



Hansbrough's 31 help 'Heels rise above N.C. State. Sports, 1B

VANCE COUNTY NAACP TO CELEBRATE CENTENNIAL

OUR HOMETOWN, PAGE 2A

N.C. DEMOCRATS CHOOSE NEW PARTY CHAIRMAN

LOCAL NEWS, PAGE 4A

GEORGE BEVERLY SHEA TURNS 100

STATE, PAGE 10A

FAST START FOR CHARGERS IN WIN OVER SPARTANS

SPORTS, PAGE 1B



SHOWCASE, PAGE 1C

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Hunters, dogs get county's attention

By WILLIAM F. WEST DAILY DISPATCH WRITER

WILTON — A committee of the Granville County Commission has been formed and directed to return with recommendations about what should be done in response to complaints by landowners about intruding hunters and dogs.

During the Friday night phase of a two-day annual county government retreat, Commission Chairman Hubert Gooch announced the special panel will be comprised of Commissioners Pete Averette, Tony Cozart and James Lumpkins.

Averette was absent from the retreat, but Gooch directed the trio to report back in 100 days, with the clock having started ticking Friday night.

N.C. Wildlife Officer Tim Sasser, appearing at the retreat Friday night, said he and a fellow officer, Bill Taylor, are assigned to Granville County, with another officer assigned to Durham County and a new officer soon to work Person County. Sasser said the procedure is for the officers to work the three counties as a unit.

Questioned by Cozart about problem areas of Granville County, Sasser said everything north of U.S. 158 and noted numerous calls from the vicinities of Berea, Mountain Creek, Oak Hill and Triple Springs and the part of the county bordering Virgilina, Va.

When Cozart asked about adequate manpower, Sasser quickly replied, "I could use 10 more officers, just in Granville, Person and Durham — and we'd still be swamped — but it's just not there."

Commissioner Zelodis Jay cited concerns about the need for hunters to obey "posted" signs and said he believed one or

PLEASE SEE HUNTERS, PAGE 4A



DAILY DISPATCH/ASHLEY STEVEN AYSUCUE

Attorneys Karlene Turrentine and Steven B. DeCillis pose for a photo in the lobby of their law office at Crossroads Shopping Center Monday afternoon. The pair are believed to have launched the first integrated law practice since the establishment of the 9th Judicial District in the late 1960s.

Faith in the system

Lawyers' beliefs lead them into partnership, thought to be the first integrated local practice in decades

By JASON ALSTON SPECIAL TO THE DAILY DISPATCH

God is often credited with bringing people together in marriage, to play on a sports team, or to save the lives of others in emergency situations. God doesn't often receive credit when attorneys come together to practice law as partners.

But the two lawyers who have united to become the 9th Judicial District's first integrated law partnership in decades not only give God credit for bringing them together, but recognize God to be the sole reason they found one another.

On New Year's Day, Steven DeCillis, who has handled criminal, domestic, personal injury, and civil cases in the ninth district since opening his own firm in 2002, officially entered into a law partnership with Karlene Turrentine, from Raleigh. Turrentine's primary focus is transactional business and corporate law; she handles contract drafting, negotiation, mergers and acquisitions. Turrentine also practices in

juvenile, criminal, domestic and appellate law.

The new partnership — operating under the moniker DeCillis & Turrentine PLLC — is believed to be the first integrated law partnership in the 9th Judicial District (Vance, Warren, Granville and Franklin counties) since that specific district was formed in 1968; DeCillis is white and Turrentine is black. Warren County clerk of court Richard Hunter, who has served Warren

for several decades, told the Dispatch that he does not recall an integrated law partnership in the area since the Clayton & Gilliam partnership back in about 1962. Louisburg attorney Charles Davis, who served as Franklin County's attorney from 1963-68, also could not recall a local integrated practice

since the Clayton partnership.

Though DeCillis and Turrentine are of different races, focus on different areas of law practice, and previously practiced in different judicial districts, they share a strong faith in God and acknowledge it was this faith that helped them find one another.

DeCillis told the Dispatch he began searching for a partner last August. One method he used in this search was sending e-mail notices on attorney listservs, and DeCillis' e-mails would have Biblical scriptures in the signatures. Turrentine said she has noticed the scriptural references in DeCillis' e-mails for some time, and that made them stand out to her.

"When I met Steven, I knew where his values were; I didn't have to ask him."

— KARLENE TURRENTINE, LAW PARTNER OF STEVEN B. DECILLIS

PLEASE SEE LAWYERS, PAGE 4A

Bigger tax hike may be needed in Granville

Another 6 cents on top of 2 cents for library upgrade

By WILLIAM F. WEST DAILY DISPATCH WRITER

WILTON — Granville County's ship of government is in such a financial predicament Commissioner Dave Currin said he believes the word to the department heads and employees should be: "All hands on deck."

Currin made the comment in the final minutes of a two-day County Commission retreat Saturday afternoon. County Finance Director Mike Felts said the county will need 6 additional cents per \$100 of assessed property valuation just to maintain services heading into Fiscal Year 2009-10.



Currin

Felts said that, while property tax revenues are consistent and sales tax revenues are holding their own despite the weak national economy, the county's sales tax receipts have dropped as a result of the state law regarding changes in Medicaid funding.

The law now requires counties, on a phase-in basis, to give up part of their sales tax dollars to North Carolina's government so the poorest counties will not have to continue footing a large part of the bills for the federal health care program.

"The state effectively has eliminated all growth in sales tax for Granville County through the next 10 years," short of any significant retail businesses coming into the county, Felts said.

At the same time, the counties are required by the state law regarding Medicaid to ensure municipalities do not lose tax revenues, which is referred to as the "hold harmless" condition.

And the 6 cents needed by Felts to keep Granville County operat-

PLEASE SEE GRANVILLE, PAGE 3A

Stimulus funds possible source for financing new elementary school

By AL WHELESS DAILY DISPATCH WRITER

At some point, Vance Commissioners might have to come up with a "drop dead date" for deciding whether to wait on possible economic stimulus funds or to pay for the new elementary school without them.

County Manager Jerry Ayscue planned to try to talk with Vance Schools Supt. Norman Shearin Friday, shortly after the potential two-horned dilemma came up during a meeting of the Board of Commissioners' education committee.

Commissioner Terry Garrison mentioned sev-

eral times in the session that he wanted any federal funds that could be obtained to be applied to the \$15 million price tag for the replacement for the aging Clark Street Elementary School.

He wondered aloud how much waiting time the

PLEASE SEE VANCE, PAGE 3A

Index

- Our Hometown2A
Business & Farm5A
World6A
Nation7A
Opinion8A
State10A
Sports1-6B
Showcase 1C
Celebrate 2-4C
Books & Leisure 5C
Light Side 6-7C
Kids A to Z 8C
Real Estate 1-2D
Classifieds 3-5D

Weather

TODAY Sunny High: 57 Low: 32
MONDAY Rain High: 54 Low: 30
Details, 3A

Deaths

- Henderson Leila Mae Green, 81
Kemp Boyd Hargrove, 93
Harry Lee Owen, 76
James D. Pierce, 71
David Williams
Oxford Albert Bullock, 60
Warrenton Eva Gilliam Elam, 76
Obituaries, 4A

