



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Ten-year-old London Smith holds a card depicting Yemanya, goddess of the sea. Smith was disciplined for violating Bangert Elementary School's ban on cards and received a five-day suspension, according to her mother, Angela Wood.

Bangert parent seeks review of suspension

Wood questions the severity of her daughter's punishment

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

TRENT WOODS — The mother of a Bangert Elementary School student suspended for violating the school's ban on cards is challenging the punishment on grounds of religious freedom.

New Bern resident Angela Wood said her 10-year-old daughter, London Smith, received a five-day suspension on Nov. 11 after a bus monitor saw her showing a deck of Goddess Guidance Oracle Cards to her twin sister, Mary Smith.

The bus monitor, who is also a teacher, confiscated the cards and escorted London Smith to the principal's office, Wood said.

Smith, who practices witchcraft and uses the cards as a divination tool, told her mother that school officials questioned her about her religion and made disparaging comments, according to Wood.

"She was crying hysterically when I got there because they told her that her religion was not real," Wood said. "Under the Constitution, they were not

allowed to ask her what her religion was and they were not allowed to harass her about it."

Wood said Bangert Elementary Principal Angie Franks suspended Smith from school for five days, claiming one of the cards that depicted a partially nude mermaid was "pornographic." She said Franks told her that her daughter would need to undergo a psychiatric evaluation before being readmitted to school.

The card in question features an illustration of

Yemanya, the goddess of the sea. The mermaid is bare-breasted, with one breast almost completely obscured by a necklace.

"The minute I walked in the door, she [Franks] had the mermaid card in her hand and said 'This is pornography,'" Wood said. "I bought the cards in the kids' section at Books-a-Million. I hardly think a multibillion-dollar corporation would be selling porn to kids."

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Police intercept drug shipment

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

New Bern police and the Postal Inspection Service on Nov. 16 intercepted a package shipped to a city man containing cocaine and marijuana with a combined street value of \$20,500.

After a controlled delivery of the package, which was shipped from Los Angeles and addressed to 726 Third Ave., Kip Wright, 35, of 312 John St., led police on a high-speed chase across U.S. 70 before being captured.

After the package was delivered to the residence, Wright placed it in the trunk of his 1993 Ford Crown Victoria sedan and drove away, refusing to pull over as marked police



Wright

Continued on Page A4



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/COREY FRIEDMAN

A U.S. Coast Guard boat circles the wreckage of a Cessna airplane that crashed into the Neuse River on Nov. 16.

Man injured in airplane wreck

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A single-engine airplane crashed into the Neuse River Nov. 16, injuring the craft's sole passenger, pilot Kent Larson of Goldsboro.

Larson escaped from the wreckage and was transported to Craven Regional Medical Center, where he was airlifted to Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville. He was treated for hypothermia and neck and back injuries before being released the next day.

Emergency first responders said the four-

passenger Cessna Cardinal dove into the river bordering the James City community, near Dixie Chemical Co. on Old Cherry Point Road, shortly after noon. The water was about 12 feet deep at the point of impact.

"He [Larson] did have what they deemed to be severe hypothermia and some neck and back injuries," said Tim Harvey, Craven County Emergency Management assistant director.

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Woman assaults probation officer

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

An off-duty Craven County Department of Social Services employee was arrested Nov. 18 for assaulting a probation officer, authorities said.

Nita Bass, 37, of 1804 National Ave., backed her car into Latoya Williams, a N.C. Department of Corrections probation officer, on the 900 block of Bern Street at 7:45 p.m. Nov. 15, according to

the New Bern Police Department. Bass drove her white Ford Escort coupe past Williams' car, honking the horn, as the officer spoke with a



Bass

Continued on Page A4

Basketball star's mother offers advice on parenting

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Michael Jordan didn't have to wonder whether his parents would show up to watch his high school basketball games. Night after night, they sat in the stands and cheered for their son.

Being an active and involved parent is the first of Deloris Jordan's seven principles of successful childrearing—a concept she put into practice long before His Airness was old enough to dribble a basketball.

Jordan shared parenting tips and anecdotes from her superstar son's upbringing Nov. 19 as the featured speaker for Craven County Schools' second annual Title I Parent Conference at Craven Community College's Orringer Auditorium.

"It didn't start on the basketball court," she told a crowd of about 100 parents and community members who attended the free conference. "It started with us at home being determined that we were going to give our

best. Nobody else was going to come into our home and teach strong values and leadership."

Jordan's seven principles are adapted from her 1996 book, "Family First: Winning the Parenting Game." She stressed the importance of placing a high value on education and promoting lifelong learning.

"I'm here to tell you that education is the way out of poverty," she said. "Once you have it, no one can take it away. A door may close,

but if you have the tools, you can keep knocking those doors open."

President and founder of the James Jordan Foundation, named for her husband who died in 1993, Deloris Jordan spoke for about half an hour. She expressed pride in her son Michael's performance as an athlete — and as a father.

"He's not a household name much anymore," she said. "He's made his mark.

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER/COREY FRIEDMAN

Deloris Jordan, mother of basketball legend Michael Jordan, speaks to parents at Craven Community College on Nov. 19.

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Local & State

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News Briefs

'Christmas Carol' to be performed

New Bern-Craven County Public Library will host a performance of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" by British actor and scholar Howard Burnham on Dec. 4.

Billed as a dramatic performance for adults, the event is being presented by the Friends of the Library and the Colonial North Carolina Branch of the English Speaking Union.

The performance is set to begin at 2:30 p.m.

NC State to offer reward for flounder

North Carolina State University's Center for Maritime Sciences and Technology is offering rewards for tagged flounder caught commercially or recreationally.

NC State researchers ask that southern flounder caught with orange cinch-up tags be returned for a reward of above-market price.

Associated information, including the tag number, date and location of capture, is also needed for the project.

For more information or to report a tagged flounder, call toll free 1-866-565-8211.

Democratic Party plans a meeting

The Craven County Democratic Party is scheduled to meet at Golden Coral on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in New Bern on Monday, Nov. 28.

Craig Weber, candidate for Congressional District 3, will be the guest speaker.

Dinner is set to begin at 5:30 p.m., with the meeting to follow at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, contact Rachel Parnell at 514-2198.

Cove City VFD to host dance event

The Cove City Volunteer Fire Department has slated its annual Dinner and Dance from 7 p.m. to midnight Thursday, Dec. 1.

Tickets are \$30 per couple. For further information, contact Brian Davis at 229-6590.

Free vision screenings are offered

Free vision screenings will be available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10 at Twin Rivers Mall in New Bern.

The screenings are sponsored by the Twin Rivers Lions Club and New Bern Lions Club.

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

Germain convicted in federal court

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

GREENVILLE — An illegal alien living in New Bern was sentenced Nov. 8 to a year in federal prison followed by deportation to Haiti at the U.S. Federal Courthouse in Greenville.

Lucien Germain, 42, of 2006 College Street in New Bern, was convicted of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon following an Oct. 31 arrest by New Bern police, according to a police department news release.

Judge Malcolm Howard sentenced Germain to a one-year term in federal prison, followed by deportation to his native Haiti. Germain's criminal history includes drug charges in New Bern and robbery and drug charges in Florida.

The police department's investigation of Germain began last year, when neighbors complained that Germain was operating an illegal liquor house, selling controlled substances and

hosting gambling activities at his residence, and that the activity occurred "at all hours of the night," according to police.

Major Case Unit detectives obtained search warrants after a shooting



Germain

took place behind Germain's home on Oct. 31, 2004. Detectives recovered drugs and a gun, which was later determined not to be connected to the shooting.

As a convicted felon, however, Germain "was not legally allowed to possess a firearm," police said in the news release.

New Bern police and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms brought their investigation to the U.S. Attorney's Office,

which prosecuted the case under Project Safe Neighborhoods, a federal program to reduce gun violence which relies upon cooperation between local law enforcement agencies, the ATF bureau and the U.S. Department of Justice.

The New Bern Police Department has been a member of Project Safe Neighborhoods since August 2004.

Free computer classes benefit seniors

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Computers are no longer intimidating to 79-year-old Jim Land.

With free weekly instruction on Internet basics from the New Bern-Craven County Public Library, Land can now browse favorite Web sites, explore search engines and check his e-mail.

"It's amazing what's stored in those little ol' boxes," he said. "The information comes from everywhere in the world."

Land signed up for an intermediate Internet class at the library taught by Wendy Rosen, assistant head of the reference department. Held from 2 to 3:15 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, the class is taught from a 20-page syllabus and typically draws six or fewer students.

On Nov. 14, Rosen had just two students, Land and 75-year-old James Gray. The class began with a thorough explanation of how to delete files and folders from the computer to reclaim hard drive space.

Demonstrating several means of external file storage, Rosen produced a flash drive, which docks into a computer's USB port.

"My Lord! What does this go into?" asked Land, who had never seen such a compact storage device.

Land and Gray also learned how to search the Internet and how to use Web sites such as MapQuest to find custom maps and driving directions.

"What's useful to me is that you can access almost any kind of information that you're interested in," said Gray. "The [MapQuest] system has lots of maps, and it can plan for you. If you want to go from New Bern to Philadelphia, it would punch you out a map.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Wendy Rosen, assistant head of the reference department at New Bern-Craven County Public Library, shows Jim Land and James White how to navigate the information superhighway during an intermediate Internet class on Nov. 14.

For her primer on Internet search engines and information retrieval, Rosen demonstrated a search for data on New Bern's history. She also showed her students the library's own Web site and online card catalog.

No Internet class would be complete without an advisory to avoid clicking on pop-up and banner advertisements, which clutter many Web sites and can masquerade as information content, easily

confusing novice Internet users.

"You're into something which will wind up costing you money," Rosen explained to her students. "They have advertisements which lead to fee-based services that I would not recommend."

Land said he's grateful for the classes and appreciates "having an intelligent person knowing what they are talking about."

Rosen said feedback has been "overwhelmingly positive," noting that

students benefit from the one-on-one instruction they receive at the library.

"The greatest benefit is the one-on-one instruction," she said. "When you're sitting in a large class in a college, you can lose people, but in this kind of setting, you have three to four people in a class."

The New Bern-Craven County Public Library offers several free classes, including Introductory Internet, Beginning Internet, Intermediate Internet, Yahoo!

Electronic Mail, Microsoft Word and Library Online Catalog.

Classes typically meet once or twice weekly. Pre-registration is required to attend. For more information, contact the library's reference department at (252) 638-7807.

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

New Bern police make one arrest in nightclub stabbing

Swindell, 19, is charged with one count of assault

BY COREY FRIEDMAN
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A New Bern police investigation of two unrelated incidents Nov. 13 at Friday's Nightclub netted an arrest for the stabbing of a local woman.

At 4 a.m. Nov. 13, Craven Regional Medical Center staff notified police that a man had been treated for a gunshot wound. The victim told police he was shot in the leg at Friday's Nightclub, located at 609 N.C. 55. The man heard someone fire a gun, but he didn't know who discharged the weapon or why he had been shot.

"We have no suspects and no information at all," in the shooting, said police spokesman Chris Stansbury.

Ten minutes later, a woman was brought to CRMC's emergency department with multiple stab wounds also sustained at the nightclub. The woman told police that patrons fled the club following the gunshot, but that a group of women began fighting in the parking lot.

One produced a box cutter and began cutting and stabbing the victim, police said. The victim, whose name was not released, was treated for facial lacerations to her face, neck and arms.

Following interviews with the stabbing victim and others present at Friday's, police obtained warrants for the arrest of Shameka Swindell, 19, of 625 Fox Chase Village.

Swindell was charged with one count of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury. She was held in the Craven County Jail under a \$10,000 secured bond, with her first appearance in district court scheduled for Nov. 14.

"We've had a large number of incidents over the last 15 years or so involving fights and the sale of alcohol

to minors," Stansbury said on Nov. 17. "We're not necessarily telling people not to go there, we just want people to know that these are the situations that have been going on."

Stansbury said the New Bern Police Department is working with the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety's Alcohol Law Enforcement division to determine whether Friday's has violated any laws.

He said the nightclub is not licensed to sell alcohol and advertises itself as "catering to private parties" where patrons bring their own alcoholic beverages.

Stansbury also said police have "re-presented the issue to the Board of Aldermen to see if the city has any options to shut it down."

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

School board OKs 2006-07 calendars

BY JAMIE SCHARBROUGH
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

The Craven County Board of Education approved 2006-07 calendars for the county's traditional and year-round schools at its Nov. 17 meeting at the board's Central Services complex.

The board had already met earlier that day between 1 and 5 p.m., to discuss pertinent issues for the county school system in a board of education work session.

With fiscal year 2004-05 ending on June 30, the accounting firm of Pittard, Perry, and Crone came before the board to discuss the annual financial report and audit. The school board was given certificates of excellence and achievement for the firm's clean opinion of the financial status of the budget.

The management analysis was also given, with a general fund increase of more than \$370,000. Audits of various programs budgeted by the school board were also given, and

no marks were found against any of the programs, on either state or federal levels.

Finance was also discussed in terms of a proposal to increase teacher salary to \$75 per day effective in November, and \$78 beginning the first of the year. Long-term substitute pay was also increased.

Several board members expressed desire to see substitute pay raised to the level of standard teachers' pay. No vote was taken on substitute pay, but it was a matter for more information.

After a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance, the agenda, which included financial reports, calendar voting and the decision to purchase new school buses, was approved. Linda Thomas, one of the board members, gave several dates to remember, including the next date for the District Advisory Committee for Education

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Community

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Bear City sunset

An orange afternoon sun dances on the horizon above downtown New Bern as seen across the Neuse River from Bridgeton on Nov. 18. The iconic peaks of New Bern's City Hall and Christ Episcopal Church tower over North Carolina's colonial capital.

Municipal news Havelock suspends its sewer flow allocations

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

HAVELOCK — Concern over a limited sewer flow capacity led city leaders on Nov. 14 to adopt a resolution temporarily suspending further allocation of sewer flow.

The resolution passed by the Havelock Board of Commissioners will allow the city to reduce the volume of rainwater entering sewage plants. The North Carolina Environmental Management Commission has placed a limit on the city's sewer flow capacity.

Havelock's city engineer and city attorney, in conjunction with the board of commissioners, are hammering out a Sewer Capacity Allocation Policy to distribute the remaining volume of sewer flow, according to the resolution.

As of Nov. 14, about 52,874 total gallons remained for allocation in 2005.

Hazen and Sawyer, the city's engineering firm, has prepared various documents outlining current usage of sewer flow and projecting future capacity limitations, explains the resolution,

signed by Havelock Mayor George Griffin.

The city of Havelock and the state Environmental Management Commission have entered a Special Order by Consent from Sept. 30, 2004 to Dec. 1, 2006.

Havelock commissioners have scheduled a special workshop to address sewer flow allocation.

The workshop is open to the public and will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 22 in the Havelock City Hall auditorium.

Cove City is acquiring land for pump stations

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

COVE CITY — This western Craven County town selected five privately owned sites to purchase for sewer pump stations, Mayor Dred Mitchell told the town Board of Aldermen on Nov. 7.

The town intends to enter into an option agreement with each landowner before purchasing each site. Option agreements will grant the

town exclusive rights to the property purchase for a period of 24 months. If the town does not exercise an option agreement, the landowner would retain all option fees paid to date.

Town aldermen voted to approve the purchase of each site in turn. The five sites being optioned by the town are currently owned by Phillip G. McCoy, D. Charlton

Mitchell, Nancy C. Chase, Wiley A. Avery Jr. and Lucille J. Gatling.

Mitchell was excused from voting and deliberation on the D. Charlton Mitchell property.

Cove City aldermen also dealt with drainage issues at their Nov. 7 meeting, discussing the possible installation of a tile at Ben McCoy's property.

Caccavaro is hired as Swing Zone general manager

SPECIAL
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

Randy Straight, owner of the new Swing Zone Family Fun Park, recently announced the appointment of Dave Caccavaro to the position of general manager. Swing Zone, slated to open in early December, is a family entertainment complex being constructed midway between New Bern and Havelock on U.S. 70.

While the project has been under development for more than two years, there were no actual employees until Caccavaro's appointment this month. Caccavaro has lived in New Bern for 10 years and is well known to local parents and children from previous volunteer and professional positions. He has coached

soccer and baseball, worked at two local video stores and most recently assisted the New Bern River Rats baseball team. He also worked in the food services and sporting goods fields in his hometown near Boston, Mass. Caccavaro is married and has three young children.

When the Swing Zone project is completed, area residents will be able to enjoy an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant miniature golf course, complete with a waterfall, bridges and six fountains.

Other park features include a four-station batting cage with baseball and softball machines, a paintball field completely surrounded by 20-foot high netting, a game room with redemption and arcade

games and snack bar which features Nathan's hot dogs, pizza, Pepsi and Maola ice cream products.

In addition to indoor seating, Swing Zone also has an enclosed patio overlooking the paintball field and batting cages. With seating for 64 people, the patio can be reserved for private functions such as birthday parties and corporate events. There is even a toddler playground next to the pavilion and free wireless Internet access throughout the park.

Caccavaro will be assisted at Swing Zone by Chris Straight, operations manager, and a staff of five to eight part-time employees. Positions yet to be filled include referees for paintball contests, snack bar

Municipal news

Trent Woods hires new police officer

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

TRENT WOODS — Bringing an end to this Craven County town's three-month search for a police officer, Trent Woods Chief of Police Michael Register notified town commissioners on Nov. 6 that he hired Abby M. Mantyla to fill the vacant police officer position.

Mantyla, the town's first female police officer, took her oath of office before the Trent Woods Board of Commissioners at the board's monthly meeting in the George R. Scott Sr. Municipal Building. Town clerk Tina C. Woolard administered the oath.

Trent Woods commissioners voted unanimously to approve a proposed increase in the base salary for town police officers in order to offer law enforcement professionals a wage competitive with that offered by other local municipalities.

Effective Nov. 1, the town increases its entry level pay for police officers to \$30,000 per year and will adjust the salary of any officer whose current pay is below the new entry level.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Ronald E. Oliver advised residents who planned on expressing sewer system

concerns to David Muse, New Bern city engineer, to relay those concerns to the board. Muse was unable to attend the Nov. 6 board of commissioners meeting.

Tom Hartman told commissioners that his property marker had been removed during sewer line installation and had been told the marker was replaced, but could not locate a replacement marker.

Hartman also expressed concern about the handling of sewer system inspections. He said he was told that inspectors are not going under houses to check for proper hook-ups.

Another Trent Woods resident told commissioners that a plumber hooked his home up to the sewer system incorrectly. He said he hired another plumber to correct the problem and forwarded his bill to the original plumber.

Ken Wyman also questioned whether a plumber who has completed his connections and has had the sewer lines inspected is free from recourse for faulty work because the inspector had approved the work.

Oliver asked residents with sewer system concerns to provide town officials with their addresses and said the

town would contact City of New Bern sewer personnel and address the matters discussed. No formal action was taken on residents' sewer hook-up concerns.

In other business, Trent Woods commissioners:

■ Heard a report from the town's maintenance director stating that the aerator in the pond at Meadows Family Park was not running because of an electrical malfunction that would soon be repaired;

■ Approved amendments to the town's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to reflect changes in state planning statutes passed by the North Carolina General Assembly;

■ Tabled consideration of an offer from Fred Hughes of 5320 Trent Woods Drive to take ownership of the right-of-way portion of Hatcher Road, privately owned property currently maintained by the state Department of Transportation; and

■ Heard a report from the town finance officer and tax collector explaining discrepancies between the current town budget and last year's budget during a presentation on the fiscal year 2004-2005 audit.

Bridgeton OKs purchase of a new sewage pump

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

BRIDGETON — Town commissioners here approved a request to purchase a new \$3,453 sewage pump for Liftstation No. 4 during the Oct. 11 meeting of the Bridgeton Board of Commissioners.

The replacement pump was needed due to the failure of its predecessor. Bridgeton Mayor Rodman L. Williams told commissioners to expect more maintenance costs following a structural inspection of the sewer plant.

The board adopted an ordinance that amended the general penalty section of town ordinances to ensure consistency with North Carolina law. The town's personnel policy was amended to read that all employment is "at will."

Commissioners green-lighted a \$400 expense for unspecified repairs to be made on a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria in use by the Bridgeton Police Department.

Chief of Police Dan Garden said he has stepped up foot patrols of the town due to high gasoline prices and addressed a commissioner's concern regarding a man that was approaching elderly women in the area asking for money. Garden said the man had been asked to refrain from doing so.

A developer from Raleigh, Jerry Pounds, approached the board seeking annexation of property he recently purchased on Wildlife Road outside of Bridgeton's town limits in order to obtain town sewer service for the site. Pounds is planning to construct single-family housing — possibly townhouses — on the property.

He was advised that since an upcoming project would max out the sewer system's current capacity, he would be added to a waiting list for sewer service and annexation.

Commissioners also heard a request from John Forrest, a Realtor, who is

assisting the Gaskins family in the sale of a parcel of land at 195 West Pine Street, outside the town limits. The prospective buyers would like to be assured that they could receive Bridgeton sewer service at this property.

The board did not object to the pursuit of sewer service at the property, but noted that the property must be annexed before the town could provide service.

In other business, Bridgeton commissioners:

■ Approved a request by the First Craven Sanitary District to install a backflow protection device to protect the water system;

■ Appointed Ray Parker as an alternate to the Board of Adjustment;

■ Rescheduled the November meeting for 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 7 due to a scheduling conflict with Craven County municipal elections; and

■ Voted to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Newly hired Swing Zone general manager Dave Caccavaro is pictured in front of the batting cages as construction continues on the family entertainment complex between New Bern and Havelock on U.S. 70.

New Bern man wanted in two counties caught

STAFF REPORTS
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

New Bern police on Nov. 15 arrested a city man who eluded capture in Wayne and Onslow counties before running afoul of police narcotics detectives.

The police department's narcotics unit and Special Response Team executed a search warrant for Apartment G-59 in the Trent Court Apartments and arrested Jurelle Hunt, 19, of 1631 Racetrack Road.

Hunt was charged with one count each of possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Once police discovered Hunt had outstanding warrants for his arrest in Wayne and Onslow counties, he was also charged with one count of assault on a female (Wayne County) and one count of an alcohol-related offense (Onslow County).

Police began investigating possible drug activity at Apartment G-59 after receiving complaints from neighbors and the Trent Court Housing Authority, according to a police news release. In response to these complaints, police stepped up patrols around the area and began monitoring activity outside the apartment.

The tenant registered to Apartment G-59, whose name was not released, was aware of Hunt's activities and could face eviction from the Trent Court Housing Authority, according to New Bern police.

Hunt was held in the Craven County Jail on a \$10,500 bond — \$7,000 from New Bern, \$3,000 from Wayne County and \$500 from Onslow County.

Wright is charged with drug trafficking

Continued from Page A1

cruisers attempted a traffic stop.

Officers gave chase as Wright drove from Third Avenue down Broad Street, where he crossed over onto Queen Street, according to a police department news release. Wright crashed into a street sign at the intersection of First and Queen streets, but continued driving.

As Wright crossed U.S. 70 into the James City community, state troopers from the N.C. State Highway Patrol joined the police pursuit, with a Highway Patrol helicopter tracking the suspect from above.

The chase ended when New Bern police stopped Wright on Keith Circle. Police

seized the package, which contained 8 pounds, 14 ounces of marijuana — which has a street value of about \$8,000 — and 1.2 lbs of crack cocaine — which has a street value of about \$12,000.

Narcotics detectives also seized the vehicle and \$2,145 in cash.

Wright was charged with trafficking cocaine, possession with intent to sell or deliver marijuana, maintaining a vehicle for the purpose of a controlled substance and flee[ing] to elude arrest with a motor vehicle.

He was held in the Craven County Jail on a \$1 million U.S. Currency Cash bond and had a first appearance in court scheduled for Nov. 17.

Social Services worker charged with assault

Continued from Page A1

probationer on Bern Street. Bass made a U-turn and parked her car in front of Williams' vehicle before getting out of her car to "make verbal threats" to Williams.

Bass began to drive away and suddenly backed up toward Williams, who had left her vehicle to record Bass' license plate number, according to a police department news release.

Bass' vehicle struck Williams in the leg, then

drove away, police said. Williams' injuries did not require emergency medical treatment.

It was unclear what Bass' relationship to Williams or to the probationer, who was not named, may have been.

Bass was charged with felony hit and run, assault with a deadly weapon on a law enforcement officer, communicating threats and resist, obstruct and destroy. She was given a \$2,000 secured bond and was expected to appear in district court on Nov. 21.

School board OKs calendars

Continued from Page A2

Excellence, which occurs on March 6 of next year, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

An art reception will be held in the boardroom at the Craven County Schools

Administrative Building on March 2, and the legislators' breakfast will be from 7:30 to 9 p.m. November 30 in the boardroom.

The board will reconvene in January of 2006.



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/COREY FRIEDMAN

Trent Road collision

Paramedics inspect New Bern resident Ethel Banks' 1997 Buick sedan after the vehicle was struck by a 2003 Ford Explorer driven by Buford Quay of New Bern on Nov. 16. According to a police incident report, Quay ran a red light and collided with Banks, who entered the intersection on Trent Road on a green light.

Pilot sustains minor injuries in Neuse River plane crash

Continued from Page A1

Harvey said the North Carolina State Highway Patrol reported that Larson was in good condition and was released from the hospital Nov. 17.

The cause of the crash is still unknown, with agents from the Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board examining the plane and

conducting concurrent investigations.

Harvey was unsure whether the plane was arriving or departing from Craven County Regional Airport, but said 50 gallons of low-lead gasoline spilled into the Neuse River following the crash.

Larson had not filed a flight plan with local air traffic controllers.

Regional emergency teams responded quickly and capably to a 911 rescue call, Harvey said.

"The potential to have a mass casualty incident was definitely there," he said. "There could have been three or four people on that plane. There was more than enough manpower, we had a large response."

A U.S. Coast Guard boat marked the crash site on Nov. 16, with investigators returning the next day to place a white buoy above the wreckage.

Recovery of the plane is the responsibility of the owner, according to New Bern police at the scene.

Bangert mother challenges suspension

Continued from Page A1

Wood said her daughter has researched pagan faiths and "sincerely thinks she is practicing." She claims school employees violated her daughter's right to practice her religion.

"We were never a traditional Christian family as seems to be the norm here in the Bible Belt," she said. "Religion should be a private and sacred matter. Irreparable harm has been done to her."

Wood went to the Craven County Board of Education to meet with Superintendent Bill Rivenbark, but said she was told he was unavailable. A meeting with Rivenbark was scheduled for Friday,

Nov. 18, the final day of Smith's five-day suspension.

Franks, the principal of Bangert Elementary School, said confidentiality laws prevent her from discussing details about student discipline. She said students are not permitted to bring cards of any kind to school or on school buses.

"We do not allow any type of cards to be brought to school," she said. "Normally, kids do not get suspended for that amount of time for just cards."

Franks said she couldn't explain why Smith received a five-day suspension, citing student privacy regulations. But, she said, school officials don't discriminate against

students because of religious decisions.

"I can't discuss what went on with the child for confidentiality reasons," she said. "I would be breaking the law...Nobody would ever be suspended over religion. Anyone can practice their religion, that would never be an issue for anyone."

Franks said the board of education does not hear appeals in cases where a student has been suspended for fewer than 10 days.

In a copy of a psychiatric evaluation from Eastern Carolina Health Resources provided by Wood, psychologist Cleaster Riggs-Gustus wrote that Smith "does not seem to be a threat

to her[self] or the staff at the school. In fact, she seems to be like many other children who are indulging in the magical thinking theme of the recent Harry Potter books and movies."

Riggs-Gustus also wrote that Smith "was very angry when her cards were taken away and even more upset by the [administrative] and teaching staff, who she feels talked about her and made fun of her within her hearing."

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

Deloris Jordan speaks at parent conference

Continued from Page A1

Now he's nurturing his children."

Deloris Jordan said she is equally proud of her four other children — relaying various stories of their dedication in their formative years and their resultant success as adults.

Her son, Army Command Sgt. Maj. James R. Jordan, returned to Fort Bragg on Nov. 14 after a final tour of duty with the 35th Signal Brigade, capping a three-

decade career in military service.

"I crossed that runway and I saw 32 troops, men and women, and my son was leading the pack," Jordan remembered. "Was I proud? Yes."

The author and parent concluded her speech with a call to action urging parents to live up to their potential—and encourage their children to do the same.

"If you want it, you can achieve it, but it doesn't

come without hard work," she said. "it comes with commitment and being determined."

The parent conference also featured two groups of sessions taught primarily by Craven County teachers and principals designed to encourage parents to participate in their children's education.

Patricia Benefield, a Jacksonville mother of four who attended the conference with a group of friends, said

she understood Jordan's message and took it to heart

"I thought it was very enlightening," Benefield said. "She has a lot of ideas for parents. I have four kids of my own, and as a parent, I can tell you that they need all the help they can get."

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



Get in the game.

Look for our local sports coverage in every issue of the

Independent Register

Opinion

Corey Friedman, Editor
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Editorials

The faith card

School should affirm students' religious freedom

Public schools in the United States often are forced to set aside well-intentioned and seemingly reasonable disciplinary policies when these policies prevent a student from exercising his or her religious freedom.

It's time for Bangert Elementary School to strike down one such rule that was invoked to confiscate a deck of Goddess Guidance Oracle Cards from a Bangert fourth-grader on Nov. 11.

Ten-year-old London Smith, who studies witchcraft and says she worships ancient goddesses, was rebuffed by school officials for bringing the deck of cards onto the school bus, according to Smith's mother, Angela Wood. Bangert does not allow playing cards or cards of any kind on school grounds, Principal Angie Franks told us.

Smith received a five-day suspension and was advised that she must undergo a psychiatric evaluation before returning to school, according to her mother. Franks said she couldn't confirm or deny Wood's claims due to student confidentiality regulations.

While we can't be certain of the exact chain of events preceding Smith's suspension, it's clear that the cards did play a role. Wood said a bus monitor observed Smith showing the cards to her twin sister, Mary Smith. The bus monitor seized the cards and escorted London Smith to the principal's office, according to Wood.

Whether or not school officials harassed Smith for having the cards and "told her that her religion was not real," as Wood claims, cannot be independently verified. But we do believe Wood was instructed to have her daughter evaluated by a psychologist before she could be readmitted to school, since Wood provided the *Independent Register* with a copy of the evaluation.

It's also clear to us that Smith felt shamed and ridiculed by school officials

— whether or not they dismissed witchcraft as a nonexistent religion.

Psychologist Cleather Riggs-Gustus wrote in the evaluation that Smith "was very angry when her cards were taken away and even more upset by the [administrative] and teaching staff, who she feels talked about her and made fun of her within her hearing."

Smith's mother sought a review of the suspension by Bill Rivenbark, Craven County Schools superintendent, and was told that the school board does not intervene in cases where a student has been suspended for fewer than 10 days. Wood said she was told that any appeal would have to be brought before the principal.

We feel this issue is serious enough to merit an immediate hearing before the Craven County Board of Education. A parent who feels — rightly or wrongly — that a principal has abused his or her power should have recourse other than an appeal to the same principal.

Further, we urge Bangert Elementary School and its principal, Angie Franks, to review school policies on cards and publicly affirm that no policy or rule will be abused to prevent a student from practicing his or her religion.

Public schools can rightly ban the wearing of hats on school grounds, so long as Jewish students are permitted to wear their yarmulkes and Muslim students their headscarves.

Likewise, schools may forbid students from bringing cards — unless the cards in question hold significant spiritual value, and banning such cards would place an undue hardship on a student seeking to exercise his or her religious freedom.

Critics of such measures charge that allowing students to leapfrog school policies because of religious decisions permits them to play with a stacked deck. But state and federal courts' interpretations of the Constitution are clear — the faith card trumps them all.

Bad for business

Local closing times shouldn't be a moving target

A certain pizza buffet in New Bern closes its doors at 10 p.m., but restaurant staffers routinely begin pulling entrees off the buffet line at 9:30 — even as new customers return for second helpings.

Elsewhere, a fast-food chain with a posted 11 p.m. closing time for its lobby often locks the doors well before the clock strikes 11.

Businesses that set their own hours would do well to adhere to posted schedules for opening and closing times. Closing early and turning away prospective customers is a poor

business practice that seems to be catching on locally. Consumers should demand better.

Sometimes — as in the case of the pizza buffet — closing time isn't really closing time. Service-based businesses, such as restaurants, should provide their service for the full duration of their operating hours. Any other practice is inconsistent.

Customers who are turned away from a business before the posted closing time would do well to send management a message by not returning at all.



Cartoon by Carlos Latuff

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.

Verbatim

“

Political correctness is America's newest form of intolerance, and it is especially pernicious because it comes disguised as tolerance. It presents itself as fairness, yet attempts to restrict and control people's language with strict codes and rigid rules.”

George Carlin

“

All our progress is an unfolding, like a vegetable bud. You have first an instinct, then an opinion, then a knowledge as the plant has root, bud, and fruit. Trust the instinct to the end, though you can render no reason.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“

When the politicians complain that TV turns the proceedings into a circus, it should be made clear that the circus was already there, and that TV has merely demonstrated that not all the performers are well trained.

Edward R. Murrow

Spunky Diablo's Laundromat

Separating self and ego will allow minds to soar

Because I care about you, Constant Reader, I will give you the meaning of life, that elusive Bird of Paradise that is oft-sought and rarely found.

And the best part is that it doesn't matter whether you have a 20-year-old Pinto or one of those offensively gluttonous, steroidal Hummers parked in your yard...the secret to bliss is available right now to those of us with discernment enough to grasp its iridescent crystal plumage.

But first, a thought experiment. Imagine your name spelled out with strips of beef on a table. See that meat cleaver lying beside it? Heft it and hack your name to bits. All that should remain when you're done is an unrecognizable red ichor. Finished? Great! Now sweep the mess off the table.

See what's left? That blank, cleaver-gouged tabletop?

That's what you are. It's what we all are: nameless beings. Blank things.

The Latin word "ego" is that language's personal pronoun: the "I" adopted by psychologists to describe the place in our minds where we live. It is the peg upon which we hang our vain hopes, the basket into which we dump the content of our lives. It is voracious, heavy, insatiable; hungry for things that

engorge it. Money. Power. The flattering relationship.

For some it's misery. We all know that longsuffering pathetic soul who fetishizes suffering. It's what they d u m p i n g e g o - b a s k e t .

T h e e g o , t h a t " I " y o u u s e t o r e f e r t o y o u r s e l f i s s e p a r a t e f r o m t h e t r u e y o u . I t i s n o t y o u . I s t r o n g l y u r g e y o u t o s u b o r d i n a t e i t , i f n o t k i l l i t o u t r i g h t , b e c a u s e i t m a k e s y o u a s l a v e .

N o w t h a t w e h a v e e n v i s i o n e d o u r s e l v e s w i t h o u t n a m e s , n o w t h a t w e r e a l i z e t h a t t h e " I " w e u s e t o r e f e r t o o u r s e l v e s i s a s e p a r a t e e n t i t y f r o m t h e b e i n g w e r e a l l y a r e , w e ' r e r e a d y f o r t h e n e x t E m a n c i p a t i n g T r u t h : T h e s o u r c e o f a l l s t r e s s c o m e s f r o m l i v i n g i n a n d f o r t h e f u t u r e .

I t d o e s n ' t m a t t e r — t h e G r i m R e a p e r c o u l d b e y a n k i n g o u t y o u r f i n g e r - a n d t o e n a i l s o r g i v i n g y o u a n e n e m a w i t h h i s s c y t h e . W h a t b o t h e r s y o u i s n o t s o m u c h t h e p a i n o f t h e p r e s e n t m o m e n t , b u t t h e p r o s p e c t o f a l i f e w i t h o u t f i n g e r n a i l s , a

future wearing a scythe-induced colostomy bag.

Armed with this knowledge, you can attain Nirvana in minutes, whereas a monk who has meditated his entire life can die without seeing it, much like Moses died without stepping foot in the Promised Land. For the monk, you see, has dumped the content of "Spiritual Guru" into his ego-basket. He has not envisioned himself as nameless.

S o . . . s h o u l d y o u b e b e r e f t o f a m b i t i o n ? C o n t e n t t o s c a v e n g e m e a l s f r o m g a r b a g e c a n s ? H a p p y t o a v o i d p l a n n i n g y o u r f u t u r e ?

O f c o u r s e n o t . W e ' r e a l l b e c o m i n g s o m e t h i n g ; a d o c t o r , a l a w y e r , a m o t h e r , a m e c h a n i c . T h e b e i n g y o u r e a l l y a r e h a s d e c i d e d w h a t y o u w i l l b e c o m e . Y o u r e g o f o c u s e s o n t h a t f a r a w a y d a y w h e n y o u h a v e a l r e a d y b e c o m e i t . I t l u s t s f o r c o n t e n t t o d u m p i n t o i t s e g o - b a s k e t .

T h e t r i c k i s t o r e a l i z e t h a t a l l y o u r a c h i e v e m e n t s w i l l s o o n e v a p o r a t e i n t o f o d d e r f o r t h e w o r m s . A l l t h a t y o u r e g o i s w i l l o n e d a y b e c o n d e n s e d i n t o t h a t s m a l l t w o - i n c h s p a c e b e t w e e n t h e d a t e s o n y o u r t o m b s t o n e .

T h i s i s t h e o n l y m o m e n t t h a t c o u n t s .

Contact Stephen Lewis at stephen@indieregister.com.

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- The Independent Register
Operating Structure and Standard Protocol

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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.

Obituaries

Timothy Revels

Timothy Revels, 45, of New Bern, died Nov. 9, 2005, at Carebridge Assisted Living Facility.

He was preceded in death by his father, Garland Revels, and stepbrother, Bobby Strickland Jr.

He is survived by his mother and stepfather, Wendy and Bobby Strickland of New Bern; one son, Matthew Hoopengartner of Wilmington; one brother, Barney Clarke of Lumberton; and four sisters, Laural Warzynski and Amy Davis of Trenton, Heather Geldbach of Kansas City, Kan., and Valerie Strickland of Kinston; three nieces,

Sherry Byrd and Anita Jacobs of Lumberton, Kaitlyn Stilley of Trenton; one nephew, Gavin Geldbach of Kansas City, Kan.; three great-nephews and three great-nieces.

Visitation was held Friday, Nov. 11 at Cotten Funeral Home. Funeral service was 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12 at Cotten Chapel with Dr. Steve Cobb and the Rev. Ruffin Hill officiating followed by burial at Greenleaf Memorial Park.

Memorials may be made to Craven County Home Health Hospice, P.O. Box 12610 New Bern, NC 28560. Arrangements by Cotten Funeral Home & Crematory.

Alton Oscar Heath Sr.

COVE CITY — Alton Oscar Heath Sr., 72, of Cove City, died Sunday, Nov. 13 at Veterans Administration Medical Center in Durham.

He was a member of Cove City Missionary Baptist Church, past master of Cove City Masonic Lodge No. 583 and a veteran of the U.S. Army. He was an avid lifelong fisherman and he loved hunting.

He is survived by his widow, Elsie Heath of the home; one son, Alton "Oscar" Heath Jr. of Cove City; two daughters, Jewel Smith of Vanceboro and Delsia Heath of Greenville;

two brothers, Clifton Ray Heath of Hampton, Va. and Leonard C. Heath of Newport News, Va.; one sister, Laura Ellen Moore of Kinston; and four grandchildren, Brandon Smith, Matthew Heath, Keaton Smith and Megan Heath.

A graveside service with Masonic and military honors was held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 16 at Cove City Cemetery with the Rev. Billy Cox officiating. The family received friends at their home following the service.

Arrangements by Cotten Funeral Home & Crematory.

Richard E. Norris

Richard E. Norris, born Feb. 6, 1918 in Steelton, Pa. to William P. and Mary Murphy Norris, died recently.

He was employed by Bethlehem Steel Co. of Steelton, Pa. during World War II. He is a member of St. Paul Catholic Church in New Bern and the Knights of Columbus.

He was preceded in death by his son, Dennis R. Norris.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Margaret Hubert Norris; one son, the Rev. Thomas P. Norris, O.S.F.S., of Goldsboro; a sister, Theresa Stachovic of Creal Springs, Ill.; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorial Mass was celebrated 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 10 at St. Paul Catholic Church.

Interment was at a later date in Holy Cross Cemetery in Harrisburg, Pa.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Alzheimer's Association, Eastern NC Chapter, 400 Oberlin Road, Suite 220 Raleigh, NC 27605-1351 or to St. Paul Catholic Church, 3005 Country Club Road New Bern, NC 28562.

Arrangements by Cotten Funeral Home & Crematory.

Dorothy Ordiway

VANCEBORO — Dorothy "Dot" Ordiway, 82, died Friday, Nov. 11, 2005, at Bayview Nursing Center.

She was a member of First Baptist Church in Andover, N.Y. She graduated from Rochester Business Institute in New York in 1941, and went on to work at First Trust Union Bank in Wellsville, N.Y.

Funeral was 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 13 at Cotten Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Mike Scott officiating.

Interment was in New York.

She is survived by one son, Kenneth E. Heselton of Joppa, Md.; two stepsons, David E. Ordiway of Vanceboro and Lewis Ordiway of New Bern; one daughter, Connie Ordiway of Vanceboro; 14 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Alzheimer's Association, Eastern NC Chapter, 400 Oberlin Road, Suite 220 Raleigh, NC 27605-1351.

Albert Moore III

Albert "Leroy" Moore III, 44, of New Bern, died Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2005, at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville.

He was a lifelong resident of Craven County.

Moore is preceded in death by his father, Albert L. "Pete" Moore Jr.

He is survived by one mother, Gwen H. Moore; one daughter, Ashley "Nikki" Moore; one sister, Dana

Moore Long; and four nieces, Hailey, Jordan, Morgan and Sydney Long, all of New Bern.

Visitation was Sunday, Nov. 20 at Cotten Chapel.

Funeral service was held at 2 p.m. Monday, Nov. 21 at Cotten Chapel with the Rev. Mike Ledbetter officiating, followed by burial in Greenleaf Memorial Park.

Arrangements by Cotten Funeral Home & Crematory.

Edward R. Phelps

NEWPORT — Edward R. "Pop" Phelps, 81, died Thursday, Nov. 17, 2005, at Britthaven Nursing Home of Newport.

He is survived by his widow, Rosalind P. Phelps of New Bern; one daughter, Judith Carolyn Windham of New Bern; one son, Randall P. Phelps of Mauston, Wisc.; two grandsons; two granddaughters; and six great-grandchildren.

Funeral and burial were held at 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 21 at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens in Nashville, Tenn.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in Phelps' name to the American Parkinson's Disease Association, 1250 Heydan Blvd. Suite 113, Staten Island, NY 10305, or to the charity of one's choice.

Cotten Funeral Home & Crematory is assisting the Phelps family.

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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.

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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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