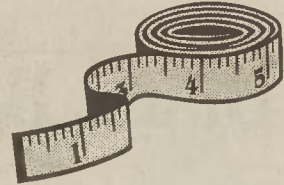




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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

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Charlotte's spring ritual gets off to a slow start

Cruising at Hornet's Nest Park yet to ignite

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Cruising season has opened quietly. Charlotte-Mecklenburg parks and law enforcement officials hope it remains that way.

About 900 cars - including one carrying Charlotte Hornet Anthony Mason - and motorcycles passed through Hornet's Nest Park Sunday, according to Terry Weatherford, Park Watch

Coordinator for the Northwest Park District. He called it "a light Sunday."

"On a normal Sunday we might have 2,000-4,000 cars through here," he said. "They got a late start today. They usually start about 4:30 p.m. They didn't start till about 5:30. They normally leave about dark or until we close the gate. It generally never comes to that. They leave when it gets dark."

Sunday the park was empty

by 8:15 p.m. Temperatures had dipped to near 60, with a stiff, cool breeze making it feel cooler. All participants left the park in an orderly fashion.

Weatherford said cruising usually begins in March and lasts through October. Cruisers hit the park two weeks before Easter. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer H.L. Hunter said cruisers visited the park two previous weekends. He said no complaints have been filed so far.

"Traffic hasn't been a major problem, so we've gotten no complaints," Hunter said. "If it goes like it's been for the past couple of years, we anticipate some because the crowds

get larger and larger each Sunday."

Weatherford said traffic management became a problem last year once cruising received a lot of media attention.

"Once the media said there was a problem, we had cars coming through with license plates from Georgia, Alabama - you name it," Weatherford said. "One Sunday we had about 9,000 cars. Once all the attention died down, it nearly went away."

Police directed traffic at the park's entrance and at the intersection of Beatties Ford and Sunset Road. They also cordoned off parking lots

See CRUISING on page 2A



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Motorcyclists gather at Hornets Nest Park to talk - and ride - bikes. So far, cruisers have been quiet at the West Charlotte park.



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Minister Robert Muhammad of the Nation Of Islam addresses the media during a press conference at Muhammad's Mosque. Flanking him are Gladys Muhammad (left) and Thomas Muhammad.

And justice for all

Police review board proposal gains strength among African Americans

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Support for a police citizens review board - the so-called Cannon Amendment - may be growing on the Charlotte City Council as waves of anger and disgust swept through the city after yet

another fatal police shooting. Hundreds of citizens appeared before city council Monday night to call for a review board to investigate fatal shootings and other allegations of misconduct by police.

Council member Patrick Cannon, who proposed the

amendment, said he thinks enough of his colleagues support the proposal to pass it. He believes as many as seven council members, possibly including Republican Lynn Wheeler, will vote for a citizens review board. There are six Democrats, including four African Americans, on the

council.

"I'm optimistic the council is more inclined to support the Cannon Amendment than to not do anything at all, like in 1994," Cannon said.

Only two of 11 council members - Cannon and Nasif Majeed - voted for a citizens review board when Cannon proposed it after Windy Gail Thompson was killed in December 1993 by officer Mark Farmer.

That was before Willie James Cooper was shot and

See SUPPORT on page 3A

New Beatties Ford library offers latest in technological advances

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Northwest Charlotte gets its long awaited library Sunday.

The new 14,000-square-foot facility at 2412 Beatties Ford Road will open with a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony. A 25-year time capsule filed with historic items from the Beatties Ford Road community will be installed in the new library's lobby. The branch motto is "Preserving The Past - Building The Future."

Festivities begin at 3 p.m. and will include city and county officials, plus the Johnson C. Smith University Choir and the West Charlotte High School Jazz Band.

The new branch replaces the North Branch on LaSalle Street, just off Beatties Ford Road.

Myriette Ekechukwu is the managing librarian for the new facility and Irish Jamison, former head librarian at the North Branch Library, is assistant

See LIBRARY on page 6A



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Beatties Ford Road library managing librarian Myriette Ekechukwu (left) and assistant librarian Irish Jamison.

Shuffletown residents take on rugby noise

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Beer cans and bottles line the street in front of Jan and Mike Caldwell's house.

It's been that way for the last few years since the Charlotte Rugby Club moved across the street, neighbors say.

Since then, they say it's not safe for their children to play outside on certain days of the week in the quiet, predominantly black subdivision.

"We were told by the original owner, Anthony Skillbeck, that it would be a park available to everyone," Mike Caldwell said. "Then they told us it would be a football field for kids. It's not that way."

According to the Caldwells, Skillbeck, a local architect, also told them Johnson C. Smith University would be involved.

Calls to Skillbeck's office were not returned, nor were calls to the Charlotte Rugby Club. Rugby is a forerunner of today's American football, with 11 players on a side. They don't wear padding, however.

"After all this started, we called them," Jan Caldwell said. "They didn't know anything about it."

The couple have a bill for \$425 for yard damage and a letter from a local realtor, Greg Mobley, saying his "professional opinion" was "that the things going on at this rugby field seriously hurt your chance of selling your home."

They have also talked to everyone from city council member Greene to N.C. Sen. Fountain Odom and Mayor Pat Mc

"The Charlotte Rugby Field on Bell Haven Circle is a noisy, boisterous place where people who drink too much and have caused damage to nearby property," Odom wrote in 1995 to then-Vinroot. "...The addition of the rugby field has been detrimental to that quality. These citizens deserve more."

What the Caldwells and their neighbors say they have had enough of is the noise, litter and parking problems associated with the club.

"We call the police when they get loud," Mike Caldwell says. "While the police are here, they're quiet. When they leave it gets loud again. It's just not right."

For four years, the Caldwells and their Shuffletown neighbors have

See SHUFFLETOWN on page 6A

No one gets fees from S.C. remap

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Republicans and civil rights activists will not get the legal fees they wanted from the state in South Carolina's almost six-year redistricting fight.

The Supreme Court without comment on Monday let stand rulings that denied any attorney-fee award to the South Carolina GOP, the state's NAACP chapter and black voters who challenged legislative and congressional election maps.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of appeals also upheld the denial of fees last fall.

The 1990 census showed problems with South Carolina's legislative and con-

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