

**GET ROCKED**

Def Leppard with Heart. The veteran rockers will take the stage at 7:30 tonight at Farm Bureau Live. Tickets start at \$24. (800) 745-3000, www.ticketmaster.com.

**Hampton JAZZ IT UP**

Hampton Jazz Festival headliners include Maze featuring Frankie Beverly and others. Today's show is sold out. 2 p.m. Sunday at Hampton Coliseum. \$55.50. (800) 745-3000, www.ticketmaster.com.

# hampton roads

*Saturday*

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT | PILOTONLINE.COM | 06.25.11

## IN DEFENSE OF CAR CRASH



Richard Freeman, 26, is charged in the deaths of two people and injury of one.

Hansen  
ian-Pilot

rd Freeman had a few  
:a Ghent bar one night,  
a jury Friday, but he  
r and better than the  
four strangers laugh-  
stumbling outside the  
osing time.

an wanted to make  
y got home safely, he  
, and he offered them  
at instead ended in a  
adly crash in the early  
of July 25, 2009.

i-year-old Navy sailor  
stand in his own de-  
the fourth day of trial  
y. Freeman is charged  
counts of aggravated  
ary manslaughter and

L, PAGE 2

## Teenagers seriously injured in crash remain hospitalized

### Driver, 18, faces charges for drunken driving and illegal possession of alcohol

By Kathy Adams  
*The Virginian-Pilot*

**VIRGINIA BEACH**

It was a night meant for celebrating. Carter Womick, 18, had just graduated from Salem High School and was bound for Tidewater Community College. Meaghan Gerety, who turns 16 on Monday, had just finished her sophomore year at Salem and was ready for a beach-filled summer.

Instead, they wound up in a hospital, where they've both remained since the early-morning crash that nearly claimed their lives more than a week ago.

Meaghan, a spirited girl with san-



COURTESY OF SEAN GERETY

dy blonde hair and gray-green eyes, told her parents she was going somewhere else the night of June 15, according to a blog created by her father after the crash. But she ended up at Womick's Salem Woods home, hanging out with a small group of friends,

See CRASH, PAGE 3

Meaghan Gerety, the passenger, turns 16 on Monday and had just finished her sophomore year at Salem High School.

By Scott He

**NORFOLK**

**P**LASTI  
Plastic  
streets  
Plastic ba  
Plastic ba  
and chokin

In a wor  
es, the ubi  
come a mo  
chemical  
Just ask ar  
school in o  
up poop w

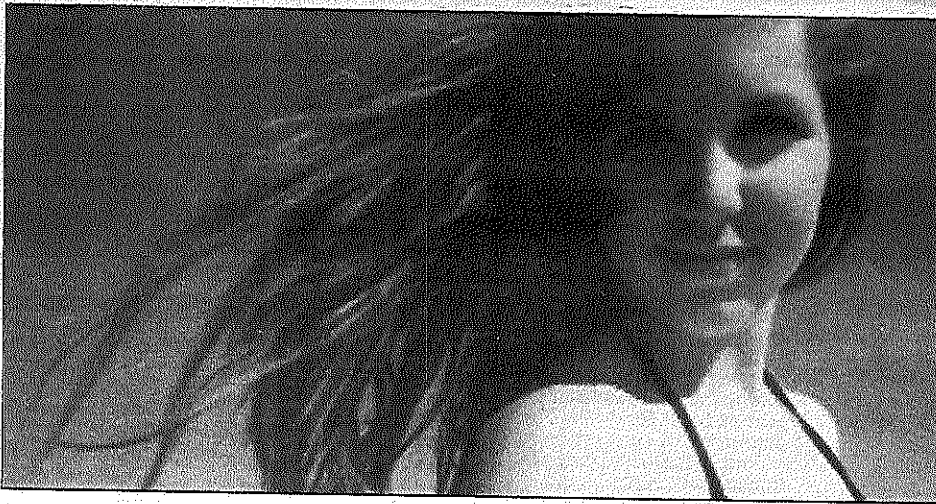
The U.S  
Agency es  
of plastic  
sacks and  
2009. But  
cycled - at

The res  
or tossed  
of plastic.

Hoping  
numbers  
leaders hav  
tic Bag Fox  
ton Roads,  
ed in part l

See PLAST.

# EARLY-MORNING TRIP



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEAN GERETY

“The littlest things right now seem gigantic. And I suppose they are.” *Sean Gerety, Meaghan's father, in a blog entry*

*Continued from Page 1*

said Carter Womick's father, David Womick.

The two teens left shortly before 4 a.m. Police said Carter Womick lost control of the car, slamming into a tree on his street, less than a mile from Meaghan's house.

Meaghan was wearing her seat belt but ended up with a fractured skull and severe trauma to the right side of her brain, according to the blog, called “Hope for Meaghan.”

Womick wasn't restrained and ended up with six broken ribs and a punctured lung, his father said. He's also been charged with drunken driving and illegal possession of alcohol.

David Womick said alcohol wasn't provided to the teens at his home, but he wasn't sure whether his son had consumed alcohol elsewhere.

Carter Womick also faced a previous charge of unlawful purchase or possession of alcohol, according to General District Court records online. The charge was filed April 20, and a deferred disposition was entered June 7, according to court records. A deferred disposition typically means a judge agrees to dismiss a charge after a period of time if a defendant abides by certain conditions, such as maintaining good behavior and attending counseling.

Carter Womick is scheduled to appear in court on that charge next summer.

The crash came two weeks



Meaghan Gerety was wearing her seat belt but ended up with a fractured skull and severe trauma to the right side of her brain, according to a blog called “Hope for Meaghan,” created by her father, Sean Gerety.

before underage drivers convicted of consuming alcohol before getting behind the wheel start facing harsher penalties. Virginia law currently allows a judge to levy a \$500 fine and suspend an underage driver's license for six months. As of July 1, a new law makes the offense a Class 1 misdemeanor punishable by a mandatory minimum fine of \$500 or 50 hours of community service plus a one-year license suspension.

If convicted of DUI in the crash, Carter Womick could also face an additional fine of \$500 to \$1,000 and five days in jail because he was transporting a juvenile younger than 17.

Every day has been a struggle for Meaghan since the crash, her father, Sean Gerety, wrote in his blog. She slips in and out of consciousness and hasn't spoken, he wrote. Nurses also had to cut her long, wavy hair

because it was matted with blood from surgery.

But there have been small victories: She's opened and closed her eyes several times, moved fingers on her right hand, pulled out her feeding tube. On Friday, she grabbed her father's arm and washed her face with a cloth, Gerety wrote.

“The littlest things right now seem gigantic,” Gerety wrote. “And I suppose they are.”

Both teens' parents have asked for prayers. Carter Womick also remained hospitalized Friday.

“We've been praying for Meaghan every day,” David Womick said. “It's a terrible thing.”

For updates on Meaghan's condition, visit her father's blog at <http://meaghangerety.wordpress.com>.

Kathy Adams, (757) 222-5155,  
[kathy.adams@pilotonline.com](mailto:kathy.adams@pilotonline.com)