



'Once Upon a Mattress'

The Footlight Players set the stage for fairytale musical.
Arts & Travel, 1E



All-Lowcountry basketball team

Goose Creek, Northwood players lead list of area's brightest stars. **Sports, 1C**

The Post and Courier

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Briefly



Rising again in Phoenix

Kevin Harvick dominated in the desert again Saturday after winning Friday night's Busch Series race. **Sports, 1C**

Turnout strong in New Orleans; runoff looms

Incumbent Mayor Ray Nagin and Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu lead a field of 22 candidates as voters streamed in from storm-scarred neighborhoods and evacuee havens across the nation. **1AA**

Riverfront property could revitalize area

A developer with big plans for an 87-acre site along the Ashley River in North Charleston wants to spend \$40 million on roads and infrastructure to pave the way for 3,000 residential units as well as retail and office space. **1B**



FILE/AP

Dolls line the wall at the American Girl Place store in New York.

Low profile pays off for Mattel on American Girl

The hands-off policy Mattel Inc. has taken with its upscale doll unit has paid off handsomely as the niche line of dolls and accessories continues to grow by double digits. **1H**

Hip to be square? Plates take on variety of shapes

Plates make the table at restaurants and in the home, and now the latest trend in setting the table is taking on new shapes and colors. **1D**

Putting the pope's first year into perspective

When Pope Benedict XVI was elected, he was expected to be a hard-line enforcer of Catholic doctrine, but a papal expert's assessment of Benedict's first year has defied expectations. **1G**



Today's outlook

Partly sunny and very warm. High 86. Low 60. Complete 5-day forecast, **12B**.

Index

Arts & Travel	1E	Horoscope.....	10G
Books.....	4E	Local News.....	1B
Business.....	1H	Movies.....	7E
Classifieds.....	1F	Nation & World....	1AA
Crossword.....	5E	Obituaries.....	4B
Editorials.....	12A	Sports.....	1C
Faith & Values.....	1G	Television.....	8E
Home & Garden.....	1D	Weddings.....	5G

Setting the record straight..... **2A**

On the Web



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A 'questionable' \$10 fee

Extra charge on local fines called improper by state court officials

BY TONY BARTELME
The Post and Courier

People nabbed in Charleston and Mount Pleasant for speeding and other municipal offenses forked over nearly \$2.3 million in "criminal user fees" in recent years, even though the state's top judge says such fees are improper and the S.C. Attorney General's Office calls them "constitutionally questionable."

Both cities quietly add an extra \$10 to fines when people are convicted in municipal court. Charleston has been collecting these \$10 fees for 12 years, Mount Pleasant for five. Over time, these small

fees have added up: Charleston hauled in nearly \$1.8 million and Mount Pleasant collected \$525,000.

The problem: "They're not supposed to do that," said Robert McCurdy, summary court manager for the S.C. Court Administration. Earlier this year, his boss, South Carolina Chief Justice Jean Toal, told the state's municipal court administrators to stop collecting criminal user fees.

State court officials were "getting vague reports that some communities were creating an additional surcharge," McCurdy said. "A surcharge has to be mandated by the state. The idea behind it is that no matter what county you're in, you're going to pay the same amount for a ticket."

The state's chief justice isn't the only one questioning criminal user fees. Just last month, the S.C. Attorney General's Office

Please see **FEE**, Page 11A



ALAN HAWES/STAFF

Judge N. Steven Steinert looks at a ticket held Wednesday by attorney Dave Lawson, whose client was in Charleston municipal court.

"I didn't dream this would have happened. Tell the truth, if I had the money I'd move this house. Really, it's too close to the road for me."

Basket maker Mary Alice Bostic



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN HAWES/STAFF

From her front porch, Mary Alice Bostic (left) and her sister Ethel Coakley can virtually feel the traffic going by on Highway 17 in Mount Pleasant. The road comes within 15 feet of her home.

Where baskets once thrived, now there are mostly cars

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

If it takes a week to create a sweetgrass basket, then a couple of years of Mary Alice Bostic's life are piled up in a corner of her living room. She hasn't had anywhere to put all her baskets since the Department of

Transportation began widening Highway 17 about a year ago. Changing the road from four lanes to six made her basket stand all but inaccessible and has left her house all but uninhabitable, she said.

The stand has been sitting across the highway from her house since Highway 17 was a two-lane road, and her community was not known as Mount Pleasant but was simply called "Four Mile." Bostic, who will be 77 this month, said a couple of generations ago she could watch the stand from her front porch and hurry across the quiet street to greet any customers who might stop.

Today, the stand sits behind a high curb and a dirty line of black fabric fencing. It leans precariously on one side in the shadow of soon to be "Upscale Office Spaces." Pointing to the stand, she struggled to make herself heard from a front porch that is now less than 15 feet from a thoroughfare that carries as many as 50,000 vehicles a day.

"I didn't dream this would have happened," she said. "Tell

the truth, if I had the money I'd move this house. Really, it's too close to the road for me."

Bostic is not alone.

With 3,500 homes on the books and a proposed road through historically black and unincorporated communities between Highway 17 and Rifle Range Road, many basket making families are facing similar dilemmas or will in coming years. Sitting mere feet from the road though, Bostic's difficulties are obvious and immediate.

Her modest, two-story home is squeezed between Highway 17 and Olive Branch Church. It bides its time amid Starbucks, CVS, Advance Auto Parts, bulldozers and 18-wheelers on an unusual little slice of unincorporated property surrounded by Mount Pleasant town limits.

Next door to Bostic's house, under a massive old pecan tree, stands an empty little green cottage with a tumbledown front porch whose very existence seems in open rebellion to all the modernity. Here, she and five of her siblings were born, and in its shadow she and her family still sew baskets to this day. But she won't go inside anymore. "Too many snakes," she said.

Though no one seems to know for sure, she thinks the home was built about 100 years ago, when her grandfather, Isaac

Please see **BASKET**, Page 9A

Warming a threat to coastal states

On Earth Day, rise in sea levels noted

BY DAVID SLADE
The Post and Courier

An Environmental Protection Agency Web site aimed at explaining global warming to children begins a discussion about rising sea levels like this: "Have you ever built a sand castle on the beach, close to the ocean on wet sand?"

We know what will happen to the sand castle, so it's easy to imagine what could happen to marshes, wetlands and other low-lying property in coastal South Carolina if sea levels rise as predicted this century, due to global warming.

This Earth Day weekend, some who live in the Lowcountry during this time of rising seas are asking what they can do to reduce global warming and the many threats that it brings.

"Global warming is on my mind," said Lynne Lovelace, a middle school science

Inside



Bush talks about reducing dependency on oil. **1AA**

Please see **EARTH**, Page 11A

Deadlock ends as Iraq picks leaders

Premier has month to choose his Cabinet

BY NELSON HERNANDEZ
AND K.I. IBRAHIM
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD, IRAQ — Four months of political paralysis in Iraq ended Saturday when a newly convened parliament chose seven top officials to run the country's first long-term government since the fall of Saddam Hussein three years ago.

The prime minister-designate, Jawad al-Maliki, an outspoken advocate for the country's Shiite Muslim majority, will have the colossal task of mending a nation nearly shattered by decades of war, dictatorship and sectarian rivalry.

He is joined by a Kurdish president, Jalal Talabani, and a Sunni Arab parliament

Please see **IRAQ**, Page 9A