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Wednesday, March 14, 2018

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Chowan County pays tribute to Speller



NCBCA honors locals

The North Carolina Basketball Coaches Association released the all-district teams for the 2017-2018 high school boys and girls basketball seasons on Wednesday. — 1B



REBECCA BUNCH/CHOWAN HERALD

Edenton Cotton Mill Museum Board President Beth Taylor draws laughs from the crowd as she pays tribute to Ben Speller Sunday afternoon at a reception in his honor held at the Penelope Barker House on the downtown waterfront. Looking on is Edenton Historical Commission Executive Director Mike Ervin

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

While Sunday hadn't officially been declared Ben Speller Day in Edenton, a large crowd, including Mayor Roland Vaughan and his wife, braved the cold weather to attend an enthusiastic reception in his honor at the Penelope Barker House on the downtown waterfront.

The reception was in celebration of Speller's recent selection by Gov. Roy Cooper as one of a group of 15 educators, historians, curators, artists and others to receive the Old North State Award during a reception held at the Governor's Mansion. The

honor came in recognition of Speller's work to preserve African American heritage and culture in North Carolina.

The local celebration was co-hosted by the Edenton Historical Commission, the Chowan Arts Council, the Chowan Tourism Authority and the Edenton Cotton Mill Museum. Speller serves on the board of each of those organizations. Representatives of the various organizations spoke admiringly of Speller's willingness to volunteer his time and talents to help support their work across the community and what a difference his presence has made.

Speaking for the TDA board, County Commissioner Don Faircloth called Speller a great team player and said that the honor Speller recently received was "well deserved" for the preservation of the rich African American history that exists locally.

Mike Ervin, EHC executive director, noted that Speller is a member of that organization's executive committee whose knowledge and state-wide contacts continue to be a tremendous asset.

"There's nobody that deserves this award more," he said.

But Speller's influence doesn't end with the influ-

See SPELLER, 3A

TILLING THE LAND



MILES LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Plowing demo links past to present

BY MILES LAYTON
 Editor

And God made a farmer as Paul Harvey once wrote.

"And who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, then, pain'n from 'tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours. So God made a farmer.

"God had to have some-

body willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds and yef stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place. So God made a farmer."

Well, God must have been in Chowan County last week for a plowing demonstration conducted by the Edenton Farmer's Market and Heri-

tage Association across from East Coast Equipment. The event is but one part of the county's 350th birthday celebration.

"This was a joint effort sponsored by the farmers market, the heritage farm fest committee, the 350th celebration committee, county and town officials and many local businesses, community groups and local agricultural

history enthusiasts," said Joseph Goodwin, a key organizer and longtime farmer.

Nancy Nicholls of the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority was front and center at the plowing demonstration. She's from the dairy state of Vermont, so as the tractors passed by, there was a smile

See PLOWING, 3A

God not Gandalf

BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON
 For the Chowan Herald

God is love.

For William Paul Young, who prefers to go by Paul, God wasn't always this way. The author of "The Shack," a New York Times bestseller, visited Edenton recently, giving talks at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Edenton Baptist Church.

The Rev. Malone Gilliam, rector at St. Paul's, has known Young for several years, and hosted a question and response session at his church.

The next day, Young spoke to a packed sanctuary at Edenton Baptist Church, interweaving story after story to illustrate how God's love has been illustrated in his life.

For several decades, Young thought of God as a "Gandalf with a bad attitude." His father was a missionary and pastor, who was as Young put it "an angry, young man." While his parents served in New Guinea as missionaries, he was abused by the tribesmen his family attempted to bring Christianity to. As a six-year-old, he was sent to boarding school, where he endured more abuse at the hands of the older students at the school.

This led Young to believe in Christianity in these terms as a child: "My father represented God. He was the darkness behind Jesus."

God the father was the darkness and he required

See YOUNG, 2A

Senate hopeful stumps

Senate District 1 candidate Clark Twiddy presented himself in Elizabeth City March 6 for what he described as a "job interview," fielding questions from members of the Pasquotank County Republican Party. — 4A



Officers installed

The annual installation of officers for Unanimity Lodge No. 7 AFAM of Edenton took place recently at the Lodge building at 215 East Water Street on Edenton Bay. — 3B



Teacher composes

Nicole Byrd-Phelps, an area teacher, has written a musical called "We're Riding On The Bus." The program is scheduled for 1:10 p.m. Tuesday, March 27 in the D.F. Walker Multi-purpose Room. — 4B

Duo team up for drive

A little girl's caring heart has resulted in the formation of a Community Snack Program at White Oak Elementary School. And her mom, who helped her start the program, hopes to expand it so that snacks will also be available at D.F. Walker Elementary as well. — 6A

Capital projects continue to progress

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

Jamie Johnson, director of maintenance for the Edenton-Chowan Schools, told the board of education at its March 6 monthly meeting that steady progress is being made in the effort to complete capital outlay projects at the county's four schools during the 2017-2018 school year.

"We've made a lot of progress," he told the board. "Hopefully we can continue to move in that direction."

Among the larger projects that needs completing is work on a pump station utilized by both Chowan Middle School and the adjacent Northern Chowan Community Center. Johnson said that since

the county uses that site it has taken over this particular project. Focusing on that job has caused some other school improvement projects to be placed on hold, he said.

In response to a question from board member Gil Burroughs, Johnson said the estimated cost of the project was around \$100,000 and that the school system would pay half. The middle school and the rec center are also both scheduled to have storm shutters installed that will be much nicer than what is there now, he said.

Johnson added that another priority project at CMS was to refill potholes and restripe the parking lot at an estimated cost of \$6,000.

See PROJECTS, 7A

EC Schools moving on up to the east side

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

The school board voted unanimously at its March 6 monthly meeting to approve a relocation plan and a budget for the proposed relocation of central services (administrative) offices to the Edenton campus of College of the Albemarle.

"We're very excited to hopefully move forward on this," Superintendent Rob Jackson told the board prior to the vote.

During his presentation, Jackson unveiled a proposed timeline for the project that calls for advertising for bids starting March 11 and making bid documents available the following day. Bids will be due

April 10 at 2 p.m. with approval of the bids by the board of education scheduled for the same day.

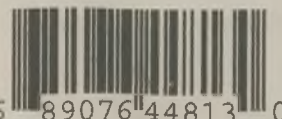
The estimated cost of work to the area of the building that would be occupied by central office staff to make it suitable for their use is \$149,941, Jackson said. That cost would represent about three years' worth of lease payments at their current location on West Queen Street.

He also offered the board a look at a breakdown of expected items and costs that included substructure, \$3,500; interior construction, \$113,242; mechanical, \$10,200; electrical, \$13,500; and special construction, \$9,500.

See RELOCATION, 7A



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