

SCRUGGS CENTER CELEBRATES FUTURE OPENING IN STYLE 3A

How much money did Tippin
raise for charity? **Page 4A**

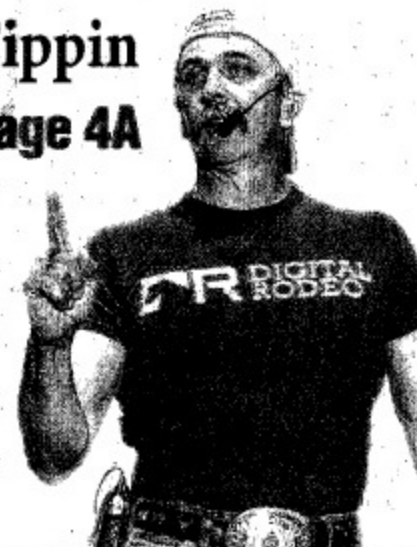
FRIDAY

May 6, 2011

SHELBY, N.C.

75 Cents

THE STAR



Troy Yocum makes his way toward Shelby from Grover with his dog and supporters on Wednesday. Troy is a veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom and is walking across America to raise money for military families in need.

Brittany Randolph / The Star



30 million steps and counting Iraq war veteran walks across U.S. to raise money for military families

Alicia Banks

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GROVER — Troy Yocum looked at the worn bottoms of his Merrell hiking boots. They were the seventh pair of he's worn in the past year. He expected this after walking more than 30 million steps in a journey across the United States.

Yocum is raising money and awareness for military families in need through his Drum Hike. He said his grandfather lost his job during the 1980s and became depressed and committed suicide. Yocum saw a good friend of his, an Iraq war veteran, on the same path as his grandfather: lost his job, diagnosed with throat cancer, survived a car wreck with his pregnant

girlfriend and suicidal.

"I contacted charities to help, and I got the thirst to want to help more people," Yocum said. "I figured, 'Why not walk across America?'"

The goal is to raise \$5 million. He's raised around \$183,000.

'LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS'

The hike started in Louisville, Ky., April 17, 2010.

Developing kidney stones in Colorado, a foot infection in Texas and walking through a Louisiana tornado weren't enough to end Yocum's journey.

"The first nine months, we helped 17 families," he said. "With Wish Upon a Hero's support, we helped 17 more families

in two months."

So far, money raised has paid mortgages on military families' homes on the verge of foreclosure. Yocum wants to raise enough money for a family in Raleigh who lost everything during the recent tornado outbreak.

His wife, Mareld, and two dogs follow him. He will walk through Raleigh, Washington, Boston and Ohio next.

With a camouflage hat and matching pants, Yocum quickly strapped on his water backpack. He turned left onto Cleveland Avenue in Grover as he walked toward Shelby.

The journey will end September in Louisville on mile 7,000.

"I'm sad it's down to the last couple of months" he said. "It's an honor to meet these families, parents and wives of fallen soldiers."

Reach reporter Alicia Banks at 704-669-3338.

Teen charged with stealing hat at gunpoint

A Shelby teenager accused of taking a hat at gunpoint was jailed Thursday on an armed robbery charge.



Hopper

David Leon Hopper, 18, of the 1100 block of Span Street, threatened

use of a handgun in order to steal a person's hat on Feb. 20, according to a warrant for his arrest. Shelby police say Hopper planned the robbery with another person.

A warrant for Hopper's arrest was issued on April 27. He was charged Thursday with robbery with a dangerous weapon and conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon.

Hopper is being held in the Cleveland County Detention Center under a \$50,000 secured bond.

—Corey Friedman

Man accused of stealing wedding ring and wallet

Sheriff's deputies say a Lawndale man stole a wedding ring and wallet and used a stolen debit card to swipe more

LOCAL CRIME BRIEFS

than \$500 from a man's bank account.

Christopher William Stamey, 22, of the 100 block of Jim Hudson Road, allegedly took a wallet, personal documents and wedding ring worth a combined \$211 on April 27. The same day, he used a Fidelity Bank debit card found in the victim's wallet to obtain \$506, an arrest warrant states.



Stamey

Stamey was charged Wednesday with felony financial card fraud, financial card theft, misdemeanor larceny and misdemeanor possession of stolen property. He also faces a charge of assault by pointing a gun on an outstanding arrest warrant.

He was jailed under a \$3,000 secured bond.

—Corey Friedman

Police: Pleasant City diner didn't pay \$87 tab

Police say a man ate and drank lavishly at an uptown Shelby restaurant, but wouldn't pay his bill after he finished the meal.

Michael Chip Latham, 41, of Hendersonville ordered \$86.63 in food and alcoholic beverages

from Pleasant City Wood Fired Grill, 223 S. Lafayette St., on Monday, according to a magistrate's order. He asked for the food and drinks "without intending to pay for them," the charging document states.

Shelby police charged Latham with defrauding an innkeeper. Latham is scheduled to appear in Cleveland County District Court on May 13.

—Corey Friedman

Taste-T Drive-In reports theft

A Shelby restaurant reported a large quantity of coins stolen from a locked desk drawer Tuesday.

Police are investigating a felony breaking-and-entering and larceny at the Taste-T Drive-In, 322 E. Marion St. A manager arrived at the restaurant around 8 a.m. Tuesday and noticed that one of the side doors was unlocked. His office door, which is usually locked, was also open, and his bottom desk drawer, which is padlocked, was broken into, according to a police report.

A significant amount of money in coins was stolen from the desk drawer, the report states. Police found no signs of forced entry to the restaurant.

No arrests have been made, and no suspects were named in the report.

—Corey Friedman