



## Ex-assistant principal files suit

### Seeks \$25M in damages

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

A former Edenton-Chowan assistant principal has filed a civil suit alleging that the school system breached her employment contract. She is demanding that the school system pay her \$25 million for damages.

Mary L. Felton alleges in her May 25th suit that Superintendent Allan Smith transferred her to a non-administrative position as a guidance counselor — one that she was not licensed to

hold. Her refusal to acquire the necessary course work for the license has subsequently put her job in jeopardy.

"My directive that you sign up for and complete this course followed a series of communications and directives to you intended to assure that you obtain a license in your area of assignment," Smith wrote in a May 25 email. "You have been noncompliant and insubordinate, and you are subject to dismissal."

In addition to an unjust

*"On or about July 15, 2009, the Defendant created a (sic) fictitious Director's title to intentionally deceive the Plaintiff. This letter (sic) cause emotional distress when the Plaintiff realized that she was working in the capacity of a counselor with the title of a director."*

#### Civil suit from Mary Felton

Mary L. Felton's suit alleging breaching of contract

transfer, Felton further accuses the school system of creating the fictitious title of director to dupe her into believing the reassignment remained in an administrative capacity when it was not. It was later changed to

coordinator by the Board of Education.

"On or about July 15, 2009, the Defendant created a (sic) fictitious Director's title to intentionally deceive the Plaintiff," Felton's suit states. "This letter cause

emotional distress when the Plaintiff realized that she was working in the capacity of a counselor with the title of a director."

Felton admits that her distress of a derailed career has led her to miss

time from work. She said she has used 66 days of sick leave, followed by another 35 annual leave days that included recovery from a car accident.

Felton was originally hired in 2005 as assistant principal at John A. Holmes High school. After her two-year tenure expired, Felton was awarded a four-year administrative contract in 2007.

Felton worked under former principal Bill Moore, who was ousted from the school at the end of the 2009 school year when Smith

See FELTON, 7A

## CAC move prompts mixed reactions

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

A meeting to decide if the Chowan Arts Council will move its gallery downtown is set to take place Friday. CAC leaders hope Edenton officials will allow the non-profit to stay in the town-owned municipal building rent-free as part of an in-kind contribution.

Members of the CAC Board of Directors will meet with Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton to discuss the possibility that CAC could move into the vacant municipal building on the waterfront.

Marge Soper, board vice president, said the group was "elated" about the possibility of moving into the downtown business district and the new opportunities that it would present.

At their May 24 meeting, the Town Council authorized Knighton to hold a conversation with the group about the possible move.

Several councilmen spoke in favor of the action.

Councilman Bob Quinn noted that, "where the Arts Council is currently located is basically off the beaten path."

"Edenton is blessed with a lot of talent," Quinn added. "This would be an extraordinary opportunity to teach arts and crafts. It's my feeling that anything we can do, even if we have to support them for a while, it's a worthwhile cost."

Councilman Sambo Dixon agreed.

"I think we need to use it (building) for something for the community," Dixon said. Dixon said he thought allowing the CAC move to the site seemed a good use for the building.

"There's no real proposal (on the table) but I'd like to move forward, get Anne-Marie to investigate if that's (relocation) a possibility," Dixon added.

See CAC, 4A

## Remember the perished



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE STARNES

Chowan County woman pays respect to fallen soldiers during the laying of wreaths at the Memorial Day service. Read US Navy Capt. Joey Tynch's Memorial Day speech, 5B.

## Town eyes tougher housing codes

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

The town of Edenton is considering how to strengthen its housing codes to combat rundown and abandoned properties.

One possible action is a demolition ordinance that would enable the town to rid itself of neglected properties. At issue is how much the town can legally do to force those who own such properties to make improvements.

If the properties in question are located inside the historic district, or in a high crime area where rundown housing is believed to be contributing to the problem, legal remedies are available, according to attorney Benjamin Gallop. Gallop offered his legal advice to town leaders at a May 24 meeting.

Part of the problem causing the neighborhood blight is indifference on the part of some homeowners, many of them heirs, said Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton.

Knighton said that some heirs, who live out of town and have inherited properties, simply ignore letters from the town attempting to bring the problem to their attention.

In one instance, Knighton said, she spoke with an heir who told Knighton that she had no intention of dealing

See PROPERTY, 7A

## Poor living conditions concern town leaders

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

Concerns about substandard living conditions in some rental housing has prompted the Edenton Town Council to consider taking appropriate action.

That action could come in the form of a registry to be estab-

lished by the town. That registry would contain the name of anyone in town that owns rental property, and where that property is located. Also under consideration is a possible inspection system that would monitor the conditions to which tenants are living.

"We've got some houses that people should not even be living in," Councilman Steve Biggs said. "I'm tired of hearing about the way some people are living in this town. It's time to do something."

Councilman Bob

*"We've got some houses that people should not even be living in. I'm tired of hearing about the way some people are living in this town. It's time to do something."*

Steve Biggs  
Councilman

Quinn agreed.

"The objective (would be) not only to make our town a better place, but to give people a better way to live," Quinn said.

Quinn added that the

ownership of rental property was a major source of income for some in the community, and that the town needed to have a better idea how many renters cur-

rently live in town.

"It's a big chunk of income, and we don't know nearly enough about it," Quinn said.

Attorney Ben Gallop, who is acting as a consultant for the town on property-related issues, said that he felt the establishment of a registry would be legal but that he needed to research the inspections issue and report back to the council.

"I think that would be an area of caution," Gallop said.

Councilman Wil-

lis Privott questioned whether the town would need to charge a fee to have its staff conduct inspections.

Privott pointed out that any such fee charged to landlords would likely be passed along to their tenants. "Some of them are having a hard enough time paying their rent as it is," he said.

Gallop and the town's attorney, Hood Ellis, will bring information back for discussion and possible action during the council's July meeting.



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