

FIRST THURSDAY

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Franklin County Schools

DECEMBER, 2008

Our *F*uture, Our *C*ommitment, Our *S*tudents

BMS Students Emphasizing Saving Water

National Contest Sparks Interest

Without water, there would be no life. Conserving the precious resource often gets overlooked, but not by a driven group of Bunn Middle School students.

Erin Costolo, Thomas Clifton and Jenna Perry have teamed up with science teacher Michael Sheldon to form EcoHeroes, a group on a mission to get the Bunn community to save as much water as possible and at the same time compete in the Siemen's national *We Can Change the World Contest*. The group that distributes the most bottles will win.

"As a teacher, you get emails about grants and projects," Sheldon said. "This one caught my attention, so I decided to give this a try. As a science teacher, I'm environmentally

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Principal Profile

Learn more about Louis-
burg Elementary Principal
Williams Harris. [Page 2.](#)

Brain Game Champs

LHS students capture Brain
Game win. [Page 7](#)

Grants Galore



Franklinton Elementary School Principal Carol Davis (left) congratulates FES teacher Tasha Wilder for receiving a grant from United Way.

United Way Delivers \$22K; Terrell Lane Sets Pace With 4 Grants

The United Way of Franklin County (UWFC) celebrated its 12th year of funding projects that enhance classroom instruction to help children and youth succeed. With this year's grant awards, the United Way has provided a total of \$272,844 to support 224 projects conducted by teachers in Franklin County.

For the 2008-09 academic year, 19 of 62 grant applications received funding. In all, 11 schools received grants, but Terrell Lane Middle School led the way with four grants.

Terrell Lane has set the pace in recent years with grants from United Way and other organizations. TLMS' pace is set by current TLMS teacher of the year Katie Tatum.

Pat Johnston, UWFC Executive Director, confirmed that "the competition this year, as usual, was very strong, and the review judges had two very difficult tasks." The first task was to identify the most innovative projects with the highest impact on the educational process.

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LES Principal William Harris gets a warm greeting from students transitioning to another activity.

Mustang Pride

Family Values Drive Louisburg Elementary Principal Harris

Growing up on a farm with eight children and losing your father at the age of 11 doesn't draw a map to success.

That map didn't stop Louisburg Elementary Principal William Harris from reaching his goals.

Harris, who has been the LES Principal since the fall of 2004, gets a lot of his internal drive from his 87-year-old mother, Annie Harris.

"My father passed away, and it left my mother in a tough situation," Harris said.

"She made sure each of us went on to receive a high school diploma and receive further education in whatever interested us."

For Harris, that interest was education. His inspiration for becoming a teacher was sparked during his tenure as a student at Bunn High School after being taught by Robert Taylor. Taylor taught for 35 years.

"Mr. Taylor inspired a lot of people," Harris said. "I had a lot of admiration for him and my other teachers as well. Teaching is

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BMS' Floess Endures Lifetime Experience

While many students have good intentions of leading in life, it's not often students get the chance to build leadership skills on the level that Bunn Middle School seventh-grader Tabitha Floess experienced.

Floess recently attended the Junior National Youth Leaders Conference in Washington DC after being recommended by her sixth-grade teacher Amy Tunstall. Tunstall, who was BMS Teacher of the Year last year, made the recommendation based on Floess' strong academic performance and willingness to learn.

"I think this conference has helped a lot," Floess said. "Hopefully it will help me get into college."

Floess' current long-term educational plan includes attending the North Carolina State University Veterinarian School to pursue her dream to become a licensed veterinarian.

While attending the conference, Floess was able to visit many monuments throughout DC, including the Lincoln Memorial.

"This was my favorite site," Floess said. "The two angels on the left and right side were beautiful, and I thought it was neat how Abe had his fist clinched in one hand and the other hand open to represent strength and leadership at the same time."

One of the keynote speakers was a former conference attendant who is now in high school and she emphasized how much the conference helped her.

"I met a lot of people who were just like me," Floess said. "I had



Tabitha Floess posing in front of the U. S. Capitol.

been away for band camp before, but this was different because I had a lot more in common with the people."

Floess built a few strong relationships with her peers during the week-long stay.

"I would recommend this conference to anyone," Floess said. "It's probably one of the best experiences they can have."

Amanda Floess, mother of Tabitha, was obviously pleased with her daughter's success.

"Coming from Mrs. Tunstall, who is a class act, it is a big honor," Amanda said. "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. For Mrs. Tunstall to recognize how hard she works is very special. Tabitha works really hard; it's paying off."

Her father Scot is equally proud.

Tabitha hopes to attend the alumni conference next year in Boston.



BMS teacher Amy Tunstall nominated Tabitha Floess for the youth leadership conference.



2007-2008 Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council

FCS Superintendent Dr. Bert L'Homme values input from teachers from every school. This year's Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council (STAC). The group meets once a month and discusses school issues and potential changes to improve FCS. There are 14 schools within the system now, and each school has one teacher representative present at each meeting. In the front row are Michael Grover (BHS) and Mary Sahady (LES). In the second row are Scott Ring (LOMES), Randy Kargarise (BES) and Ron Kirby (CCMS). In the third row are Michelle McGhee (FES), Evelyn Ballentine (YES) and Jane Riggs (LMES). In the fourth row are Amy Tunstall (BMS), Nancy McCrea (EBES), Linda Frederickson (Central Office) and Rosanne Dickerson (Royal). In the back row are Jonathan Phillips (FHS), Phil Privette (TLMS), Dr. Bert L'Homme (Superintendent) and Elwood Johnson (LHS).



Elementary Schools

Elementary teachers earning United Way grants were as follows: Back row, Michelle McGhee (FES), Wendy Walker (BES), Elaine Ihrle (BES), Lacy Coley (Royal), Scott Ring (Long Mill) and Pat Dodson (Long Mill). Front row: Tasha Wilder (FES), Mary Sahady (LES), and Maria Collins for Marla Mize (Laurel Mill).

GRANTS

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The second task involved determining how to allocate the \$22,000 available for educational grants. "All 62 applications requesting \$78,000 in funding were worthy projects. I wish we had the funds to support every grant application," said Johnston.

On November 20 the United Way and Franklin County Schools hosted an Educational Grant Award Reception to recognize the educational grant recipients for their achievements. Dr. L'Homme, Franklin County Schools Superintendent, and the principal of each school assisted Ms. Johnston in presenting the grant awards to the following teachers.

United Way Grant Award Recipients

Bunn Elementary

Wendy Walker

Elaine Ihrle

Bunn High

Jill Massey

Cedar Creek Middle

Eboni DuBose

Jason King

Creative Education Center

Cheryl DeMent

Franklinton Elementary

Michelle McGhee

LaTasha Wilder

Franklinton High

Barbara Jean Howell

Lisa Lawrence

Laurel Mill Elementary

Marla Mize

Long Mill Elementary

Scott Ring

Patricia Dodson

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UW

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Louisburg Elementary

Mary Sahady

Royal Elementary

Lacy Coley

Terrell Lane Middle

Katie Tatum

Catina Jordan

Matthew Carter

Chad Moore

The United Way of Franklin County's educational grant program reflects the organization's belief that the building blocks for a good life include education, health, and self-sufficiency. Every dollar United Way raises locally is invested back into the community through community impact grants, educational grants, day of caring program, and much more.

United Way addresses critical needs county-wide by funding programs and services that focus on aiding families in crisis, assisting classroom education, building vital and safe neighborhoods, helping children and youth succeed, improving people's health and well-being, meeting basic needs, promoting self-sufficiency, and supporting the aging population.

You can help the United Way improve lives in Franklin County by sending your tax deductible donation by December 31. United Way of Franklin County, P.O. Box 342, Louisburg, NC 27549.



More winners! In the Back row are Jason King (CCMS), Jill Massey (BHS), Barbara Jean Howell (FHS) and Chad Moore (TLMS). In the front row are Katie Tatum (TLMS), Eboni DuBose (CCMS) and Debra Hall for Cheryl Dement (CEC).



Long Mill Elementary assistant principal Carleen Jones and teacher Scott Ring discuss the grant Ring earned.

Brain Game Champs



LHS Students Set The Pace In Area Competition

Members of the Louisburg High School Quiz Bowl team showed off their skills recently in the WRAL TV Brain Game. Cameron Gupton, Yvette Townsley and Ben Lord (right) teamed up to topple Hobbton High and Edgecombe Early College. The show aired on November 22nd on WRAL TV. The LHS stalwarts totaled 570 points, while Edgecombe finished with 110 and Hobbton 90. It was the third-highest point total of the season. As a result, the squad has qualified for the Brain Game Tournament of Champions in December. Questions were chosen from a variety of categories including math, science, literature, pop culture, poetry and geography. The show airs each Saturday at 11:30 p.m. on WRAL TV.

Fun With Science at FES

Franklinton Elementary School fourth graders had special field trip for two days at the end of October. *High-touch, Hightech Science Made Fun* from Cary came to share the program *Extreme Scenes*. Students created animals in their natural habitat, saw real animals, played the bird beak game and got to hang out with scientists all day to ask tons of questions. They met scorpions, fire-bellied toads, chameleons, and tarantulas. Fun was had by all; the 4th graders can't wait for December for the next program. Instead of having a traditional fall field trip, the field trip came to the school.



Sponsors For Foster Children Needed

Thanksgiving and Christmas are times to have food and fellowship with loved ones. While the adults converse, the children will play and feel secure in the love of those surrounding them.

As the holidays approach, Franklin County Department of Social Services (FCDSS) has 75 children in custody. Children in foster care have experienced very difficult circumstances. Initially they are often withdrawn, tearful or angry. They lack confidence, self-esteem, and trust. Relationships have to be established with healthy interaction to help these children develop trust and confidence. Social Services provides them with someone to listen, interpret any special needs, and establish a support system for

their continued development. These children are like all children that we know and love; they too enjoy playing and having fun.

Children of all ages are looking forward to Christmas trees, stockings, and presents. For those in foster care, it can be a lonely, sad time with little expectation of trimmings, trees, and gifts. It is during this time that the support of our community is especially needed to show these children that they can celebrate and receive kindness from those around them.

Every year an Angel Tree is placed at Wal-Mart with angels representing a child, their age and a gift. Each child has a few items on his or her wish list that range from winter coats, bikes, movies, or gift cards. Individu-

als select an angel from the tree to sponsor a present for a child. By sponsoring a child's gift, you provide them with a present on Christmas.

Foster care children, staff, and parents appreciate the support of the community through sponsorship or monetary donation. All gifts go to the foster children and monetary contributions are tax deductible.

If you have questions, please contact Karen Wilson at the Franklin County Department of Social Services at 919-496-8103. Items purchased at Wal-Mart may be left there or delivered unwrapped to FCDSS for distribution, or checks to FCDSS for the Foster Children Fund may be mailed to FCDSS at P.O. Box 669, Louisburg, N.C. 27549.

HARRIS

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something I always wanted to do.”

After graduating from Bunn High School, Harris went on to receive a teaching degree from Elizabeth City State University and later earned a Master of Education from N.C. State University.

His first teaching position was at Gold Sand Middle. Harris taught math and science and coached a variety of sports during his stay at Gold Sand from 1981-1983. In the fall of 1983, he took the leap to high school academics and coaching. Harris was a varsity football assistant at LHS as well as head girls softball coach and head junior varsity football coach. He taught math at LHS until 1987 before returning to Gold Sand in the fall of the same year.



William Harris still takes time visit with students.

Harris stayed at Gold Sand through the switch to Terrell Lane Middle School, before landing an administration job as an assistant principal at Cedar Creek Middle School under the direction of former CCMS Principal Dale Byrns.

With the promotion of Lynn Henderson, former LES Principal, the opportunity opened to become Principal of Louisburg Elementary.

Each of Harris' four sisters and four brothers went on to be successful with careers ranging from engineering to human resources.

“There’s a common expectation and general understanding that we will work hard and support each other,” Harris said. “We all grew up with responsibilities and worked together, and we continue to do so as adults.”

Those same family expectations are expected by the teachers and staff of Louisburg Elementary.

“We have a very talented staff at Louisburg Elementary,” Harris said. “We all have our strong points, and I try to get the teachers and staff to combine their strengths so we can succeed.

“Being able to rely on qualified experts is good,” Harris said. “Our staff knows their job very well. Together, we help our children grow.”

Louisburg Elementary School was recognized as a school of high growth by the North Carolina Department of Instruction for the 2007-2008 school year.

While LES is not among the top performing elementary schools in terms of overall composite results, Harris and the FCS administration are very encouraged by the continued growth at LES.

Despite the recent gains, Louisburg Elementary is often scrutinized by the public. This is a topic Harris is well aware of.

“No matter where you are, you are always going to have naysayers,” Harris said. “They were here before me, and I realized the situation before I got here. The perception was the same when I was a student at Bunn High School.

“This is a good school with good kids. We have many parents who are working hard to provide for their children to make sure their kids have good educational opportunities now and in the future.”

Harris points out that LES has been frequently visited by major universities including Duke, UNC and

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LES

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North Carolina Central. This past year, former UNC Chancellor James Moeser visited LES and was impressed.

"I got to see three wonderful teachers," Moeser said after his visit. "You (Franklin County Schools) are very fortunate to have teachers of that caliber. I was impressed by their teaching skills and their excellent techniques. They are very caring and relaxed with the students. Every success the student had was celebrated. That is very important, and it makes reading enjoyable for these kids."

Harris pointed out that all of the visitors, including visitors from the North Carolina Department of Instruction, recognize Louisburg Elementary for its positive attributes.

"I invite anybody to come and visit us before forming a judgment, Harris said. Are we perfect? No. Not yet."

Harris had to adjust to the different needs of students in elementary school after spending nearly 20 years in the high school and middle school environment but believes he adjusted well during the transition and continues to learn.

His biggest current concern is the testing performance of his students.

"This is an on-going concern," Harris said. "We will continue improve because we work together. We are using more formative assessments to address the students' individual needs."

Like many principals, Harris particularly enjoys the students.

"The kids really make Louisburg Elementary," Harris said. "We are very diverse, and we get along very well. The different personalities make this place so interesting. The youthful energy the kids show and being able to watch them develop an awareness of individuality is fascinating. Their perspective is less judgmental than the world's perspective.

"Our kids can shed off so many different barriers that they face on a day-to-day basis; it's amazing they come to school and do so well.

"Our students understand what need really means, so they love to give – giving is meaningful to them."

Harris praised the support of his administrative staff. Assistant Principal Judy Stover offers a wealth of knowledge and experience through her more than 30 years in education.

"Mrs. Stover is a tremendous asset," Harris said. "She is very strong in the elementary peda-

gogy. Even before she came to Louisburg Elementary, I knew she had a great background. We went through the administrator program together so we were familiar with each other. We work well together, and I think that is a major reason why."

In addition to the experience and know-how that Stover offers, Harris has a talented office secretary in Tammi Lassiter and a seasoned Data Manager in Bonnie Inscoe.

"Mrs. Lassiter and Mrs. Inscoe have exceptional credentials," Harris said. "They are tremendous. If I need something, I can go to them, and they will have it. I never have to worry about them. I can rely on them always."

As a school principal, extra time isn't found too often. On the occasions when Harris gets to kick back, he spends time with his three children and wife. He has a 14-year old son who attends Bunn High School as well as an older son and daughter. His 24-year-old daughter has a career in health-care, while his 22-year-old son is in the Air Force.

Like many people, Harris would like to spend more time with his family, but in the meantime, he's going to continue to focus on making Louisburg Elementary the best school he possibly can.

- Nathan Moreschi

Story Clarification from October Issue of First Thursday

In the October issue of *First Thursday*, a financial literacy project grant at Franklinton High School was outlined. The story did not point out that Emily Bunch played a major role in obtaining the grant and developing the project. Bunch is now a teacher at Leesville Road High School in Raleigh. We regret the oversight.

LHS Grad Wins \$5K In National Contest

Louisburg High School graduate and UNC-Chapel Hill junior Tripp Gobble is making big strides in the world of business.

The Morehead Scholar recently won \$5,000 for an innovative idea in the music industry after entering the Race to Be Entrepreneurship Challenge.

Gobble cofounded Vinyl Records this past August with AI Mask (son of Dr. Allen Mask of WRAL TV 5). Vinyl Records is a student-run record label program that allows students a chance to display musical talents from performance to pro-

duction.

The company is off to a strong start, signing three groups to labels. The groups were determined on a campus vote that included votes from nearly 25% of the student population that lives on campus.

Gobble valued the opportunity for many reasons, including working with established entrepreneurs which he learned valuable information.

In addition to the cash prize, Gobble got the opportunity to ring the bell at the New York Stock Ex-

change with music industry icon Russell Simmons.

For more information about the contest in which Gobble won, visit www.racetobeusa.com. In addition, there is full story on through UNC-Chapel Hill at www.moreheadcain.org. Search for the story in the archives section.

Gobble, a 2005 LHS graduate, is a journalism major at UNC and intends on attending graduate school after graduating in 2010.



Grants Pouring in for FHS' Lawrence

Franklinton High School drama and English teacher Lisa Lawrence isn't afraid of hard work. Her hard work has led to a strong drama department at Franklinton High School.

As the program grows, money is needed for different programs ; most of the program's funding comes from donations and more recently through grants.

In recent months, Lawrence has obtained three grants totaling \$5400. The grants don't just help Franklinton High School but multiple schools throughout the county.

Lawrence earned a \$1500 grant from Wake Electric (Bright Ideas) that will result in more lighting for the Franklinton High School stage. Students from Franklinton Elementary, Youngsville Elementary, Long Mill Elementary and Franklinton High School all use the stage for performances. The lighting will enhance the show for the audience as well.



Lisa Lawrence

Lawrence received an additional \$1500 grant from United Way of Franklin County. The grant will support the new technical theater class that begins next semester at FHS. The basis of the grant is to upgrade lighting and sound in the FHS auditorium to a point that students who are interested in pursu-

ing a study in Theater Arts have been exposed to the necessary equipment. Students will research equipment, layouts, installations and recommend upgrades to the present equipment. They will learn to operate equipment that will also enhance the quality of presentations made by all theater groups in the county.

The Franklin County Arts Council awarded Lawrence a \$2400 grant that will help fund the Franklinton Area Community Theater. The funds from that grant were used to present the play *Godspell* this past November. The funds will also go towards the production of *Beauty and the Beast* in the spring. Remaining money will be used for additional technical upgrades.

"The support from these groups allows us to add to the quality of our presentations, and it lets the students know that their community supports them - an amazing combination," Lawrence said.

All County Success

The annual All County Band competition took place the final Tuesday in November at Louisburg High School. This year's event was held earlier than in years past, but nonetheless, Louisburg High, Franklinton High, Bunn High, Terrell Lane Middle, Bunn Middle and Cedar Creek Middle bands delighted the crowd with a strong performance. The middle school performers played a variety of songs, including *For The Glory of the Flag* and *Wyndham March*. The high schools (right) played a wide range of music as well, including *Allied Honor* and *Encanto*.



Green Challenge from Bunn Middle

In an effort to save on an electricity bill as well as save money for the school system, Bunn Middle School has placed signs on all light fixtures throughout the building as a reminder to everyone to turn off all lights when they are not in use. Bunn Middle is also flipping only one light switch on and covered the others with tape which causes users to use a fraction of

the fluorescent lights. Bunn Middle challenges other schools to do the same.

BMS Honors

Bunn Middle held an assembly to recognize student achievements for the first quarter in early November. There were nearly 100 students who received certificates, Bulldog chains and medals in these categories: Bulldog Team

Award – students with perfect attendance, no discipline referrals, and maintained academic success of “A” and “AB” Honor Rolls. Perfect Attendance Award, “A” Honor Roll (Principal’s Award), “AB” Honor Roll, Academic Achievement Award for students who made A, B, and C grades, and Top Reader Awards.



Signs of the Holiday Season

FCS students kicked off the holiday season December 2nd with traditional holiday songs in front of the old Franklin County courthouse. Music teachers Bryson Finney (EBES), David McCray (BES) and Rebecca Wachholz (LMES) lead the students in singing.



Bunn Middle students Thomas Clifton, Erin Costolo, and Jenna Perry are taking conservation seriously by going door-to-door to offer ways to conserve water.

WATER

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conscientious. Because of droughts, we need to be aware of how to conserve water.”

Sheldon estimates a little more than 200 bottles have been distributed.

In addition to pointing out the waste involved with careless use of water such as brushing your teeth with the sink on, the group primarily has focused on reducing the capacity of most toilet tanks.

Just how can this be done? It's a straight forward process. EcoHeroes went on a school-wide mission to collect as many plastic drinking bottles as possible and filled them with sand. The bottles are then placed in toilet tanks to essentially lower the water capacity without changing the operating function of the toilet.

“The students have really enjoyed this,” Sheldon said. “They've impressed me with their ability to take on a project like this.”

During their exploratory classes, students took to the streets of Bunn, going door-to-door to get people to place the bottles of sand in their toilets to conserve water and save money.

The Bunn Water Department fully supported the idea, as did most businesses and homes in the Bunn area. The idea of saving water and money at the same time was a big hit.

Perry, Clifton and Costolo developed the plan carefully. In addition to interviewing Franklin County Director of Public Utilities Bryce Mendenhall for insight and direction, the students are hoping to speak at a Franklin County Commissioners' meeting in January or February and express the importance of becoming an environmentally sound county.

“Most people were really open to what we are trying to do, and some were very appreciative,” Sheldon said.

There are many variables in measuring the total gallons of water conserved, but the group will get a strong sense for it after comparing total usage during the billing cycle with and

without bottles.

The total number of bottles that can fit in a tank varies but many can take at least two.

The project is off to an early success, and Sheldon pointed out the much of the success has been due not only to the hard work of the students directly involved with the project but also many students throughout Bunn Middle. BMS classmates have donated hundreds of bottles, while Lowes of Wake Forest donated the sand to fill the bottles. The sand acts as an anchor to secure the bottle to the bottom of the toilet tank.

Judging for the contest will begin in the middle of March.

Sheldon's students are documenting the entire process on paper and through video.

Judging is multiple rounds with the first round being at the state level. Sheldon's immediate goal is to at least place in the state bracket.

- Nathan Moreschi