

Independent Register

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One of New Bern's most wanted turns self in

Jemmott charged in Craven Terrace Apartments shooting

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

The New Bern Police Department crossed the fifth name in 18 months off its most-wanted list with the arrest of Benjamin Jemmott on Tuesday, Jan. 3.

Jemmott, 24, was wanted on four charges stemming from an

Aug. 19 shooting at the Craven Terrace Apartments, according to New Bern police spokesman Chris Stansbury.

"This afternoon at 5:09, he turned himself in to police," Stansbury said. "Word got to him, and he decided to turn himself in."

Jemmott is one of two men

charged in the Craven Terrace shooting. The other suspect, 25-year-old Kevin Slade, was arrested on Aug. 25.

The victim sustained a "pretty severe injury" to his leg and was airlifted to Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville, Stansbury said.



Jemmott

Jemmott is charged with one count each of assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill,

felony conspiracy and discharging a firearm within city limits.

Jemmott was held in the Craven County Jail under a \$61,000 bond awaiting a Jan. 4 appearance in county district court.

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or at corey@indieregister.com.

Airport seeks a moratorium

Craven Regional Airport Authority asks county to slow development

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Vigorous growth at Craven Regional Airport may be just a flight of fancy if development around the airport's perimeter isn't halted, airport authority Chairman Jim Creech told county commissioners on Tuesday, Jan. 3.

Jet service at the airport has increased, Creech explained, but rapid construction and residential development on adjacent land may threaten future expansion if allowed to continue.

"Any encroachment on airport operations will impact our ability to provide air service to the community," he said. "This is a serious situation...you see expansion going on in every direction around the airport."

The Craven Regional Airport Authority is recommending a compatible

land use plan, which would limit the size and number of developments around the airport, which offers commuter flights to U.S. Airways' hub airport in Charlotte and direct jet service to Philadelphia.

"We need space. We can't be compressed," Creech said. "Somebody needs to take a good, hard look at how we use the land surrounding the airport."

Commissioners expressed support for the airport authority and scheduled a public forum for a proposed moratorium on development around the airport. The moratorium would be a temporary measure to protect airport-adjacent land while county staff surveys the area, which could take several months.

The public forum will take place during the next Craven

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Store clerk injured in robbery attempt

BY WILLIAM R. TOLER
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

VANCEBORO — Two men walked into a convenience store and fired a shotgun blast at the clerk on Friday, Dec. 23, according to the Craven County Sheriff's Office.

Robert Lavar Lewis, 21, and Noah Mewborn, 26, both of Dover walked into Smiley's convenience store at 1800 N.C. 118 around 8 p.m. in a robbery attempt. One man shot in the direction of Aref Zeidan, deputies said.

There were several customers in the store at the time of the incident. No one was injured except Zeidan, who received lacerations on his face, which deputies

believe were caused by ricocheting birdshot pellets. Zeidan was transported to Craven Regional Medical Center, where he was treated for his injuries.

The suspects fled the scene in a light-colored vehicle, but were apprehended a short time later on Butler Ford Road.

Both men were charged with robbery with a dangerous weapon and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill or inflict serious injury. Lewis and Mewborn were both released on a \$50,000 secured bond.

Following their initial court appearance on Dec. 28, a continuance was scheduled for Jan. 18.

Man dies in crash with ambulance

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A New Bern man is dead after the car he was driving collided with a Pollockville Rescue Squad ambulance on Monday, Dec. 26.

Aiden Lloyd, 19, was killed in the wreck at the intersection of U.S. 17 South and Academic Drive in New Bern. The collision between his 1998 Honda and the rescue squad's 1995 Ford Econoline ambulance injured both men in the ambulance.

The ambulance driver was treated at Craven Regional Medical Center, while the passenger was airlifted to Pitt County Memorial

Hospital in Greenville. Their names were not released.

Police are still investigating the cause of the wreck as well as contributing factors, according to a New Bern Police Department news release.

At the time of the wreck, the Pollockville Rescue Squad ambulance was returning to Jones County from CRMC and was not transporting any patients, according to the release.

As of press time, New Bern police had not concluded their investigation of the crash, which was reported at about 11 p.m. Dec. 26.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/COREY FRIEDMAN AND WILLIAM R. TOLER

Indecency fines from the Federal Communications Commission mushroomed after singer Janet Jackson bore her breast during the Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show in 2004. Radio personalities from New York to New Bern have noticed the clampdown, leading some to engage in what one assistant program director calls 'self-censorship.'

You can't say **CENSORED** on the radio . . .

Mercurial FCC has local broadcasters watching their words

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Don't ask Wendy Gatlin where the line is. The only way to find out is to cross it.

As the assistant program director for WSFL-FM 106.5 in New Bern, Gatlin is charged with the task of selecting content that will keep listeners tuned in without treading over what she calls the "invisible line" — the Federal Communications Commission's hazy definition of indecency.

"We don't have a list that says 'You can't say this, you can't say that,'" she explained. "A lot of it just comes with basic common sense...I think the f-word, you have to draw the line over."

Radio stations under increased pressure from the FCC to clean up vulgar broadcasts have been slapped with stiff fines for flouting the regulatory agency's standards. But those standards are notoriously nebulous.

Since there are no outright bans on even the saltiest language, according to Gatlin, the agency primarily investigates listener complaints. WSFL, a classic rock 'n' roll station, receives relatively few complaints and has not recently endured FCC scrutiny.

Most songs containing profane or vulgar language are edited for broadcast, but some classic rock mainstays — such as Pink Floyd's "Money," and The Who's "Who Are You?" — are aired with cusses intact.

"I think it goes with the integrity of the music," Gatlin said. "If you think about it, classic rock is the only format besides oldies that sticks. It really stands the test of time."

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Wendy Gatlin, assistant program director for WSFL-FM 106.5, is shown in the station's New Bern studio. Gatlin said she receives few complaints about on-air content.

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Local & State

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News Briefs

CCC holds registration Jan. 4 - 5

Craven Community College is holding registration for spring semester classes from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Jan. 4 and 5 at its New Bern, Havelock and Cherry Point campuses.

Tuition is \$39.50 per credit hour for North Carolina residents and \$219.50 per credit hour for non-residents, as set by the N.C. Community College System.

Spring classes are scheduled to begin on Jan. 9.

For more information, contact the New Bern campus at 638-4131, the Havelock campus at 444-6005 or the Cherry Point extension at 444-6000.

Conditional use permits requested

BRIDGETON —The Town Council has scheduled a public hearing for discussion on two requests for conditional use permits.

The permits requested would allow a non-retail office to be located at 606 B St. and a light manufacturing business to be located at 607 U.S. 17 North.

Detailed permit requests are on file in the town clerk's office and are open to public inspection during business hours Tuesday through Friday.

The public hearing is set to begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10 at Town Hall.

All interested parties will have an opportunity to speak. Written comments must be received at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

For more information, contact Elaine G. Bryan, town clerk, at 637-3697.

Trenton VFD auction set for Jan. 14

TRENTON — The Trenton Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad plans to hold its annual farm equipment and general auction Saturday, Jan. 14 at the Trenton Fairgrounds on King Street.

A \$5, non-refundable fee is required for participation in the auction, which features six auctioneers and will benefit this Jones County town's volunteer firefighters and emergency workers.

The fairgrounds will also host a flea market, set to begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, and a bake sale featuring barbecue chicken and pork.

For more information, call 448-2161 during business hours. After 6 p.m., call 448-4161 or 448-4441.

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

Parents welcome first baby of 2006

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Dawn and Matthew Grady never made it to the New Year's Eve party they planned to attend.

Instead, the New Bern couple rang in the New Year at Craven Regional Medical Center, where they celebrated the early arrival of their son, Sean Matthew Grady, at 1:12 a.m. Jan. 1.

Weighing in at 7 ½ pounds and measuring 19 ¼ inches, Sean was the first Craven County baby born in 2006, delivered by Caesarean section. Doctors had set Jan. 26 as the expected delivery date.

"Sean brought life to our party," said Matthew Grady, a probation and parole officer and first-time father. The fact that Sean was the first area baby to be born in 2006, he said, was "cool."

"I don't know if it's a good luck charm, but I was kind of proud of it," he said. "I think anybody would be."

Balloons and flowers ringed the cheery room on CRMC's maternity ward where friends and family members greeted the Gradys

en masse and welcomed their newest arrival.

"He looked pretty good," said Dawn Grady. "Early babies sometimes have issues with their lungs, but he was good and ready to go, so he decided he was going to come."

The day after Sean was born, a member of the hospital's nursing staff administered a blood sugar test to Dawn Grady, who has Type I diabetes. She lauded medical advances that have greatly reduced the risks of childbirth for diabetic mothers.

A language arts teacher at West Craven Middle School, Dawn Grady has high hopes for her firstborn son.

"We would like for him to be a confident young man who walks the right path," she said.

Matthew Grady expressed relief that his son was healthy despite being born almost a month premature.

"It's awesome," he said. "I've been praying for this for a long time. I didn't know it was going to come this soon."

The new dad said his son



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Matthew Grady sits beside his wife, Dawn, holding his newborn son, Sean, on Jan. 2.

has rarely cried, but "he does snore like his mother and father."

Dawn and Matthew Grady thanked hospital staff and obstetrician Dr. Stephen Joyner for their care and helpfulness during and after Sean's birth.

"Dr. Joyner, who delivered Sean, was just awesome throughout the delivery process," Matthew Grady said.

CRMC awarded the proud parents with a gift basket to commemorate the hospital's first 2006 birth. Megan

McGarvey, director of public relations, said about 1,000 babies are delivered at the hospital each year.

"All of our babies are special, of course, but the New Year's baby seems to hold an extra special place in our hearts," she said.

Man is wanted for break-in burglary

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A 20-year-old New Bern man is wanted by city police on burglary and kidnapping charges stemming from an alleged break-in Sunday, Jan. 1.

Shaun Shepard, of the Copperfield Apartments, is accused of threatening his ex-girlfriend with a knife after she discovered him inside her apartment at about 4 a.m. Jan. 1, according to a New Bern Police Department news release.

Upon discovery, Shepard prevented the victim from leaving her Arlington Circle apartment, grabbing her by the hair with a knife in hand, according to police. The victim, whose name was not released, fled when Shepard left her alone to returning her 17-month-old daughter to bed.

Shepard was not in the apartment when police arrived, and the child was unhurt. The suspect's knife was not recovered, therefore, police presume him to be armed and dangerous.

Authorities believe Shepard is still in the New Bern and Craven County area and are asking anyone with information on his whereabouts to contact the police department.

Shepard also faces charges from a Dec. 30 incident in which he allegedly assaulted the victim, damaged property in her apartment and stole the apartment keys.

Police arrest six in breaking, entering

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A swift police response to a breaking-and-entering in progress at an auto body repair business netted six arrests on Wednesday, Dec. 28.

New Bern police arrived at E&J Automotive, 103 Wanda Ave., to discover several men with flashlights inside the fenced-in compound and arrested Travon Boomer, 20, of Canal St., Charles Dade, 19, of Mockingbird Lane, and Edward Greene, 17, of River Road in Vanceboro.

Suspects had cut through the fence and begun to ransack cars and trucks

inside the compound, according to police. Doors and/or trunks were opened in 10 vehicles, but none had items removed or were damaged.

Each of the three men was charged with 10 counts of breaking and entering of a motor vehicle, one count of first-degree trespass, one count of damage to property, one count of conspiracy to commit a breaking-and-entering and one count of possession of burglary tools.

A police investigation turned up suspects involved

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Christmas clean-up

Craven County maintenance worker Ronnie Aderholt removes a holiday wreath from the county courthouse annex on Tuesday, Jan. 3.

Off the Wall

Union Point Park inspires poetic musings

The benches at Union Point Park chill my body this time of year. Dark and empty the last time I passed by, there was nothing to be seen but Christmas lights. Once, the wind and I engaged in a tug-of-war as I crossed the lawn to the waterfront.

I observed seagulls, but no ducks, like the ones who dined on my leftover dinner rolls before the September rains came.

Back then, the birds I found sifting through sand and broken shells at the river's edge were looking for morsels, leaving behind their footprints of many sizes. With his beak, a blackbird tore bits from a Styrofoam cup. A mallard sat

still, expecting a handout, while other ducks watched, along with pigeons: some gray, some black-striped, and one mostly white with reddish brown markings.

As I unwrapped the white napkin from the restaurant, my fingers lacked the speed to pinch off pieces fast enough to meet their demands. Seagulls swooped down, stealing from smaller birds.

It was the year of the poem in my beloved park where I gave birth to an endless string of free verse given to me by the natural Muses of the place.

It began on a steamy July afternoon while watching a man and his children bait

orange-colored lines off the

edge of the pier. They used chicken wings. Suddenly there was a pull. He grabbed slowly, raising a crab into the net at the end of the metal pole. Their first catch was a baby. He threw it back. Again it happened. His two daughters checked the lines. Suddenly a big one bit, then another.



SANDRA ERVIN ADAMS

"We got craaaabs," the man's young son sang, swinging on the green gate of the metal fence bordering the river. A boat full of people sped by, blew its horn repeatedly. The boy turned to look at a big blue crab climbing up the side of his bucket.

Couples in New Bern for the Shag Fest walked by my bench, holding hands, smiling. A child flew a kite with her parents. I immortalized them all in ink.

A week later I examined names and dates on the brick walkway by the water. Most of the names were unknown to me, but their pride rose up, stirred my soul.

I noted the plush green sod grass underneath my feet. Inspiration surrounded me by the old drawbridge where, more than 40 years ago, my father's car had waited to cross over, I in the backseat next to Grandma, hugging the pink jewelry box that she had bought for me downtown.

Amid the rushed schedules of the New Year, warmer weather is sure to bring me back to this peaceful place where you might find me eating a picnic lunch under the trees.

Contact Sandra Ervin Adams at sandra@indieregister.com.

Opinion

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Editorials

Shock waves

FCC continues clampdown on radio broadcasts

Howard Stern doesn't seem like much of a role model. A misogynist homophobe with an affinity for the lewd and crude, the veteran radio personality is a pitchman for hedonism and self-aggrandizement.

But the recalcitrant Stern's battle with the Federal Communications Commission over indecency fines for radio and television broadcasts have earned him a space in the pantheon of patriots.

It's difficult to imagine anything more antithetical to the First Amendment than the current climate of fear in which radio stations operate. Disc jockeys are biting their tongues and musicians holding their notes in order to avoid being fined by the FCC, a government arm that, at its worst, becomes little more than a censorship agency.

The FCC regulates any information and content disseminated over public airwaves. Private print and broadcast media enjoy full First Amendment protections, but lease a radio frequency from Uncle Sam and you'll have to watch your language.

While the technology that enables radio broadcasts is government-owned, we fail to see why it should be exempt from constitutional guarantees of free speech and expression. Stern doesn't understand it, either, and though the self-proclaimed "King of All Media" abdicated to Sirius satellite radio, it's a safe bet that he will continue opposing

FCC censorship.

The Independent Register interviewed two assistant program directors at area radio stations this week. Both said the FCC provides little or no guidance on what constitutes an indecent broadcast. Wendy Gatlin, assistant program director at WSFL-FM 106.5, calls it an "invisible line" that she and her DJs are cautious not to cross.

With no punch list of forbidden words, radio stations are left to answer thorny questions about how much profanity or vulgarity — if any — will be permitted. The short answer is it depends on who's listening.

Gatlin explained that the FCC's enforcement arm is primarily a repository for listener complaints. Often, the agency will investigate complaints and review broadcast recordings, sometimes issuing a fine to offenders.

Washington doesn't employ a shadowy team of censors to root out indecency. Since citizen complaints usually result in action, the real censors are the listeners who would sooner stifle uncomfortable speech than confront it.

We urge radio listeners to oppose censorship in all its forms and petition elected officials to free broadcast media from the yoke of the state.

It's what Howard Stern would do, and this time, it's the right thing.

Running unopposed

State awards voting systems monopoly to ES&S

New voting machines are required in all 100 North Carolina counties, but state elections officials are allowing only one company to cash in.

After the State Board of Elections decertified current voting equipment, it sent bid requests to nine manufacturers and received five responses. The state board certified four Elections Systems and Software voting machines, leaving other equipment manufacturers out in the cold.

Since counties cannot purchase equipment that doesn't have the state's endorsement, the state board's decision effectively eliminates competition and creates a statewide monopoly on voting machine sales.

New laws passed by the General Assembly required every voting machine to produce a paper trail and ordered improvements to electronic voting systems for the disabled and visually

impaired. While Elections Systems and Software may have dazzled state officials with their new offerings, we doubt the company is the only one that could produce satisfactory equipment.

Government has long been known to punish some monopolies while nourishing others, and rarely has such an obvious and puzzling case of corporate favoritism emerged in the Tar Heel State.

County boards of elections — including Craven's — can do little more than shrug their shoulders and fork over the cash.

We don't question the quality of ES&S' voting machines, which are currently in use countywide, nor do we fault the company for so thoroughly wowing the state elections board.

But we do believe that county governments — and the taxpayers to whom they are accountable — deserve a choice.

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.

Vox Populi

County squanders tax revenues

Editor:

The Craven County Board of Commissioners has decided to buy land for the new county jail and county sheriff's facilities. Correction: law enforcement center and detention facility. I must be politically correct!

Costs: \$689,000. This was done in a closed session,

away from public eyes and ears.

If I am not mistaken (correct me if I am wrong) did not this same Board of Commissioners give land to BSH, just within the past year?

I read that there was a block grant to CARTS. CARTS are to be used for people within Craven County. Why is

there a CARTS van parked at a private residence in Jones County? Are CARTS employees using these vehicles to commute to and from work, like many of the law enforcement officers do? Our plundered, sorry tax money well spent.

Richard C. Evey
Havelock

Oil prices mirror recent history

Editor:

In response to all the talk about the ANWR, to paraphrase, those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it.

In the mid-1970s, this country had a major "oil embargo." No oil was "shipped" from the Middle East and there was a limited amount of gasoline. There were gas lines nationwide, people got into fights over who was in line first, and people were shot over the price of gas, the need for gas and the availability of gas.

Then one day, there was all the crude oil that anyone

wanted, but the price of gas had doubled and the number of gas stations dropped. It was a time that a lot of people should never forget.

The people demanded more gas and a better source of oil. The U.S. government responded, along with the major oil companies, with the crude oil that was located on the north slope of Alaska, near the Bering Sea. The U.S. government funded the Alaska pipeline with billions of your tax dollars to build a pipeline from the North Slope to the port at Valdes, Alaska. The non-hard line environmentalists were concerned and had a lot of

reservations about the real need for the pipeline.

But did the crude oil go to the U.S. market? No, it went to the country of Japan. Remember Pearl Harbor? Less than 20 percent of the crude came to this country.

Now the people of the U.S. and the U.S. government are beating the drum saying that we must get off the need for Middle East oil again — the same cry we heard in the mid-70s.

My question is: Where will the oil from the ANWR go, China? Food for thought.

Richard C. Evey
Havelock

Spunky Diablo's Laundromat

Impatient patients should

be calling their own shots

Doctors, lawyers should emulate humble priests

I dittybop into my dentist's office, and the good tooth-doctor tells me the condition of my dentition: number 16, my leftmost wisdom tooth on the maxilla (upper gum) is rotting right out of my skull.

He tells me that for several hundred dollars, he can get rid of the damn tooth. He seems powerfully biased in favor of this decision.

My bias runs in the opposite direction. I want number 16. They don't call it a wisdom tooth for nothing. I want it. And I want my several hundred dollars, and this really pisses the dentist off, because he wants it too. His eyes tell me that I am a bulbous ox.

But the tooth stays. On my way out I pass a lawyer's office, and then it hits me: Your disease is marrow to the doctor's bones, your travails bread on the attorney's table; your sweat is braces on the teeth of the pedodontist's child, and your minor traffic infraction is what keeps Chief Palombo's pasta *al dente*.

Why do these people demand so much money? Seventy-five percent of the time, their incompetence makes us suffer in the first place. Nowhere is more germ-ridden than a hospital, nothing more corrupt than a courthouse or lawyer's office.

They justify their extortion by saying, "Well, we went to college for a couple of

decades and that ain't cheap, you know," and, "It costs billions to keep you alive, idiot," and, "Only in America do so many get so much for so little."

It all amounts to a big load of hooptydoodle.

Not only do we give them the fruit of our energy, of our very lives, but we also give them dominion over our bodies. When was the last time you openly defied your doctor? G o t screwed over by some slick-talking sycophant lawyer?

The equipment, the procedures, the technological arms race — these all balloon the cost of health care and legal services.

This march, this constant acceleration, this progress...what does it all mean? What are we progressing toward?

Death. As individuals, as a species. You're in a hurry to die. You stand on the gas pedal and shoot through the red light with half your kid's soccer team in the back seat. You pass the ninth grade if you know what's good for you. You marry that boy while

he'll still have you. You enroll in cosmetology school. You get in Line.

What they don't tell you is that the Line leads to Cotten Funeral Home.

The decay is painless. God blessed me with an extraordinarily kind wisdom tooth. All I'm aware of is that I've got this numb spongy mess in my mouth. When I'm bored, I tongue the socket. I wonder about the dying tooth's attachments. But I don't worry.

The Neanderthal Me, the Cro-Magnon Me, that Hairless Ape Me from whom I descend and to whom I'm attached by a thin invisible thread of uninterrupted DNA — *this* person needed no dentists, no doctors, and not only did he survive, he survived long enough without being mangled, handicapped or eaten to sire the good folks who would one day sire me.

If progress leads to death, then retardation leads to life. The solution is to make sure you strike a balance between getting ahead in some areas and dropping behind in others. We should have all the trappings of modern medicine...but doctors and lawyers should be more like priests, not robberbarons. We set the standard. We call the shots.

If we're only aware.

Contact Stephen Lewis at stephen@indieregister.com.

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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.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WANDA TOLER

'Polar Express' party

Bridgeton Elementary School first-graders Natalie Smith (left) and Taylor Whitford play a card game on Dec. 20. Students were allowed to wear pajamas as the entire school watched 'The Polar Express.'

Radio stations seek guidance on vague FCC 'decency' standards

Continued from Page A1

The FCC crackdown on television and radio indecency began after singer Janet Jackson's exposed right breast was broadcast during the Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show on Feb. 3, 2004. Responding to calls from incensed viewers, the agency tripled some fine totals and began stepping up investigation and enforcement.

Controversial radio host Howard Stern has famously feuded with the FCC, taunting Chairman Michael Powell on-air after Clear Channel Communications, which syndicated his show, was fined \$495,000 by the agency for a series of indecent comments.

Stern recently signed a five-year, \$500 million contract with satellite radio provider Sirius, with his first show on the paid-subscription network to air on Jan. 9.

"I realized when I was in school that the FCC regulates radio and you have to abide by what the FCC says," Gatlin explained. "I respect Howard for what he's done in radio, but I think that they gave him

an inch and he kept taking and taking and taking. Now where he is, he can do what he wants to do."

The assistant program director for WXNR-FM 99.5 in New Bern said he perceives a harsher FCC crackdown on radio than TV. The increased pressure to abandon suggestive content has resulted in an attitude of caution that leads radio personalities to engage in self-censorship, he said.

Disc jockeys used to get as close to the "invisible line" as they could, said Paul Sullivan, better known as Sully, his on-air moniker.

"Now, it's 'Don't even go anywhere near it,'" he said. "If you have to question it, don't do it."

Echoing frustrated broadcasters nationwide, Sullivan said it would be easier to adhere to the FCC's guidelines if the agency elaborated upon its list of taboos and minimized confusion over what would be interpreted as indecent.

"There does need to be a level of self-censorship," he said. "But the problem with that is no one knows where to go. I think everybody would

have preferred some kind of guidance."

Though he hasn't been fined by the FCC, Sullivan said he's spoken to fellow broadcasters who have been investigated.

His station, which features a heavy rotation of modern rock music, takes a proactive approach to editing vulgarities in music and preventing them during call-in segments.

While on the air, Sullivan avoids what he calls the "Big Three" — sex, religion and politics.

"My policy on the air is stay away from politics and religion, just stay away from it," he said. "It's very offensive, people have strong views on it."

Some radio veterans — including Stern — believe the FCC's tight reins violate the spirit of the First Amendment.

Sullivan doesn't mind a little oversight — as long as it's in moderation.

"I don't have a problem with radio being governed," he said. "But too much, I think, is bad, because you can't give the production that you want to give."

New voting machines debut at public forum

By COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Citizens and poll workers were given the opportunity to "kick the tires" on new voting machines at a Craven County Board of Elections public forum Dec. 28.

More than 30 people filed into the county courthouse annex for the forum, which introduced two new voting machines the county will purchase to replace current equipment, which was recently decertified by the state elections board. In accordance with new state regulations requiring a paper trail for all votes cast, the county board plans to buy an optical scanner — which tallies the paper ballots most voters will use — and an iVotronic touch-screen voting machine to accommodate citizens with disabilities for each precinct.

"We want to let you kick the tires on these new machines," said Owen Andrews, president and co-owner of New Bern-based Printelect, which represents manufacturer Elections Systems and Software. "We're excited to have our

home county. I live here and most of our staff lives here. We look forward to continuing to serve Craven County's needs."

Elections Systems and Software is the only company certified by the state board of elections to sell equipment to North Carolina's 100 counties, which are expected to replace decertified voting machines by Jan. 20.

"The state has gone to a lot of time and expense to help certify everyone's vote," Andrews said.

The iVotronic's predecessor, the Votronic, had a black-and-white screen, which users would navigate with a stylus. The updated model has a 15-inch color touch-screen and prints a record of each ballot, known as a Voter Verifiable Paper Trail.

"It's not really that much different than what we're doing now," said William Miner, chairman of the Craven elections board. "It's just new."

The new machines carry a price tag of about \$450,000, according to

Tiffany Miller, Craven County elections director. The board expects to receive a \$312,000 state grant and is expected to request the remainder from the county board of commissioners.

Pat and Rita Flynn, who moved to Craven County from New Jersey, attended the forum to gain insight on North Carolina voting practices. The Flynns plan to be informed voters and participate in future elections.

"It was awfully discouraging, the turnout for the last [New Bern] election," said Pat Flynn. "There's something wrong there. There just seemed to be more advertising when they had the runoff."

"Change is hard, so that's all it is, basically, is change," said Fred Nichols, an assistant precinct judge for the West of New Bern precinct. "Whether we like it or not, the people in Raleigh dictated it, so I guess we have to go with it."

Contact Corey Friedman at 633-2757 or at corey@indieregister.com.

Commissioners set public hearing

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County Board of Commissioners meeting, scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17 at the county administration building.

County leaders pledged support for a project to renovate Rocky Run Park initiated by resident Tenise Gooding, who said the

dilapidated facility has become hazardous.

"We do need to update this park," she said. "It's very dangerous for the children out there...on the basketball court, the grass has grown and separated the pavement. Someone who's playing could get hurt."

Gooding submitted a petition with 125 signatures asking the county to replace

rundown equipment and install restrooms, which would cost about \$100,000, according to estimates provided by Jan Parker, county recreation and parks director.

Commissioners said renovations are a priority, but additional construction to the park couldn't be approved until the county receives its budget in May.

City police arrest six B&E suspects

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in two prior break-ins at E&J Automotive, reported on Sept. 14 and Oct. 1.

Detectives from the police department's Major Case Unit obtained arrest warrants for three suspects: Eric Lovick, 18, of Green Street, Gregory Franks, 19, of Monroe Drive, and Jimmy Berry, 19, of F Street.

Lovick was charged with one count of first-degree

trespass and one count of injury to real property for his role in the Oct. 1 breaking-and-entering, according to police.

Franks was charged with one count each of felony breaking-and-entering of a motor vehicle, misdemeanor larceny, first-degree trespass and injury to real property in the Sept. 14 breaking-and-entering.

Berry was charged with one count each of felony

breaking-and-entering of a motor vehicle and misdemeanor larceny for the Oct. 1 incident and one count each of first-degree trespass and injury to real property in the Sept. 14 incident.

Police said the investigation remains open and additional suspects may be charged.

Classifieds

Rates and Disclaimer

Basic classified advertisements for individuals and businesses are \$5 for five lines of copy with the first line bolded, with \$0.50 added for each additional line of ad copy. Business logos, icons or clip art can be added for an extra \$1.

The Independent Register offers free basic classifieds for lost and found items. Classified ads are accepted over the phone at (252) 633-2757, via fax at (252) 636-0616 or via e-mail at advertising@indieregister.com. Payment must be made in cash or by check or money order.

The Independent Register bears no legal responsibility for the content of classified ads or claims made therein. We reserve the right to edit or refuse any advertisement at any time.

Help Wanted

ADVERTISING SALES

The Independent Register is seeking a capable and motivated sales professional to sell display advertisements. Pay is commission only, but earnings are unlimited! Call Advertising Manager William R. Toler at (252) 633-2757.

FREELANCE WRITER

wanted to cover community events and write concise, accurate and engaging news and feature stories for the Independent Register, an alternative biweekly newspaper covering New Bern and Craven County. Call Corey Friedman, editor, at (252) 633-2757 for more information.

For Sale

OAK FIREWOOD FOR sale. \$50 per load, stacked and delivered. Call 637-6035.

DISH NETWORK -- Dish and two receivers \$100. Call Mark at 745-4757.

BB GUN -- DAISY Eagle model BB/pellet gun with aftermarket scope. Loads 100 BBs or 1 pellet at a time. Good condition, asking \$65 or best offer. Call (252) 349-9066.

COMPUTER MONITOR 15-inch color screen, compatible with most desktop PCs. Good condition, \$30 firm. Call (252) 349-9066.

USED TEXTBOOKS --

Current editions used for several classes at Craven Community College including English 111, Math 070 and 080, political science. Some books like new, some bought used. Don't pay bookstore prices! \$10 -- \$20 apiece. Call (252) 349-9066.

ELECTRIC PIANO -- Pushbutton tuning, good quality, about 10 years old and rarely used. Asking \$450. Call (252) 626-1949.

MUSIC EQUIPMENT FOR SALE: Custom Hand Made Bass Guitars, Electric Guitars, Amplifiers, Effects Units, Stands, Gig Bags and Microphones. Call Tony at 635-2684 between 10am to 6pm Mon - Sat. Email acarta@cox.net

For Hire

EXPERIENCED BABYSITTING Service. Weddings and all special occasions. \$10 per hour per child. Call 675-1098.

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RADAR DETECTOR wanted for fair market value, \$50 or less. Should comply with state laws and include original instruction manual. Call (252) 349-9066

POLITICAL SIGNS -- Have a sign from recent local, state or presidential elections? Why let it go to waste? I buy used signs from political campaigns for posterity and history. Rare signs from 1960s and earlier welcome also. Call 349-9066.

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1968 CHEVELLE -- 350 Chevy engine, 350 turbo trans. Solid Body, some rust, interior good. \$5,000 neg. Call (252) 633-2757.

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1994 FORD TAURUS GL edition, 3.0 liter V-6, new tires, 145k miles. New Pioneer CD player, but speakers don't work. Asking \$1800, will consider trades. Call (252) 349-9066.

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Personals

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