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Area
SALISBURY POST

Biotechnology explained
New biotechnology director for RCCC discusses the science and the N.C. Research Campus /**7B**

B
Deaths/**2B**
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Republican Executive Committee takes no action against Sides

By Jessie Burchette
Salisbury Post

The Rowan County Republican Executive Committee won't try to punish members whose party loyalty frayed a bit in the Nov. 7 election.

Instead, local party leaders want to focus on the 2008 election.

Jim Sides, vice chairman of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners, had incurred the wrath of some Republicans for his endorsement of Tina Hall, a Democrat who is an apparent winner in the race for the board.

Other members of the executive committee had also drawn scrutiny for e-mails urging voters to support Hall instead of Republican Jon Barber and for supporting Don Sayers, a Democrat, in the nonpartisan race for Superior Court judge.

SIDES

The committee met in closed session Tuesday evening and invoked a pledge of secrecy.

Stephen Kidd, chairman of the executive committee, said Wednesday there will be no action against Sides or anyone else.

"As Republicans, we will support Jim Sides any way we possibly can," Kidd said, adding that Sides is one of his favorites.

"We support his votes and his actions as commissioner," said Kidd.

"The Republican party is proud of its efforts in the past election. We find it disgraceful that the Democratic party nationally is gloating after a dismal voter turnout," said Kidd. "When voters turn out, Republicans get elected. When they don't, Democrats get elected."

Sides, who earlier scoffed at the idea of being kicked off the committee, welcomed the news that it's over.

"I'm glad to hear it's over for everybody involved," said Sides, adding, "It would have been a big mistake."

If the committee had kicked him out, Sides said he most likely would have changed his registration to independent.

According to the Republicans rules, a member can be ejected for disloyalty — publicly endorsing a Democratic candidate.

Kidd explained last week that a charge letter or petition with the signatures of one-third of the committee's member-

See **Sides**, page 3B

THIS BABY'S IN IT FOR THE LOOOOOOOOONG HAUL

WAYNE HINSHAW/SALISBURY POST
A heavy piece of mill equipment was delivered from an aluminum plant in Hannibal, Ohio, to the Norandal plant in Salisbury on this Diamond Heavy Hauler. The truck is 200 feet long and has 16 axles and 80 tires.

Heavy haul rig delivers 250,000-pound mill housing to Norandal plant

By Mark Wineka
Salisbury Post

Attached to the front of the truck, the yellow sign with black lettering says "Oversize Load."

Boy, it's not kidding.

The Diamond Heavy Haul rig extending behind the cab is almost three-quarters of a football field long.

Imagine four tractor trailers strung together, and you get another idea of the length.

It has some 16 axles and 80 tires. And the load it's carrying — half of a mill housing from a closed Ormet aluminum plant in Hannibal, Ohio — weighs roughly 250,000 pounds.

"I've never seen a truck like that in my life," said Tom Stines, plant manager at Norandal in Salisbury. "I know it would turn your head on the interstate."

Norandal's parent company bought the mill housing and had it shipped to the Salisbury plant for now because Salisbury was the closest location.

It could eventually be transported to any other plant in the corporation or stay and be installed by crane at the Salisbury facility.

Norandal produces rolls of light-gauge aluminum foil used in heating and air-conditioning, packaging and printing applications. The Salisbury operation has about 250 people and is Rowan County's 17th largest employer.

The hauler and its heavy cargo are sitting in the hourly employees' parking lot, which had to be clear of cars when the rig arrived Monday with a state trooper escort.

Diamond Heavy Haul, based in Shandon, Ohio, specializes in the transport of what it calls "unique, overdimensional cargo" or "superloads." It also arranges the logistics behind difficult shipments such as the mill housing.

Stines said the other half of the mill housing is scheduled to arrive in similar fashion, on a second hauler, sometime Saturday.

Contact Mark Wineka at 704-797-4263, or mwineka @salisburypost.com.

Spencer hears advice from Monroe city official on handling nuisance properties

By Holly Fesperman Lee
Salisbury Post

SPENCER — Board members heard a presentation Tuesday outlining the pros and cons of a recently discussed rental property inspections program.

Aldermen have discussed starting some type of inspection program in the town to help take care of nuisance properties.

Bob Harvell, director of building standards for the city of Monroe, said most rental programs haven't succeeded.

In 2001, Monroe decided to implement its own rental inspections program. Harvell said the ordinance stated his department would need to asses every rental property once every three years. This initially seemed an easy task, but a survey revealed Monroe had more than 7,000 rental units.

Harvell said his department spent 40 percent of its time trying to look after those rental properties and even more time trying to register them. "It took a lot of extra expense," he said. "We were almost into the project $100,000 and nowhere close to being finished."

In 2004, the problem came of what do with the properties that weren't registered. Harvell said he asked the city attorney about the issue and "We decided we didn't know if we could do anything about it or not."

Even though the city couldn't take legal action against the rental properties, it was about ready for legal action in another way — a lawsuit.

The rental program unfairly targeted rental property owners. There was no mechanism in place to inspect single family homeowners, Harvell said.

To alleviate this program of high cost with low results, the city came up with systematic inspections. "It's addressed as a North Carolina general statute and that's a good thing," Harvell told board members.

Raise
Spencer town employees get increase in holiday pay, **page 3B**

Systematic inspections are legally defensible and helped Monroe identify problems without wasting time on properties that didn't need to be inspected.

"By doing systematic inspections, it made for safer neighborhoods and it deterred crime somewhat," Harvell said. "Like y'all, we have all kinds of nuisance violations. In the last two years we've demolished about 70 houses in the city of Monroe. The housing stock in Monroe has vastly improved because of systematic inspections."

He told board members that education was key to making the program work.

"The one thing you can't do enough of is getting out and teaching people what they should do and they shouldn't do," Harvell said.

Spencer may have pockets of housing nuisances here and there, but "Overall, you're blessed with fine neighborhoods," Harvell said.

Right now, since nuisance numbers are relatively low, Harvell said he felt that Spencer could easily handle the problem with systematic inspections.

Board members thanked Harvell and said he cleared up many questions they had about starting a program. Harvell's department uses the minimum housing code to conduct the systematic inspections. Board members asked for a copy.

Also during Tuesday's meeting:

- Board members voted to place liens for town abatements on several properties, including: 905 Second St., 306 S. Carolina Ave., 408 S. Spencer Ave., 800 Fifth St., 514 Seventh St., 822 Second St. and 1515 S. Salisbury Ave.
- Board members voted to donate $250 to the Holiday Caravan.
- Margaret Wadell from the Spencer Business Association asked aldermen if the town would donate funds to help buy lights for the Christmas tree this year. Aldermen voted to donate $100.
- Board member Nick Bishop represented the Spencer Partnership and asked Aldermen for a donation to help with Spencer's Christmas gathering. Aldermen voted to donate $150.

Bishop announced that the town's annual Christmas gathering will be Dec. 1 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Contact Holly Lee at 704-797-7683 or hlee@salisburypost.com

Mixed-use residential development morphing into single-family subdivision

By Mark Wineka
Salisbury Post

In 2002, Drummond Village won the city's stamp of approval as the kind of mixed-use residential, office and commercial retail development envisioned for Salisbury's future.

Four years later, Drummond Village looks like it will become mostly another single-family subdivision.

Much of the change in direction has to do with an extension of Jake Alexander Boulevard — or lack of it.

When Eric Wood of Pilot Developers started putting together land for the mixed-use development in eastern Salisbury, he fashioned concepts in keeping with the Salisbury Vision 2020 comprehensive plan.

Jake Alexander Boulevard's extension from Stokes Ferry to Earnhardt roads was a key part of the project. An extension would go through the heart of Drummond Village, and much of the office and retail development would be along the new corridor, according to Wood's plans.

At the time, the extension was unfunded but at the top of a city priority list with the N.C. Department of Transportation. Wood figured the road was five years away from construction.

But what once seemed five years down the road could now be 30 years, Wood said Tuesday.

The Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long-Range Transportation Plan puts the funding of the Jake Alexander Boulevard extension between 2021 and 2030.

So to get better use out of the total tract, Wood wants to change 15 of 19 acres previously zoned for business-retail and make them residential instead.

The 4 acres of business-retail zoning remaining would allow a small area of commercial uses if ever needed, Wood said.

The zoning change sought by Wood also connects to revisions he wants to make in Drummond Village's entire site plan.

The original plan called for apartments, townhomes, single-family houses, street designs meant to slow speeds, more connections among streets, the use of alleys to minimize curb cuts and open park spaces.

Wood said Tuesday he no longer has plans for three-story apartment buildings and townhomes.

But plans now call for home lot widths as narrow as 40 to 45 feet in phases 2, 3 and

See **SUBDIVISION**, page 3B

Former Post writer wins N.C. Travel Industry Association award

CAROLINA BEACH — Author, travel writer and former newspaper reporter Sara Pitzer received the North Carolina Travel Industry Association's 2006 Charles Kuralt Award on Nov. 10 at the association's tourism leadership conference in Carolina Beach.

Pitzer, the seventh recipient of the annual award, was honored for her 23 years of writing about North Carolina.

PITZER

"Through her articles and books, Sara has established herself as a North Carolina treasure," said NCTIA president Ed Phillips. "And much like Charles Kuralt, she delights in discovering out-of-the-way places and telling the stories of the common person."

Pitzer's best-known work is her popular guidebook, "Off The Beaten Path North Carolina." The book is currently in its eighth edition and is an impressive compilation of the unique and overlooked places that make North Carolina so

See **Award**, page 3B

Spencer town employees get 10 percent increase in holiday pay

By Holly Fesperman Lee
Salisbury Post

SPENCER — Town employees can look forward to larger holiday bonuses this year.

Aldermen voted Tuesday to add 10 percent to last year's longevity pay formula.

For the past few years, employees have received $100 each plus an additional $10 for each year of service to the town. This year, each employee will get $110 and $11 for each year of service.

Mayor Alicia Bean told board members using the old formula would cost the town $6,590 and $7,245 has been budgeted. Mayor Pro Tem Randy Gettys said he wanted to use the extra money to increase employee bonuses if at all possible. He said he believed strongly in the quality and commitment of town staff.

After some calculations, board members decided increasing the pay would only exceed the budget by a few dollars.

Also during Tuesday's meeting, board members:

■ Voted to clear up a discrepancy in Spencer's code of ordinances that caused the High Rock Raceway application to take a backward step in September.

Town officials discovered that the code of ordinances required a 15-day notice prior to a public hearing as well as the 10-day notice the town has used for years.

The technicality could have caused problems in court, so the Zoning Board of Adjustment decided to hear the High Rock application again in October.

No one spoke for or against the amendment during the public hearing. Aldermen voted unanimously to take out the 15-day requirement.

■ Held a public hearing to discuss extending the commercial corridor overlay to include Long Ferry Road. No one spoke for or against the zoning amendment.

Board members voted to approve extending the commercial corridor overlay.

■ Voted to grant a subdivision variance at 913 2nd St. The property owner Gene Lloyd requested the town split up four properties that were on the same deed. Lloyd indicated he wouldn't be able to sell the property unless the houses were divided.

Century 21 Realtor Vicki Readling spoke during the public hearing. She confirmed Lloyd's reasoning, saying the property couldn't be sold until it was subdivided.

■ Alderman Nick Bishop updated board members on the Centralina Council of Government's (COG) vision of regionalism plan. Bishop told board members the information gathering first phase of the plan has now been completed.

The next step involves organizing people from the region to address issues and discuss how counties can collaborate on roads, infrastructure and public utilities.

Bishop said the plan was considering the next five to 10 years. "The speculations are we could actually double in population in this region," he said.

During a public comment session, business owner Rod Whedbee asked aldermen to consider property owner's rights and "not let Charlotte dictate what we look like."

Some things coming out of COG and Charlotte can limit the property rights of people in Spencer, Whedbee said.

■ Heard from Barbara McGuire, wife of Frank McGuire — Dave Risdon's business partner with High Rock Raceway — who asked aldermen during public comments how Bishop represents the town's position at COG meetings. She also asked who would make up the regional committee to study possible collaborations.

Bishop told audience members there hasn't been an opportunity for input yet since the first phase was purely information gathering. Bishop said his main goal is to preserve the small community while improving housing and jobs as well as raising the tax base.

■ Heard that the Parks and Recreation committee has received two donations — one for $5,000 and one for $200.

■ Learned that any town resident or business in need of a garbage roll cart should contact town hall.

Contact Holly Lee at 704-797-7683 or hlee@salisburypost.com.

Clothes dryer catches on fire in China Grove laundromat

Staff report

CHINA GROVE — A clothes dryer caught fire and caused $3,000 in damage to a China Grove laundromat about noon Tuesday.

The fire occurred at Speedwash, 312 S. Main St. Someone in the laundromat called 911.

"It was really confined to the dryer and damaged another," said Jeff Gledhill, China Grove's interim fire chief.

Gledhill said firefighters from China Grove, Landis, Locke and Bostian Heights responded. The fire was under control in about 15 minutes.

AWARD

FROM PAGE 1B

special. In it, Pitzer demonstrates her crisp and succinct writing style that informs while painting a vivid picture.

She is also the author of "Recommended Country Inns of the South," which enjoyed six printings from 1987-97.

Pitzer, a resident of Richfield, spent 10 years writing for the Salisbury Post — five years on staff and five years as a correspondent. During her time on staff she wore many hats, including columnist, features editor and business reporter.

For the past several years, Pitzer has written a weekly travel column for The Charlotte Observer. The column is titled "Inn-side the South" and focuses on inns and bed-and-breakfasts.

Other NCTIA honorees at the conference were Clairborne Young and Duplin Winery. Young won the Charles J. Parker Award and Duplin Winery received the G. Lynn Nisbet Award. Both awards recognize outstanding contributions to develop the state's tourism industry.

The NCTIA is a non-profit organization dedicated to building a more successful tourism industry through leadership, education and advocacy. The Association was established in 1955 and has more than 200 members consisting of hospitality and tourism leaders.

AskUs
704 797 4291
askus@salisburypost.com

SIDES

FROM PAGE 1B

ship would be needed to start the ejection process. That would have required about 22 signatures.

The committee met for around an hour in closed session at the Holiday Inn.

One participant said party officials report that there was a charge petition against Sides, but after discussion, the Executive Committee voted almost unanimously to drop the issue.

Kidd said he couldn't acknowledge a petition or any details of the closed session.

During the open session, the committee welcomed a new member, Michael Caskey, precinct chairman from Enochville. Caskey was an unsuccessful candidate for the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education.

The executive committee has about 64 members, one from each precinct, 10 members elected at large, and all elected local officials who are Republicans.

SUBDIVISION

FROM PAGE 1B

4 of the project.

Construction has begun on Phase 1 of Drummond Village off Stokes Ferry Road, but much of the other phases will extend along Earnhardt Road.

The typical lot widths in Phase 1 are 60 feet or more.

Salisbury Planning Board voted 7-0 Tuesday in favor of rezoning 15 acres of the business-retail area in the middle of the project to a residential development district. That recommendation will go to City Council.

As for changes in the site plan, the board sent the matter to committee.

City staff members have raised concerns that some of the previous design elements aren't part of Wood's new plans.

Diane Bruendl and Ida Arey, both of Earnhardt Road, said they were concerned about the density of homes that would come with narrow lots.

Arey said she pictured a lot of little houses "jammed up on top of each other" and added that it was "not a good way to go."

But the women said they were happy that apartments were no longer part of Wood's plans.

Wood said his new plan, without the apartments, actually will decrease the density in Drummond Village by 200 housing units, leaving 400 lots.

He said the price range of homes will be $130,000 to $225,000 and above.

Contact Mark Wineka at 704-797-4263, or mwineka@salisburypost.com.

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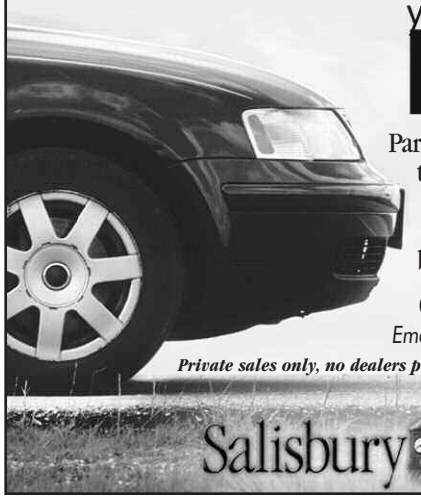
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Fire officials say cigarette caused fire that killed Kannapolis woman

By Joanie Morris
Salisbury Post

KANNAPOLIS — Fire officials here have confirmed that a cigarette caused a fire that killed a 50-year-old woman Wednesday.

Carolyn Delene Graham, 50, was unable to get out of her house at 1005 Pump Station Road when it caught fire sometime after 3 p.m.

Fire Chief Larry Phillips had told a reporter last week that Graham had just moved into her house about two weeks earlier. Neighbors said relatives were helping her renovate the house.

Fire Inspector Shane Pethel said the woman died of smoke inhalation.

Originally, Pethel said they had looked at the motor on the woman's lift chair as a possible cause of the fire, but it was completely encased.

"The chief investigator for Charlotte looked at it for the insurance company and we all determined that it was cigarettes," Pethel said Tuesday afternoon.

Pethel said the smoke alarms in the house were working because he could hear them when he pulled up to the house.

"We know she smoked," Pethel said. "We went over the wiring. We went over the chair. Everything in that corner (where the fire started), we took it apart and sifted it piece by piece."

Pethel said Graham was not in the motorized lift chair — where the fire started — when firefighters got there.

"She was in a chair across from it," Pethel said. That chair was metal and wicker. "That's not a chair someone would sit down and sleep in."

Pethel said fire officials believe the woman — who was handicapped — was sitting in the chair that caught fire and tried to get up and leave the room.

"There was too much smoke," Pethel said. The woman probably sat down in the other chair when she was overcome with smoke, he added.

Neighbors near the woman smelled smoke and called the fire department when they realized Graham's house was on fire.

Contact Joanie Morris at 704-932-3336 or jmorris@kannapoliscitizen.com.

Salisbury Gardens to reveal its new identity, vision in Friday rebranding ceremony

Salisbury Gardens will unveil its new identity and vision for the future as a Brookdale Senior Living community during a rebranding ceremony from noon-7 p.m. Friday.

It will also introduce Martin Skowronski, its new executive director.

SKOWRONSKI

Brookdale Senior Living has provided senior housing in the U.S. since 1981.

Skowronski joined Salisbury Gardens in September. A native of Grand Rapids, Mich., he has lived in Deerfield Beach, Fla., the past eight years. He received his bachelor of science degree from Grand Valley State University and did his graduate studies in counseling psychology at Michigan State University.

He previously was director of resident services for Classic Residence by Hyatt in Pompano Beach, Fla. While there, he developed policies and programs that promoted whole person wellness and independence.

Skowronski believes that understanding the aspirations and needs of older adults, while providing them with services that are based on compassion, integrity and excellence is the most sensible approach to quality senior living.

The community is at 2201 Statesville Blvd. There will be food, door prizes and giveaways at the celebration. For information or tours, call 704-636-0588.

Corrections

The Post strives for accuracy in all its reporting. To report a factual error for correction, call 704-633-8950, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday - Friday. Corrections for sports will appear in the Sports section.

GX Fitness and Wellness 'Chicken Run/Walk' is Saturday

Gx Fitness and Wellness will hold its first annual 5K "Chicken Run/Walk" Saturday at Salisbury Community Park.

The event is for first-time runners/walkers as well as those who have participated in other events. It will begin at 9:30 a.m.

There is a $25 registration fee for all participants. T-shirts are guaranteed to all pre-registered participants, and awards will be presented.

For more information, contact Sacha Roberts at sacha@gxfitness.com or 704-637-5775.

Child car seat safety check is Saturday

The Rowan County Farm Bureau in conjunction with the N.C. State Highway Patrol will hold a free buckle-in-baby safely event Saturday.

A N.C. Highway patrolmanwill be at the Farm Bureau office at 301 E. Centerview St. in China Grove from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. to check child carseats to make sure they are installed properly. Willy the Squirrel will also be present, and there will be refreshments.

For more information, call Penny Bargher at 704-636-4670 or the Rowan County Farm Bureau at 704-633-4801.

Faith Board of Aldermen meeting

FAITH — The Faith Board of Aldermen will hold a special meeting at 10 a.m. Friday at Town Hall, 100 N. Main St., regarding future fire department concerns.

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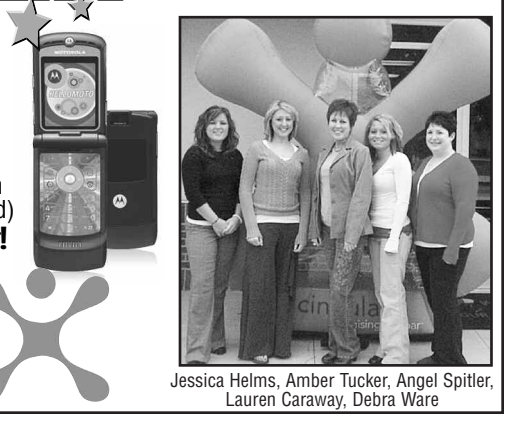
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NEW FACES,
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Rowan Regional Medical Center is pleased to welcome 11 new physicians to its medical and dental staff. Each physician brings years of training and experience to his or her respective specialty and is committed to offering patients the best in quality healthcare.

Dr. Bethany South
Family Practice

Dr. Rakesh Patel
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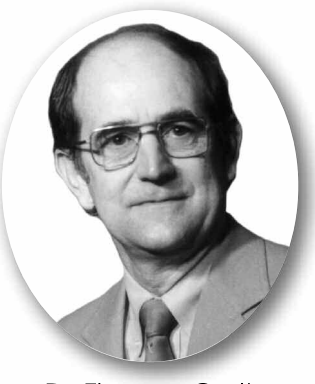
Dr. Thomas Carlton
Pediatrics
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Dr. George Everhart
Family Practice
25 years

Congratulations to Dr. Thomas Carlton, Pediatrics, and Dr. George Everhart, Family Practice, on their retirement from Rowan Regional Medical Center.

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