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Joe Albea photo

An F/A 18 Super Hornet veers away from a group of tundra swans on Dec. 7.

Navy, birds battle for turf during flyover

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

The U.S. Navy did little to boost its cause to site a landing field for fighter jets in northeastern North Carolina last week, according to opponents of the project.

During a flyover by an F/A 18 Super Hornet over the proposed outlying landing field site in Washington County on Dec. 7, observers "gasped as a jet banked away from a large flock of birds," the Southern Environmental Law Center said on its Web site.

The flight began shortly after 7:30 a.m. The site has been the focus of a lawsuit between the Navy and Washington and Beaufort counties, in addition to environmental groups also in opposition to the outlying landing field. The 30,000-acre OLF would be located near Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge near Roper. Tundra swans and snow geese are two species of migratory waterfowl that converge on the refuge each year. Opponents have said that, in addition to the loss of precious farmlands, the birds would pose a strike threat to the jets.

Plymouth Mayor Brian Roth said that was evident during the Dec. 7 flight, when jets banked near about a dozen tundra swans.

"The plane was very fortunate not to collide with the flock. That is clearly what we'd call a near miss," Roth said on the SELC's Web site.

SELC attorney Derb Carter also said the birds appeared to pose a threat to the jet last week.

"What was striking to me was the way the birds were diving to avoid the path of the

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Aces' featured athletes

Edenton's Christmas Parade and The Historic Edenton Christmas Candlelight Tour provided ample opportunity to get that Holiday Spirit

HOLIDAY SCENES



Parade marshalls sense of community

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

Over 40 floats paraded down Broad Street in this year's annual Christmas parade held Saturday, December 10. Thousands of anxious families lined the street, from the parade's beginning at Golden Coral all the way to the bay. Hands warmed by mittens were waved in the air at those whom they knew and shouts for happy holidays filled the air.

Northeastern High School and John A. Holmes Marching Aces rang in the season with joyous favorites as the miniature and classic cars, horses, clubs and churches shared their wishes for a Merry Christmas.

"This is my first Christmas parade here," said Bob Batson of Georgia whose son had purchased a home in the mill village. "But from what I know of this town already, I know that the sense of community will be my favorite part of the parade. This is a great town and the feeling



Staff photo by Earline White

Santa (top) makes another appearance in Edenton during the parade. (above) Ryan and Nicholas Nazari of New Orleans sit atop their family auto to take in the spectacle.

of togetherness is the one thing I'm sure will stick in my mind."

Winners in the 2005 "Twelve Days of Christmas" parade were: 3rd place Arrowhead Beach

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Candlelight Tour 'exceeds expectations'

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Mark Reeves stood between a stairwell and a doorway and greeted the throngs of visitors traipsing through his home on Saturday night.

"You have to see grandma," Reeves urged his visitors on the second night of Edenton's annual Christmas Candlelight Tour.

"Grandma," as it turns out, was a dolled-up mannequin relaxing in a faux bubble-bath in an upstairs bathroom decorated for the holiday tour. Reeves and his wife Dale Griffith were among the 14 hosts opening their homes to tour-goers on Friday and Saturday nights. A bevy of churches and historical public buildings also joined in on the tour that drew roughly 1,200 visitors.

Visitors said the stops — largely grouped in the Mill Village — offered a unique view at holiday decorating styles.

"Oh, it's wonderful," Betsy Bixler of Colerain said of the tour. "The condos were great fun."

Indeed, crowds surged into the Edenton Cotton Mill condominiums shortly after nightfall Saturday. After strolling past a 16-foot yuletide tree just inside the entrance, visitors were allowed



Staff photo by Sean Jackson

Ismelda in the tub was a surprise for everyone touring the home of Dale Griffith and Mark Reeves in the Mill District.

extended peeps inside the newly opened units. "It's just turned out better than anybody could have imagined," Gina Rascoe, the condos' site decorator said of the project. "People absolutely can't believe how wonderful the architecture is and how creative it is."

Bixler raved about the Elliott Street home of Mary Scott Perry, another first-time host on the tour.

"Her house is very eclectic," Bixler said, receiving agreement from husband Warren.

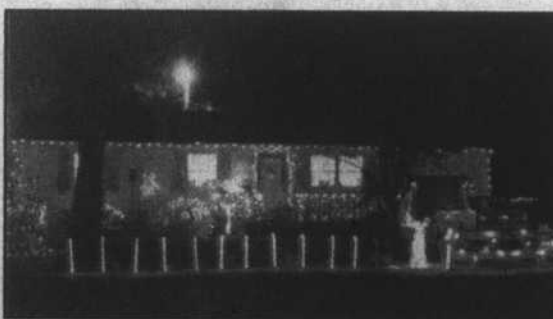
Perry said the varied adornments were planned to illustrate her own personality

"It's been a rewarding experience," Perry said. "It's been a joy."

Deck the halls, and the outdoors

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

Two hundred strands of lights, stapled, taped and coerced into their places on the roof, the windows, the porch railings, the outhouse and even the car and the tractor. Decorating enthusiasts would be proud of the light entrepreneurs who have surfaced in Chowan over the past few years with their lighted palm trees, twinkling multi-colored icicles and plastic reindeer. And for those of us who have not the patience nor time that is needed for such a festive endeavor, we thank you for providing the canvas of our cheap and popular Christmas excursions—packing the family in the car and driving around the neighborhood looking at those creative decorations.



Staff photo by Earline White

This home on the corner of Paxton Ln. and Old Hertford Rd. definitely rises up the spirit.

Few are left without some twinkle this season. And many of those still share a glimmer of the holidays by placing their tree in front of a window for passersby to see. But it is still those with lights blaring so brazenly that cause cars to slow down as they drive by, sometimes turn around and take it in from another angle.

One such sight is on Icaria Road. Douglas Hollowell has been decorating since Thanksgiving and is so happy that it's all over, unless there's a burnout,

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• More photos of Tour and Parade can be found on page C-1



Susan Sterner photo

First Lady Laura Bush announces the newest additions to the "Preserve America" program, including Edenton.

Town of Edenton designated 'Preserve America' community

BY REBECCA BUNCH
The Chowan Herald

Local officials expressed great excitement at the news that Edenton has been selected as one of our nation's newest Preserve America communities.

Mayor Roland Vaughan said, "We are, of course, delighted to have been chosen. Edenton's selection will open up opportunities for us to have access to grant money that would not otherwise be available to us." And having Edenton included in such a select group, he said, would also aid efforts to promote the community and to

attract more visitors.

The announcement came from First Lady Laura Bush, who serves as honorary chair of Preserve America.

"Preserve America communities demonstrate that they are committed to preserving America's heritage while ensuring a future filled with opportunities for learning and enjoyment," she said in a prepared statement. "This community designation program, combined with the Preserve America Presidential Awards and Federal support, provides strong

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Officials discuss agency's role with Parton project

County Managers group plan to meet next with the Northeast Partnership's Executive Board

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland met Friday with other area county managers to discuss their concerns about recent developments at the Edenton-based Northeast Partnership.

Copeland said Tuesday that last week's meeting did involve discussion about Rick Watson, president and CEO of the agency. Copeland said the closed-door meeting involved "positive" discussion, but the details of the meeting were not released.

Watson has been the focus of scrutiny from the state officials involving a \$500,000 funding request for a planned theater complex in Roanoke Rapids. The complex is to be built and operated by Randy Parton's Moonlight Bandit Productions company. Parton, brother of famed country singer Dolly Parton, plans to invest \$129 million into the project.

Watson plans to become a manager in the project within 18 months, while keeping his job with the Partnership in the interim. His role in helping secure the \$500,000 in state funding for the project has drawn the attention of state officials and



Rick Watson

lawmakers, who have said it's unclear what entity the funding would be appropriated to.

"What we agreed is simply that we discuss the issues and concerns and set a meeting with the (Partnership's) executive board to discuss those concerns," Copeland said, adding that he planned to make calls Tuesday to set up that meeting.

With the Christmas holiday fast approaching, Copeland could not say if that meeting would be scheduled for later this month or in January.

He did say hopes are to keep the Partnership's role in economic development in the region intact.

"The Partnership has

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