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Tanner Leggett horses around as Texas mascot INSIDE A2

Walker receives tech grant

Goal is to facilitate change, remove barriers for learning

By Earline White
Managing Editor

D.F. Walker students will have the latest in cutting-edge technology thanks to a \$1 million-plus state tech grant.

Interactive white boards, and production of podcasts, videos and even a school news program are just a few of the activities students in the Northeast Consortium (Edenton-Chowan Schools and Perquimans County Schools) can look forward to thanks to their district's recent receipt of IMPACT IV grants.

Nelle Hyatt, director of media/technology for the local school system, said, "Edenton-Chowan Schools are very excited to be a part of the Northeast IMPACT Consortium with Perquimans County Schools.

"We are looking forward to replicating the IMPACT model at D.F. Walker Elementary School and providing the students and teachers with collaborative tools that enhance the use of technology in the curriculum."

D.F. Walker has received a lot of media attention recently, being honored as the alternate North Carolina School of Character. Walker took the honor last year for the first time ever.

The IMPACT model is based on a vision of media and technology programs grounded in a team approach in which media and technology professionals plan with classroom teachers to design, implement, and evaluate multidisciplinary and thematic units of instruction that integrate technology, information literacy, and 21st century skills throughout the curriculum.

Every student will learn technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that will be needed to compete in a constantly changing international environment.



From left, language arts teacher Debra Rook with students Debbie Rojas and Julia Jones and Wren, a trainee for the Guide Eyes for the Blind program. Rook's students take part in Wren's training and care while in the classroom.

A furry addition in class

Students and teacher train dog for work with blind

By Earline White
Managing Editor

Debra Rook stood in front of the overhead projector teaching the class about introductory hooks in persuasive papers.

Behind her, on a faded blanket in the corner was a yellow dog. Across the room in a noisy aquarium a mudskipper hid among the rocks.

The cockatiel cage was empty, because it gets too cold here in the winter. Later, a mouse made a guest appearance beneath the TV and ran behind the bookshelf.

The students paid no attention to any of the animals, except the surprise mouse, who caused a quick stir.

The yellow dog Wren slouched motionless, lying down for an afternoon nap with her pet monkey.

The kids keep an online blog of themselves and Wren, their 6th grade service project, thanks to Rook — a "bleeding heart liberal" who has found a way to combine her love of dogs and kids.

Classroom pets

While teaching in Lee County, Rook discovered a link between the kids in her class and her pets. "We had reading rats," Rook said of former mem-

bers of the menagerie she once had housed at another school.

During presentations, Rook said the students found it easier to present to Algernon, the rat, than to just her. It was as if the students were more interactive with the animals.

They (the students) loved reading aloud to Algernon.

"And I had students that would argue their grade with the rat," Rook laughed.

Seeing this as a positive thing, and with the administrator's permission, Rook has continued her work, now bringing into the classroom a hopeful candidate for the Guide Eyes for the Blind program.

Rook has prior experience with her dog, Maren, that died over the summer. Maren was a therapy dog and often visited with Rook in the classroom.

And now there is Wren.

Sharing the love

"If you don't have a pet at home it makes you feel like you have one," Ali Belch said from the back of the room.

And it gives the students a chance to learn responsibility for a pet.

"You used to have to take Wren out and tell her to 'get busy' 10 times. Now she goes as soon as she hits the grass," James Duncan said.

Yes, the students have also taken the 'picking up poop with a plastic bag' course too.

Destined fate

Wren will be the most chased after thing at Chowan Middle School for now.

At 16 to 18 months, she will be taken to N.Y. for testing which, if passed, will lead to her Guiding Eyes training.

"Most of the dogs don't make it," Rook said, petting Wren on the head after a quick walk down the hall, on a leash of course.

"But she could go on to be a hearing ear dog, search and rescue ... she will go on and do something good for somebody I have high hopes."

By that time the class will be going on to 7th grade, out of the blocked classes. By then they may not remember the moral of the Theodore Taylor book they read about a boy named Phillip going blind and getting an assistance dog.

But two years will be long enough for the kids to feel more comfortable about speaking in public and Wren to have learned her commands.

Strong bonds

"When we got her I just wanted to cuddle with her she was so cute," Mary Myers said.

"She likes to skate on frisbees," Shaina Lawrence said. "And drink from the fountain," Debbie Rojas laughed.

"I didn't know about that one," Rook said loudly, laughing and shaking her hand in front of her face.

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Town receives 'fine' audit

Town needs to bolster its savings, accountant says

By Connie Sage
Contributing Writer

Edenton earned above average grades on its 2006-7 fiscal report card, with only one major area — the town's savings account — needing improvement, according to a financial audit presented to Council on Monday.

The town is "doing fine," said James P. Winston of the Oxford, N.C., CPA firm of Winston, Williams, Creech, Evans & Co. "There's always room for improvement."

Winston delivered a 72-page document of the town's financial statements as required by the State and Local Government Finance Division which monitors and analyzes the fiscal and accounting practices of local governments.

Taxpayers, said Winston, would want to know, "Do we have any money in the bank? Have we reduced liabilities? Is there an overall gain in net assets?"

The answer was "yes" to all three questions.

■ The town exceeded its liabilities for the fiscal year ending June 30 by \$16,191,150. Total revenues were \$16,805,774, compared to \$16,548,037 in expenses, for an increase in net assets of \$257,737.

That was an improvement over last year, when the town spent \$245,383 more than it brought in, according to the report.

"It's certainly in the right direction," Winston told Council.

■ He applauded town officials for collecting 97.7 percent of taxes, compared to the state average of 95 percent. A total of \$1,272,329 in taxes (not including car taxes) was received, compared with \$1,155,146 for the previous fiscal year.

■ The town's unreserved fund balance — what's left in savings — is \$792,481, compared with \$2.1 million in reserves for other towns its size in North Carolina, Winston said.

Said another way, Edenton's available funds are 18.2 percent of the general fund expenditures, compared with 62 percent for other towns this size.

The town is not in trouble, Winston emphasized, but said it needs to bolster its savings account.

"Eight percent is the trouble level. (Edenton) should strive to improve that average. I'd like to see at least 30 percent."

"It's about a third of what it should be," he said, and to increase the fund, the town has to spend less than it takes in.

The audit was due to the state last October but an

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Commissioner incumbents run for re-election

By Vernon Fueston/Contributing Writer

Winslow; Holmes, county office a concern in the future

Harry Lee Winslow has filed to keep his first district seat on the county commission.

A farmer and retired farm loan officer, Winslow has been a member of the commission for 14 years.

He was originally appointed to the board to fill an unexpired term of Wayne Goodwin.

When asked about the most important accomplishments during his time on the board, Winslow cited the construction of a community center on Highway 32, the County Extension Office Building, and the new public safety building.

"I think you might say we've been working," he said.

Winslow has also served

on the College of the Albemarle's Board of Trustees since his first year on the commission.

He said the county faces a number of challenges in the future. Most of them revolve around money.

"We've got a lot of things facing us," Winslow said. "John A. Holmes High School needs renovation and we're going to need a new county office building."

"With the cost of materials, you can only do so much. You have to work it out over time."

Filing for the commission-

Cole; Recruiting business and increasing tax base are goals

Ralph Cole, the former White Oak Elementary principal, has filed for reelection to his third district seat. He will be running against Earl W. Willis.

Cole was born and raised in Pasquotank County, but has spent most of his professional life in Chowan County.

He holds a bachelor's degree from ECSU and a master's in education administration from ECU.

He served as a teacher in Chowan County for nine years before becoming principal at D. F. Walker Elementary for 28 years.

Married with three children, Cole, 67, currently works as director of field operations and clinical practice for ECSU's department

of teacher education.

"As an incumbent, I want to see good things continue," Cole said.

"Chowan County is my love, here. I want to pay something back. I'm an open-minded person. Even though I'm representing the third district, I'm looking at the total county and what we can do here."

One challenge for the future, Cole said, will be recruiting new business and developments that can increase the county's tax base. "I don't want to keep imposing new taxes," Cole said.

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