

**A LONG WAY FROM GLORY**

Bobcats rookies learn hard lessons during team's slump 1C  
Power forward Sean May



**ONE OF A KIND**

For four decades, Richard Pryor broke new ground in comedy and society with acerbic wit and wisdom/1D



**ATTENTION, SHOPPERS**

Retailers offer deep discounts to limited results/8C

Volume 31 No. 13

\*\*\*\*\*5-DIGIT 28216 511 P1  
James B. Duke Library  
100 Beatties Ford Rd  
Charlotte NC 28216-5302

# The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

Also serving Cabarrus, Chester, Mecklenburg, Rowan and York counties

WEEK OF DECEMBER 15-21, 2005



FILE PHOTO

Grace AME Zion Church is the last church in Charlotte's Second Ward. The Historic Landmarks Commission wants to buy the site and preserve it, but a disagreement over how much the site is worth may hasten Grace's destruction.

## County ponders state of Grace

*Future of historic Charlotte church in limbo over buyout*

By C. Jemal Horton  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Grace A.M.E. Zion Church, the last remaining church in Charlotte's historic Second Ward, is at a severe crossroads.

With the church's congregation vacating the building to move to a new location in University City, the Historic Landmarks Commission is seeking to purchase the storied Grace site and preserve it.

However, a difference of \$735,000 - and a Board of County Commissioners meeting on Tuesday - ultimately could lead to Grace's demise.

The church is asking \$1.575 million for the site. However, when the Historic Landmarks Commission had an appraisal done last spring, the Grace site was valued at \$840,000.

Historic Landmarks Commission, though, does not currently have enough money in its revolving funds to pay the \$840,000 for the site, let alone \$1.575 million. The Historic Landmarks Commission, however, has asked the Board of County Commissioners to temporarily replenish its revolving funds so it can make an offer on the Grace site, then sell it to a new buyer with the agreement to preserve it.

The Historic Landmark Commission's request is on the agenda for Tuesday's Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Dan Morrill, consulting director for the Landmarks Commission, said the Commission is willing to pay more than the \$840,000 for the site, but not the \$1.575 million price tag - as long as the County Commissioners agree to replenish his group's revolving funds.

Please see HISTORIC/2A

**PLAN TO REMAKE CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS**

**CMS task force recommendations**

- District would be split into semi-autonomous subdistricts of 40,000 students.
- CMS would intervene in low-performing schools.
- K-8 student assignment would be fixed based on residence.
- School board would shrink from 9 to 7 with one member appointed by Mecklenburg commissioners.
- Superintendent would have expanded authority.

CMS TASK FORCE



PHOTO:CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

## Another daunting task

*Panel begins job of selling skeptics on recommendations*

By C. Jemal Horton  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Harvey Gantt smiled confidently Wednesday when he called recommendations put forth by the Citizens' Task Force on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools a "bold move" that will enhance public education in the district.

Not everyone shared Gantt's enthusiasm, however.

Gantt, the former Charlotte mayor who co-chaired the 16-member task force with Bank of America executive Cathy Bessant, was met with plenty of resistance after the recommendations were revealed at the Government Center.

Some in attendance expressed concern that the task force's proposal to keep one district but subdivide it into three or four geographic

areas with their own superintendents would result in what many see as a familiar problem: schools with high concentrations of low-income students would continue to receive fewer resources than those in the suburbs.

Some were upset about possible dramatic changes in how school board members are determined. For

Please see CMS/7A



PHOTO:WADE NASH

Task force co-chair Harvey Gantt (right) makes a point while Cathy Bessant listens Wednesday during a press conference announcing the panel's recommendations.

## Crip executed, but debate over life continues

By George E. Curry  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Stanley "Tookie" Williams, the notorious co-founder of the Crips street gang who led an anti-gang crusade from his death row prison cell at San Quentin, was executed early Tuesday morning, leaving behind a spirited debate over what constitutes justice and redemption.

Williams

After Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected a second last-ditch legal appeal at 11:30 p.m. Monday, Williams, Please see DEBATE/3A

## the box NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS



Torre Jessup, community liaison for U.S. Rep. Mel Watt (right) accepts a petition backing a timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq Wednesday in Charlotte. Maggie Davis and Teresa Davis of MoveOn.org handed Jessup the petitions.

## Food banks go all out for the holidays

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

What will the holidays become for families who can't put food on the table?

Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina has sponsored food drives since November to help low-income families. Successful drives included a concert by R&B recording artist Ray J Dec. 10 at Lake Norman High School that collected 7,584 pounds of food; the Charlotte Bobcats' Street Turkeys drive that raised \$13,300 in donations and approximately 1,000

Please see FOOD/3A

## America urged to recognize Africa's strategic value

By Jim Lobé  
INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — Africa's strategic importance to the United States — both with respect to Washington's "war on terrorism" and the growing competition with China for access to energy supplies and other raw materials — should be given more attention by policy-makers and the public, according to a major new report released by the

influential Council on Foreign Relations.

The 139-page report, which charges the Bush administration with lacking a comprehensive, long-term strategy for dealing with the region, calls on Washington to upgrade its diplomatic and intelligence capabilities in the region by appointing an ambassador to the African Union and opening more missions in key African cities, particu-

larly in energy-producing countries.

It also calls for greater high-level attention to resolving conflicts in the region, particularly those, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that threaten the stability of whole sub-regions or involve large-scale atrocities.

On Darfur, the report urges Washington to work with the AU in gaining U.N. authorization to

deploy a larger force of African and non-African soldiers to join the nearly 7,000 AU troops already there to protect nearly two million displaced civilians and take military action, including a no-fly zone, to counter any threat against them.

However, the report argues that a strictly humanitarian approach to Africa — as symbolized by last June's global "Live 8"

See AFRICA/6A

University Park Baptist growth leads to acquisition of Merchandise Mart 8B



INSIDE

Life 1B  
Religion 8B

Sports 1C  
Business 8C

A&E 1D  
Happenings 6C

Please Recycle



To subscribe, call (704) 376-0496 or FAX (704) 342-2160. © 2005 The Charlotte Post Publishing Co.

6 19887 00001 2