

InBrief
From staff reports

Gotodad receives grant

The N.C. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission has awarded a \$2,500 grant to Gotodad Inc. of Fayetteville.

The agency will use the money to pay for a program that teaches boys ages 8 to 15 how to avoid conflict and deal with existing conflicts peacefully. It also is to teach them to identify and appreciate others' values, leadership skills, and about choices and consequences.

Statewide, 14 grants of \$2,500 were awarded to nonprofit agencies for youth programs. The MLK commission is a subsidiary of the N.C. Human Relations Commission.

The occupant of the vehicle, Brandon Sanders, 26, of the 900 block of Chesterfield Drive, was shot with a handgun once in the leg during the incident and sustained injuries that were not life-threatening, police said. Officers were called to 1706 Powhatan St. at 2:40 p.m. to a report that Sanders' 2006 Honda Element had been stolen at gunpoint. Sanders was taken to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center for treatment, police said. Only limited information about the thief was provided. The man was said to be wearing a black coat and was last seen traveling on Langdon Street, according to police.

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SUPPORT GROUPS

- TUESDAY**
- **Celebrate Recovery Men's Step Study:** 7:30 a.m., Myer-Reese, 560 Wilkes Road, Wood, 987-3620.
 - **Celebrate Recovery Women's Step Study:** 7 p.m., Mount Carmel Church, 2569 Owen Drive, Joetta, 987-9057.
 - **AI-Anon-Serenity Seekers Group:** Noon, 109 Bradford Ave., Room 107, Fdri, 222-6165.
 - **Adult Children of Alcohol/Dysfunction:** Noon-1 p.m., 109 Bradford Ave., Room 468, 850-1126.
 - **Bereavement support:** 10 a.m., Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, Robbie Byrd, 484-3191.
 - **Cumberland County National Alliance on Mental Illness:** 7 to 8:30 p.m., the Mental Health Center, conference room, 109 Bradford Ave., 488-8284.
 - **Take Off Pounds Sensibly:** (800) 932-8677, or go to www.tops.org.
 - **Overeaters Anonymous:** 7 p.m., Room 8, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Village Drive, Call Sue at 568-3829 or 489-4764.
 - **Prostate cancer:** 7 p.m., Gibson Cancer Center, 1200 Pine Run Drive, Lumberton, 671-5130.
 - **Alcoholics Anonymous:** 678-8733 or 678-9002.
 - **AI-Anon:** 1100 Pine Run Drive, Lumberton: 8 p.m., Hawley Lane; 8 p.m., First Baptist Church, Fairmont; 8 p.m., First Baptist Church, Main St., Raeford; 8 p.m., 121 W. Third St., Red Springs, 738-1191.
 - **Walking in Deliverance:** 7 p.m., Lakdale Church of God, 2211 Southern Ave., 977-1864.
 - **Narcotics Anonymous:** Call (866) 418-9500 or go to www.cna.org.
 - **HopeKeepers Christian support group and Bible study:** 7 to 8:15 p.m., Southview Baptist Church, 4089 Elk Road, Hope Mills. 424-1298, charles.bedsale@gmail.com.
 - **Fayetteville psoriasis/psoriatic arthritis:** 7 p.m., Hitz Garden Inn lobby, 4025 Sycamore Dairy Road, 864-1138, fayettevillesupportpsoriasis.org
 - **Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children of Harnett County:** 10 a.m., Cornelius Hamet Blvd., Conference Room 119, Lillington, 893-7518.
 - **FayAnny:** 7 p.m., Peace Presbyterian Church, 6703 Ramsey St., 670-9837.
 - **Crohn's and Colitis Support Group:** 3:20 Today Drive, Call Troy at 429-0556 or e-mail craninform@crohns.com.
 - **Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group:** 2 p.m., Better Health of Cumberland County, 1422 Bragg Blvd., Call Sam at 609-1633 or Better Health at 483-7534.

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Board approves plan for hospital merger

HARNETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

■ **What happened:** The board Monday approved in principle merger plans that amount to a handover of power from Betsy Johnson Regional Hospital to the inaugural board of trustees for Harnett Health System, which will own both the Dunn hospital and a new 50-bed, \$65 million hospital set to open in 2012 on Cornelius Hamet Boulevard in Lillington. The move requires commissioners' approval because the county appointed the inaugural health system board and retains the right to appoint seven of the 13 members in the future, having pitched in the 20 acres for the new facility.

■ **Why it matters:** The health system board was crafted to provide countywide representation at a time when the battle over who should build a new hospital had caused division in the county. That was in 2005, when Good Hope Hospital in Erwin was seeking to replace its aging and landlocked facility. The county commissioners partnered instead with Betsy Johnson and WakeMed, which manages the Dunn hospital and also will run the new facility. The health system trustees have been working on subcommittees of the Betsy Johnson board since they were appointed, with the understanding they would take over when financing was found for the new hospital. USDA loans for the project were announced in September.

■ **What's next:** The board will formally approve the plans in January. The Dunn City Council also must approve them. Construction on the new hospital is set to begin in January; the facility is tentatively

scheduled to open in summer 2012.

■ **Other business:** The board approved a bid of \$55,258 from Utilities Plus Inc. of Linden to install a waterline at the Brightwater Science and Technology Campus of which the hospital will be the centerpiece.

— Gregory Phillips

BLADEN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

■ **What happened:** By a 9-0 vote on Monday night, the board agreed to implement a Bladen County government hiring freeze that still would allow board members to review and decide upon critical positions that remain vacant.

■ **Why it matters:** County Manager Greg Martin said a number of county government employees are retiring or have left the county. He asked the board to consider the hiring freeze "to try to create as much flexibility as we can" in dealing with budget challenges that are expected to become more difficult.

■ **What they said:** Commissioner Dallah Blanks, who sits on the governing board of Bladen County Social Services, said there's a need to have some flexibility on a case-by-case basis. "It's just impossible for one human being to handle so many cases," she said.

■ **Other business:** In a split vote, the board voted in newly elected Commissioner James G. Smith as vice chairman. Smith received five votes from the nine-member board, while Commissioner David Gooden received four.

Two weeks ago, the board was unable to agree on a replacement for Blanks, who

was not re-nominated for the position.

Charles Ray Peterson was elected chairman of the board from Utilities Plus Inc. of Linden to install a waterline at the Brightwater Science and Technology Campus of which the hospital will be the centerpiece. — Michael Fitch

HOKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

■ **What happened:** During a public hearing Monday night, county Parks and Recreation Director David Jackson recommended that the Board of Commissioners reject a \$500,000 state Department of Environment and Natural Resources grant that would go toward building a recreation center.

Jackson said the terms of the grant would require the county to spend anywhere from \$3 million to \$8 million dollars over the next three years. Jackson said the county wasn't in a position to build the facility well, because it is in the process of building sewer systems and helping fund schools, which could face budget cuts of up to 10 percent in the coming year.

If the county decides to turn down the grant, Jackson said it could apply again in the coming year. The recommendation from DENR, he said, was to either take the grant and hope the job could be done well in three years or not accept the grant and reapply in three years when times are better. He said a poorly done and rushed recreation center would be "a black eye" for the county.

The board did not take action nor did board members comment on the issue.

— Jennifer Calhoun

Commissioners

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the first week of January. In other business, commissioners:

■ Heard Chief District Court Judge Beth Keverer ask them to move out of the courthouse in the next five years or so. Keverer said the judicial system needs the space in the courthouse.

■ Court officials apparently are concerned that the commissioners have shelved plans to renovate an old health building for their new offices.

■ Received a clean audit of their fiscal 2010 finances by an outside accounting firm.

■ Two credit rating agencies, Moody's Corp.'s Moody's Investors Service and McGraw-Hill Co.'s Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC, also affirmed their bond ratings for the county. Both ratings are well above investment grade.

■ S&P indicated that it may raise its rating on the county's municipal bonds in the upcoming year, an indication that County Manager Amy Cannon, if wealth and income in the county and other economic indicators continue to improve.

■ Voted 6-1 to approve a federal lobbying agenda for the upcoming year, in conjunction with the city of Fayetteville and the Fayetteville-Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce. The chamber was newly installed. Commissioner Charles Evans objected to the Ferguson Group, the county's Washington, D.C., lobbyist, failing to include obtaining more federal transit money as a goal for 2011.

■ Improving public transit in Cumberland County was a key plank in the campaign platform of Evans, who was elected last month.

The Ferguson Group's Leslie Mozingo said she would be happy to add transit money in her next draft of the lobbying goals. Mozingo said the goals will be adjusted before the new Congress convenes.

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Court voids certain same-sex adoptions

By Gary D. Robertson
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — North Carolina's highest court on Monday voided a state senator's adoption of her former domestic partner's biological son, a move that appears to close a method for same-sex couples to adopt unless the legislature steps in.

The state Supreme Court ruled 5-2 that the adoption of Melissa Jarrell's son by state Sen. Julia Roseman was invalid because a Durham County District Court judge waived a requirement five years ago that Jarrell had to give up her parental rights in the process.

Under the adoption plan approved by the lower court, Roseman became an adoptive parent while Jarrell retained full parental rights as well.

However, Associate Justice Paul Newby wrote for the majority that the adoption never occurred in the eyes of the law because lawmakers have made clear the biological parent must terminate a legal relationship with the child. That part of the ruling favored Jarrell, who had sued to negate the adoption after the couple separated.

She and Roseman, North Carolina's first openly gay member of the General Assembly, had been living together when Jarrell gave birth to Jacob in 2002.

The majority of justices let stand another lower court ruling allowing the two to have joint custody of the child, saying it would be in Jacob's best interest for the women, who have been sharing parental responsibilities, to rear him.

Still, the ruling eliminates a method for same-sex couples to adopt and could raise legal questions about so-called "second parent" adoptions such as this one. They have been granted in Durham and Orange counties in recent years, according to testimony and court documents.

"If our uniform court system is to be preserved, a new form of adoption cannot be made available in some counties but not all," Newby wrote.

N.C. COURT OF APPEALS

Thigpen concedes after recount shows he's still behind

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — Doug McCullough is returning to North Carolina's Court of Appeals after a statewide recount Monday showed McCullough still in the lead and incumbent Judge Cressie Thigpen conceded the election.

Thigpen conceded defeat after the complete recount in all 100 counties had McCullough, a former member of the state's intermediate appeals court, leading by 6,655 votes. Nearly 1.1 million votes were recorded between the two candidates in the instant runoff race.

Thigpen sought the recount when unofficial results showed him trailing by about 6,000 votes, saying he wanted to make sure election officials counted properly ballots cast through the unusual voting method.

The margin widened to more than 6,500 votes before the recount began.

The recount began as early as Dec. 10 in some counties and wrapped up early Monday. Election reform advocates have been keeping an eye on the race because the ranking concept hadn't been used in a statewide race anywhere in at least 70 years.

Public Safety

Compiled from law enforcement reports, magistrates' records and court documents.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Arrest

- Andre Lamar Stewart, 28, of the 2100 block of Dillon Drive, was charged Monday with possessing 101 grams of marijuana with the intent to sell or distribute, possessing 1.5 grams of cocaine with the intent to sell or distribute, maintaining a drug house and possessing drug paraphernalia. Bail was set at \$15,000.

Break-ins

- **SHAW ROAD:** 700 block, reported at 11:32 p.m. Sunday. Xbox 360 and an LCD TV taken.
- **YADKIN ROAD:** Jersey

910CRIME

- Search crime reports and plot them on a map of Fayetteville at www.910crime.com.
- For more crime news from the Cape Fear region, go to fayobserver.com/local

CAPE FEAR REGION

Arrests

- **SANFORD:** Joseph Kyle Amero, 18, was arrested Friday in the 2500 block of Murrel Drive in Fayetteville and charged with possessing a controlled substance with intent to sell.
- **SANFORD:** Adolfo Torres, 17, was arrested Saturday in the 800 block of Hollywood Road in Cameron and charged with removing or altering a merchant's security device.
- **SANFORD:** Clifton Cornell Daniels, 35, of the 300 block of Petty Road, was charged Saturday with obtaining property by false pretenses, noncompliance and resisting officers. Bail was set at \$3,500.
- **LILLINGTON:** Angel Alejandro Gayton-Loredo, 25, of Angier, was charged Sunday with forgery of an instrument, obtaining property under false pretenses. Bail was set at \$20,000.
- **LILLINGTON:** Alejandro Gaytan Castro, 51, no address given, was charged Sunday with forgery of an instrument, obtaining property under false pretenses. Bail was set at \$20,000.

Vehicle break-in

- **BRAGG BOULEVARD:** 4900 block, reported at 3 a.m. Sunday. Coach purse taken.