

EXCHANGE CLUB

'Such a storyteller'

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Renee Morrison is a storyteller. More than reading words of paper, or blandly reciting from memory, when Morrison tells a story, she creates a world for her listeners to temporarily escape to. Through the use of a few props, some creative man made sound effects and a vivid imagination, Morrison's stories remind you of the kind of tall tells you would hear while sitting around a campfire.

Morrison has been recognized for her art. She has been named a national storyteller by the National Storytelling Network and her book, Calico Ghosts, has received critical acclaim.

"Some people like to play games, chess and checkers, others like to golf...I tell stories," said Morrison.

During work hours, Morrison is a wildlife biologist and manages the

Jacksonville State University Field Schools at the Little River Canyon Center. She often merges her skills of storytelling and knowledge of animals when hosting programs for kids.

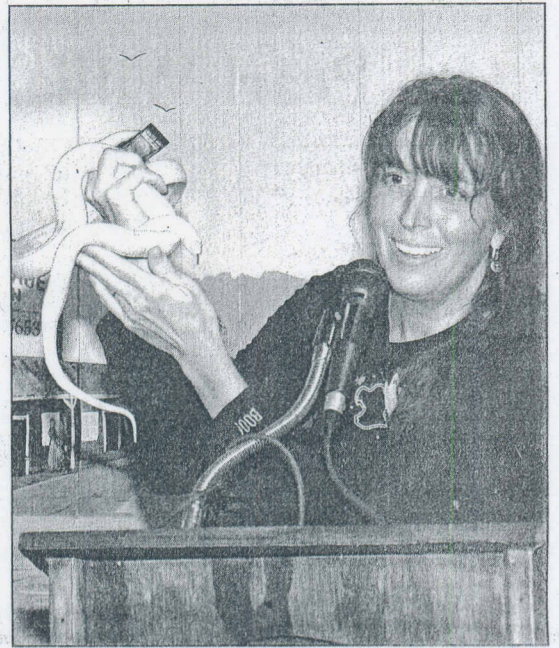
"I feel sorry for a lot of kids today. Kids who only have Nintendo Wiis and PS2s and PSPs and iPods and iPads, because so many kids today don't know what it feels like to go outside, walk barefooted in the grass, catch lightning bugs and feed them to toad frogs and watch their throats light up," said Morrison. "All of those cool things that really don't cost anything."

Morrison's love for storytelling and animals may have come from her days as an only child playing with animals on her family's farm. When she was younger, Morrison told of a time where she convinced herself she was a black and tan coonhound named Midnight. As Midnight, she would talk to the ani-

mals. It is that kind of imagination world that Morrison says too many kids today are missing out on.

"I want kids to live in fairy land as long as they can," said Morrison. "To have these imaginative experiences and build creative character because I think that from the time they are born they have this creative essence that God gives to them, and it is a gift. And so many times it is 'mushed' out of them and taken from them. But, it is important for kids to love to read. It is important for them to read things they enjoy as well as things we think they should read, it is a nice balance there."

Morrison reminded the Exchangers that Canyon Fest 2010 would be held at the Little River Canyon Center on Nov. 6 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will have art, exhibits, demonstrations, hikes, children's activities, music, great food and more.



Renee Morrison holds up Popcorn.

Anita Kilgore



TOP LEFT: Jacksonville High School's Youth of the Month is Quanteeria Mooney. Quanteeria is the daughter of Consuella Russell. She is the recipient of 2009 academic awards, the Presidential Physical Fitness Award, and won 1st place in the Black History Month program. She serves on the Student Council and is a member of the FFA. Quanteeria plays volleyball and soccer for JHS. She enjoys playing sports and spending time drawing. Quanteeria was introduced by her Algebra teacher, Mandy Frantz. Shown above, Quanteeria is flanked by her mom and grandmother on her left, and Exchangite Sonja Parris, behind, who presented her award, and teacher Mandy Frantz on her right. TOP RIGHT: Derek Langston is the Youth of the Month from Pleasant Valley. Derek is the son of Mike and Crystal Langston. He is on the "A" Honor Roll, is a member of Jr. Beta, SADD, and the Scholars Bowl. Derek plays football and baseball for PVHS. He loves spending time playing with his dog, playing video games, getting on the Internet, playing sports and has an interest in politics. Derek is introduced by his science teacher, Adam Goosby. Derek is shown above with his parents on his right, and his teacher on his left. Exchangite Sonja Parris, far left, presented his plaque.

LEFT: Joe Nabors of the Calhoun-Cleburne Children's Center presents Sara Blount, Exchange Club secretary with a plaque of appreciation.



Trail: Is 2.8 miles long and offers different tracks for cyclists of different expertise

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the trail. I had just over a dozen volunteers helping me out," said Di Biase. "A few of these were especially helpful and spent several eight-hour days out there with me, cutting brush, getting torn up by thorns and coated with poison ivy and terrorized by the occasional scorpion.

"It took us about three months to get the trail in riding condition. The more we use it, the harder the soil will become, and the faster the trail will be. We still have work to do

the surface here and there where it on an uncomfortable angle still, but most of the trail is now in its final shape.

Di Biase says the new trail is 2.8 miles long and offers different tracks for cyclists of different expertise.

"There are four options," said Di Biase, "and they're all marked with colored aluminum markers. The yellow is 0.55 miles, the orange is 1.10, the blue is 1.55 and the red is 2.80. The yellow is for kids, beginners who might want to stay within view of their

eye on them while sitting on nearby benches. The other loops take you into the main woods. This piece of land quite beautiful, and it is also quite hilly, so the trail has a lot of climbing in it, a lot of ups and downs. The red, or longest loop, takes you all the way up to the water towers, around them, and back down."

Not only does the terrain makes the Henry Farm Trail stand out from other trails, the fact that it is connected to the Chief Ladiga Trail makes it a unique attraction for cyclists.

"What makes the trail

