

County halts development

Moratorium on growth around airport's perimeter is approved

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Acting on a request from Craven Regional Airport officials, county commissioners imposed a 180-day moratorium on development around the airport's perimeter Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Effective immediately, the moratorium will stall approval of new subdivisions and building permits in portions of Township 7 while county staff studies land use and prepares a zoning ordinance to shield the airport from suburban sprawl.

"We've had steady development that's been occurring in the Township 7 area," said Don Bumgardner, county planner. "The development has resulted in [airport] encroachment and incompatible land uses."

The Craven Regional Airport Authority on Jan. 3 presented commissioners with a resolution urging the county to adopt a zoning ordinance that would allow growth and expansion of the

airport, which serves an estimated 200,000 travelers each year.

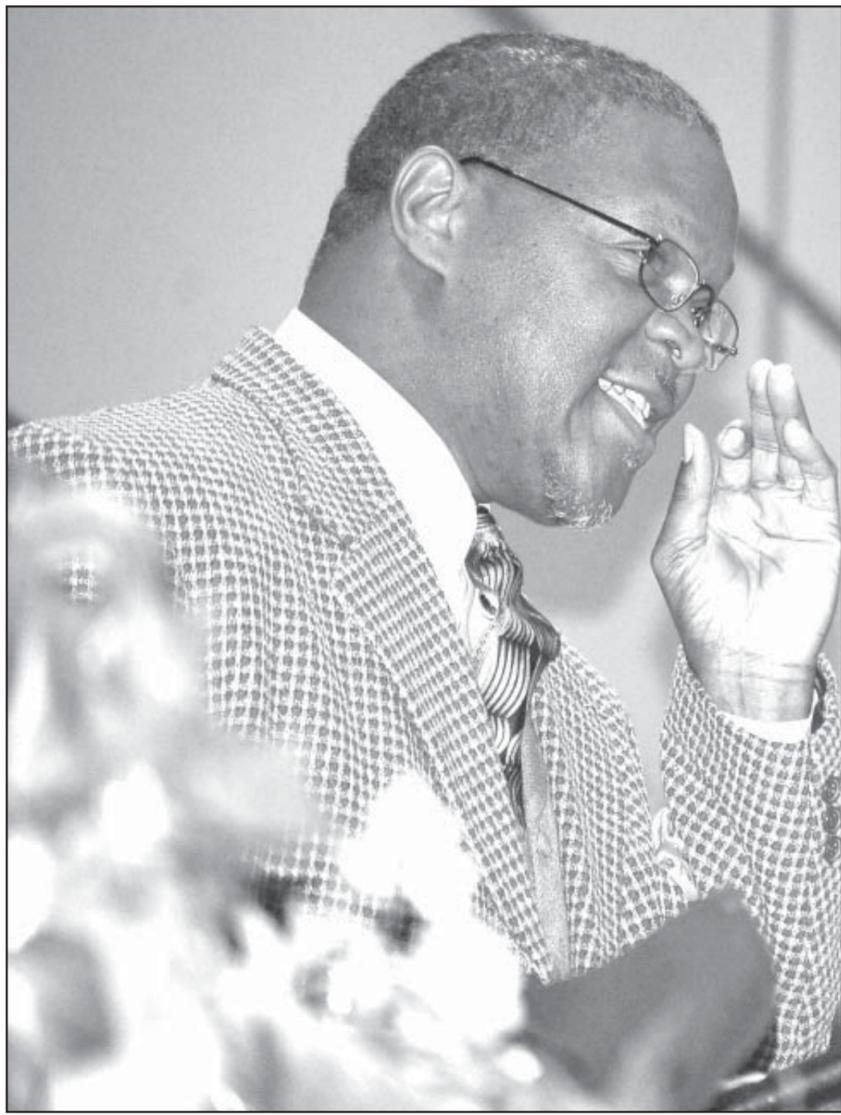
Andy Hall, who lives on Old Airport Road and owns 130 acres of land within the moratorium boundary, expressed concern that he would not be able to build a home on his land.

"I don't think it's right for someone to come in and tell me, in a place I've lived my entire life, that I can't build a home there," he said.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Perry Morris told Hall that whether such a project would be permissible would be the subject of future public hearings.

Bumgardner said the moratorium would prevent the approval of new subdivisions, mobile/manufactured home parks and building permits issued from new developments.

However, he said, building permits could still be issued for renovations, replacement of damaged structures and some additions to existing structures.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

The Rev. Johnny R. Smith addresses a crowd of 700 during the MLK Scholarship and Awards Committee banquet Jan. 15 at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center.

'Day of decision'

Sharpton's stand-in inspires audience to act

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A last-minute cancellation from the Rev. Al Sharpton drew more indignation than disappointment Sunday, Jan. 15 as an annual scholarship banquet proceeded without its keynote speaker.

Civic leaders expressed regret that Sharpton, a nationally known progressive activist, was not able to address the more than 700 in attendance at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship and Awards Committee, Inc.'s Annual Banquet.

"We don't care about no Al Sharpton. We're here to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, who has made a difference in all of our lives," said Barbara Lee, New Bern Ward 5 alderman. "We give God the glory, and we wish Al Sharpton well."

Spirited remarks from the Rev. Johnny R. Smith drew thunderous applause as

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Grace Hudson holds the 2006 Humanitarian Award, the highest honor bestowed by the MLK Scholarship and Awards Committee.

Thomas seeking D.A. job

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Early in his legal career, state Sen. Scott Thomas worked as an assistant district attorney under W. David McFayden Jr. Before announcing his retirement effective at month's end, McFayden asked his former protégé if he wanted the top prosecutor's job.

With McFayden's recommendation to Gov. M i k e

Easley — who will appoint a district attorney to fill the remaining months of his term — Thomas (D - Craven) confirmed his candidacy for the position on Jan. 3.

"I think it's important to have a district attorney who fully understands the criminal justice system," said Thomas, who explained that his experience as an assistant DA, private practice attorney and elected official would help him make sage decisions as a crime victims' advocate.

"I want to be sure we have an effective and efficient office that provides a strong voice for victims of crime," he said.

If the governor appoints Thomas to serve as district attorney for Prosecutorial District 3B — which includes Craven, Carteret and Pamlico counties — the three-term senator would have to resign his seat in the North Carolina General Assembly.

Thomas' Senate seat would then be filled by governor's appointment. The governor is bound to accept the recommendation of the Senate's Democratic Executive Committee, Thomas explained.

Easley is expected to appoint McFayden's successor before the veteran DA steps down at the end of January.

"David has done an outstanding job as district attorney, and he has assembled a very good staff over there," Thomas said. "I plan to build upon the good work he has already done."

Thomas graduated from

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Trespass triggers a cocaine arrest

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A shooting suspect out on bond found himself behind bars again after New Bern police spotted him trespassing at the Craven Terrace Apartments on Friday, Jan. 6.

Kevin Slade, 26, of New Bern, was seen walking from the Days Inn hotel at the intersection of Queen and Broad streets toward the apartment complex at 10:14 a.m. Jan. 6, according to police.

Slade, who faced charges in the August 2005 shooting of a man in the same apartment complex and was released from Craven County Jail on \$350,000 bond, had a trespass warning that banned him from entering the complex.

After walking onto the Craven Terrace Apartments parking lot, Slade ran from a police officer who approached him, New Bern

police said in a Jan. 6 news release.

Slade was arrested a short distance away from the complex. Police seized nine grams of crack cocaine, \$2,000 in cash and a 2001 Lexus sedan, which contained a small amount of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and a police scanner.

Slade was charged with one count each of possession with intent to sell/deliver cocaine, maintaining a vehicle for the purpose of a controlled substance, simple possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, second-

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Slade



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Having a ball

Bruce Crevier from Champions Forever Ministries juggles basketballs Friday, Jan. 13 at Havelock High School following a varsity basketball game.

Harper resigns as commissioner

Colorful political figure cites 'personal commitments' in his decision

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

County Commissioner Bill Harper — widely known as one of the area's most outspoken public officials — abruptly resigned his seat on the county board of commissioners, citing family obligations.

In a letter to board chairman Perry Morris and fellow commissioners dated Tuesday, Jan. 10, Harper said he will resign his District 7 seat effective Feb. 10.

"I find it is necessary to take this action due to personal commitments and family obligations that prevent me from being able to devote the time and energy to my position as commissioner," he wrote.

Harper is known for his vociferous opposition to

continued county and state funding of the Global TransPark, a commercial air depot in Lenoir County, and for boycotting Fisher Oil, the local gas distributor that owns the Fuel Mart chain.

During his commissioner's report preceding the adjournment of each meeting, Harper steps on his proverbial soapbox, lambasting the GTP for its failure to bring promised jobs and revenue to the area and announcing the passage of two more weeks without buying gas from Fuel

Mart.

"Our elected officials in Raleigh have voted again to feed this burden on taxpayers," he said on Dec. 5. "I don't know if you're disgusted with it, but I'm disgusted with it. The Global TransPark is an embarrassment, as far as I'm concerned, for the whole state of North Carolina."

Formerly unaffiliated with a recognized political party, Harper joined the Republican Party and stumped for Republican state House of Representatives candidate Michael Speciale, who defeated incumbent Mike Gorman in the 2004 primaries.

In case county residents miss his missives, Harper drives the point home with politically charged

commentary on a signboard outside his home, the former location of his Mexican Imports business at the intersection of U.S. 70 East and Old Cherry Point Road.

Recently, Harper chimed in on the impending retirement of District Attorney W. David McFayden Jr., speculating on his signboard that a prominent local judge may replace McFayden with the message "Ken Crow 4 DA?"

Repeated attempts to reach Harper were unsuccessful as of press time.

The District 7 seat on the board of commissioners will be filled by appointment of the Craven County Republican Party.



Harper

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Local & State

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News Briefs

Palace hosts lecture on civil rights

Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens will host a lecture on civil rights in North Carolina and black economic development at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19 at the Tryon Palace Visitor Center Auditorium.

Ben Ruffin is the scheduled speaker for the January installment of the African-American Lecture Series. Admission is free. For more information, call 514-4900.

Chamber plans poker tournament

HAVELOCK — Eastern Craven County residents are invited to place their bets at the Havelock Chamber of Commerce's Mardi Gras and Texas Hold 'em Tournament, beginning at 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21.

Admission is \$50 for single players and \$90 for couples, with a limit of 256 players. Tickets include the price of Cajun cuisine and live entertainment as well as participation in a silent auction.

Texas Hold 'em is a variant of poker that has mushroomed in popularity, with opportunities for players to compete on professional and amateur levels nationwide.

For more information, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 447-1101.

Bridgeton assesses an impact fee

BRIDGETON — Town commissioners here voted to impose an impact fee of \$9,450 on resident Richard Brown's property Dec. 13, after Brown received a variance from the Board of Adjustment to construct a three-unit retail business.

The fee was calculated using a formula to determine the type and amount of sewage flow that could be expected, town leaders explained during the Bridgeton Board of Commissioners regular monthly meeting Tuesday, Dec. 13.

Town commissioners also heard a request for a conditional use permit to allow light manufacturing of fiberglass boats at 607 U.S. 17 North. No formal decision was made Dec. 13 or during a subsequent public hearing on Jan. 10.

Commissioners' first order of business on Dec. 13 was to swear their oaths of office after retaining their seats in November's Craven County municipal elections.

Appointed officials, including the town clerk, town attorney and finance officer, were all reappointed for another two-year term.

Briefs are compiled from Independent Register staff reports. To submit information for this space, e-mail news@indieregister.com.

Man charged with armed robbery

Dixon is accused of stealing beer from Family Market convenience store

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A New Bern man accused of robbing a convenience store at gunpoint was in police custody moments after the incident Thursday, Jan. 5, authorities said.

Chester Dixon, 27, of the Craven Terrace Apartments, was arrested for stealing beer from the Family Market

convenience store on Roundtree Street, according to a New Bern Police Department news release.

Upon entering the store, Dixon allegedly selected a beer from a refrigerated case and walked to the front counter, then lifted his shirt to show the store clerk a handgun before leaving the store and walking toward the

Trenton Court Housing Complex.

Police responded to a 911 call placed at 2:43 p.m. and received a description



Dixon

of the suspect from the convenience store clerk. Moments later, a police officer spotted Dixon near the intersection of Queen and Broad streets, where he was arrested without incident according to the news release.

The handgun found in Dixon's possession was listed

as a stolen weapon from Florida.

Dixon was charged with one count of armed robbery and one count of possession of a stolen firearm.

He was held in the Craven County Jail on a \$10,000 secured bond awaiting a next-day appearance in district court.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Bidding farewell

One man's trash proved to be another man's treasure Saturday, Jan. 14 at the Trenton Fairgrounds as the Trenton Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad held its annual farm equipment and general auction.

New Bern woman faces embezzlement charges

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A six-week New Bern police investigation resulted in the Jan. 3 arrest of a UPS Store employee on embezzlement charges, according to a police department news release.

Amy Goff, 26, of Pine Street in New Bern, stands accused of embezzling more than \$4,500 from the UPS Store since August 2004, authorities said.

Goff was released from Craven County Jail with a written promise to appear in court.

Embezzlement is a felony in North Carolina regardless of the amount of money at issue. Funds embezzled

under \$100,000 draw a Class H felony charge under state law.

The New Bern Police Department investigates all cases of embezzlement and employee theft and listed the following signs of employee theft courtesy of the U.S. Small Business Administration:

- Forged or fraudulent receipts
- Small but habitual money discrepancies
- Customer complaints of over billing
- Excessive "no sales" transactions
- Hidden receipts
- Missing merchandise
- Excessive voided transactions.

Police offer the following suggestions to business owners and managers to prevent embezzlement or employee theft:

- Conduct random internal and external audits
- Split and/or rotate financial duties to ensure one person doesn't have complete control of funds
- Keep accurate, up-to-date records
- Install an alarm, security system or video surveillance
- Randomly change passwords to vital computer programs involving accounting or customer information accessible to all employees.

Off the Wall

Searching for the Great Gatsby in New Bern

What does a certain New Bern antique store have to offer that cannot be found anywhere else? Perhaps a certain ambience that brings me back time after time. When the old store was on Middle Street I was drawn to it periodically to get my fill of old stuff, and now that it is down the highway, that feeling is still the same.

Several years ago, I would spend hours going into each little "shop" within the bigger shop searching for old china, drinking glasses, some familiar looking item from the past.

Meanwhile, my son was combing the shelves for collectible sci-fi books and films. Doctor Who, Star Trek and Star Wars would call out

to him. We would leave exhausted but happy.

Nowadays, he looks for other films. Having become a Harry Potter buff, he is familiar with the names of stars in the popular series. For example, the superb actor Gary Oldman, who plays Sirius Black, we learned, was Beethoven in "Immortal Beloved." He also co-starred with Demi Moore in "The Scarlet Letter," as Reverend Dimsdale. My son snagged both of them on VHS.

"The Great Gatsby" — the one with Robert Redford and Mia Farrow — is on my list of wanted films. Last year I was in my Roarin' Twenties phase, looking for sheet music, anything that

reminded me of that time in history. I was ready to "Charleston Back to Charleston."

After checking out a bagful of books from the library on Johnson Street, mostly about F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, I discovered that he wrote a lot of himself into the character of Jay Gatsby.

Old postcards are another passion of mine, and my

store can provide me with plenty of them. Box after box awaits my touch. Recently I found a treasure, a postcard dated June 24, 1938 and postmarked Baden-Baden, Germany.

We all know what was happening in the world at that time. I will ask my German friend to translate it for me.

But I saved the best for last. About a month ago I was craving the kind of writing instrument that I had used in school — a classic Sheaffer cartridge pen. The tip of my green-barreled, silver-tipped one is bent. The ink fails to flow smoothly as it once did. Once again, my store came through. There in a glass case sat two like

mine, except their barrels were red.

The man unlocked the case and I chose the better pen. An office supply store provided me with refills. I dropped a cartridge in, created my name on paper exactly as I had remembered. Craving satisfied.

This year, I predict an increase in my antique store visits. Nostalgia peaks my senses, invigorates my brain, balances my well-being in this land of confusion. As I get older, I desire more of it. And, not to be forgotten, this "Miss Marple" is still on Gatsby's trail.

Contact Sandra Ervin Adams at sandra@indieregister.com.



SANDRA ERVIN ADAMS

New Bern man is sentenced in a federal court

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

GREENVILLE — A New Bern man was sentenced to a four-year prison term in federal district court Jan. 4 on gun charges following a joint local and federal investigation.

Julius Sanders, 24, of New Bern, was sentenced to 48 months by Federal District Court Judge Malcolm J. Howard after New Bern police and the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms joined forces to prosecute Sanders under Project Safe Neighborhoods, according to a police department news release.

Sanders was arrested on April 27, 2004, after a traffic stop and subsequent vehicle search yielded a stolen Glock 22 .44-caliber handgun, a blue ski mask and more than \$4,500 in cash.

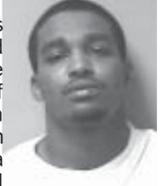
During the arrest, a Craven County sheriff's

deputy identified Sanders' vehicle as the same one involved in the breaking and entering of a county business.

Sanders was charged with one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, one count of possession of a stolen firearm and one count of resist, obstruct and delay.

He was sentenced in conjunction with Project Safe Neighborhoods, a partnership between federal and local law enforcement to curb gun violence.

The New Bern Police Department has participated in Project Safe Neighborhoods since 2004.



Sanders

UNC System is accused of student rights abuses

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

RALEIGH — A report by two prominent academic freedom watchdog groups released Tuesday, Jan. 10 accuses the University of North Carolina System of widespread student rights abuses.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy's Report on the State of the First Amendment in the University of North Carolina System found that "13 out of the 16 schools in the UNC System have at least one policy that both clearly and substantially restricts free speech."

"The revelations in our report ought to outrage everyone in North Carolina," Greg Lukianoff, interim president of FIRE, said in a news release. "The UNC System is disregarding the First Amendment at public

expense, each and every day."

The report cites numerous examples of university policies that allegedly violate constitutional guarantees of free speech and expression, including a provision in Appalachian State University's code of conduct banning "insults, taunts or challenges directed toward another person."

"North Carolina exemplifies so much that is wrong with American higher education today," Lukianoff said in the release. "From its unconstitutional speech codes to its quashing of religious groups, the UNC System contains perfect examples of all the things we are fighting nationwide."

The state university system rebuffed the report's claims, calling the document "a clear case of smoke with

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Opinion

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Editorials

Honoring MLK

Civil rights leader's legacy too often overlooked

A shameful tradition among students at New Bern High School underscores the need for education concerning Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement he led.

Each year, many white students skip the annual MLK assembly as a show of disrespect — shockingly, some with the approval and assistance of their parents, who write the excuse notes and sign their children in late, inculcating ignorance and fostering bigotry.

An attitude of indifference to King's message and achievements has found favor in some white Southerners, and it saddens us to see children adopt these shortsighted views.

The same resentment sprang up in 2000 after the city of New Bern renamed Clarendon Boulevard for the slain civil rights leader.

Some business owners resisted the name change, but the new signs went up, and MLK Boulevard remains.

Mandated genuflecting on Jan. 16 of every year won't reverse deeply rooted prejudices, nor will compulsory attendance at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day assembly instill instant understanding.

While public schools could use more instruction on the civil rights movement, most children come to school with their opinions on the subject already formed. Parents have the primary responsibility to educate their children on racial equality issues.

King's message was one of equality among all races, his vision one of peace and a universal human brotherhood.

His work to advance the cause of African-American rights and eradicate the Jim Crow laws which galvanized America along the fault lines of race and color has earned him a permanent place in our nation's history.

It's time that everyone accepted that place.

Banking on change

Independent Register faces shaky financial future

On an almost daily basis, we graciously receive compliments on the scope of this newspaper's coverage and its role as an alternative voice in Craven County.

The *Independent Register* has been favorably compared to New Bern's daily newspaper and loyal readers laud our commitment to intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas. But this publication's future has never been more tenuous — or more imperiled.

Advertising revenues have been stagnant, and while moral support is gratifying, financial support is imperative if we hope to continue providing county residents with objective local coverage and a vibrant open forum for social and political discourse.

The money we take in from advertising sales isn't enough to cover our commercial printing costs. While we never expected windfall profits, we did hope to make a modest living from this venture.

Our advertisers are anything but parsimonious. We are grateful for their generous support of the *Independent Register* and urge readers to frequent these community businesses when they can do so.

We also implore those who support this newspaper's mission of creating a viable alternative to the area's established news media to pledge their support — financial as well as moral.

The *Register* released its inaugural issue on Sept. 27, 2005, with plans to

continue as a weekly newspaper and expand from eight pages to 12 or more. With unexpected monetary shortfalls, we were forced to improvise — slashing our publication frequency to biweekly in order to stay afloat.

Publishing every two weeks meant it was more difficult to provide timely coverage of breaking news, so we launched a Web site and companion blog that could be updated as news happens to supplement the print edition.

We will continue to seek creative ways to bring you the news, and do everything in our power to keep the *Independent Register* in print.

That being said, without a substantial increase in financial support, we can no longer guarantee the prompt release of future editions.

On this week's Currents page, you will find an in-depth article about the *Register* and its three co-publishers. While it is not customary for a newspaper to turn the spotlight on itself, we feel that it's necessary for our story to be told — while we still have the means to tell it.

Whether this newspaper finds a foothold in Craven County or whether we are forced to suspend publication, we sincerely thank you for reading.

Whatever the outcome, it is our prevailing hope that, through the words and images on these pages, we have made a difference.

What do YOU think ?

Letters to the editor are accepted for publication in this space each issue. Letters should be 350 words or fewer and should contain the author's name and telephone number for verification purposes.

Mail letters to the Independent Register, 1734 Elmwood Street New Bern, NC 28560, fax them to (252) 636-0616 or e-mail them to letters@indieregister.com.

In Memoriam

Crystal ball

Reflections of a friend

BY WILLIAM R. TOLER
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Born leader.
Two simple words that describe Crystal Adair.

Long before she attended Craven Community College, Crystal had developed her leadership style.

During the memorial service, her sister Candice spoke about how she would follow Crystal around, like a typical little sister. She said, "I felt like we were invincible as long as she was in charge."

As the other half of Craven's "power couple," I know exactly what Candice meant by that statement. Spending three years together as campus leaders, it seemed like we could do anything. With my resourcefulness and her tenacity, things got done.

Once she began her time at CCC, she immediately took charge. Her first order of business was to revive the comatose business organization Phi Beta Lambda.

I had the pleasure of serving with her for three

years in different capacities. The first year as her historian and one third of a seventh-place business decision making team.

The third year, roles were switched as she served as my vice president. In those two years of her involvement, Crystal headed up the "Bootie for a Dollar" campaign as a fund-raiser for the March of Dimes.

Year number two saw the birth of a new organization, Sigma Phi Sigma Sigma (Students for Student Success).

With her vision and leadership, Crystal brought together students who normally wouldn't have been involved in any club to form a unique society.

In 2004, the group held a Halloween party on campus that was open to the public as an alternative to trick-or-treating.

Stacy Coleman, former Student Council president, expressed her gratitude for Crystal filling the V.P. role on the council's executive board in the spring of 2005.

Coleman recalled how Crystal assured her that she "had her back" and how she was there to help her through stressful times.

In addition to her extracurricular activities, Crystal was a leader in academics. Throughout her three-year span, she maintained a high grade point average, landing her in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, which requires a 3.5 GPA for membership. Business instructor Yvonne Shanks recalls assignments being turned in at a much higher level than the average community college student.

If there is one thing I picked up from Crystal, it would be standing up for what I believe in. I remember her being proud of me for "having the balls" to voice my dissent for what we considered to be an unfair decision by Student Life personnel last year.

Crystal will always hold a place in my heart and memory and will truly be missed.

Spunky Diablo's Laundromat

Heaven is no haven for earthly identities

In response to legions of e-mails, I've decided to answer the most pressing question: Where is Heaven, and how in Hell can I get there?

Hold it, Tex — reholster your twin Colt .45s. First, let's banish some misconceptions.

According to many modern Christians, Heaven is where you get the Really Big House. Your chunk of celestial real estate is determined, not by how many souls you actually shepherd toward Christ, but by how often you make the recruiting attempt.

If you have to reclaim a few pearls from a few piggish palms along the way, no matter — at least you tried. And your reward will be a stout Victorian structure constructed from stone and half-exposed timbers. Its roof will be made from gingerbread you can actually eat, gingerbread that replenishes itself nightly, while your contemporaries will live in the cosmic equivalent of trailer parks, on Paradise's fringes, forgotten by God but spared burning in Hell.

The few unbelievers who manage to straggle into Heaven will never qualify for membership at the country club — that right belongs to you alone, and your cronies, the true believers. All you gotta do is die to get it.

Men, am I the only Hittite among you who has ever voiced this blasphemous thought: "Hey, God, I know

you call the shots and all, but...if there ain't no chicks, I maybe kinda might not actually want to go to Heaven?"

Heaven is where you finally get laid. A lot. Unfortunately this doesn't apply to Mr. Lionel Libido, he of the gorgeously oiled body and brand new Mustang and pulverized bull sperm he uses for weightlifting milkshakes. When poor Lionel dies, he's destined for a fleshless cavern of eternal suffering.

Not so for Pastor Kenneth Cheekie, who also teaches geography at the festival of mediocrity that passes for the local middle school. You've seen guys like Pastor Cheekie before, quite possibly pushing a cart in Wal-Mart — crew cut, pockmarked, mustachioed, bespectacled, with a homely, fat wife who wears floor-length denim dresses and yarmulkes.

That guy's going on a fornication spree when he gets to Heaven, that guy's destined for a cosmic orgasm one thousand years long, a marathon of wickedness capable of making an Iraqi imam wage jealous jihad.

Sound strange? That's precisely the way many religious people think about Heaven. As a catharsis for pent-up pressures; a gift of license in exchange for the recently-passed period of chastity.

Obviously, such a mindset misses the entire point: by the time you get to Heaven, there will be no such thing as you. This is Death's toll for your spirit's ride.

A pity that people spend millions forcing us to remember them after their death, two hundred grand and your name goes on the university placard, three million sees it on a stadium, five hundred engraves it on a brass synagogue tag that later gets placed on a woodcut of the Tree of Life. And for what?

The entity that used and discarded your skin will never recognize your name as it stands before the Almighty. Your skin is a wardrobe hanging in a dirt-filled closet, and I hope you didn't spend too much on cosmetic enhancements, because by the time you get to where you're going, you won't need skin. More than likely you'll be an amorphous spill of plasma floating through the Void.

Nah. Just kidding. You won't be amorphous.

But you will be happy. After you get what you got coming.

Contact Stephen Lewis at stephen@indieregister.com.

Independent Register

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"At its best, journalism illuminates the human condition, publicizes societal inequities and provides the public with the unvarnished truth -- a record of events untainted by personal bias. It is this admirable and noteworthy form of journalism that the *Independent Register* strives to practice."

- The Independent Register
Operating Structure and Standard Protocol

Letters to the Editor Policy

The *Independent Register* accepts editorial submissions and letters to the editor for publication. All submissions become property of the *Independent Register* upon receipt.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words. Letters must be signed and must include the author's ad-

dress and telephone number for verification purposes. The *Independent Register* does not accept anonymous letters, open letters or letters to a third party. The *Independent Register* reserves the right to reject submissions and will edit all submissions for spelling, grammar, clarity, accuracy and Associated Press style.

