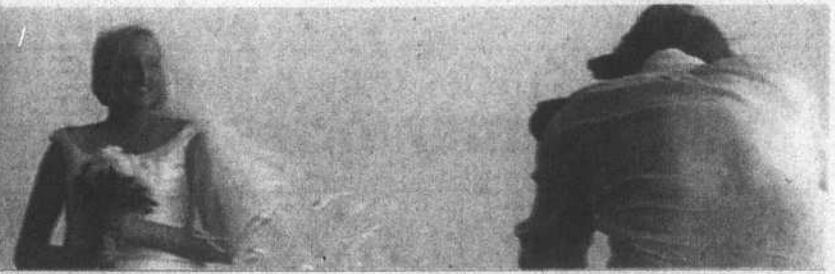




Wedding bell bucks

County and town work with Historical Commission to make Edenton a premiere wedding destination for locals, visitors C1



CHOWAN HERALD

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RACE FOR LIFE

Teams, participants urged to join Relay festivities May 16-17 C3

Staff reduction possible

As many as five teachers and five others could be cut

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

The local school system is considering eliminating five teaching positions because of a potential budget short-fall.

In addition, the school board gave the superintendent authorization Monday night to eliminate five additional jobs among other staff, including custodians and bus drivers if necessary.



Smith

Superintendent Allan Smith said an expected cut in state funds due to lower student enrollment was a key factor in deciding to seek the authorization.

He acknowledged that the exact amount of funding the school system will receive from the state in low wealth and small county all-cations is yet to be determined.

But he said it is unlikely that these funds would increase in the coming year or provide enough additional dollars to eliminate the need for a reduction in staff.

He said that other factors in the expected workforce reduction included state-mandated salary increases, higher health benefit costs, a huge jump in energy costs, and more expensive property insurance.

The board voted 5-1 in favor of granting Smith the authorization with Ricky Browder casting the lone dissenting vote.

The school system's proposed budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year was also approved at the meeting and will be delivered to the county manager's office later this week.

Smith noted that any additional dollars the county might be able to provide would be greatly appreciated.

He also expressed the hope that the potential loss of jobs was a "worst case scenario" that could still be resolved without a reduction in staff.

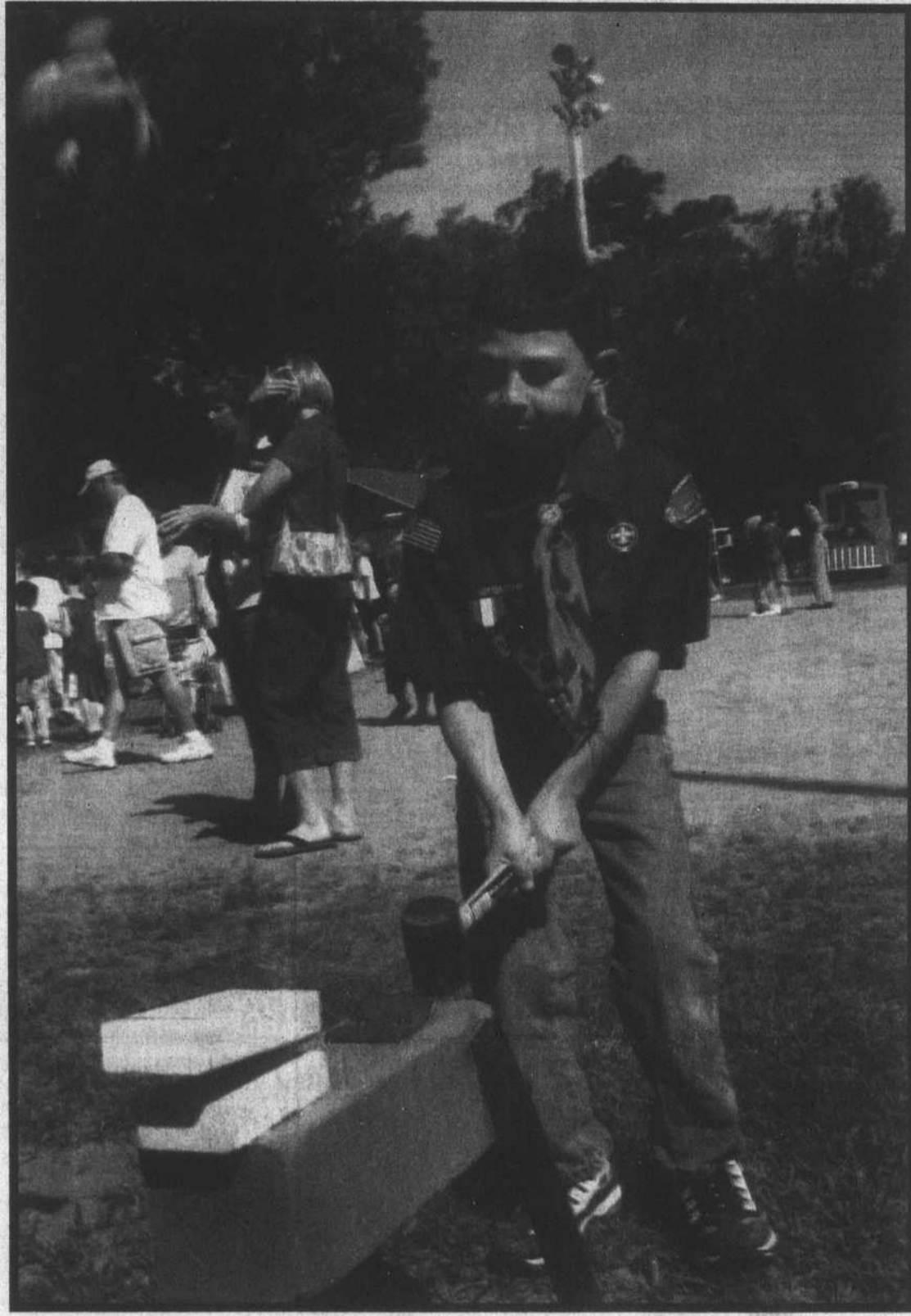
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Hitting the mark



Wade White catapults a frog to win a prize during May Play Day in Rocky Hock. Vernon Fueston

Dock masters work as goodwill ambassadors

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

They may not be as well known as Elizabeth City's Rose Buddies, but the three-man crew that oversees Edenton's dock master's project serve an equally important purpose.

In addition to being ambassadors for the town among the boating population, they also oversee the maintenance and upkeep of Colonial Park and Queen Anne Park that front Edenton Bay.

The senior member of the group is Frank Bunch, who's worked with the program for four years. Also on the team are Bobby Ashley, and Emmitt Owens, who gives them a hand in the summer.

Bunch says that he loves being among the first to greet newcomers as they settle into a slip on the waterfront.

"I've met some real nice people that way," Bunch says.

He's become acquainted with visitors from Germany, England, Australia and other far-flung places. Others arrive from throughout the United States.

In an effort to attract visitors with a gesture of Southern hospitality, the town offers a two-night stay at the town docks

free of charge.

Bunch says he thinks that's a pretty smart way to bring in more people given that the community is 45 miles away from the Intercoastal Waterway.

"We had about 200 boats last year," he observes. "That was a good year."

Effective advertising

On a recent spring afternoon, Anne Howell and her husband Roger were among the new arrivals.

"We found out about Edenton through people who've cruised the area before," she said. "We heard nothing but good things about the place."

The Howells left their home in Maine last June and after sailing down the coast on their boat, The Third Reef, they've seen Ohio, Tennessee, Florida and other sites.

"That's great," she says with obvious pleasure after Bunch tells her about the van the dock masters have available to take boaters occupying slips at the waterfront on short trips to the grocery store and laundromat.



Bunch

Another selling point? Bunch points out that most everything visitors like to see, including the historic homes Edenton is so well-known for, are within walking distance from the waterfront, as are several restaurants and other types of businesses.

"People really like that," Bunch says, smiling.

Boat slips

Ten regular-sized boat slips can be found on the waterfront, Bunch notes, as well as an extra one that's just perfect for sailboats.

Electrical hook-ups are available for those who travel with computers on board, as is WiFi service.

Their biggest arrival so far, Bunch says, was a 90-footer from Mystic, Conn.

Future plans

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton praises the work of the three dock masters.

"They do a great job," she says. "They really represent our town well."

And that's a good thing.

Knighton says that with the relocation of the Roanoke River lighthouse to Edenton's waterfront even more visitors are

See DOCKS, Page A2 >

Turnout high in local races

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

A hotly contested race for the Democratic presidential ticket and excellent weather contributed to heavy voter turnout yesterday.

As of 7 p.m., about 3,500 votes were cast in the county, a 36 percent turnout.

However, voting results were not ready at press time.

The stakes were high for two local incumbents in this primary election. A loss for either Democrat Harry Lee Winslow or Republican Bill Gardner, Jr. in the primary would mean losing their seats on the county's board of commissioners.

Republican Darryl E. Stallings withdrew his name from consideration for a district seat just before the election. His name remained on the ballot.



For County Republican Chairman Bob Steinburg, Tuesday was historic. For the first time in memory his party was fielding a full slate of candidates.

"This is our first go at this," Steinburg said. "We haven't had a (full slate) primary in at least 100 years."

At the Chowan County Board of Elections, Director Rebecca Lowe was talking on two phones at once, a cordless phone in her right hand, her desk phone in her left, while keeping one eye on her computer monitor. It was a busy morning.

Before the election even dawned, 995 residents had voted early or by absentee ballot. By 10 a.m., 743 more had voted at the precincts for a total of 1,738.

To put that in perspective, only 1003 total votes had been cast in the 2004 primary, also a presidential election year.



Voting in the primary was Carol Dillard, a registered Democrat who planned to vote for Obama. Dillard said she had not particularly followed the local commissioner's races but was looking forward to voting for Fred Spruill, a high school classmate. She cited the Iraq war, health insurance for children, and jobs as her hot button issues.

Peggy Giordanela, a registered Republican and recent immigrant from New York, said she was voting the party line all the way, but did not know the local candidates that well.

Bettie Bond, also a registered Democrat, said she had no interest in the local races.

"I can't keep up with all those names," she said. But she was eager to vote for Obama. "I'm hoping to get some jobs, insurance, and something needs to be done about these gas prices. The only thing sticking in my mind is the presidential race," Bond said.



Steinburg said he expected Democrat numbers to be high because of the national implications of this election, but he also expected a big turnout for his own party.

Martha Badger, Chowan Democratic chair, was out in Yeopim at 11 a.m. delivering signs. Her attention has been focused mainly on the national and state primaries. She said the Obama people have been canvassing the area, but has not heard much from the Clinton campaign.

Unaffiliated voters were allowed to choose which of the two primary ballots they would vote on.

Voters who had previously selected a party and had not changed their affiliation were required to vote in the primary for which they were registered.

This is a presidential election year and Chowan County voters also made their choices for President, senate and statewide offices.

Just prior to the election, voting officials had noticed a surge in voters requesting to change their affiliations.

The net change for the county indicated a small shift toward the Republicans.

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Anniversary Supper * \$7.00 per plate * 4:00pm to 7:00pm

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