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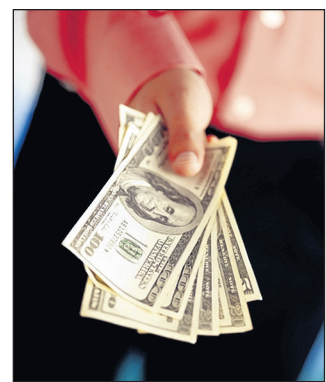
GREENSBORO • HIGH POINT • ROCKINGHAM • STATE

Sunday, December 25, 2011

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Looking back on consumer finance

Columnist Michelle Singletary: The government took steps to protect consumers in 2011, and she takes a look at the good, bad and ugly in personal finance. **Work & Money, B6.**



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Building triumph from a tragedy

■ **Mary Ann Holder's ex-husband, daughter want to help others avoid domestic violence.**

By **DIONI L. WISE**
Staff Writer

GREENSBORO — Tuesday was the one-month anniversary of a dark day for Robert "Rocky" Smith and his 20-year-old daughter, Christina.

"I didn't want to get out of bed," Rocky said, his voice breaking. "I think it's the first day that I felt that

way."

Authorities say Mary Ann Holder, Rocky's ex-wife and Christina's mother, killed five children and herself on Nov. 20, destroying their family. They don't know why.

"It just seems to hit harder when there's a day set on it," Christina said. "Even though all the children didn't die on the 20th, that's just the day that everything changed. We basically knew that day that six people that we loved weren't going to ever be the same. We didn't know if they were going to all

pass or not, but that's the day everything went wrong."

Rocky, Christina and their closest friends will reminisce today about the good times and place flowers and stockings on their graves. The family will look at pictures of Holder; her sons with Rocky, Dylan and Zack Smith; her niece and nephew Ricky and Hana Suttles; and Dylan's girlfriend, Makayla "Kayla" Woods.

They were supposed to be here. "But we have to move on," Rocky said. "One of

the things that Tina and I decided to focus our energies on is awareness for domestic violence, mental illness and organ donation. That's where we're putting our focus right now because we gotta do something positive out of this."

Christina said one ugly day now marks the life of her mother, although she had 36 years of wonderful times. Holder was a caring person who took in Ricky, 17, and Hana, 8, when their mother, Carrie Beth Suttles, became ill shortly



LYNN HEY/News & Record

Robert "Rocky" Smith and Christina Smith wear T-shirts to honor family members killed in Mary Ann Holder's shooting spree.

See **Holder**, Page B3



PHOTOS BY JERRY WOLFORD/News & Record

Stephen Vanstory, a homeless man nicknamed Toddy, created his home on Greensboro's east side out of tarps, cardboard signs and hard-plastic pipes. He keeps a Santa snow globe in his tent. "Well, at least I'll have something for Christmas," he says.

IN SNOW GLOBE, HE SEES CHRISTMAS ALL YEAR

GREENSBORO — His name is Toddy, and he keeps a Santa globe in his tent.

As many of us celebrate Christmas, Toddy is probably huddled up in his tent, looking at his Santa globe and thinking about where he's going this afternoon.

He told me he'd like to go see his wife, Nina, and his young daughter, Gladys. She's 3. But there's no Nina in any directory, and when I tell Toddy that, he says she has a private number that he doesn't remember.

So today, on Christmas, Toddy will probably stay at his camp beside the railroad tracks. He'll probably look at the Santa globe someone gave him and say to himself, "Well, at least I'll have something for Christmas."

At least that's what he told me.

"I look at it all the time, to tell you the truth," he says from his bed underneath the tent. "Santa and his reindeer. Yep. He's holding the ceiling up, and he's alright with me."

Today is just another mark in Toddy's notebook. He uses it as a makeshift calendar to keep tabs of how long he's lived in the woods.



JERI ROWE



Stephen Vanstory in his camp during a January snow.

He told me he's been there since July of 2009. He created a big tent beside the tracks out of discarded cardboard signs and tarps blown from passing trains.

He uses metal crutches, wood slats and plastic cable pipes as joists to keep his tent from falling down.

He ties off and secures everything with anything he can find — from vinyl rope to duct tape to electrical cords.

His tent is his home. Behind his curtain of tarps, he has a



Vanstory smokes a cigarette that he made using tobacco and a piece of a brown paper bag.

plastic trash can to store his clothes and food in, and cinder blocks to support the mattress and box spring he found.

On and around his mattress is a big mound of comforters,

packing blankets, sofa cushions and a Winnie the Pooh blanket.

In the corner hangs a head-

See **Toddy**, Page B2

Bidder wins Liz Taylor's 1973 outfit

■ **A Greensboro man who admired Taylor wanted a piece of her history.**

By **TINA FIRESHEETS**
Staff Writer

It's not every day that the average person gets the chance to own something that once belonged to someone as famous as Elizabeth Taylor.

But last week, Lynn Wooten placed an online bid that made him the proud owner of a Valentino day ensemble worn by the iconic actress in the 1973 movie, "Night Watch."

Taylor's collection of jewels, gowns, art and memorabilia sold for a record \$157 million over four days of live auctions in New York and a 10-day online auction.

Taylor, who died in March at age 79, was notorious for her lavish jewelry collection.

Wooten, vice president of marketing and communications for The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, says the acquisition is even more significant because he met Taylor in 1996.

The actress and AIDS activist came

See **Dress**, Page B3

Is road's repair in city budget?

Q. Country Park seems to have a large and obvious need for some updates. Chief amongst these would be the resurfacing of the road around the park. Is there a line-item expense for this resurfacing any time soon?

— Kim Ketchum

A. Country Park road repairs are on a long, multibillion-dollar list of city improvements projects. The current version of the city's plan calls for repaving roads at Country, Hester and Barber parks — but not until at least 2016. The city plans to pay for the project with bond money. But there is no current effort to hold such a bond referendum. In the meantime, Parks and Recreation Director Greg Jackson said the department may try to replace or repair some of its infrastructure without having to borrow money to do it. The city staff plans to create a list of repair priorities when it develops the department budget next year. The bottom line? You won't get new roads anytime soon. But rest assured, the city recognizes the problem.

— Staff Writer Amanda Lehmert



GOT A QUESTION?

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