

Job loss up; local businesses open, close

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

In the midst of a recession, Brooke Small's experience in retail sales has been one of continued growth and success.

Her shop, the Polka Dot Palm, opened two years ago in a kiosk no bigger than 100 feet wide.

The kiosk was one of several located inside the space occupied by the Nothin' Fancy Café and Market on North Broad Street.

From there she moved to a slightly bigger space adjacent to Wish in downtown Edenton. But, Small said, high utility bills convinced her to look elsewhere.

On Tuesday, she opened at her new 1,200 sq. ft. location on the corner of South Broad Street in the space formerly occupied by Elaine Schneider Interiors — which has moved into its own new retail space at Nothin' Fancy.

Small calls the decision to expand "the best decision I ever made."

"I'm very happy," she added, thanking God for His blessings.

Small is realistic about the slowly recovering economy but said she learned from her move downtown that her customers would follow her wherever her shop went.

And, she said, starting small and growing her business before moving into her own retail shop was definitely the right way to go.

"Starting out small like I did you have the opportunity to learn so much, and at Nothin' Fancy, I had no overhead," Small said. "They took 10 percent, that was it."

Unlike the relocated Polka Dot Palm, the summerhouse is a new business that opened its doors just weeks ago.

The business, located on East King Street, is owned by Cindy Gandee. It carries antiques, home accessories, garden-related items, and more.

The economy has not been so kind to others. Retail shops Wish and The Light-house have both announced plans to close at the end of September.

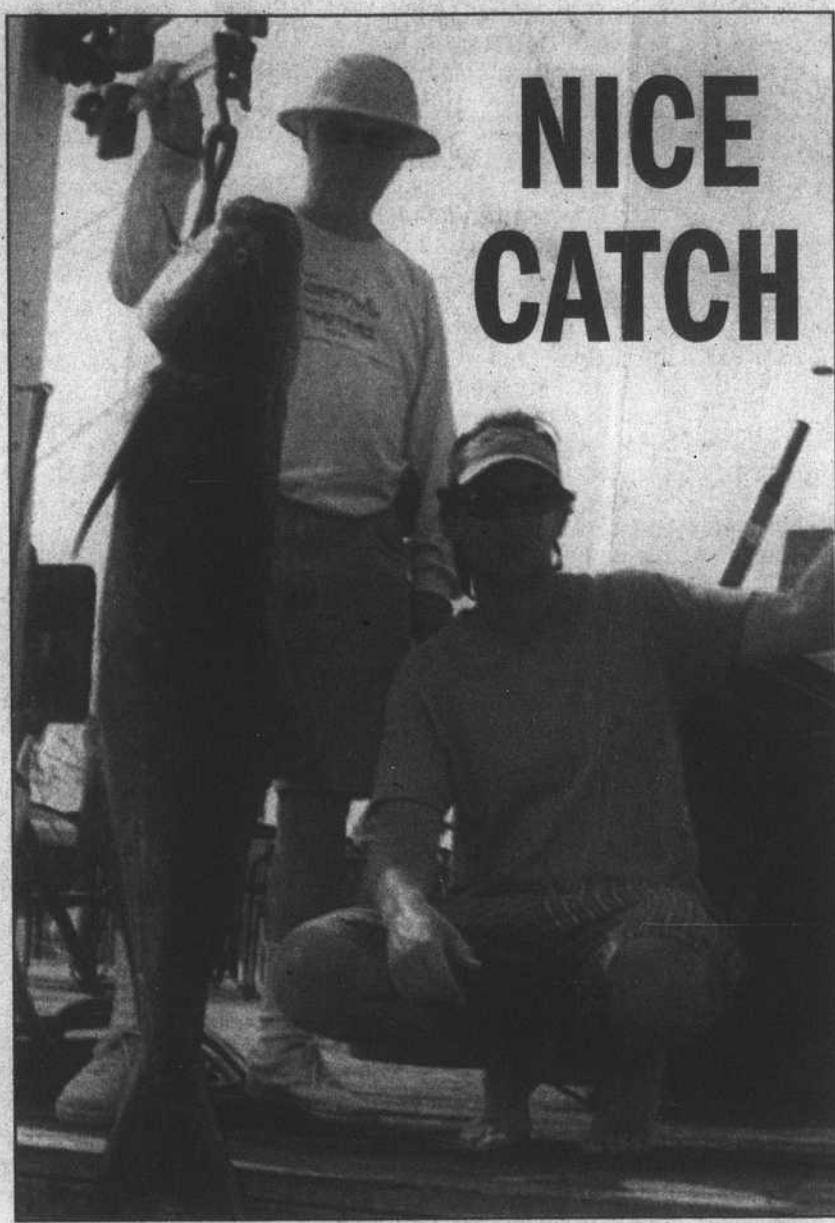
Neither returned calls seeking comment for this story.

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Chowan Herald office closed Labor Day
Chowan Herald office will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of Labor Day.



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NICE CATCH

Dr. Darell Bigner of Mebane (and Edenton) and Greg Barham of Nixons Beach caught a very big fish this weekend on a trip to Ocracoke Island. This 56 pound, 53 inch long citation fish (cobia) was a fighter!

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Capstrat's work more than airport, public safety center

By Dee Langston
Correspondent

A former employee of a Raleigh communications firm says his work for Chowan County involved more than helping the county obtain funding for the new public safety center and improvements to the county's airport.

"At any one time, we had four or five things probably rolling, but those were the two big ones that came through," said Frank Hill, who formerly worked for Capstrat.

Hill, along with Capstrat CEO Ken Eudy, believe Chowan County benefited from its association with the company.

But state and local officials question that belief. The county's payment of nearly \$260,000 to Capstrat for lobbying expenses in fact has drawn scrutiny, especially since the release of a preliminary report from the State Auditor's Office. The document suggests the lobbying firm was paid without the knowledge of local officials, including the board of the economic group it ostensibly had been hired to help.

Hill's efforts on behalf of Chowan County actually began before



Vaughan

he joined Capstrat, when he served as chief of staff for U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole, a position he held from 2002 until 2004. Hill in fact became a key player in Chowan's recovery after Hurricane Isabel ripped across the county in September 2003.

During a recent phone interview, Hill recalled how former County Manager Cliff Copeland and Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton contacted his office for help following the hurricane.

"The two got on a plane and came to Washington (D.C.) with pictures of the damage from Hurricane Isabel," he said.

Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan said he also met with Hill.

"We went up there looking for relief," Vaughan said, adding that the visit was straight municipal business. "We were just there trying to seek federal help after a natural disaster."

After Hill joined Capstrat, he continued his association with Chowan

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New finance officer takes helm

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Efficient analysis is what a Chowan County resident with a solid accounting background hopes to bring in his new role as the Town's finance officer. Janet Hines retired in July after 19 years in the role.

Randall "Randy" Jordan was chosen from more than 40 applications for the job. Nine of those applicants were interviewed.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said that Jordan's 32 years of accounting experience in private sector accounting won him the position.

"These next few years will continue to be extremely challenging for the Town as the economy hopefully slowly recovers from the current economic recession," Knighton said. "Randy brings private sector experience in efficiencies and productivity that will be beneficial to town operations in these difficult economic times."

Knighton and Jordan said they shared the goal of always seeking ways to improve the way services are delivered to citizens.

As part of that, Jordan said he would encourage the Town to place on its Web page



Jordan

the monthly financial analysis prepared for the Mayor and Town Council.

He also said he would help her with an efficiency analysis as part of the Town's upcoming budget review.

Jordan will be working with Jim Winston, the Town's auditor, in reviewing the prior year's financial statements.

"Right now, with regard to the state of the town's finances, I can tell you that the early payment discount for property taxes has improved the Town's cash flow," Jordan said. "I did an analysis for the Mayor and Council recently that showed collections increased substantially [from 12 to 38 percent] over last year."

"It's a win-win" situation, he said. "The taxpayer enjoys a one or two percent discount, and the Town increases its cash flow."

With regard to the Town's other funds, Jordan noted that the general fund, the electric fund and the water and sewer fund "all

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From the Herald archives....



Do you know who, on what occasion this photo was taken? Let us know...chowanherald@nccox.com.

Perry will not start but makes history with ODU team

By Chic Riebel
Special to the Chowan Herald

Perry Owens will be a part of college football history Saturday when Old Dominion University plays its first game since 1940.

He just won't have as big a role as he envisioned when he signed with the Monarchs.

The freshman offensive lineman from John A. Holmes arrived at ODU's on the heels of an all-state senior season, but may not see a lot of action when the Monarchs host Chowan in what is expected to be a sold-out and frenzied Foreman Field.

Owens, a 6-foot-3, 275-pound guard and center, will not be starting.

"I've been running with the No. 2 offensive line

most of training camp even though I've had a high ankle sprain," he said by telephone last Friday. "It's hard to say how much I might play. The coaches are going to put the best players they can out there. If I'm not one of them, I'll just have to keep working harder until I am."

Even if he's never on the field for a single snap against Chowan, Owens will be thrilled to be a part of Old Dominion opening a new chapter in its athletic history.

"I'm an athlete, of course I want to play," he said. "But it's going to be an honor to be in full gear, with my name on my jersey, running on to that field."

"This is an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to say you were part of the first

team. ODU has done everything the right way in getting ready for this and the community is really behind us. We were at the Monarch Grill (off-campus eatery) the other day and we got a standing ovation when we came in. There's just so much excitement.

"All the time I'm thinking about what that first game is going to be like. Running on to the field with 22,000 fans screaming, fireworks, the band ... It's going to be the biggest rush of my life."

Right now, Owens is in the competition of his life.

A dominant player who started every game in high school and one of the few local players ever to appear in North Carolina's Shrine Bowl All-Star Game, Owens



Perry

has shown himself to be more promise than polish at this stage of his transition to college ball.

No longer able to push opponents around from a three-point stance just by being one of the biggest guys on the field, he's trying to master new footwork and hand skills from a two-point stance while dealing with defenders who are bigger, stronger and faster than those Owens saw in high school.

"It's a good thing I played in the Shrine Bowl," he said. "There I got to see what Division I-level guys are like. The

speed and intensity of everything is a big change. If I had gone straight from Edenton to ODU without that experience, I'd probably be fourth or fifth string right now. I got a chance to see that the next level is really serious.

"Now I've got 300-pound guys coming at me, followed by a linebacker, and I have only a split-second to react. It wasn't like that in high school."

In addition to competing for playing time with other recruits who were stars in high school, Owens is going against junior college players who were recruited specifically to ensure ODU was ready to protect its quarterback and open holes for

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