

SPORTSWEEK

Woods causing golfing craze among locals

Track team makes speedy impression



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COMMUNITY

Church wraps up popular arts camp

Diabetes continues to be issue for blacks

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The Choice for African-American News

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Report takes aim at charter schools

Public policy group says too many charters are one-race and have experienced financial difficulties

FROM STAFF REPORT

A new report by a well-known public policy agency urges the General Assembly to put the brakes on the formation of new charter schools until several issues can be examined further.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research (NCCPPR) released a report this week that examines the effectiveness of charter schools in the state.

The state had 97 charter schools during the 2001-2002 school year. The schools are nonprofit corporations. The schools are not under the auspices of local school boards but are run by volunteer boards. They rely on state funds for their livelihood, but are also free to pursue funds from foundations, corporations and individuals.



A new report says that too many charter schools are one-race and are adding to the problem of resegregation in public education.

Charter schools are similar to public schools. For instance, any student is eligible to attend and tuition is not charged.

Charter schools have become popular throughout the country as parents seek schools that can offer new, innovative educational techniques. In the year 2001, 38 states allowed charter schools, with a total of 2,317 charter schools nationwide.

North Carolina's General Assembly passed legislation in 1996 that cleared the way for the formation of charter schools in the state. Legislators allowed for only 100 charter schools. The state is near its maximum. The NCCPPR report comes as the State Board of Education is pushing the General Assembly to raise the charter school limit to 110. Other legislators want the limit to be pushed up to as high as 135 charter schools.

See Charters on A5



Clockwise from left: John Miller, Ben Smith, Ryan Lineberry and Davaun Hickman practice a sword fight scene before Friday's performance at Mineral Springs Middle School.

Shakespearean Summer

Children's Theater shows youngsters acting ropes during special arts camp

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

The Children's Theater of Winston-Salem entered the crowded summer camp arena last year, offering artistically-inclined young folks a crash course in acting and a chance to shine during a summer production.

The summer camp concept proved so successful that the theater held another camp this summer. The camp wrapped up Friday with a unique performance featuring the work of Shakespeare.

"We were bombarded with phone calls from folks wanting to know what is there to do in the summertime," Children's Theater Executive Director Les Epstein



The young actors show off the drama masks they created.

said, explaining how the camp came about. "It is a way to show kids the discipline that goes into developing roles, and it is a great alternative to soccer camp."

Seventeen young people from ages 4 to 14 and of all acting levels took part in the most recent two-week camp, working for sev-

eral hours a day to nail down the production, a 30-minute stage presentation featuring a smattering of work by the famous bard. The highlight of production was a 15-minute version of the classic "Romeo and Juliet."

The camp was spearheaded by

See Play on A10

'Celebrating Sandra'

WFMY News 2's Hughes marks 30 years on television

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Sandra Hughes doesn't consider herself a trailblazer.

Although she created paths in her field where none existed before, Hughes says when she thinks of trailblazers, names such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. spring to mind.

"I don't think of myself as such," Hughes said Monday.



Photo courtesy of WFMY
Sandra Hughes

There are many who disagree. Hughes has been a player on the WFMY News 2 team for three decades. Her face, smile and inviting personality have become familiar to most Piedmont residents as Hughes has secured her position as the matriarch of Triad television news.

WFMY, a Greensboro-based station, is in the middle of an ongoing celebration in honor of Hughes, a celebration that will culminate Wednesday when the station will air a special program in honor of the popular anchor.

Hughes said the hoopla

See Hughes on A4

Happy Hill Reunion brings thousands home

BY FELECIA P. McMILLAN, PH.D.
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Founders of the Happy Hill Reunion, Benjamin Piggott and William "Rock" Biting, were pleased with this year's turnout for the annual affair. More than 2,000 residents, former residents and friends of the Happy Hill Garden community supported the ninth annual Happy Hill Reunion.

Happy Hill is the oldest African-American community in the city. The area has many historic ties to nearby Old Salem, the city's first settlement.

The gathering was held last weekend at the William C. Sims Recreation Center, in the heart of the historic community. This event continues to attract larger and larger

crowds for various reasons.

During the opening ceremony on Saturday, the founders held a balloon release in honor of the ancestors from Happy Hill and from Liberia, West Africa, the source of the enslaved persons who lived across the creek from Salem. James Y. Hunder Sr., founder/former president of the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont (LOP); Frank J. Konah, vice president; and Jacob M. Crawford, LOP chairman of planning, participated in the ritual. Hunder spoke in one of the dialects of the ancestors to offer a special message.

"We are glad to be in your midst because we are all one. On behalf of the Liberian

See Happy Hill on A9

Activists attack Stewart's use of PVC

Plants that make the carcinogenic component are located mainly in African-American communities; one such area has been dubbed cancer alley by environmentalists

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Concerned consumers and local environmentalists protested at the Kmart on Lewisville-Clemmons Road last week, telling patrons that "Martha (Stewart) Ain't No Environmental Steward." The protest in Clemmons was just one of several happening at Kmart stores around the country.

Protesters were referring to the toxic plastic material PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride), otherwise known as vinyl, which is used in the manufacturing and packaging of many items in Stewart's Everyday line, which is sold exclusively at Kmart. Items such as Martha Stewart Everyday table covers, place mats, shower curtains and beverage dispensers are just a few household products on her line that contain PVC, protesters claim.

The actual products themselves have not been shown to pose health risks. The danger comes in the manufacturing of PVC. Post-cards were handed out to customers to send to Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, urging Stewart,



Environmentalists are hoping to get Martha Stewart out of the kitchen and to a bargaining table to discuss her use of PVC in products.

who is already under fire because of alleged insider trading, to replace the vinyl with a safer material.

"Consumers are saying that they want companies to be more environmentally sound. I think if anything, it's a great message for them to express that companies need to be environmentally responsible," said Meredith McLeod, a concerned consumer who joined in the protest.

The high chlorine content in PVC contaminates the recycling of other plastics and PVC is the single largest source of a cancer-causing chemical called dioxin. When PVC is burned in waste incinerators, it creates a toxic brew of pollution that can cause serious health problems - immune system damage, altered sexual development, diabetes and reproductive problems - to anyone from vinyl fabricators to residents who live near vinyl manufacturers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that one in 1,000 Americans will develop cancer due to dioxin exposure.

"PVC, or vinyl as it's called more readily, is dangerous from its production to its disposal, so the people who live near the factories are in grave danger. In fact, people are very sick who live near these factories in Louisiana and Texas," said Lisa Faldli, U.S. toxics coordinator with Greenpeace in Raleigh.

Several low-income African-American communities in East New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Lake Charles, La., are learning firsthand just how dangerous the manufacturing of PVC is. One community in Louisiana has been dubbed "Cancer Alley" because of the high rate of the disease in the area.

Residents in communities where PVC is manufactured have charged that air, water and food supplies are being contaminated from the toxic chemical releases and wastes from vinyl plants, many of which are located along the Mississippi River.

In one case, it has been determined that a school and neighborhood were built directly on top of an old city dump in a portion of East New Orleans.

See Stewart on A4



Michael Kimbrough, Betty Terry, Beverly Funches Williams, Evelyn Funches and James Funches sat together at a family table during the reunion.