

CHOWAN HERALD

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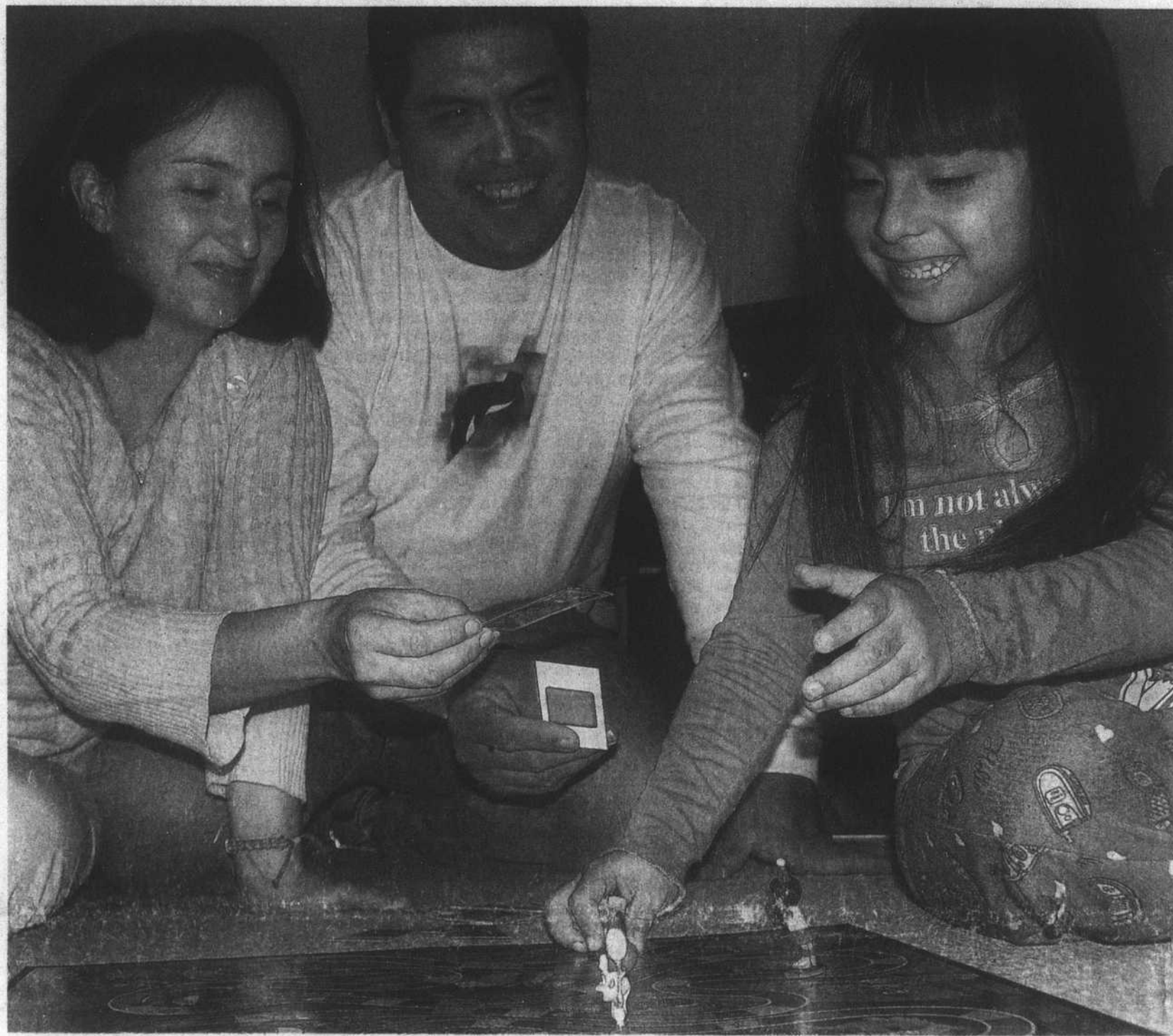
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Good deals for good deeds
Shopping for more than
clothes at the Clothes Closet
Inspiration, B6

Housing hardships
Affordable rentals becoming
harder to find See below

Coming to America

Hispanics starting new lives, families in Edenton, Chowan County



Sandra Carrera plays a Dora the Explorer game with her husband Carlos, and daughters, Getzabel and Andrea (not shown) in their West Queen Street home. The Carreras say a well-run government and opportunities for their children keep them in America.

First of two parts

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

The new faces in St. Anne's Sunday congregation are black-haired, brown-skinned, carrying rosaries passed down from their grandmothers.

Some sing Spanish hymns in hushed tones to their children. Some wake up in the morning and tune into the new Spanish format on WZBO and get ready for work.

They cook tortillas purchased from the grocer's ever-expanding Hispanic section and drink

herbal teas for their headaches.

Many are renting houses in the Edenton outskirts, working at Albe-Marle Boats, and pumping quarters into the jukebox at Mamasita's.

The number of Hispanics in Chowan County has been growing for the last 15 years, making this an increasingly important part of the community.

The *Chowan Herald* has conducted many interviews with Hispanics and others in the community and this is what they are saying:

■ "Without Hispanic migrant workers farms in rural areas like ours would be sunk." — Louis Nixon, owner Pigs Plus Farms

■ "Spanish-language programming is the fastest growing trend in

radio in the United States today."

— Rick Loesch, WZBO station owner

■ "The perception exists that all Hispanics are uneducated farm laborers seeking to live off public assistance and shun tax-paying responsibilities. But most local Hispanics are giving back to their communities.

"People don't talk about that part." — Zary Ortiz, Northeast Community Development Corporation

■ "In our business there is a lot of detailed work that demands continuous work. There is not a lot of standing around. That is why they [Hispanics] are so good at their job.

"They don't mind giving a good day's work. This is becoming very rare in our society today." — Rod Leary at Leary Plant Farm

Who are they and where did they come from?

The majority of Hispanics who live and work in Chowan come from Mexico, employers say.

They come up in groups/crews through the southeastern U.S. looking for seasonal work. In between local crops of cucumbers, watermelons, and sweet corn

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Edenton police nab
alleged credit
card thieves
Community, C1



Chowan says goodbye to the "Meal Man"



Walter Lane, who worked at the grist mill on Dillard's Millpond for 60 years, passed away Saturday.

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

They say that if you like your job you'll never work a day in your life.

That's how Walter Lane felt.

For the past 60 years Lane worked in the only operational grist mill remaining in Chowan County, not even a half a mile from his homeplace overlooking Dillard's millpond.

He never missed a day.

He'd rise early with the chickens and walk or catch a ride to the mill. For years he worked alongside his mother in the mill, grinding corn grown and harvested by locals.

From the hopper to the stone to the bag, the meal was carefully packaged in small yellow bags stamped with the family name and tied by hand with string.

The bags had to be tied by hand, he'd say, and few besides him could do it to suit.

His regular customers, owners of the local country stores, enjoyed their weekly visits.

Lane who was always a kind, considerate fellow didn't just stop in to make a quick buck. He'd stay a while and catch up on the news.

Emmett Winborne who grew up in the area remembers Lane making his deliveries with his helper riding around in the back giving turn signals with his hands.

"Walter was one of a kind," Winborne said.

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Study: Renters being left out in the cold

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

The rise in the state's minimum wage should help Chowan County renters afford housing.

But it may not be enough for them to live in a home large enough to suit their needs.

Chowan County renters earn a median monthly income of less than \$1,600, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's annual Out of Reach Report.

Other workers make much less. The average monthly rent for a two-bedroom home is \$593 a month.

But with a rent that high and an income that low, you're spending more than 30 percent of your recommended income for rent, the report states.

Local realtor John Dowd

said the findings in the report are sobering.

"There's a major problem and I don't know how it's going to be solved," Dowd said.

Dowd said it's hard to point a finger at exactly who is to blame for the shortage of affordable housing, and the gap between wages and rent costs.

Property owners have to shoulder their share of the burden in deciding whether or not they can afford to rent.

Increasing taxes and fees — including new costs to tap-on to county and town water systems — are just two of the issues homeowners face when deciding if they can collect enough rent to offset their expenses.

Insurance costs also can make rental-property owners feel that they have to raise their rents.

"You can't get enough rent to

make it worth your while," Dowd said.

The private sector, Dowd said, likely won't be able to solve the problem. Local governments and public agencies may have to step in and help resolve the matter, he said.

Dowd said the problem is widespread. Unfortunately, he added, an affordable rental home in Edenton and Chowan is no longer a stick-built house. Mobile homes are becoming more prevalent among renters.

"That's become affordable housing," he said of the boom in mobile home rentals.

Local officials formed an Affordable Housing Commission about 18 months ago.

While that commission hasn't met recently, the group has asked the N.C. Community Development Corp. to do a

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Citizen of the Year nominations sought

One picks up trash in downtown Edenton every-day.

Another volunteers each week at school, helping students improve their reading skills.

Another brings flowers to the sick and shut-ins.

They are the heroes of our community.

They do it for little to no recognition and they do it "just because."

But it's about time their efforts were recognized.

And we want to know who they are — they could

become *The Chowan Herald's* Citizen of the Year for 2006.

E-mail, call or drop us a line and let us know who you think should be recognized as the Citizen of the Year and why.

Be sure to include the nominee's name and number.

We'll count the votes and have a feature story on the Citizen of the Year in the Feb. 7 edition.

Remember, no good deed is too small.

You be the judge.

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