



See photos from Edenton Christmas events — 1B 50¢

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Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Postal workers allege employee harassment

Customers say service suffering

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Edenton postal workers say they're the latest victims of a beleaguered postmaster with a reputation of choking employee morale. Now, customers are complaining the facility no longer provides the same quality service.

Although they say union rules prohibit postal employees from airing their grievances to the media, several Edenton postal workers spoke privately about how the facility's newest postmaster Cinder Israel continuously berates employees. Meanwhile, customers allege that since Israel's arrival, the level of service they've become accustomed has eroded.

Employees acknowledge

that Israel's criticism primarily seems to be aimed at improving the speed of delivery while reducing employee overtime. Her efforts to streamline duties have also led to the elimination of customer services usually performed.

In addition to union rules, employees decline to speak out for fear of retaliation. But, a customer witnessed one of Israel's verbal attacks on a veteran carrier Maurice Bunch in

the parking lot at the post office. Edna Harvey said Israel was questioning the manner that Bunch had loaded his mail for the day's delivery.

"She was speaking harshly to Mr. Bunch," Harvey said. "She was being very inappropriate. She said to him 'I'm the postmaster and you're the mail carrier.' I was horrified."

"You don't talk to anyone like that. And if you have

an issue with someone, you don't take it out in the parking lot," she added. "I was saddened for the community."

Employees allege such verbal assaults are typical from Israel.

One employee said Israel's management style has been counterproductive to any attempts to save time, resulting in her procedures taking longer and resulting in more overtime.

Customers say Israel's

new practices have come at the expense of customer service, especially for a facility with a reputation for strong community relations.

A customer said when he called the post office with a question, he was directed to refer to the computer. When he asked for the clerk that usually assisted him without fail, he was told they could no longer

See POST OFFICE, 2A

White hearing delayed

Defense attorney: Witness unavailable

By WILLIAM F. WEST
The Daily Advance

A hearing has been delayed again in the case of a woman accused of sending a threatening e-mail to College of the Albemarle and one of COA's faculty members in early October.

Margaret Monika White, who is charged with misdemeanor cyberstalking, has now been ordered to appear in Pasquotank County District Court on Jan. 13. District Attorney Frank Parrish said Friday evening that White's attorney, Sam Dixon of Edenton, has a witness believed essential to White's defense, but that the witness was unavailable to appear in court.

"And that was the sole reason it was continued," Parrish said. "We want him (Dixon) to be able to present any claims or defenses, obviously. And we had the police available and the appropriate witnesses from COA on telephone standby."

White appeared in District Court at 9:30 a.m., as rescheduled back on Oct. 31. Parrish, representing the state in court on Friday morning, called the names on the court docket. When he got to White's name, Dixon stepped forward and said he was representing White.

Dixon then asked Judge Robert Trivette whether he could approach the bench with Parrish. After the three talked quietly, Trivette announced the hearing would be reset to the Jan. 13 date.

Moments later, Dixon met in the hallway with White and her family. Dixon, White and White's family declined comment afterward.

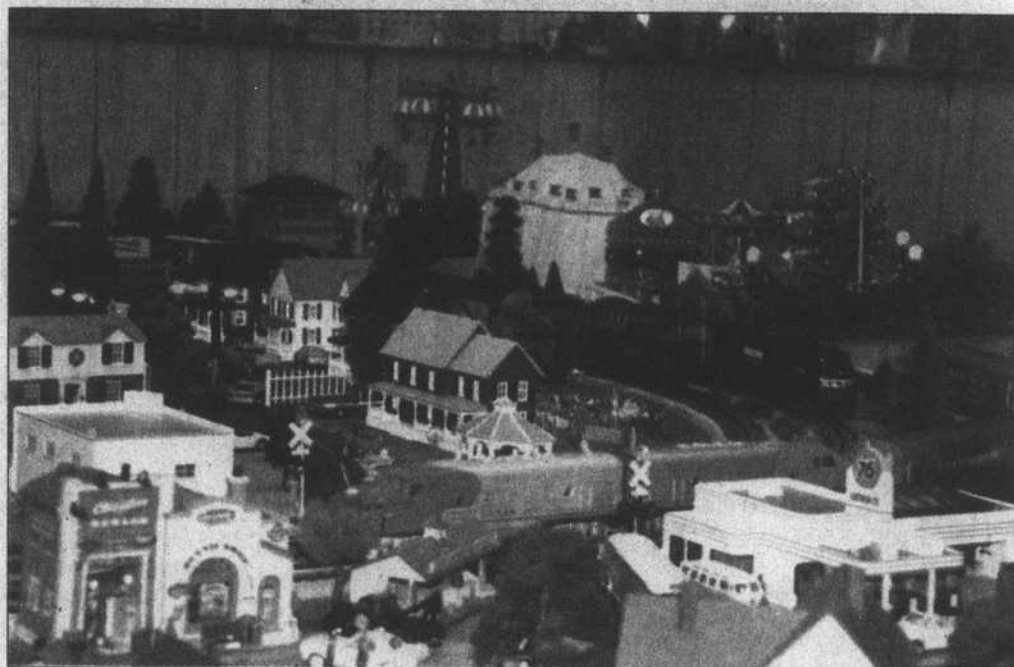
Margaret White appeared in court Oct. 31

See WHITE, 2A



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TRAIN HOUSE



PHOTOS COURTESY REBECCA LOWE

Richard Pearce has collected an assortment of toys and trains to create a Christmas wonderland. He uses models to create a miniature slice of life. One setting (below) depicts Santa in his sleigh.

Nothing says Christmas like toy trains

Eure house home to wonderland

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

EURE — A railroad crossing sign stands conspicuously out of place. No iron rails are in sight. The track that once dissected the sleepy



Pearce

community of Eure has long been gone. Instead, the caution sign stands in front of tall trees and fallen leaves on a lawn of dirt — foreground for an otherwise plain two-story dwelling.

What lies inside this simple dwelling is anything but plain and beyond any



wordsmith's just description. It's where imagination and nostalgia collide every December, when faces of young and old distort, but never tire, from wide-eyed amazement and ear-to-ear grins. Between toys of yesteryear and the timelessness of imagination, visitors of all ages partake

in the annual pilgrimage.

"Kids don't want to leave," said owner Richard Pearce, 70. "They (parents) have to drag them out. They'll (children) do some hollerin' sometimes."

Over the last 24 years Richard and wife Peggy

See TRAIN, 3A

Dr. Devine, 64, succumbs to cancer

Devine was founder of Chowan-Edenton Optimist

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Dr. Leibert Earl DeVine, 64, founder of the Chowan-Edenton Optimist Club, died peacefully at his Edenton home on Dec. 7, surrounded by family members.

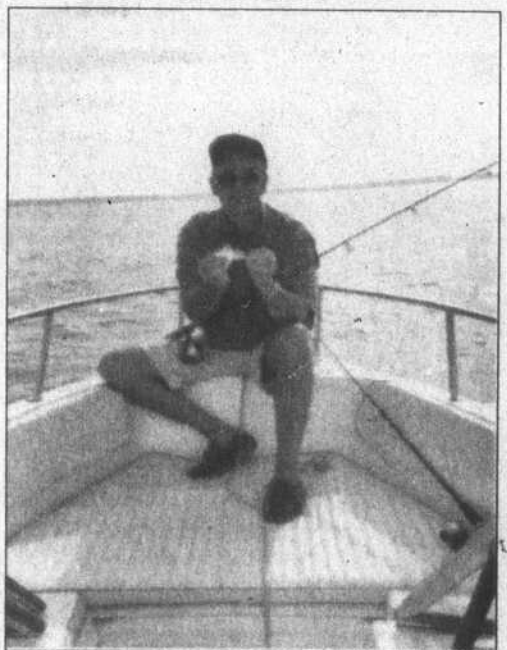
Chowan County Clerk of Superior Court Mike McArthur, a close friend of DeVine, was among those who spoke at DeVine's funeral on Saturday afternoon at the Edenton United Methodist Church.

Devine, a highly regarded general practitioner and civic leader, succumbed to stomach cancer. After surviving the disease's first diagnosis four years ago, the cancer had returned three months ago.

During his eulogy, McArthur shared the story of the first July 4 celebration carried out by the Optimists in 1980.

Finding nothing of a patriotic nature planned for Independence Day in Edenton, DeVine, who had moved here a year earlier, convinced a group of friends, including McArthur, to join him in organizing the festival with the assistance of the Evening Optimist Club of Wilson. That early group formed the nucleus of what's currently regarded as the Chowan-Edenton Optimist

See DEVINE, 3A



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dr. Lei DeVine shows off his "catch" as he indulges in one of his favorite hobbies, fishing on the Chowan River.

Resolution backs return of Teaching Fellows

Edenton-Chowan relies on program

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

At its Dec. 5 meeting, the school board unanimously voted to back a resolution asking the North Carolina General Assembly to restore funding for the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

The resolution stated, in part, that Teaching Fellows "have been observed to be a much more able group of students and have higher SAT scores than any other group of teachers." And, it said that Teaching Fellows graduates are "much less likely to exit NC public schools in their first three years of teaching."

Faced with a \$2.5-billion shortfall, state legislators

cut the program by \$210,000 for the fiscal year starting July 2011. The budget calls for stripping \$3.4-million from the program for the 2012-2013 school year. And while some lawmakers have said they would like to find a way to continue the program, current language in the state budget calls for the program to be phased out.

The 25-year-old program provides scholarships for

high school students that agree to teach for four years in the state's public schools once they graduate.

Two local educators who graduated from the program said they wholeheartedly support all efforts to save it.

Vann Lassiter, Region I Teacher of the Year for 2009-2010, said, "I cannot imagine not having this program for future gen-

erations. Without this program, I would not be the educator I am today."

Lassiter, who was a classroom teacher at John A. Holmes High School and is now an instructional technologist with the local schools, said that it was because of the program that he had found success in his ability to reach and motivate students.

See PROGRAM, 4A

DRIVE THRU CHRISTMAS PANORAMA
The Greatest Gift
 DECEMBER 16th, 17th & 18th
 6 PM - 8 PM