

Engel's talk on Dickens sheds new light on Christmas

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Chowan Herald

The life and times of author Charles Dickens will form the centerpiece around which Professor Elliot Engel will present, "A Dickens of a Christmas" on Saturday, Dec. 3.

His presentation will be offered in a set of two programs - the first taking place in the afternoon from 1-3 p.m. and an evening performance scheduled from 6-8 p.m.

Both will be sponsored by the Friends of the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library and held at the his-

toric 1767 Chowan County Courthouse in Edenton. Both shows will be followed by Victorian-style receptions featuring hors d'oeuvres that are sweet and savory, and Christmas spirits.

Tickets are \$40 per person and may be purchased at the Penelope Barker Welcome Center, located at 505 South Broad Street. Tickets may also be reserved by calling the welcome center at 482-7800.

This will mark the first time Engel has presented a program in Edenton and he said he is looking forward to the experience.

Engel said his presentation will look at educating his audiences in a humorous way about how the story Dickens captured in his classic "A Christmas Carol" forever changed the way people have thought about the meaning of Christmas and how they celebrate it.

"My ultimate goal," he said, "is to educate. I do that through entertainment."

Engel, who lives in Raleigh, has lectured across the United States about Dickens, and his mini-lecture series concerning the world-famous author has

aired on numerous PBS television stations.

He has also won acclaim for his work from national figures such as Stephen Chbosky, screenwriter of the movie "Rent," and co-creator of the CBS series, "Jericho."

Chbosky observed: "With each spoken word, Dr. Elliot Engel brings literature and history to life. He is not only an academic, he is an artist. You will laugh a lot, you will learn a lot."

The Dickens theme will be carried out across the community's holiday celebration starting with the Friday, Dec. 2, Christmas

Extravaganza and Flotilla and continuing with the Dickens Christmas Parade on Saturday, Dec. 10. Also complementing the celebration will be the live theater production of "A Christmas Carol" brought to life by the cast of the Epic Music Theatre led by Laurie Edwards. The musical will come to life at the historic 1767 Chowan County Courthouse on Dec. 9, 10 and 11. Tickets are \$25 and seating is limited so early reservations are encouraged.

For additional details on these and other events, go to www.visitedenton.com.

Wreath sale to start

From Staff Reports

Perquimans County 4-H is now accepting orders for holiday wreaths.

The cost for a 26-inch wreath is \$10. For more information on placing an order call the Perquimans Extension Center at 426-7697. The deadline to order is Nov. 15.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gina is a cool and calm Brown Tabby. This young female has beautiful golden eyes as well as a beautiful personality.

PETS OF THE WEEK



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tall and blonde, Liza is quite a stunning girl with a sweet nature. She is between 5 and 6 years old and healthy but heartworm positive. She will need treatments.

SURVEY

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yes when asked if the faculty works in a school environment that is safe. That compares to 90.6 percent two years ago.

One veteran teacher who was at school Thursday but not directly involved in the

fight agreed she still feels safe.

"It gets worse every year, but overall I still feel safe. I'm not threatened and I'd only be moving other students along, not trying to break up the fray."

When it came another question asking is "my school is a good place to work and learn" 91.7

percent of local teachers agreed. That compares to 86 percent two years ago.

The survey was open statewide for most of the month of March.

The school system has recently beefed up security for an outside threat with electronic doors that prevent someone from entering the building without per-

mission. The fight Thursday involved students already in the building.

While teachers reported being safe, many said some students don't follow rules of conduct according to the survey. Across all four schools in the system, 30 percent of students said students didn't follow the rules. At Perquimans County Middle School, the figure was the figure was 49 percent. That's an improvement over two years ago when 60 percent of PCMS teachers said students followed the rules.

Access to technology was clearly not a problem for local teachers - 100 percent

said they have access to reliable communication technology including phones, faxes and e-mail.

A big majority (86 percent) of Perquimans teachers said they plan to continue teaching where they are. That compares to 81 percent statewide. Two percent of Perquimans teachers said they plan to leave education entirely, compared to 5 percent statewide.

"I see a lot of improvements in all areas of the survey," said Teresa Beard-sley, the school's spokeswoman when the report was released. "Our school system is moving forward and we will continue to

work towards becoming an elite school system. With high quality administrators, teachers and staff coupled with the amount of resources available to staff and students, we are well on our way towards our goal."

The survey was first administered in 2002 as part of the Governor's Teacher Working Conditions Initiative.

Both Perquimans County Middle School and Hertford Grammar School had 100 percent participation from teachers this year.

The 2016 report can be viewed at <http://www.nc-teachingconditions.org/results>

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DINNER

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and available from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. Those that want to eat in at the Perquimans Recreation Center will pay \$10 for a blue ticket and can dine from 5:30 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Library supporters want broad based support for the project so they have distributed the 450 blue tickets around. Layden said each of the Ruritan Clubs involved and the library got 45 tickets for the eat-in dinner. Carolina Trophy got 20, and the chamber of commerce got 25.

Those who dine in can hear entertainment from Mickey Phelps and each Ruritan Club will have an opportunity to talk about the projects they support. There will also be a slide show of what the new library will look like.

The Belvidere Ruritan Club is providing the sauce with financial support from Durants Neck. Parksville is doing the noodles, Inter-County will provide the drinks, Bethel will be providing little cakes for the take-out orders, Forestburg is giving the setups and plates and Bear Swamp is providing the bread.

When Perquimans County agreed to build a new library, a portion of the \$3 million was earmarked to furnish it. Both Layden and Muriel Harmon and other supporters want to make

sure there is enough to do it first class.

"This means we can buy a desk that lasts for 50 years, not a Wal-Mart desk that you have to put together," Layden said. "We feel if we put really good stuff in there, it will last a long time."

"We want to get state of the art equipment," Harmon said. "A state of the art library should have state of the art equipment and furnishings."

Library supporters will also be selling squares for a memorial quilt that will hang in the new library. The cost for each square is \$100 and they're custom made to honor some one or some thing. The quilt sale will be an ongoing project for the library.

For more information, call Layden at 297-2875 or Harmon at 312-6348.

EARLY VOTING

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There were 53 that listed themselves as "other" according to nevotetracker.com, a project of the Civitas Institute.

In addition to a list of national and statewide candidates, voters will be asked to elect three Perquimans County Commissioners out of a list of four candidates. Voters can only vote for one, and the top three win office in December.

Kyle Jones, a Republican, is the only incumbent on the ballot. He's seeking a second four-year term. Other challengers are Alan Lennon, a Republican and Democrats Joseph Hoffer and Charles Woodard.

The Bethel precinct remains the most active with 929 votes cast. Following in second was New Hope with 560 with Parksville in third at 525. There were 248 voters from East Hertford who'd cast ballots and 203

from West Hertford. The Belvidere precinct had the fewest number of votes cast at 131.

Early voting hours today are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday the hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Perquimans will hold one Saturday of early voting, on Saturday. Hours will be 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. All early voting happens at the Perquimans County Board of Elections office on Edenton Road Street.

Perquimans County Register of Deeds Jacqueline Frierson, a Democrat, is running unopposed in that race.

In a regional race for the N.C. Senate, Republican incumbent Bill Cook is facing a challenge from Brownie Futrell, a Democrat from Washington, N.C. Cook lives in Chocowinity.

In the District 1 House race, Republican incumbent Bob Steinburg is challenged by Sam Davis, a Democrat from Elizabeth City. Steinburg lives in Edenton.

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