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Wednesday, April 23, 2014

TAKING THE OATH



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Lynn Gilliard, flanked by her husband, Travis, is administered the oath of office as Chowan County's Register of Deeds Tuesday morning by Susanne Stallings, clerk to the Chowan Board of Commissioners.

Gilliard sworn in as Register of Deeds

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Lynn Gilliard was sworn in Tuesday morning as Chowan County Register of Deeds. The oath of office was administered by county clerk Susanne Stallings.

Gilliard will be filling the unexpired term of the late Sue Rountree, who won re-election to the office in 2012. Rountree died earlier this month.

Gilliard, who had served as assistant register of

deeds under Rountree, has worked in the office for almost 18 years. She said that she had admired and respected Rountree and was glad to have the opportunity to keep the office running.

"One thing that I noticed about Sue that's also very important to me is that she always treated everyone the same," Gilliard said.

That same philosophy spilled over into the way that Rountree treated her staff and the bond that fostered between all of them,

Gilliard said.

"We've all had a really good working relationship," Gilliard said. "It's been like family. We've got each other's backs. Sometimes we even finish each other's sentences."

Gilliard is a native of Chowan County and a graduate of John A. Holmes High School. She attended College of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City.

She and her husband, Travis, have four children. The announcement of

Gilliard's appointment was made during an April 14 county commissioners meeting.

"I know (her) and I know she'll do a fine job," Commissioner Greg Bonner said.

Also, during the meeting, the commissioners adopted a resolution paying tribute to Rountree and her outstanding public service. A framed copy of the resolution was presented to her husband, Ronnie, and other family members who were present at the meeting.

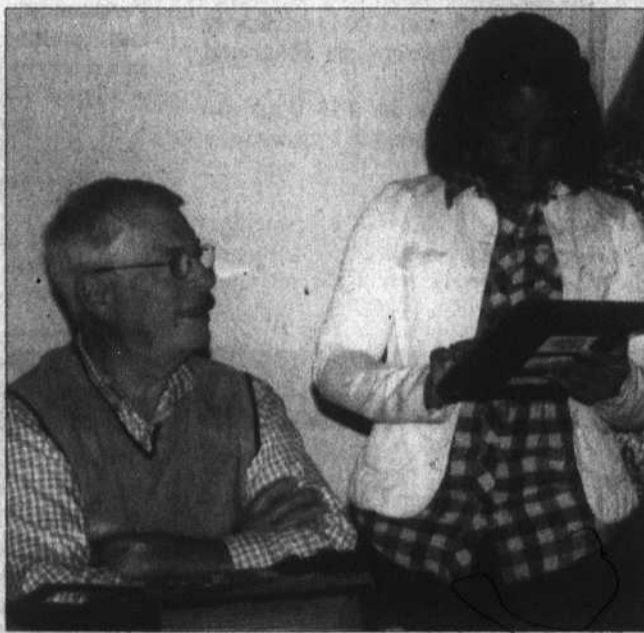
Teachers, students demonstrate technology's role in classrooms

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The Education Committee of the Edenton Chowan Partnership got a hands-on lesson last week in how the local school district is using iPads and other technology funded through a Golden LEAF grant.

At the committee's April 17 meeting, teachers from John A. Holmes High School and Chowan Middle School talked about how they're using technology in their classrooms — and students from the high school tutored committee members in how to use iPads to learn about English, social studies and other subjects.

English classes at the high school use an application called subtext. The technology gives students a variety of ways to interact with the texts, which encourages them to



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

A'shanti Johnson, a junior at John A. Holmes High School, demonstrates for Frank Palm some of the instructional technology used at the high school.

See TECHNOLOGY, 3A

Resident drowns in Edenton Bay

From staff reports

An Edenton man drowned in Edenton Bay Monday morning, according to local police.

The victim has been identified as David Earl Hassell, 49, of Oakdale Drive in Edenton.

"The Edenton Police Department is sad to report a drowning that occurred today in Edenton Bay," Chief Jay Fortenbery said in a statement released Monday afternoon by the department.

The Chowan County emergency communications center received a report of a possible drowning in the water near South Granville Street and West Water Street around 10:30 a.m., according to police.

Officers from the Edenton Police Department, Chowan County Sheriff's Department and Chowan County Rescue responded and began a search, according to police.

Around 12:10 p.m., with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard, Chowan County Emergency Management and several local citizens, Hassell was found and transported to Vidant Chowan Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, police reported.

Fortenbery said the drowning was accidental and there is no criminal investigation being conducted.

According to information from the scene, Hassell had waded into the water to retrieve a remote controlled toy boat.

Two members of the sheriff's department dive team were instrumental in locating Hassell, according to reports.

Town becomes a 'Retirement Community'

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Edenton is one of two North Carolina locales designated as a Certified Retirement Community by state officials last week. Tarboro is the other.

Chowan County will partner with the town in the endeavor, according to officials from the North Carolina Department of Commerce who oversee the program.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton confirmed that when the town prepared its application it asked that it be allowed to share the designation with Chowan County. State officials acknowledged the request but said the program's guidelines only allow towns and cities to officially hold the designation.

A reception in celebration of the news was held April 22 in the town council chambers. Special guests were Wit Tuttell, executive director of the Commerce Department's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development and DOC Tourism Development Manager Andre Nabors.

Mayor Roland Vaughan said in a news release announcing the designation that the town was excited and honored to be one of the state's Certified Retirement Communities.

"We look forward to the many opportunities the program will bring to Edenton and Chowan County as we continue to embrace folks looking for a new community in which to spend their retirement years," Vaughan

See COMMUNITY, 3A

County continues to mull Hopeline request

BY REGGIE PONDER AND REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writers

County commissioners appear reluctant to resume the practice of funding nonprofits — but some commis-

sioners are taking a close look at whether they should make an exception for the Albemarle Hopeline domestic violence program.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Keith Nixon reported at the board's April 15 meeting that Commissioner Alex Kehayes had done additional research on the Hopeline issue in the wake of a request for funding that was presented by Melanie Jordan at the commissioners' April 7 meeting. Jordan said at the April

7 meeting that she appreciates the fiscal responsibility the county has shown during the past few years and realizes that a lot of funding cuts had to be made because of the serious fiscal crisis the county faced.

But she added that she hopes the county is now in a position where it can help Albemarle Hopeline, which helps women and children (and occasionally men) escape domestic violence.

Jordan made reference to a letter that Albemarle

Hopeline Executive Director Pat Youngblood had written in February to Clifton Hardison, who at that time was serving as interim county manager.

The letter requests that the county allocate \$2,000 for Albemarle Hopeline in the 2014-15 budget.

Kehayes reported at the commissioners' April 15 meeting on what he had learned about Albemarle Hopeline during the previous week.

"Everyone I spoke to

spoke very highly of their service and considered it to be valuable," Kehayes said.

When Nixon asked if the funding could be funneled through the budget of the county's Department of Social Services, Kehayes replied that if the funds were included in the DSS budget, then county staff would have to be assigned to do the work that Hopeline is doing.

Nixon repeated the reservation he expressed during the previous week's meeting

— that funding one nonprofit would invite others also to seek funding.

"The problem I have is, it's going to become political," Nixon said, referring to the situation that arises when multiple nonprofits request county funding. "It's not our job to take the taxpayers' money and divide it up as we think best."

When Nixon again asked Kehayes to look into the DSS option, Kehayes cited

See HOPELINE, 3A

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