

News at a glance

Former City Council Member charged for fake kidnapping

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — A pregnant attorney who police said made up a story about being kidnapped was charged Friday with making false alarms.

Karyn McConnell Hancock, 35, a former city councilwoman, never was abducted outside a the city's juvenile court building, police said.

Hancock's husband has said she had a "meltdown" and that she was seeking treatment.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Hancock was reported missing Dec. 5 and was found three days later after she flagged down a motorist near Six Flags in Austell, Georgia. Her car was found nearby.

She told authorities that a man with a gun abducted her in downtown Toledo and forced her into the back of a van, police said.

Police said she recanted the story after meeting with investigators for about eight hours.



Hancock

African elders launch rights campaign

(GIN) — A new campaign to combat human rights abuses was launched this month by a group of African elders. The campaign was announced in Cape Town this week, timed to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

"The Elders," a group of global leaders, were convened by Nelson Mandela and his wife Graca Machel in July 1997 to address global challenges. They include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, rights campaigner Machel, Mandela, and former UN chief Kofi Annan, among others.

"As Elders, it is our responsibility to listen to and amplify people's voices. The biggest enemy of human rights is silence," said Graca Machel.

The campaign, called "Every human has rights", aims to collect at least a billion signatures worldwide in support of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Machel called for specific attention to the rights of women and children:

"We would like to feel the pulse of the world - from the most remote areas of our globe, from those who believe they are forgotten - to come forward and be part of this large movement of people who speak out to protect their rights, to advance their rights, and to speak out against abuses."

U.S. Rep. Julia Carson dead at 69

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Rep. Julia Carson, who rose from a childhood of poverty and segregation to become the first black and first woman to represent Indianapolis in Congress, died Saturday. She was 69.

Carson died of lung cancer at her home, where she had spent the past several weeks, family spokeswoman Vanessa Summers said.

Carson had persevered through major heart surgery and years of health problems before revealing her lung cancer last month, saying she would not seek election in 2008 to a seventh term. Carson had been away from Washington since late September, when she was hospitalized with a leg infection.

Carson, a Democrat, was first elected to Congress in 1996. She championed children's issues, women's rights and efforts to reduce homelessness, and was a staunch opponent of the war in Iraq.

Carson was born to a single mother who worked as a housekeeper. She graduated in 1955 from the same segregated high school as basketball star Oscar Robertson.

She began her political career in the 1960s when then-Rep. Andy Jacobs Jr. hired her to work in his office. Jacobs encouraged Carson to run for the Indiana Legislature in 1972 — the first of more than two dozen victories in local, legislative and congressional elections. She ran for Congress in 1996 after Jacobs retired.

Carson had suffered in recent years from high blood pressure, asthma and diabetes. She missed dozens of House votes in 2004 because of illness and spent the weekend before the 2004 election in the hospital for what she said was a flu shot reaction — but still won re-election by 10 percentage points.

Bounty hunter 'Dog' Chapman gives away toys with black group

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bounty hunter Duane "Dog" Chapman appeared Saturday at a holiday toy giveaway sponsored by a black advocacy group a month after publicly apologizing for using a racial slur.

Chapman handed out toys to dozens of children and signed copies of his book "You Can Run But You Can't Hide," said Ermas Alemayehu of the conservative Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny.

"We don't condone racial slurs, but upon hearing Dog's apology and after meeting with him and his family, we don't believe he's a racist. We also believe that Duane 'Dog' Chapman sincerely wants to make amends to the black community, and deserves a second chance," BOND founder Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson said in a statement.

Chapman, 54, apologized Nov. 6 to blacks and to all Americans for repeatedly using the "N-word" during a March phone call to his son, Tucker, urging him to break up with a black girlfriend.

The subsequent Web release of the recorded conversation by The National Enquirer led the A&E television network to put Chapman's reality show indefinitely on hold.

In a Fox News interview, Chapman denied being a racist and said he used the N-word conversationally when talking to black acquaintances.

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TV reporter refuses to give in to disorder that's turning him white

BY COREY WILLIAMS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — Lee Thomas' skin is betraying him.

His once brown, even complexion is now mottled with pale patches around his eyes and mouth, around his nose and on his ears; his arms, shoulders and chest are speckled and blotched.

"I'm a black man turning white on television and people can see it," says Thomas, an anchor and entertainment reporter for the local Fox Broadcasting Company affiliate. "If you've watched me over the years, you've seen my hands completely change from brown to white."

Thomas has vitiligo, a disorder in which pigment-making cells are destroyed. White patches appear on different parts of the body, tissues in the mouth and nose, and the retina.

"There is no cause. There is no cure, and it's very random," Thomas says. "I could turn all the way white or mostly white."

As many as 65 million people worldwide have the disorder, including up to 2 million in the United States.

Few people, outside medical professionals and those with the disease, had heard the term "vitiligo" until Michael Jackson revealed in the early 1990s that the disorder was behind his skin turning brown to white.

It's not fatal, but experts say vitiligo robs people of self-confidence, evokes ridicule and unpleasant stares,



Fox 2 Detroit anchor and reporter Lee Thomas answers the phone at his desk.

and pushes some into unforced seclusion.

The 40-year-old Thomas says that's not where the disorder needs to be. He openly talks about vitiligo and how it has affected his life and career, and has written a book about his journey titled "Turning White: A Memoir of Change." Along the way, Thomas says he's met others with the disorder and has become a celebrity spokesman for the Columbus, Ohio-based National Vitiligo Foundation.

Vitiligo attacks the soul and psyche, foundation executive director Robert Haas

says. "When was the last time you saw someone with vitiligo handling your food? It is the public's image that it is some leprosy-type of disease," he says. "A lot of folks feel this disease has trapped them and kept them away from their life goals."

That was Thomas' fear. He uses a combination of creams and makeup to cover the growing patches of skin — which he calls devoid of color — on his face, hands and arms. Viewers, co-workers and, for years, his basketball buddies, were none the wiser.

Only family members and those closest to him knew the secret he had kept since age 25.

Thomas first noticed a change after getting a haircut while working in Louisville, Ky. He looked in a mirror and thought the barber had nicked him. A closer look revealed a pale spot, about the size of a quarter.

"I got two more on the other side of my scalp, on my hand and one in the corner of my mouth," he recalls in an interview from the station's studio. "That's when I went to the doctor and got diagnosed."

See Thomas on A6

FAMU students score perfectly on national exam

BY NIKKIA G. GANEY
CAPITAL OUTLOOK

Tallahassee, Fla. (NNPA) — When students at the Florida A&M University College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences raise their index fingers and say, "We're No. 1," they mean it.

They have set the standard for pharmacy schools across the nation with a 100 percent passing rate on the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination.

FAMU's school average score of 119.15 exceeded the state and national averages of 118.77 and 116.00, respectively.

The state passing rate was 98.22 percent and the national rate was 97.23, compared to FAMU's 100 percent.

"We are excited about our students doing so well on the exam," said Dr. Henry Lewis III, dean of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. "This proves that our faculty is working hard to prepare our students for their careers."

The NAPLEX is an examination that is mandatory for all students who are graduating. The test is a standard examination created by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy to help individual state boards of pharmacy assess an individual's competency and knowledge so that he or she may be given a license to practice.

"The exam is the equivalent to the Bar exam when you become a lawyer," said Dr. James Moran, a professor in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. "It's an amazing thing that FAMU has set the standard across the nation."

This group of first-time candidates took the test between May 1 and Aug. 31, according to a report by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.

Seventy-three candidates of the Class of 2007 took the NAPLEX and all passed:

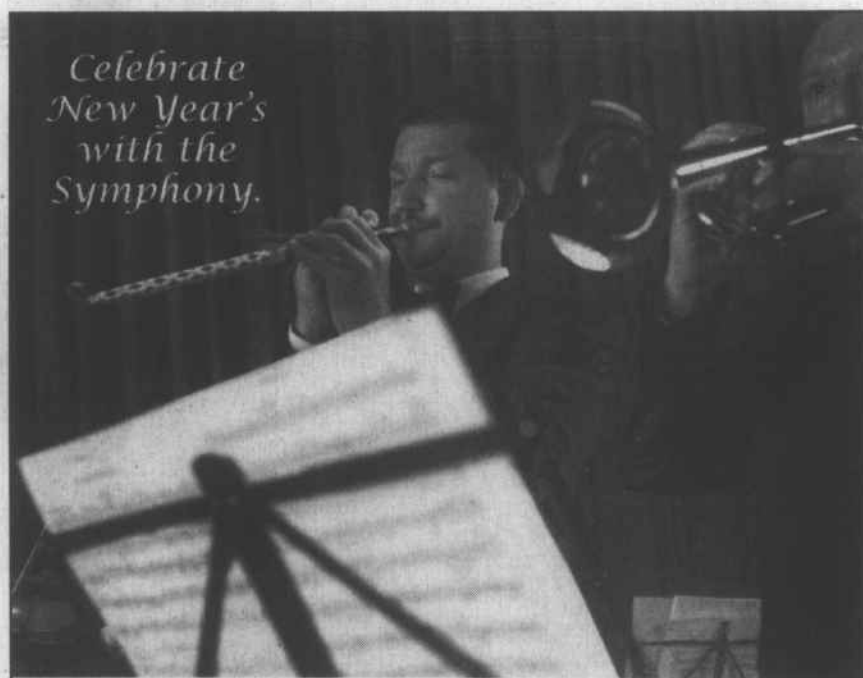
"We are very proud of the

students in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences," said FAMU President James H. Ammons. "I applaud Dean Lewis and the faculty for doing an out-

standing job in preparing our students. This is another example of how we have distinguished ourselves."

Says, Jeremy Johnson, a fifth year Pharm. D candidate,

"This just proves why most students chose to come to FAMU for pharmacy... Only with the best education can you set the highest standards on a test like this."



Puttin' on the Ritz

Presented by the

Winston-Salem Symphony

ROBERT MOODY, Music Director

Celebrate New Year's Eve with the Winston-Salem Symphony. Vocalist Jenn Raithel Newman and the Neos Dance Theatre join Maestro Moody and the orchestra for a festive evening, featuring musical theatre favorites, Strauss waltzes, and some very special surprises. Don't miss Winston-Salem's newest holiday tradition.

DECEMBER 31, 2007, 7:30 p.m.
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