



Woman, 101, perishes in house fire

Victim celebrated birthday Thursday

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**
Editor

A Monday night house fire claimed the life of an Edenton woman who turned 101 years old four days earlier.

The body of Flora Banks was found in the bedroom of her burned 207 E. Freemason Street home, said Edenton police Chief Jay

Fortenbery. A neighbor first spotted the 5:22 p.m. blaze and called 911, said Edenton Fire Chief Charlie Westbrook.

"Fire was coming out of two windows on the side and the house was full of smoke," Westbrook said.



Banks

Westbrook said firefighters searched the house for occupants immediately upon arrival on the scene, but it wasn't until after the fire was extinguished that Banks' body was discovered. Neither he nor Fortenbery would say where the body was lying in the bedroom.

Fortenbery and Westbrook said a kerosene heater may have triggered the fire.

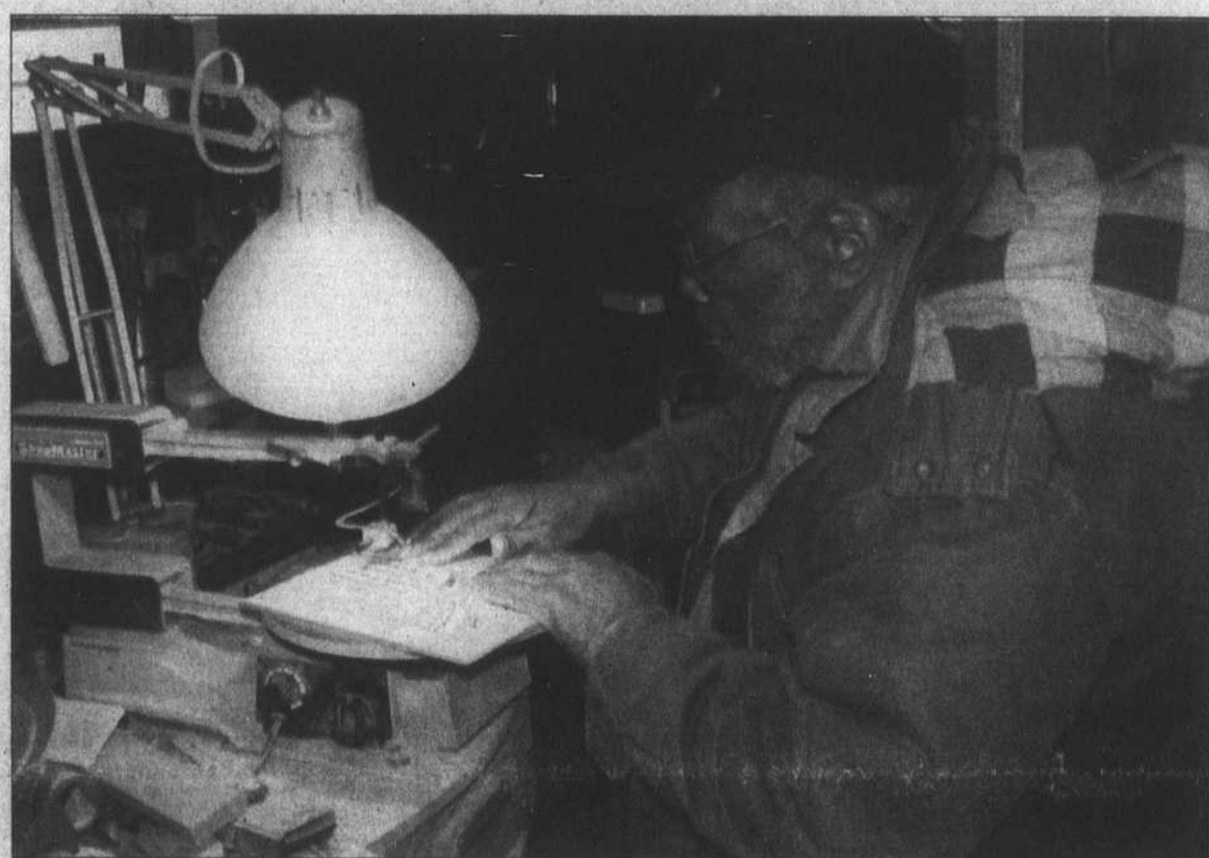
See **FIRE**, 2A



PHOTO BY RITCHIE STARNES

Flora Banks, 101, perished in a Monday night house fire at 207 East Freemason Street. Flames were billowing from the house's side windows and the smoke consumed the home when firefighters arrived.

CRAFTER 'CARVES' PASSION



STAFF PHOTOS BY REBECCA BUNCH

Linwood Stanley works on a pattern to create one of his woodcarving designs in his own distinctive style.

Woodcarver yearns to share skills

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

At 80 years old Linwood Stanley is a man at peace with life and himself.

For 32 years, Stanley worked as a maintenance man at Seabrook Blanching in Edenton, on call day and night. Now, his days and nights are his own. And Stanley, who retired in 1992, can spend his time pursuing what started as a hobby while he was still working, and became his passion — woodcarving.

Stanley, born and raised in Chowan County, said he began making his woodcarvings in 1985 in the home he and a friend built over 40 years ago.

"I'd do a little carpentry work from time to time before I retired," Stanley said. "I worked with my cousin a little and helped him out. But I'd never



Linwood Stanley looks at shelves containing much of the work he has created over the years.

done anything like this (woodcarvings)."

Stanley said he didn't start out to become known for his skill in

woodcarving.

"The way I got started was, I

See **STANLEY**, 7A

COA, alumni: Still no deal on Walker building

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

College of The Albemarle's president and members of the D.F. Walker Alumni group met Wednesday but are no closer to an agreement on sharing use of the former Walker school building, both sides said this week.

COA President Kandi Deitemeyer said the afternoon meeting with 60-75 members of the D.F. Walker Alumni Association left her with a deeper understanding of the group's strong personal at-

tachment to the building, which prior to integration, served as a high school for African-American students.

But Deitemeyer said the meeting had not changed COA's position on use of the building. The college still maintains that it must have full use of the building — which the alumni group now uses for its meetings and functions — once COA moves from leased space at the Edenton Village Shopping Center.

"We want to partner with them, but we do need to use that facility," Deitemeyer said, referring to the former high school. "I think it will come down to the (county) commissioners deciding what to do."

See **WALKER**, 9A

BoA to close Edenton branch

Banking giant sets June 3 for closing

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

One of the nation's largest banks plans to close its branch office in Edenton this summer.

Charlotte-based Bank of America confirmed Wednesday that it will close its banking center in the town's downtown on June 3.

Nicole Nastacie, media relations officer for Bank of America, described the

move as a business decision.

"We constantly evaluate our retail network to ensure we are meeting evolving customer demand, and may add or consolidate banking centers as a result," Nastacie said.

Nastacie said BoA's procedure is to notify customers 90 days before any closing. She said the bank is now in the process of mailing letters to its customers in the Edenton area.

"This is a very difficult business decision, but a

See **BANK**, 2A

Edenton-Chowan could opt out of Vernon James Center

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

Plans for a regional agriculture biotech high school

that were greeted with enthusiasm in December are now raising questions from local officials.

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Allan Smith asked and received permission at the school board's Feb. 7 meeting to withdraw the school system from participating in the new proposed school should he deem necessary.

Smith told the board it now looks possible that the participating school systems — Hyde, Tyrrell, Washington and Chowan counties, — could end up losing ADM (average daily membership) funds they currently receive based on student enrollment — a forfeiture Edenton-Chowan

See **CENTER**, 2A

Makin' Snow Angels



PHOTO BY REBECCA LOWE

Patrick Christopher, 3, feathers a snow angel on the white blanketed Courthouse Green after Thursday's snowfall that cancelled school for the day. See more Chowan snow photos on 1B.



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