

PHI BETA SIGMA
conclave comes
to Charlotte on
July 30/Story below



Mixed martial
arts takes on
boxing for
hearts of fight
fans/1C



BBQ rating
Henry Hunter
grows a home-
grown sauce
empire/6C

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The Voice of the Black Community

Also serving Cab

WEEK OF JULY 19-25, 2007

Mayor's words strike a resonate chord

McCrorry's criticism of African Americans imitating gang culture echoes the sentiment of many blacks, too

By Cheris F. Hodges

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Could one sentence cost
Charlotte mayor Pat McCrorry a
shot at political history?

Not likely.
McCrorry has taken some heat
from the NAACP because of one

sentence in a letter he wrote
praising Charlotte-Mecklenburg
police for their efforts following
the Fourth of July fireworks.

"My letter said three things,"
McCrorry said. "The dress,
behavior and action - a combi-
nation of the three have caused

great harm."

The comment that McCrorry
made in the original letter was,
"too many of our youth, pri-
marily African American, are
imitating and/or participating
in a gangster type of dress, atti-
tude, behavior and action."

JAMES B. DUKE

CHARLOTTE

The sentiment is not new in
the black community, but Ken
White, president of the
Charlotte-Mecklenburg branch
of the NAACP said McCrorry's
comments were insensitive.
"He associated all African
American youths with being a

gang member," said White.

However, political experts
do not expect this dust-up to
cause McCrorry's re-election
campaign any problems.

"(McCrorry) has never had nor
ever needed much of a vote
Please see MAYOR/3A



McCrorry



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR PHOTO/MELANIE STETSON FREEMAN

Home away from home: Al Hajj Saboor Arta (center) was once a refugee himself. Now, he offers his land to some 160 families of
Darfuri refugees, like the four men next to him.

An oasis amidst the chaos

Farmer's gift builds bridges between African neighbors

By Scott Baldauf

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

IRIBA, Chad - When Darfuri
refugees started streaming
across the border into Chad
four years ago, fleeing a civil
war that has killed 200,000 and
displaced 2.5 million, many
Chadians opened their arms in
welcome.

Al-Hajj Saboor Arta Bakit took
one step further. He gave the
refugees some of his land to
raise their own crops. This step
has earned him some local
respect, some derision, and
three separate stints in the

local jail. But Bakit says he was
only acting on the urging of his
heart.

"When the refugees arrived
here, they didn't have clothes,
didn't have shoes, they were
hungry, and when I saw them,
I cried," says Bakit, brushing
away dry animal dung from a
shady spot under an acacia
tree before sitting down. "I
don't have money to give, but
I do have lots of land. I don't
want money for it, I don't want
thanks from government. I just
want thanks from God."

Not only does Bakit's gift

provide 160 Sudanese families
with the chance to become
self-sufficient by growing their
own food, it also builds a crucial
bridge between Chadians and
Sudanese refugees whose
welcome may be wearing thin.
Despite sharing the same lan-
guages, religion, and in some
cases the same relatives, the
addition of some 57,000
refugees to the local popula-
tion of 60,000 has doubled the
burden on water and land
resources.

With the Darfur crisis going
See GIFT/2A



Bond leaders raise profile

Campaign co-chairs say they will rely on grassroots approach on referendums

By Herbert L. White

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Mecklenburg County's bond campaign will
be led by a threesome of amateurs, which is
what its supporters want.

Co-chairs Eulada Watt of Charlotte, Boly
McClung of Pineville and LuAnn Tucker of
Mountain Island are relatively unknown to
voters, but have extensive social and profes-
sional profiles in the county. Their job is to
convince voters to support \$581.6 million in
bonds - including \$516 million for Charlotte-
Mecklenburg Schools - as well as for mea-
sures for Central Piedmont Community and
land bonds. Tucker, a member of the School
Building Solutions Committee that recom-
mended \$400 million for CMS last year, said
the committee is taking a grassroots
approach.

"We're going to take input from people,"
she said. "We're not professional campaign-
ers. We're feeling our way. We're not experts.
We need help."

Watt, a former CMS principal and member
of the N.C. Board of Education, said CMS
enrollment, which is projected to grow by
5,000 for 2007-08, threatens to swamp the
pace of construction.

"I can vouch that education is much more
than a building, it's much more than facili-

Please see BOND/3A

Public school options growing despite limits

By Erica Singleton

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

When Jim Diana and his wife couldn't find
what they were looking for in gifted educa-
tion for their son, they created it.

A former lawyer, Diana vaguely knew that
there was something called a charter school,
so he and his wife decided to start one after
moving to Charlotte from Washington, D.C.

"We hooked up with Sheila Gallagher, profes-
sor of gifted education at UNC Charlotte
and she was very excited about the idea,"
explained Diana. Gallagher created the educa-
tion plan, Diana the business plan. In 2000,
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy
opened.

Charter schools, which now enroll about
30,000 N.C. students, are becoming a more
attractive alternative to public schools.

"Enrollment has increased approximately
50 percent over the past five years," said
Terry Stoops, policy analyst for the John
Locke Foundation and author of a report
titled, "Ten Years of Excellence: Why Charters

Please see OPTIONS/6A

FOCUS ON FUTURE LEADERS AWARDS



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Brenda McMoore (left), president of Focus on Future Leaders presents the Village Leader Award to Judy Williams at FOL's annual awards ceremony.

Networking, levity at fraternity's conclave

By Herbert L. White

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One of the largest African American fraternities is coming
to Charlotte later this month.

Phi Beta Sigma will hold its 93rd conclave July 30-Aug. 5,
with 10,000 visitors expected for the week. Organizers
expect an economic impact of \$2 million for the week.

"Charlotte is the perfect place for our conclave," said John
Reaves, president of the Charlotte alumni chapter. "It sits in
the perfect geographic location, has a growing, diverse popu-
lation that can support such a large event and is a great
draw for people who are curious about the rapid growth and
opportunities here."

The Westin hotel is the site of fraternity business for the
week, while Marshall Park is the designated gathering place
for networking, concerts, a comedy show and picnic. Teams
from nine fraternities and sororities will compete at a step
show at Ovens Auditorium and a health fair will benefit St.
See FRATERNITY/2A



Everyday stress takes a
bit out of life, but
don't let it get the best
of your health/1B

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