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Phyllis Britton

Britton to fill vacant seat

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Phyllis Britton's return to service with the Town of Edenton is more groundbreaking than it may at first appear.

The Paradise Road woman isn't just replacing former Ward 3 Councilman Jerald Perry, she's also become the first female African-American to join the town board. She was appointed by council during its Feb. 8 meeting.

"Welcome aboard," Mayor Roland Vaughan told Britton after her unanimous appointment.

"I think it's a great honor to be appointed (to Perry's former Ward 3 post) by the council," she said Tuesday.

Britton was sworn in by Chowan County Clerk of Superior Court Mike McArthur.

"It's an honor for me to do this," McArthur said. "I've known Phyllis for 30 years."

During a recent interview with *The Chowan Herald*, Britton said she's certainly a neophyte in the political arena, but is looking forward to the challenges ahead.

"I need to get in there and really find out some things before I go in (to issues) gung-ho," she said.

She was openly endorsed by Perry, who stepped down after moving out of his ward.

"Jerald and I grew up together," Britton said of Perry, who had represented the district for 15 years. "We've just known each other forever ... He knows I'm interested in the well-being of Edenton."

Britton also is familiar with fellow councilors Jerry Parks, Steve Biggs, Sambo Dixon, and Willis Privott. And she knows Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton and Vaughan.

"I'm a people-person," Brit-

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Council agrees to rezone Whitemon Lane

Land was site of Wal-Mart controversy

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

The Edenton Town Council has approved an Elizabeth City man's request to rezone his undeveloped property, the same tract that sparked controversy over "big-box" retailer Wal-Mart nearly seven years ago.

By a 5-1 vote on Feb. 8, council approved zoning the Whitemon Lane property

owned by Dr. Lloyd Griffin II from highway commercial to shopping center designation. Councilman Sambo Dixon voted against the request.

Council debated how to gauge, or the futility of predicting, any harm to the town and potential success of Griffin's plans for developing the 60-acre site.

Dixon and Mayor Roland Vaughan indicated that allowing large-scale commercial development at the site—located just south of Hampton Inn off of N.C. Highway 32—may not have been in the right interest of residents in the area. Vaughan noted that the town has three shopping centers, one of which is closed, with the other two scrambling to keep

their current tenants under lease.

"It doesn't lead me to believe there is a great demand for another shopping center," Vaughan said during the hour-long discussion on Griffin's rezoning request.

"I think we can look at our general stock of what we have and what we need," to determine if more retail businesses are needed, Dixon said.

Councilman Jerry Parks said the board shouldn't undertake the task of determining what types of businesses are needed, and which will succeed or fail.

"That is for the developer to decide," said Parks, adding that he has seen projects approved "that I knew wouldn't

happen, and they didn't."

Edward Brooks, a consultant working with Griffin, told council that 14 acres of the property was zoned for residential use, with the remaining 46 zoned highway commercial.

"I personally don't see the need for the R-20 (residential) piece to be changed," Vaughan said.

The shopping center zoning will allow the development to proceed quicker, Brooks said, and cheaper. The highway commercial zoning would require projects to be done in separate chunks with a size restriction of less than 80,000 square foot per business. The shopping center zoning allows for much larger businesses.

"We don't want to develop it piecemeal," Brooks said. "It's not economically sound (to do that) ... It doesn't make sense."

And the developers have a broad plan in mind. "We are attempting to build a shopping center," Brooks told council. And a national-chain supermarket would be a part of that development, he added.

To do that, Brooks said, Griffin would need to conduct a "land-swap" with the property owner who owns a tract that borders N.C. 32. That deal would allow traffic to flow onto the highway from the shopping center, and not onto Whitemon Lane.

That land owner has indi-

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Local soldier seeks help for refugee children

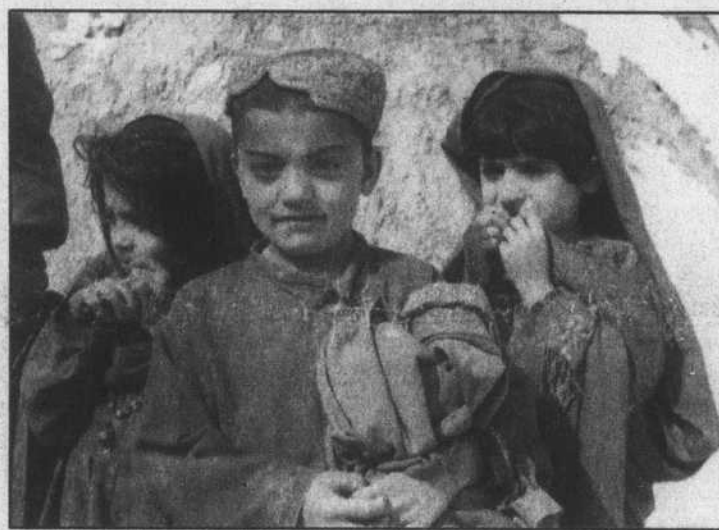
BY REBECCA BUNCH
The Chowan Herald

Lisa Brown of Tyner is a woman with a mission - to make her son's dream come true.

SFC Jeremy Brown is among the Americans serving in Afghanistan. And while a Feb. 3 e-mail from her son said his Army Special Forces Unit continues "doing great things for the cause of freedom," Jeremy Brown also shared with his mom another mission for the greater good that he'd like to accomplish.

"About 1/2 mile from the entrance to our camp," he wrote, "there is a refugee camp. We pass this camp every time we leave the base. When we leave all the children run out to wave, give us thumbs up, and hope for candy or something from us...Most times we don't have anything to give them other than smiles and a friendly wave."

"My friend, J.D., and I have come up with an idea. We want to go into the camp on Sundays (because) there is only a Catholic priest on the Base (he is French!), so in lieu of a service, we hope to go and play with the children or talk with them



These Afghan children live in a refugee camp near where American soldiers are based. One of those soldiers, SFC Jeremy Brown, is asking for your help for the children.

or maybe even read stories through our interpreter. We are hoping to spread goodwill and hope to these kids and show them that we are here to help them and their country. We could use some help though."

Brown's e-mail went on to tell his mom how he hopes that help can be provided for the approximately 100 children, whose ages range from two to 10.

"What we are hoping that we can do," he said, "is get our friends and families and churches to send us stuff for these children. We don't need

money...Here are some things that we could use to help these children: Socks and/or shoes, even flip-flops would be good (because) most have nothing; Balls (soccer, softballs, kickballs, anything that can be played with); candy."

Brown's mom also said he hoped people would send the following items of a non-religious nature, since Islam, not Christianity, is the major religion in Afghanistan: children's books that the soldiers

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Board green lights systemwide calendar for next school year

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education has unanimously approved a new school calendar for the 2005-2006 school year, which dictates that teacher workdays are reduced by five days and that schools open no sooner than August 25 and close no later than June 10. The calendar puts the local school system in compliance with new terms set out in House Bill 1464 which was passed by the NC General Assembly in 2003.

The measure was pushed through the state by the Tourism committee that had hoped to extend the summer vacation in order for the young work force to support NC tourism. The NCAE switched its former position and supported the passage of the bill. Though the new law takes away individual county flexibility, its requirements had to be met.

Therefore, the 12-member calendar committee made up of one administrator, one classroom teacher and one parent from each of the four schools, had to formulate a calendar of 180 school days within approximately 210 weekdays. The state did however allow school systems to apply for waivers in order to forego the August 25 opening. Submitted on a school-by-school basis, only John A. Holmes received the waiver. Because of the extra money and stress involved for parents and children if the school openings did not coincide, the calendar committee opted not to use the waiver. Edenton-Chowan schools district-wide will open August 25.

Several changes are apparent in the new calendar: Five of the 2005-2006 calendar school days are protected teacher workdays, dictated by the state to come at the end of the academic quarters. Yet, in total, teacher workdays were reduced by five. K-5 teachers had a problem with the reduction and asked the calendar committee to consider early release days once a week. Though the instructional hours would be met if the early re-



Dr. Allan Smith

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Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King's visit to Edenton

Commissioners briefed on fiscal impact of revamping policy

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

A completely revamped personnel policy for the employees of Chowan County was presented at the Chowan County Commissioner's meeting Thursday, February 10. Ben Rose, director of the Department of Social Services presented the policy that has been in the makings for over two years. The staff committee, in developing this new policy, focused on Federal policies that will address the growing needs of county employment. Among the newest ele-



Allysa Miller, bronze medal winner at 4-H state competition, gives a presentation.

ments of the policies include training for all department

heads on a regular basis. A retiree medical insurance benefit was also introduced similar to those across the state. It came to the committee's attention that Chowan County was one of the few counties left in the state that did not have such a policy.

Under the Local Government Retirement System, employees that have twenty years of continuous service with the county are eligible to retire with full benefits. Those applicants must retire from Chowan County with the last five years of work performed within the County system,

among other elements. A policy similar to this was introduced by Lisa Jones for the retiring Law Enforcement Officers. After 30 continuous years of service, with five to ten of those years of service prior to retiring, a Law Enforcement Officer 55 years of age with five years service (unless re-employed by the government) may be eligible for a Separation Allowance. Such an allowance will be paid until the age of 62. Sheriff Fred Spruill does not agree with the allowance under which the employee can not come back to work on even a part-time basis. Spruill

shared his concerns with the board that his team would be losing valuable assets by not being able to call on former employees to help out if needed. Wayne Goodwin, chair, assured Spruill that adopting a resolution to accept the policy does not mean that the policy is etched in stone. The commissioners adopted the resolution, promising that Sheriff Spruill's concerns will be heard and perhaps addressed in a future revision.

The fiscal impacts for the entire policy revamp will re-

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