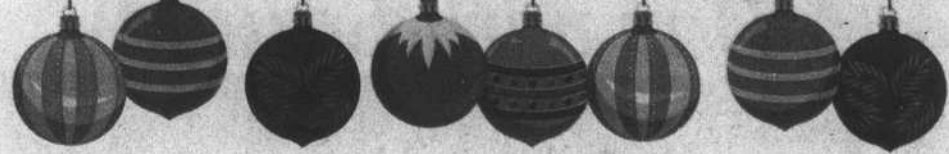


# HAPPY HOLIDAYS



# CHOWAN HERALD

482-4418

Wednesday, December 20, 2006

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### Local youths write Soldiers & Santa

### Local businesses spread Holiday cheer

See *Wishes for the Season* In Section C

## MAKING A Christmas TO REMEMBER

### Mom with terminal cancer creates lasting memories with her children

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

Nichole Hartman's eyes shine as she talks about her love for her children.

They widen as she rattles off their Christmas plans. This week, the Edenton woman and her three children plan to bake cookies, share hugs and kisses, greet friends and family.

There will be mounds of food and perfectly wrapped



Nicholas and Alyssa Hartman

presents. They'll share the joy and promise that real happiness brings.

But they'll also deal with the likelihood that this could be their last Christmas together.

Hartman, 32, is in the final stage of a rare, deadly cancer, synovial sarcoma. She's been told she has about two months to live.

"It's been very emotional," Hartman said of the recent news from Duke University Hospital doctors that her disease is terminal.

"We cry a lot," she said. "We laugh a lot, too," she added.

In a difficult time, Hartman has shined a bright light on the unthinkable.

She's aware of the chance her children could long outlive her.

First diagnosed with cancer in May 2004, she recently suf-



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Nichole Hartman plays with her 3-year-old daughter, Kennedy Belle Francis. Nicole Hartman has videotaped messages to her children for the important occasions in their lives.

ferred a collapsed lung, was told cancer had invaded her liver and lymph nodes, and spent three weeks in hospitals before being sent home with a grim diagnosis.

Her children are Kennedy Belle, 3, Alyssa, 14, and son Nicholas, 12.

"My family is my entire life," Hartman said.

Not everyone in Hartman's circle of friends and family has wanted to accept the truth as it may turn out to be: Her last days could come sooner rather than later.

Friend Kathy Rawls, Hartman said, deals with the issue by going deep-sea fishing on her boat.

Her brother, Reg Williford, is wondering whom he'll turn to during tough times, Hartman said.

"I tell my family we have to be realistic about it," Hartman said. "We have to be real-

istic about what's going to happen."

Then again, Hartman hasn't given up.

People beat cancer. Hartman isn't ruling out the possibility she might also.

"They're going to have to take me out of this world kicking and screaming," she said.

Nicholas Hartman, a seventh-grader at Chowan Middle School, sums up his mother's disease in two words: "Cancer sucks," he said.

But precious time together is what this family is focusing on, Nicole Hartman said.

Despite its ability to cut lives short, cancer hasn't dimmed the shine of life's true joys, she added.

It makes moments more vivid, the daily grind more enduring. A child's frowns or smiles are more important.

"You love a lot harder," Hartman said.

### Season of light

Hartman understands what the Duke hospital oncologists have said. It's an uphill battle. She's scheduled for intensive radiation treatments two days after Christmas and again on Jan. 3.

In the meantime, she's abiding by Nicholas' letter sent to her while she spent two weeks at Duke University Hospital in Durham. If it's the family's last Christmas together, Nicholas wrote, then it will be the best they've ever had together. He also vowed that his mother would always be his best friend.

And that's all any parent wants to hear, Nicole Hartman said.

"As long as my kids feel that way about me," she said, "I can leave this earth peacefully."

Hartman has good days and

### INSIDE

What if this Christmas might be your last with family, friends? **Opinion, A3.**

bad.

"Some days," she said, "I just want to crawl in a hole and never come out of my room."

But she forces herself to get up and be with her children, family and friends.

She's told the oncologists at Duke that she'll do everything she can to beat her cancer.

"I'm going to kick butt," she said.

### Making preparations

Hartman has made videos for her children, for the impor-

See NICHOLE, Page A2 >

### Holiday closing

The Chowan Herald will close Monday for Christmas.

The deadline to place ads or submit news items/photos for next week's newspaper will be 5 p.m. tomorrow.

The newspaper also plans to close Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Day.

### Christmas weather

The forecast for Christmas Day calls for a high of 57 degrees, with a chance of showers.

## Holiday shopping season warming up in Edenton

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Editor

Will Santa arrive wearing flip-flops this year?

People shopping for Christmas gifts in recent days certainly seem to think it could happen.

On Monday, with the temperature a toasty 71 degrees, shoppers said they found it hard to have much Christmas spirit while dressed in short sleeves and sandals.

"You don't want to wake up at Christmastime and its 80 degrees outside," said Anne-Marie Wright of Edenton. "You want to be drinking hot

chocolate with marshmallows, not Coca-Cola with peanuts."

Nevertheless, she and her mom, Marie Doughty, were like other shoppers — mindful that younger family members would be looking for some nice presents under the tree Christmas Day, regardless of the weather.

Doughty, dressed in a short-sleeved shirt and lightweight capri pants, said that even though the weather felt more like summer than winter, kids knew the difference.

"We're planning a big family celebration with lots of presents for the kids," she said.

See SANTA, Page A2 >



Rebecca Bunch/The Chowan Herald

Marie Doughty, left, and her daughter, Anne-Marie Wright, shopped at Byrum Hardware Monday afternoon.

## County-wide zoning goes smoothly so far

BY EARLINE WHITE  
Staff Writer

When county manager Cliff Copeland first proposed zoning he was called, among other things, a communist.

People didn't want the government telling them what they could and couldn't do with their land.

That was the early 80's, before the airport was zoned industrial, and before million-dollar subdivisions were proposed.

Now, two months after county-wide zoning has been put into effect, little opposition has been raised against it.

"There were misconceptions about zoning at first," Copeland said. "People thought that it would be

like the historic district — that the color of the houses would have to be approved.

"Once people understood that they too can have input and control on the many aspects of growth that will be taking place in the future then, I believe, they breathed a sigh of relief."

Several community forums were held in the various townships regarding the proposed zoning.

Hundreds of citizens showed up with questions, but left peacefully with the assurance that their land would not be rezoned, that zoning would in fact protect their land and that around them.

Prior to the zoning, devel-

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### Coming next week

The Chowan Herald's Year in Review for 2006

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH  
101 W. Church St.  
8:00 A.M. & 11:00 A.M.  
Holy Communion

St. Paul's Episcopal Church and St. John's Episcopal Church  
Invite you to their Christmas Eve Services:  
"O COME LET US ADORE HIM, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD"

ST JOHN'S CHURCH  
212 W. Church Street  
11:00 A.M.  
Holy Communion