

Happy  Holiday!

Be sure to see children's letters to Santa on Pages 7-11 A!

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'A Day with Santa' delights many local youngsters



Dante Jones of Edenton tries to answer that question Santa asks every season, "What do you want for Christmas?" during Operation Santa Claus at D.F. Walker Elementary School on Saturday. (Staff photo by Jeb Caudill)

BY JEB CAUDILL
Publisher

Blue bags filled with presents lined the stage at D.F. Walker Elementary School Saturday, and, at center stage, hundreds of toys rested under Christmas tree.

It was all part of this year's Operation Santa Claus, where local citizens and merchants donate presents for Chowan County's needy. The program is run through the Recreation Department and is in its second year, organizer Gwen Brown said.

This year, 182 children applied to receive gifts through Operation Santa Claus. Last year's pro-

gram was a little larger, and donations in 1998 included a lot more clothes, Brown said. But, in the aftermath of this year's hurricanes, Brown understood that many resources went elsewhere.

"Due to the storms and the floods, that made it a little tough on people now," she said.

Close to 30 volunteers turned the cafeteria at D.F. Walker into a holiday playground for the event. There were crafts and refreshments for kids and their parents; and, every kid got a chance to visit with Santa.

Student volunteers came from John A. Holmes

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Shopping season sales are strong in Edenton

With Christmas just a few days away, area residents are scrambling to pick up those last minute gifts in what local merchants are calling one of the best holiday shopping seasons ever.

Grace Swanner of Edenton was among those finishing up her gift buying Tuesday morning. Swanner, who was battling a cold, said she usually tries to get an early start on her Christmas shopping.

She said she has had good luck finding mostly everything on her list locally. "As a rule, it hasn't been bad at all," Swanner said.

Snug Harbor resident Rosemarie Sherrod said she generally does

most of her holiday shopping in Edenton and Elizabeth City, and this year was no exception.

"I try to get started with it early. I start looking for things each September because I've found that you need to do that if you're going to get the best selection," she said.

Sherrod said she has 11 grandchildren, and four grandchildren, "so I have a lot to buy for."

Gail Davenport of Creswell said she does her Christmas shopping "about half and half. I do about 50% of it in Edenton and the rest elsewhere." She said that with children and grandchildren to buy for, she had found the selection good

when buying for those on her gift list.

That same enthusiasm was echoed by local merchants Tuesday. Peebles Manager Tracie Adams said this was "the best year we've ever had. We've gotten more local support from shoppers this year than ever before. I'm just thrilled."

Adams said that Christmas decoration items have sold really well this year, as have clothing items such as velvet sequined sweaters and other fancy dress items. "Probably there are a lot of people planning to attend New Year's parties

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Shoppers look at holiday merchandise at Peebles as they finish up their Christmas shopping

School officials discuss Walker suspensions, new programs

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

Concerned that parents attending recent school forums may have come away with a misleading impression of the learning situation that exists at D.F. Walker Elementary School, school officials say they want to set the record straight.

"Obviously, any discipline referral is one too many, and we have to continuously work to address disci-

pline problems at all our schools," said Dr. Allan Smith, superintendent of the Edenton-Chowan Schools. "However, the numbers given during the forums were somewhat misleading. In fact, about 90 percent of the students at Walker School have never been referred for disciplinary action."

"The fact is, the vast majority of students who attend Walker School are good, conscientious students. We think it is important for people

to know that at Walker, as at our other schools, teachers are able to teach and children are able to learn."

Information provided by Michelle Alexander, school-public relations coordinator for the school system, shows that during the 1998-1999 school year, a total of 631 students attended Walker School. Of those, two were suspended for fighting, while 18 students were suspended for other types of ag-

gressive behavior. One student was suspended for possession of a weapon on school property, and two for stealing.

Alexander said that the record clearly shows that "89% of the students at D.F. Walker have not been involved in disciplinary situations that resulted in suspension, and only .04% of the students at that school were involved in disciplinary action resulting from fighting or aggressive behavior."

Figures provided by Alexander detailing suspension incidents during the period from Aug. 5, 1999 through Nov. 16, 1999 indicate that of a total student population of 595 students, there were seven suspensions for aggressive behavior and one for employee assault resulting in no injuries.

"During that period of time," Alexander said, "only .03% of students were involved in situations that resulted in disciplinary ac-

tion resulting from aggressive behavior. The figures clearly show that 99.97% of Walker students have not been involved this school year in incidents involving disciplinary infractions that resulted in suspension."

During the 1998-1999 school year, information released by the school system indicates there were 558 students attending White Oak El-

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Coat drive is held



Chowan Department of Social Services staffers Mona Griffin, Valerie Patrick and Melissa Perry show some of the winter coats collected for area flood victims. More than 100 coats were donated to the project, which was sponsored by NC Social Services Association. (Staff photo by Rebecca Bunch)

County starts process of records' restoration

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

Some of Chowan County's most important documents are a little safer today, thanks to Register of Deeds Sue Rountree and the Chowan County Commissioners.

Rountree said Monday that documents her office oversees, including handwritten deeds and maps, prepared on acid-based paper, were becoming increasingly fragile and worn - both because of the type of paper on which they were prepared and the large amount of handling they received. Her office is a popular research site for area genealogists and history buffs alike.

But those documents, including land transfers dating from the late 1600s to about 1878, have now been submitted to a process that dea-



Register of Deeds Sue Rountree

cidifies the paper on which they are prepared - thereby preserving

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Holiday closing

The Chowan Herald will be closed all day Thursday, Dec. 23, and Friday, Dec. 24 to allow employees to spend time with their families during Christmas.

The office will resume regular business hours on Monday, Dec. 27.

Items for the Herald's New Year's edition may be dropped in the mail slot in the office door closest to Waterman's Restaurant or brought to the newspaper prior to noon Monday.

The newspaper will be closed on the afternoon of Dec. 31 and all day on Friday, Jan. 7, in observance of the New Year's holiday. Please plan to submit items accordingly.

Merry Christmas!



Special Music
Observance of
The Lord's Supper

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Edenton Baptist Church • 7 o'clock p.m.

Nursery
Services
To Be
Provided

