

THE QUEEN OF KWANZAA

For Gerry Chisolm, it's a connection with community/1B

Gerry Chisolm shares Kwanzaa's festive fruits



MOVING ALONG

Panthers prep for New York, then NFL playoffs/1C

Running back DeShaun Foster will play often against Giants



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THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 23-30, 2003

Black income climbing

Rise continues in Charlotte, smaller gap to white earnings

By Herbert L. White
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The median income of black Charlotteans has improved dramatically since 1990, reflecting the city's economic growth.

2002	
Ethnic group	Median income
Blacks	\$35,589
Whites	\$54,703
Hispanics	\$33,820
2000	
Blacks	\$33,645
Whites	\$56,144
Hispanics	\$38,298
1990	
Blacks	\$21,960
Whites	\$36,686
Hispanics	\$30,816

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Charlotte's one of the nation's wealthiest cities, and African Americans aren't going along with the economic boom.

Census Bureau figures released earlier this month showed Charlotte is the nation's eighth most prosperous municipality with an overall median of \$48,975 in 2002. That means half the city's households earned more and half earned less. The median for African Americans was \$35,589, nearly \$2,000 more than in 2000. The gains in African American wealth also cut into an income gap of more than \$22,000 between blacks and whites just two years ago. In 2000, black median household income was \$33,645 compared to \$56,144 for whites. In 1990, African Americans earned \$21,960 while whites

Please see CENSUS/3A

Saddam capture no reason for U.S. to gloat

By J. Zamba Browne
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

NEW YORK - It appears that supporters of President Bush are gloating over the capture of Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein and seem to believe that the recent development could definitely be a political plus in next year's election.



Rangel

But Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.) feels that the capture is no more of a plus than the actual invasion of Iraq itself by the U.S.

While he believes that the invasion was morally wrong, Rangel still feels Saddam's capture was also a political plus for the Bush administration. However, he said that if one really wants an accurate response, the following questions should be asked:

"Is the United States and the world more safer as the result of Hussein's capture? Will the insurgents and the terrorists be restrained because he has been captured? And was Saddam responsible for the 9/11 attacks? Is the United States in any danger because of the possibility that Saddam may have had weapons of mass destruction? And

Please see CAPTURE/6A

SPECIAL SEASON, NEW FAMILY



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Latondra Chappell hangs an ornament on her Christmas tree as her new mom, Nikki looks on. Nikki Chappell adopted the 5-year-old earlier this year.

First Christmas special for mother, adopted daughter

By Paula Young
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

This article is part of a year-long series on adoption and foster care in Mecklenburg County and its effect on African Americans.

Nikki and Latondra Chappell will spend their first official Christmas together next week. Latondra wants Barbie dolls. Although her

room probably couldn't hold one more toy, Latondra is

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN HOMES so many other ways.

The 5-year-old kindergartner is Nikki's daughter. Latondra is very cheerful, like her mother. She also loves to watch musicals, like her mother. And Latondra is bright and intelli-

gent, like her mother.

Although mother and daughter are similar, Latondra is not Chappell's biological child. The girl was adopted last year.

"When I was 10, I knew I wanted to adopt," Chappell said.

Nikki Chappell's got it going on.

She's young - 29 to be exact. Please see CHRISTMAS/2A

Thurmond saga of long-held taboos

By Hazel Trice Edney
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON - A 22-year-old Strom Thurmond having sex with his family's 16-year-old black maid should not be seen as an "affair," as it has been widely portrayed in the media, but rape, a well-respected black sociologist says.



Washington-Williams

"You could call this a statutory rape because this person was about 16 or so when this happened," says Julia Hare, executive director of the Black Think Tank in San Francisco. "These are the types of things that we need to look at very seriously when we look at these double standards."

Essie Mae Washington-Williams, 78, a retired school teacher who now lives in Los Angeles, decided to tell her secret in order to bring closure to the subject and finally answer persistent questions from reporters.

For years, Thurmond and his family had remained silent and, in some cases, expressed doubt about the veracity of stories accusing him of fathering a Black daughter. Just days before the daughter had called a news conference to offer evidence that Thurmond was her biological father and to say she was willing to submit to a DNA test, the family finally confirmed the validity of her claim.

Washington-Williams says she had not come forward earlier because she didn't want to ruin the political career of Thurmond, who died in June at the age of 100.

Thurmond was a virulent racist who ran for president in 1948 on a pro-segregationist platform. He said at the time: "And I want to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that

Please see ACTIVISTS/6A

Seniors find new Medicare mandates confusing

By Mark Sherman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAUREL, Md. - Eugene Obermier takes eight pills a day and a dim view of the new Medicare law, with its prescription drug benefit.

"I think it stinks," said the 78-year-old retired automobile service manager from Maryland City who has a bad heart, high blood pressure and

other health issues. He gets prescription drugs through his wife's state health plan.

But after taking part in an hourlong town meeting hosted by Rep. Ben Cardin, D-Md., a vocal opponent of the Medicare overhaul, Obermier said he does not really understand the complicated law and how it might affect him and his wife.

That reaction has been common in lawmakers' meetings

with older Americans and in queries to interest groups such as AARP. They find the law too confusing to be able to say whether they like it, according to both its supporters and detractors.

The Republican administration and AARP are undertaking intensive campaigns to explain the law before a negative impression takes root among the 40 million older and

disabled Americans on Medicare.

The Health and Human Services Department is working on a letter from Secretary Tommy Thompson to older people next month to explain the law. In addition, HHS officials are being made available to Republican lawmakers for public meetings on the law, said Greg Crist, a spokesman. Please see SENIORS/6A

INSIDE

Editorials 4A
Weather 8A
Life 1B

Religion 8B
Sports 1C
Real Estate 5C

Business 8C
A&E 1D
Classified 4D

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