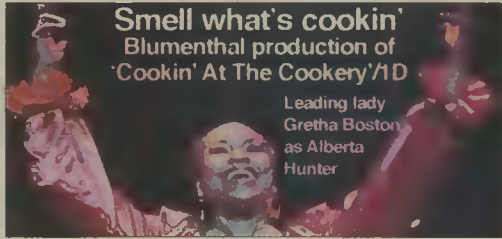


HONORING M.L. KING

Art and words offer hope for the future 1E

Art by Annedra Young of West Charlotte High School



SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Now that holidays are over, intrepid Fly is back on the case 2A

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WEEK OF JANUARY 12-18, 2006

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CIAA already profitable for city, league

Basketball tournament and hotels nearly sold out, while record purse in scholarships guaranteed

By Cheri F. Hodges
cheri.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

Charlotte's turn at hosting the CIAA basketball tournament has already eclipsed Raleigh before the first game tips off.

So far, 85 percent of the tickets for the tournament have been sold, which is ahead of last year's tournament, said CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry.

"We're ahead of pace," he said. And Kerry expects the tickets to sell out. The only seats left in the Charlotte Bobcats Arena are upper level seats. "But it's not a lot of those left either," Kerry

said proudly. "I had a couple of sponsors buy 2,000 of those yesterday."

Of the 25,000 hotel rooms in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 20,000 of them have been sold, said Tim Newman of Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority.

"This inaugural CIAA tournament in Charlotte is proving to be one of the largest, most lucrative and most dynamic of any event ever hosted by our city," said Lenny Springs, chairman of the 2006 local organizing committee.

The event, which tips off on February 27, is

Please see CIAA/7A



PHOTO:WADE NASH

CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry said the tournament will generate more than \$2 million in scholarships for its 12 member schools, a first.

Rapid support for vote rights

Bush favors renewal of Section 5, but there are concerns

By K. Chandler
THE WESTSIDE GAZETTE

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. - While President Bush professes to back reauthorization of Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, political appointees and Justice Department officials are being accused of deliberately attempting to scuttle key aspects of the act over the objections of career lawyers within the Civil Rights Division.



Bush

The landmark law, signed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, came into existence as a remedy "to break the grip of state disfranchisement" of black voters in the South, and "to overcome Southern legislators' resistance" to enforcement of the 15th Amendment.

The 15th Amendment to the Constitution granted African-

Please see SUPPORT/3A

Obama: Listen to Iraq's minorities

Senator: U.S. mission depends on inclusion

By Jason Straziuso
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Sen. Barack Obama on Saturday said the United States will not be successful in Iraq unless the political landscape better represents the country's minorities.

Obama, the nation's only black senator, met with U.S.

Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and Iraqi President Jalal Talabani on Saturday. He said before his two-day trip to Iraq

that he wanted to ask U.S. commanders for a realistic time frame on bringing troops home.

"What I'm fully convinced of is if we don't see signs of political progress ... over a relatively short time frame - let's say six months or so - we can pour money and troops in here till the cows come home, but we won't be successful," said Obama, D-Ill., who said he opposed the war before it began.

Talabani predicted Saturday that a new government could be formed within weeks and said the country's

See SENATOR/2A

SUPPORT FOR NAME, NO CONSENSUS ON SITE



PHOTO:CURTIS WILSON

A proposal to rename Stonewall Street Martin Luther King Avenue didn't have enough support at Monday's Charlotte City Council meeting. The council voted to instruct city staff to further study options for the honor, including unnamed sections of Interstate 485, which requires state approval.

Speed bump on MLK street

Support is there, but council votes to weigh more options

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

There's no Martin Luther King Avenue in Charlotte, but time - and support - are on its side.

City Council voted 7-4 Monday to order city staff to study potential sites for a street to name in honor of the slain civil rights activist. Council member James Mitchell backed the re-naming of Stonewall Street or a stretch of Independence



Mitchell

Concerns about changing Stonewall's name - believed to be

Boulevard to Martin Luther King Avenue.

"I'm not doing so well right now," said Mitchell, a Democrat who represents District 2 in north west Charlotte.

linked to Civil War general Stonewall Jackson - was enough to put the brakes on a quick resolution.

"It's appropriate for Charlotte to have a road named for Dr. King," said council member John Lassiter (R- Please see BACK2A



Lassiter

EDITORIALS: City Council should think bigger for King honor/4A

The rapid decline in youth smoking rates may now be coming to an end, according to a University of Michigan report.

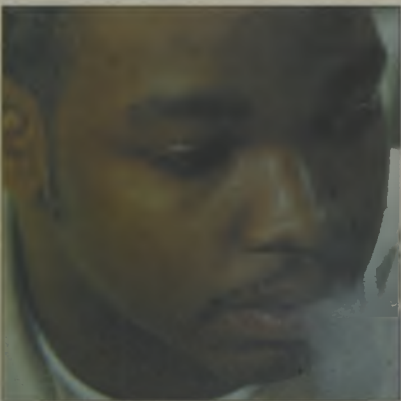


PHOTO:CURTIS WILSON

Drop in U.S. teen smoking may be waning

By Hazel Trice Edney
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON - Twenty-year-old John Adams takes a long drag from a half-smoked filtered cigarette, then uses the side of a brick building as an ashtray to snuff it out.

The lanky youth tucks the stump behind his ear, hoists his backpack, then breaks into a trot toward a bus stop

on Georgia Avenue in North West Washington, D.C.

Perhaps a typical day for Adams, but according to statistics, he is in grave danger. The tiny stick of tobacco behind his ear is a live time bomb that kills 1,200 Americans a day and 450,000 a year, usually by cancer or other lung diseases, according to the Center for Disease Control.

But like many young smokers, cancer is the fur-

thest problem from Adams' mind.

"I smoke to relieve stress, really," he shrugs at a reporter's question. "Looking for a job, my problems, you know, relationships. I want to go back to school in the fall."

Adams is not alone in his apparent indifference about smoking.

New data announced last month by "Monitoring the Future," a University of

Michigan project that documents trends of tobacco use among youth, shows that the once-celebrated rapid decline in youth smoking rates may now be coming to a halt.

"Teen smoking had been in steady decline from the recent peak levels of use reached in the mid-1990s through 2004," states the MTF study. "But, the rate of decline in their use of ciga- See YOUTH/3A

Panthers focus on erasing memory of November dud against Chicago. 1C



INSIDE

Life 1B
Religion 8B

Sports 1C
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