerly of Hampton, has been promoted to the position of Director of Emergency Services for the US Military Academy at West Point.

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SANTA FROM 1C

Ilynn Morehead, Brentwood librarian, said Gibson’s beard gets a reaction from the kids when they tug on it and discover it’s real. “I really think it takes them aback because a lot of them have become a little bit jaded about Santa,” she said. “He brings the magic back... I think he loves it and it shows.”

Last fall, the Brentwood Friends of the Library presented Gibson with a new red suit. “It’s just something they wanted to do for him because he’s been so good to us,” Morehead said, adding that every year, Gibson also donates an 1850s-style Nantucket basket that he weaves himself for the library’s fundraising raffle.

People who see Gibson in action as Santa notice the time he spends with each child. He talks gently and patiently, never forcing himself on children who are afraid. He focuses intently on the child sitting with him at the moment, and sits for digital photo after photo, until the parent is happy with the results.

“I don’t do that ‘ho, ho, ho’ stuff,” he said. “I like to talk to the kids.”

He is also exceptionally careful about his entrances and exits, often staying beyond the time he needs to, because he doesn’t want any child to be disappointed upon seeing Santa getting in or out of a car instead of a sleigh.

Why does he do it? Why spend many hours every year playing St. Nick, sometimes in two locations on the same day, sometimes in hot, cramped quarters? Gibson says he worries that political correctness run amok may someday cause all town-sanctioned signs of the season to vanish, explains: “I’m just giving back... I’m only going down this road once, and I’ve got 60 seconds to live. I’ve never seen yesterday and I’ve never seen tomorrow.”

Gibson seems to truly enjoy spending time with the children, who he said are “honest” and cause him sometimes “to bite [his] tongue to keep from laughing,” and at other times, “to keep from crying.”

Some of the children, he said, do not request toys, only that their parents be healthy or, in the case of one young girl, that her father, a logger, receive a bigger truck because his current one was too small and, Gibson said, “he couldn’t make enough money for food.” The same girl turned back to Gibson after leaving his knee, letting him know that, “if you need firewood, we deliver.”

Gibson laughs frequently when relating Santa stories and seems genuinely touched by the experiences he has had. He is mindful of the children’s feelings and said no matter what the request, “I never promise. I tell them, ‘I’ll put that on the list.’”

And in answer to the many children who he says ask him, “Are you the real Santa?”, Gibson said, “I never say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ I always say, ‘What do you think?’” Watching Gibson walk away in the fading light, his Stetson silhouetted against the winter sky, “honest” and cause him enjoy spending time with the children, who he said are “honest” and cause him sometimes “to bite [his] tongue to keep from laughing,” and at other times, “to keep from crying.”

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