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UNCP hosts 32nd annual Region IV Science Fair

Young scientists from several of the area's elementary through high schools competed on Saturday, February 16, at the North Carolina Region IV Science and Engineering Fair on the campus of UNC Pembroke.

The annual event, which was sponsored in part by Progress Energy, demonstrated that, although things change, the fun of learning science remains constant.



Overall winner was Walter Patterson of Lumberton Senior High School. On the left is Dr. Tim Ritter, Science Fair director, and on the right is Dr. Liz Normandy, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs.

"It took a lot of time, but I learned a lot," said Soumya Varma, an eighth-grader at Central Harnett Middle School. "I really enjoy science."

Varma won several prizes as did Nicolle Rentas-Rodriquez, an eighth-grader at East Hoke Middle School. Rentas-Rodriquez was thrilled to be at the science fair and won second place in the Junior Earth and Environmental Science Division.

"As a kid, I was crazy for science because I wanted to know how things work," she said. "My mother was always telling me to 'take it outside.'"

Rentas-Rodriquez tested lead and nitrate levels in soil. Environmental science projects are increasingly popular at all age levels. Projects tested the bioelectrical potential of pansies and what vegetables produce the most ethanol.

Olivia Richards, a sixth-grader from Overhills Middle School, won first place in the Junior Biological Science Division.

"I tested the effects of cigarette smoke on plants," Richards said. "Do plants suffer? No, it kills them."

Judges have fun too, said Dr. Martin Farley, a UNCP geology professor who was judging his 12th Region IV Science Fair.

"I had a good time, but I always do," Dr. Farley said. "The projects were good again this year, and the interviews are always great."

Before retiring, John Harbison helped his students win awards year after year as a science teacher at the

Fayetteville Academy. He returned this year to give out special awards for the Pope Chapter of the Air Force Association.

“I’m here to keep science in the forefront,” Harbison said. “I put a lot of time into science projects when I was a teacher because I believe it’s a great experience.”

Winners will advance to the statewide science fair this spring, said Dr. Tim Ritter, a physics professor and Region IV Science Fair director.

“We have some great sponsors every year; many of them remember their own science projects,” Dr. Ritter said. “For students, this kind of inquiry is invaluable to their science careers. Here, they learn the basis of science – the scientific method.”

Besides Progress Energy, sponsors included Rust Enterprises (McDonald’s), Metcon Construction, the Air Force Association, the Office of Naval Research, UNCP’s Biotechnology Research and Training Center and the university’s departments of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. A new award was given this year in honor of the late Dr. Dalton Brooks, who taught physics at UNCP for many years.

Elementary Division

Honorable Mention

Kaitlyn Zuravel, Vanstory Hills Elementary School
Evan Houston, Benhaven Elementary School
Timothy Reeves, Shawtown Elementary School (not pictured)
Bethany Norris, Wayne Avenue Elementary School
Raul Sierra, Green Ridge Elementary School
Bennie Titan Oxendine, Sandy Grove Elementary School
Colin Cleaveland, Star Elementary School
Spencer Reese, Long Hill Elementary School

Winners

Jonathan Piland, Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts
Emme Ann Thompson, Angier Elementary School
Caleb Denning, Angier Elementary School
Andrew Bailey, Sherwood Park Elementary School
Iris Johnson, Page Street Elementary School
David Steed, Candor Elementary School
Sebastian Jozefowicz, Beaver Dam Elementary School
Gracie Mullins, LaFayette Elementary School

Junior Biological Science A Division

Honorable Mention: Jordan Saunders, East Hoke Middle School
3rd Place: Chloe Carroll, East Hoke Middle School
2nd Place: Jithmi Kulathunga, East Hoke Middle School
1st Place: Olivia Richards, Overhills Middle School

Junior Biological Science B Division

Honorable Mention: Jendayi London, East Hoke Middle School
3rd Place: Cathleen Miguel, East Hoke Middle School
2nd Place: Myra Holder, Abby Johnson
1st Place: Michaela York, East Hoke Middle School

Junior - Chemistry Division

First: Laurynn Ansted, SanLee Middle School

Second: John Duncan, East Hoke Middle School
Third: Hannah Flick, Overhills Middle School
Second (*tie*): Damien Noble, East Hoke Middle School
Honorable Mention: Emilie Taylor

Junior - Earth/Environmental Science Division

Honorable Mention: Layne Randolph, Kasey Genthe, Western Harnett Middle School
3rd Place: Soumya Varma, Harnett Central Middle School
2nd Place: Nicolle M. Rentas-Rodriguez, East Hoke Middle School
1st Place: Benjamin Lewis, Overhills Middle School

Junior - Physics Division

Honorable Mention: Alyssa Persina, Overhills Middle School
3rd Place: Justin Koltermann, SanLee Middle School (*Not in picture*)
2nd Place: Caleb Chandler, East Hoke Middle School
1st Place: Patrick Martin, Western Harnett Middle School

Junior - Technology/Engineering Division

3rd Place: Emily Corella, East Hoke Middle
2nd Place: Bailey Lawrence, SanLee Middle School
1st Place: Zachary Rowe, Overhills Middle School

Senior - Biological Science A Division

1st Place: Daniel Harper, Lumberton Senior High School

Senior - Biological Science B Division

2nd Place: Megan Conroy, Jack Britt High School
1st Place: Walter Patterson, Lumberton Senior High School

SPECIAL AWARDS**Air Force Association**

Senior Division (\$50 cash) - Caleb Chandler, East Hoke Middle School
Junior Division (\$50 cash) - Zachary Rowe, Overhills Middle School

Navy Award**Junior Division** (\$50 cash)

Caleb Chandler, East Hoke Middle School
Zachary Rowe, Overhills Middle School

Senior Division

Daniel Harper, Lumberton Senior High School
Megan Conroy, Jack Britt High School

Metcon Construction Award (\$50 cash)

John Duncan, East Hoke Middle
Emilie Taylor and Laurynn Ansted, SanLee Middle School
Soumya Varma, Central Harnett Middle School
Benjamin Lewis, Overhills Middle School
Quinton Ansley, East Hoke Middle School

Lumbee River EMC Award**Elementary Division** (\$50 cash)

JeDarien Buners and Rashaun Borom, Elizabeth M. Cashwell Elementary School

Junior Division (\$50 cash)

Leah Sealing, East Hoke Middle School

Senior Division (\$50 cash)

Benjamin Lewis, Overhills Middle School

Biotech Award - Sponsored by COMtech (\$150 cash)

Walter Patterson, Lumberton Senior High School

Rust Enterprises - McDonald's (\$500 college scholarship)

Megan Conroy, Jack Britt High School

Department of Biology

Junior Division: Myra Holder and Abby Johnson

Senior Division: Walter Patterson, Lumberton Senior High School

Department of Chemistry & Physics (\$100 cash)

Junior Division:

Anika Mattson, East Hoke Middle School

Damien Noble, East Hoke Middle School

Senior Division:

Daniel Harper, Lumberton Senior High School

Walter Patterson, Lumberton Senior High School

Dr. Dalton Brooks Award (\$100 cash)

Hannah Flick, Overhills Middle School

Grand Winner

Walter Patterson, Lumberton Senior High School

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