

PERQUIMANS COUNTY RECEIVED
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JOSHUA'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

Father, son go on safari

SUSAN HARRIS

The animals were fascinating, but the women have it tough.

They were two impressions Joshua Hollowell brought back from South Africa, where he and his father, Ralph, spent more than 10 days in October. The two went to indulge their love of travel, adventure and game hunting.

Joshua said he was taken with the cape buffalo, lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants, hippos, monkeys, baboons and other animals on the Kikuyu Preserve near Port Elizabeth where he and his dad stayed. He didn't hunt this trip, but his dad did.

Joshua did, however, get up close and personal with a lion while on safari in an open Jeep. The lion came within 4-5 feet of the vehicle. Joshua was told to stay very still, and adults in the vehicle were prepared to shoot the animal if neces-



Joshua Hollowell and the mascot of his fifth grade class, Classey, pose with native South African women who can carry an amazing 100 pounds on their heads. Meeting the women was just a small part of Joshua's excellent adventure.

sary. On another occasion, he was charged by an elephant.

He also met an elephant named George. George had a hole in his ear and was kicked out of his herd because of his deformity, Joshua said.

And a point of interest about elephants was that

the ear of African elephants is shaped like the continent, one way to tell an African and an Asian elephant apart.

"The women work harder and I wouldn't want to be one," Joshua said.

His view was that the women, who sometimes carry over 100 pounds on their heads either in jugs or

just slung over, do all the work while the men stand around and watch.

Indeed, Joshua found many things about the lifestyle in Africa different than that in America. Homes resembled sheds and lean-tos with holes in the walls for windows, and were crowded with family

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ATVs stolen

Thieves strike during holidays

MARGARET FISHER

Four all-terrain vehicles were stolen from two areas in the county between Dec. 20 and Jan. 1.

Three four-wheelers were taken from the Woodville area and one from a home on Center Hill Road, said Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley.

All of them were inside of a garage or outbuilding, but none of the buildings were locked, Tilley said.

Some of the residents were home at night when it was believed the thefts occurred, and some owners

reported the serial numbers of their ATVs. Those numbers will be listed with the National Crime Information Center.

"Four-wheelers have been a big item to get rid of quick," Tilley said.

There was a rash of ATV thefts a couple of years ago in Pasquotank County, Tilley said. Some of those vehicles turned up in Virginia, he said.

The Sheriff's Office recommends that ATV owners keep their vehicles locked up when they are not in use, and keep the serial number in a safe place.

There are no suspects or leads on the stolen ATVs. If anyone has information about the all-terrain vehicle thefts, please contact the Sheriff's Office at 426-5615.

SPCA seeks to curb feral cat population

MARGARET FISHER

The SPCA of Perquimans County recently met to discuss plans to spay and neuter feral cats that have become numerous in some communities.

"We're going to target areas that have feral cats," said Keith Burnett, president.

Two target areas SPCA members would like to address initially are Snug Harbor and Holiday Island, he said.

The SPCA is hoping to model their program on a successful program held in Montana, though it is offered on a much larger scale there in their own facility.

The plan is to alter cats that are captured. After recovery, the felines will be re-released.

"The theory is, and it's been proven, that once all the animals are spayed and neutered, they will not let any other animals in," Burnett said. "After a while, they die out."

Christian Ford, a veterinarian at Chowan Animal Hospital in Edenton, is assisting as an advisor to the SPCA. Ford has suggested ideas for the SPCA to consider in order for the program to be successful. One consideration is the expense of obtaining a facility to perform the surgeries, purchase or borrow equipment and retain veterinarians and anesthesiologists.

"The key is getting the facility before any equipment is purchased," Ford said. The building would need to be large enough to accommodate possibly 50 animal crates, several surgery tables and a large number of volunteers.

Once the venue is obtained, then various types of equipment will be needed in order to perform the operations. The SPCA is hoping to get equipment loaned or donated, as well as monetary donations to purchase equipment and supplies. One apparatus, a

portable anesthesia machine, costs \$2,000, and they will need at least five of them. Ford estimates the cost of a surgery pack and suture material for each surgery to be about \$90.

Other supplies they will need include traps, animal crates, blankets and towels, and these could be donated.

To keep costs down initially, the SPCA could partner with the North Carolina State University Veterinary School's Campus Community Partnership. They would do the altering out of a mobile unit, while the local SPCA would trap the animals and provide volunteers.

Burnett said that the SPCA plans to do a small-scale trial run — trapping as many as 25 cats — to learn how the program will work.

Feral cats in the county seem to be a bigger problem than stray dogs, Burnett said. Dogs are pack animals and often move about. But cats tend to colonize a particular area where food is available, he said.

Burnett estimates that the program will not be up and running for at least a year.

"The reality is that it will probably take a good year, year and a half, in my

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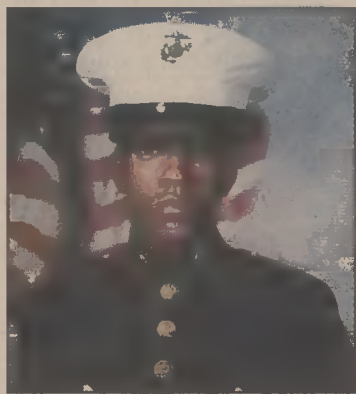
Fear accompanied young soldier on tour in Iraq

MARGARET FISHER

Fear is what Sgt. Johnny Ray Warren Jr. said he felt during his two trips to Iraq. Warren knew about a few soldiers who were killed.

"I didn't want to be there. What if I was next?" he asked, rhetorically. "What if one of my friends didn't make it back?"

Warren graduated from Perquimans County High School in 2000 and joined the U.S. Marines in May 2002. He was sent to basic training at Parris Island, S.C., then to the Marine Combat Training School at Camp Geiger in Jacksonville and then to Fort Lee in Petersburg, Va., to learn food service.



Johnny Ray Warren Jr.

His first duty station was Camp Lejeune at Jacksonville where he was deployed to Kuwait in March 2003. There, he helped support troops in Iraq with food, ammunition and supplies. Instead of working in food service,

Warren said he spent his workdays shuffling paperwork.

Warren was in the Eighth Communication Battalion, II Marines Expeditionary Force. Kuwait was fairly quiet, except for the numerous drills, he said. The drills were held to prepare troops for gas, chemical and biological attacks.

The drills often happened in the wee hours of the mornings when he was sleeping, and they would have to run outside in their chemical suits. Warren said he was never sure, at the time, if they were drills or the real thing.

"It was pretty scary because we would have to

stay in our suits for hours at a time," Warren said.

He wasn't able to leave the base unless he was in a convoy. When he did leave to deliver supplies to other bases, it was scary, he said. Vehicles would speed past them on the highway because there was no speed limit enforced. He didn't know if one of them might be a suicide bomber, and troops were told to treat everyone as the enemy and be cautious, he said.

Warren spent a month in Iraq on this deployment at Camp Viper, a U.S. Marine Corp operating site located near the ancient city of Ur and three miles from the Baghdad border. There

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War teaches a lesson in freedom for U.S. Marine

MARGARET FISHER

When Cpl. Bret Bell joined the U.S. Marine Corp, he said that he couldn't wait to get to Iraq and kill people. When he got there, the situation was not as he had imagined, and it turned out to be eye opening.

Perquimans County is a second home to Bell. He was born and raised in Stone Mountain, Ga., but he has more than a few relatives in and around Winfall.

Bell joined the Marines in August 2001 and went to basic training at Parris Island, S.C. He attended infantry school at Camp Lejeune and Counter-Terrorism School with a Marine training unit at a U.S. Navy base in

Chesapeake, Va.

His first duty station was with the 1st Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team at NOB Norfolk, Va. His tour lasted from February 2003 to December 2004.

Bell's training was similar to what a S.W.A.T. Team goes through. He's a rifleman who specializes as an assault breacher with close quarter battle. A breacher is one who makes a forced entry by using explosives, Bell said.

In November 2003, Bell deployed to Iraq for his first of three tours. He worked at the American Embassy, which was formerly the Republican Palace, in the heart of Baghdad. It was the main base of operations for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Bell was looking for a

military fighting adventure, but he discovered that the enemy wasn't all around.

"Ninety-five percent of the people there welcomed you," he said. "They knew why you were there and didn't give you any grief about it."

He said that he saw people living in poverty, though they had well-kept homes. A lot of people lived in crowded conditions, he said. But, Saddam Hussein's generals and other powerful heads lived in larger, more expensive homes.

When a location was targeted, Bell and his team would raid the place and take whatever or whoever they found back to the palace. The captive(s) would be interrogated.



Bret Bell was all smiles as he returned home in October from a tour in the Middle East.

"The first time was just a learning experience, but it was also surreal," Bell said. "...There's mortality of doing what we do, and it will make you think twice."

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 61, Low: 37
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 50, Low: 31
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 47, Low: 30
PARTLY CLOUDY