

JAMES B. DUKE LIBRARY
100 BEATTIES FORD RD
CHARLOTTE NC



READY FOR PRIME TIME

Panthers prepare for first round of NFL playoffs vs. Dallas/1C



TROPICAL PUNCH

A taste of the islands can spruce up living space/5C

Warm colors can do wonders for home interior



The Charlotte Post

James B. Duke Library S13 P2
100 Beatties Ford Rd
Charlotte NC NC 28216-5302

The Voice of the Black Community

Also serving Cabarrus, Cherokee, Mecklenburg, and other counties

WEEK OF DECEMBER 31, 2003-JANUARY 7, 2004

NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR



He shoots, and scores

Bobcats acquisition is just a step toward Bob Johnson's business and sports goals

PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BOBCATS

Charlotte Bobcats owner Bob Johnson made history in 2003 as the first person of color to own controlling interest in a major league sports franchise. Now he is going about the task of luring customers to see his NBA franchise and developing uptown as the entertainment epicenter of Charlotte.

By C. Jemal Horton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

It is a relatively slow day in Edwards' Barber Styling III on The Plaza, when the subject of Charlotte's new NBA team and its owner, Bob Johnson, hits the floor.

Now, it is important to remember that no one is sacred in black-owned barber shops, which often double as black sports talk radio. Here, they take the gloves off when it comes to sports topics. Here, black sports figures get ripped just as much as, if not more than, white sports figures.

On this day, someone offers up this description of Bob Johnson:

"He's a savior," patron Tyrone Davis said softly as he leaned back in an unused barber's chair.

"Bob Johnson saved this city. He's getting ready to bring the life back to this city. He's bringing jobs to this city. That means a whole lot."

Johnson disagrees with the notion he is a savior. But his impact in returning professional basketball to the Queen City



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Johnson's decision of Bobcats for the NBA team's nickname and color scheme were firsts in U.S. professional sports.

— and creating opportunities for those who need them — is why Johnson is The Post's Newsmaker of the Year.

Johnson purchased the Charlotte Bobcats for \$300 million and energized a city where sports fans felt betrayed when George Shinn and Ray Woodridge ran off to New Orleans with its first big-league franchise, the Hornets.

Sure, it almost was inevitable that the city would feel a debt of gratitude toward the person who owned the next Charlotte NBA franchise. But a great many people in this city felt something extra when it was learned the next owner would be a black man.

"Oh, he's definitely a hero," said barber Wayne Harris, as he trimmed Lamar Hill's hair

in the last chair on the left. "He's going to show a lot of other young black men that they can accomplish goals right here in Charlotte. It definitely means more because he's black. I wouldn't feel the same way if Larry Bird had gotten the franchise. Bob Johnson is someone people in this neighborhood can identify with."

'A community compact'

Johnson, founder of Black Entertainment Television, cringes when he learns he is considered a savior. He said he instead considers the City of Charlotte its own savior. He points to how Charlotte and its business and community leaders were proactive in letting NBA commissioner David Stern know that fans here wanted another franchise. A savior? No way. The billionaire cannot embrace that.

"I don't see it that way," Johnson said, shaking his head in the Bobcats' offices at the corner of Trade and Church streets. "I call it a community compact between the city, the fans and the team. To

Please see **BOBCATS/2A**

Who'll pay to boost affordable housing?

With fewer U.S. funds, alternatives are a must

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Charlotte needs more affordable housing, but revenue is scarce and will likely remain that way. So what's a city to do?

City Council is wrestling with the possibility of taking a more active role in providing homes. With the federal HOPE VI program reducing funding nationally from \$545 million in 2003 to \$105 million in 2004, local options are limited.

"Anybody who thinks sour share of federal dollars will get better is in for a rude awakening," City Council member James Mitchell says. "If we're going to continue to hit our goals, we've got to be more creative in where we get those dollars."

Charlotte's in a difficult situation, says Lucy Bush, a Charlotte Housing Authority commissioner. Without federal money, city leaders will have to look long and hard to locate and leverage alternative funds. An estimated 7,000 families need housing.

"I don't think the whole thing falls to City Council by default, but a lot of it will," she said.

Please see **CHARLOTTE/6A**



Bush



Mitchell

Dad's decision spared son from fatal car wreck

By Paul Nowell
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TROUTMAN — Eugene Arnold refused to let his 14-year-old son go joyriding with friends last weekend, a "fatherly instinct" that may have spared the teen from a horrific crash that killed seven of his peers following a police chase.

To be sure the message got across, Arnold brought his son, Nellow Brown, to the scene of the crash Monday.

"I wanted to let him see firsthand the loss of five, six or seven of your best friends," Arnold said.

The Highway Patrol identified the teenagers as driver John Lindsey Myers, 15, and passengers David Wayne Summers, 14, Quentin Maurice Reed, 18, Antonio Miller, 13, Domnick Hurtt, 17, Erica Stevenson, 15, and Antoinette Griffin, 13.

Arnold said he refused his son's pleas to join companions on Sunday night. "I told him he was too young," Arnold said. "Call it fatherly instinct."

Arnold is among those in this rural North Carolina town who believe too much speed and too little driving experience caused the deadly

Please see **FATHER'S/3A**



Summers



Griffin

Protesting Somalis face indefinite incarceration

By Lloyd Nicholas
INSIGHT NEWS GROUP

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Some 20 persons of Somali origin who were detained by the Department of Homeland Security over the last few years remain incarcerated for an indefinite period says Omar Jamal, executive director, Somali Justice Advocacy Center.

"We spoke to Homeland Security on Monday, Dec. 15,

and the situation looks grim. The authorities said the detainees will not be released, but if they request to be returned to Somalia, some arrangement could be worked out," reported Jamal in an interview.

The Somali Justice Advocacy Center here had expressed concern about the conditions of the Somali immigrant detainees, some of whom were transferred to Oak Park Heights prison in Stillwater,

Minn., after a protest riot broke out at the Rush City Detention Center in November.

The detainees had refused to return to their cells and demanded a resolution of their immigration status after a protracted period of incarceration.

The Somali Human Rights Association, in investigating the prison disturbance, warned that some of the 20 refugees detained, "have been in legal limbo for years now,

lingering in indefinite detention."

The problem, explained Jamal, "is the reality that Somalia does not exist as a country and is under the control of armed elements who are likely to place the lives of returning refugees at risk and under U.S. law, refugees cannot be returned to a place that is not recognized as a country. And since these groups of detainees are not allowed legal

Please see **SOMALIS/6A**

INSIDE

- Editorials 4A
- Weather 8A
- Life 1B
- Religion 8B
- Sports 1C
- Real Estate 5C
- Business 8C
- A&E 1D
- Classified 4D

To subscribe, call (704) 376-0496 or FAX (704) 342-2160.
© 2003 The Charlotte Post Publishing Co.

Please Recycle



6 19887 00001 2