



**INSIDE TODAY**  
 Guest Columnist Bill Hill explains why some of us are lucky to be alive.  
**See Page B5**

# THOMASVILLE TIMES

Winners of Fairgrove Family Resource Center's 'Fore the Families' Golf Tourney announced.  
**See Page B4**

**TODAY'S SPORTS**

Saturday, August 14, 2010

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## PREYING ON INNOCENCE

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### Internet a gateway for predators

BY ELIOT DUKE  
 Staff Writer

Meet Chase Rhodes, a Thomasville teenager who, on the surface, looks like a normal kid with his whole life in front of him.

In the summer of 2009, however, two separate incidents involving Rhodes and the Internet cast a dark shadow over social networking sites and just who is behind the person on Facebook or MySpace.

Davidson County Sheriff's Office twice arrested Rhodes between July 20 and Aug. 11, 2009, for sexually assaulting women he met on the social networking site MySpace. According to warrants and DCSO press releases, Rhodes befriended women on the site, communicated with them via text messages for a few weeks before eventually meeting them in person. In one case, Rhodes met a 23-year-old woman in a parking lot on N.C. Highway 109, forced her into his ve-

hicle and assaulted her with unwanted sexual advances.

"They're predators and they prey on the naivety of the victims," Sheriff David Grice said.

On June 9, Rhodes was convicted on three counts of sexual battery, including an assault from 2002, and received 60 months probation. Cases like this are prime examples of how social networking sites can be used for all the wrong reasons. While the problem may be relatively new, as social networking sites continue to grow in popularity worldwide, law enforcement agencies are taking steps to ensure sexual predators don't have free run of the Internet.

"It's very difficult to prevent," said Det. Lt. Kimberly Sebastian with Thomasville Police Department. "The best thing we can do is educate parents and educate the kids themselves to try and recognize the signs. You think you're talking to a 13-year-old boy when you're really talking to a 50-year-old man. You can't always trust that people are who they say they are."

See INTERNET, Page A3



#### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- To report a case of sexual abuse or assault, contact Thomasville Police at 475-7755 or Davidson County Sheriff's Office at 474-2645.
- Search the North Carolina Department of Justice Sex Offender Registry at <http://sexoffender.ncdoj.gov/search.aspx>
- If you suspect sexual abuse of a child, contact Davidson County Department of Social Services at 474-2760.

### Emotional trauma lingers for victim

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
 Staff Writer

*Editor's Note: The names have been changed in the following story to protect the victims and their families.*

Sarah's monster didn't come in the dark of night, prowling from the unknown depths under her bed or oozing from the black abyss of her closet. Instead, her monster stalked with a disarming smile and in broad daylight, whispering innocently into her ear.

It was summer 2009. Ten-year-old Sarah had spent the night with her best friend, Lindsey, a frequent occurrence for the two playmates, who had known each other for years. After breakfast, the girls ran outside for a game of hide-and-seek.

Though Lindsey's father wasn't home, a friend of his stopped by and jumped into the girls' game.

"One, two,..." Lindsey yelled, turning and covering her eyes. Sarah dashed off to find a hiding place. The man came up to her and quietly told her he had a better hiding place in mind. The two crept off to an alley between two buildings.

And Sarah's nightmare began.

See TRAUMA, Page A3

### TCS orientation has lesson for parents

BY ELIOT DUKE  
 Staff Writer

After months of planning and training, Thomasville High School is ready to go with its new one-to-one laptop initiative that will put a computer directly into the hands of every student.

Now it's the parents turn.

Starting Monday, THS will begin holding parent orientation sessions for each grade level and attendance is mandatory before a laptop can be issued to a student. Parents will be provided with the necessary and required information regarding the care of use of laptops, the insurance information, online safety practices and an explanation of the laptop agreement contract.

Teachers at THS have spent the summer learning how to incorporate laptops into daily education with representatives from Mocksville, who began a similar initiative three years ago.

"We're excited about it," THS Principal Deboy Beamon said. "Our teachers are very prepared. For insurance purposes, we have to ensure parents have been properly trained on what's acceptable use for

See LESSON, Page A6

### 'Taste of the Town' returns with largest lineup to date

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
 Staff Writer

Sampler platters can't even compare.

With 63 local restaurants, caterers, bakeries and beverage vendors prepared to market small portions of their wares, Hospice of the Piedmont's 22nd annual Taste of the Town promises to bring its A-game.

The event — planned for Tuesday, Aug. 17, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Showplace in downtown High Point — allows guests to sample small servings of food from a variety of vendors, including Thom-

asville-based Misty's Cakes and Bakery. With a record-number of food vendors signed up and ticket sales already remarkably high, Kimberly Hines, Hospice's marketing associate, expects a turnout as good as or better than last year's 5,000.

"We're excited that we have the most restaurants that we've ever had this year," Hines said. "We want to make sure that everybody out there knows that we're here and that we really care and we provide for people."

Besides food, Taste of the Town also boasts local



COURTESY PHOTO

Attendees at last year's 'Taste of the Town' sample foods from participating vendors.

band Timeless and music from DJ Vance Harris of Karaoke Sensations.

"They're great," Hines said. "They get everybody dancing and on their feet."

A kids zone will give children the opportu-

nity to run around, create cards for Hospice patients, color and get a temporary tattoo.

A silent auction with more than 200 items and services donated from

See LINEUP, Page A6

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#### Today's Weather



Isolated T-storms  
 83/73  
 Full Forecast Page 2

#### What's Inside

Weather	A2
Focus	A4
Opinion	A5
Obituaries	A6
Religion	A8
Sports	B1
Classifieds	B6

