

FISH HATCHERY AVERTS GOV'T SHUTDOWN, PAGE 1B

Spellasaurus claims first Bee

'Maquillage,' 'goiter' seal victory

By KIP SHAW
Special to Chowan Herald

In the end, it all came down to a relatively simple word to spell, especially after all the tongue twisters that were thrown at the two final teams of 12 starters at Thursday night's First Annual Spelling Bee, sponsored by the Edenton-Chowan Educational Foundation.

The John A. Holmes Spellasaurus team of principal Jamie Gillespie, Amy Asbell, Olinka Baker, and Samantha Christopher rose to the challenge, with Gillespie boldly taking the microphone and spelling, "G-O-I-T-E-R." Victory was declared, and the runner-ups—the White Oak School team of Beth Brabble, Lee Powell, Bobby Jo Owens, and Heather Matthews, graciously accepted defeat.

But, it was the word "maquillage" that Spellasaurus recited correctly after it stumped White Oak.

"It feels wonderful," said Gillespie, of her team's win. "I just wish it could have been declared a tie because I think our team and White Oak's were pretty evenly matched. I think they deserved to win as much as we did."

Attendance was strong for a first-ever non-sporting event with more than 200 watching the word

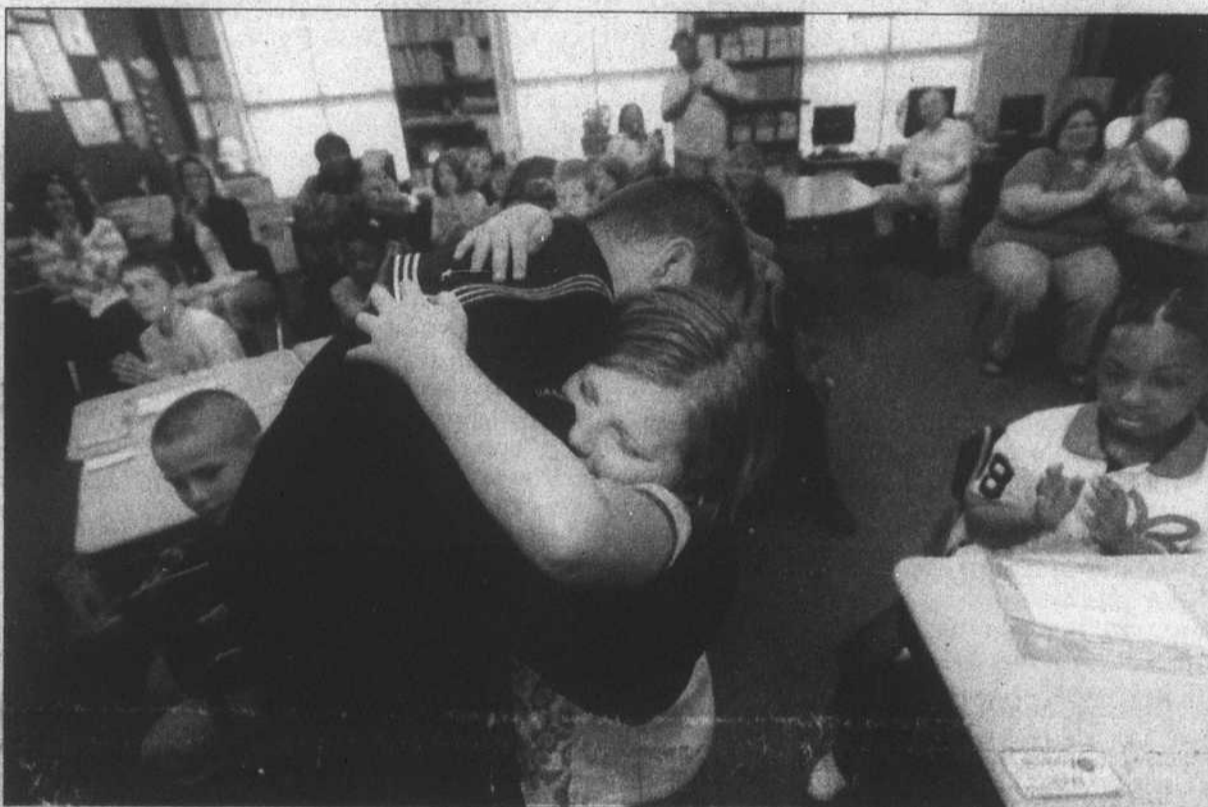
See BEE, 3A



PHOTO BY KIP SHAW

The Bizzy Bees, sponsored by D.F. Walker Planning Team, celebrate a successful round at last Thursday's first community Spelling Bee held at Edenton United Methodist Church. The team consisted of Nancy Heiniger, Jamie Bass, Stephani Hartman, and Deb West.

BACK AT HOME



STAFF PHOTOS BY THOMAS J. TURNEY

Raymond White Jr. gets a hug from his daughter, Sharon, 9, after surprising her by showing up at her classroom at D.F. Walker Elementary School on their annual awards day. He had gotten back without her knowledge and surprised her at school after being gone seven months while being deployed at Guantanamo Bay, Thursday.

Enlisted father surprises children at school

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Tears of joy streamed down their young faces when their dad chose to surprise his two children at their respective schools after a seven-month absence for a call of duty.

Raymond White Jr., an ensign in the U.S. Navy, first surprised his son, Cody, 12, by standing alongside cafeteria workers at Chowan Middle School as his son's class entered for lunch. To surprise his daughter, Sharon, 9, White waited outside her D. F. Walker Elementary classroom until the conclusion of awards day presentations. Both children burst in tears when they saw their uniformed dad while rushing toward him for a hug.

"Dad!" Cody yelled as he saw his dad. "I was shocked," Cody

See SURPRISE, 2A



Raymond White Jr. gets a hug from his son, Cody, 12, after surprising him by showing up at his cafeteria at Chowan Middle School. He had gotten back without his son's knowledge and surprised him at his school after being gone seven months while being deployed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Thursday.

Coltrain says job recovery is on upswing

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

As job availability begins to increase locally, the swing suggests the economy recovery here could be gaining ground.

Ricky Coltrain, manager of Edenton's office of the N.C. Employment Security Commission, said over the last several months the number of jobs being listed here are increasing.

"Toward the end of last year, things had gotten so bad that we only had about 15 job openings we were trying to help them (area businesses) fill," Coltrain said. "But now folks are starting to hire again. As

of this morning (April 5), we had 57 job openings."

Richard Bunch, Chamber of Commerce president, said the movement is consistent with the Chamber's findings as well.

"That's the very reason we are hosting our 'State of Business' this week," Bunch said. "We are hearing some of the same types of things, that some are hiring a few folks, sales are up some, business is not as bad as it has been, those are just some of the things folks are telling us. We hope Thursday's event will give everyone a true picture of what our business climate

See JOBS, 2A

Broadband group seeks providers

By WILLIAM F. WEST
Staff Writer

Two members of a new nonprofit group told Albemarle business leaders Wednesday that they need help bringing the "last mile" of broadband Internet service to small businesses and rural residents.

Noel Preston and Paul Tine, both of Kitty Hawk and both board members of Northeast Broadband, were the speakers at Wednesday's quarterly luncheon of the Albemarle Area Committee of 100.

Typically "last mile" is a phrase used to describe the technologies and pro-

cesses needed to connect an end customer to a communications network. Because of the challenges involved, achieving this last mile of service is usually expensive.

Northeast Broadband's mission is to work with potential last-mile providers as part of the multi-million-dollar broadband project being spearheaded by the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina.

"Now, the challenge is, typically, that the last-mile providers are going to be in a for-profit area or a co-op type of arrangement," Preston said. "And

See BROADBAND, 2A

Robotics squad reaches semi-finals

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Despite a number of immediate obstacles, the John A. Holmes Retro-Robot Squad's first-ever entry into the US FIRST



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Robotics Competition yielded a stellar outing with a berth in the event's semi-finals.

When the Retro-Robot Squad arrived in Raleigh for its first US FIRST Robotics Competition, the team knew there were some technical glitches to overcome, but it didn't know they needed to shed eight pounds. Instead of using last Thursday as a practice session like all of its team competitors,

the Holmes' robot had to lose some weight. The team first thought that its robot was two pounds beyond the minimum requirement, but the official weigh-in revealed six additional pounds.

"We knew going into the competition that we had a problem," said John Becker, a team mentor. "We knew we were two pounds overweight, but when we learned that we were eight pounds we had to go to

work immediately."

Work entailed the disassembly and drilling of holes throughout the aluminum frame to reduce weight.

"After we drilled holes into it, it looked like Swiss cheese," Becker added.

The changes consumed the first day and costs the inexperienced team a chance to practice. Holmes' Retro Robot debuted

See ROBOTICS, 3A



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The John A. Holmes Retro Robotics Squad uses a pit stop to make adjustments on the team's robot during last weekend's US FIRST Robotics Competition held at Raleigh's Dorton Arena.

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