

FROM 1A

Growth hems in family of basket makers

BASKET From Page 1A

Snype, moved down from a community called Coosshaw near Georgetown to work the farm of Alfred Jennette on Rifle Range Road. "People were wondering how that old house was standing after Hugo, and then all these other houses blew down," she said. "Yessir."

Making lunch in her kitchen while her sister Ethel Coakley, 71, sews a basket, "Alice" as her vast family knows her, recalls her childhood in the heavy African patois that most in the Lowcountry would consider Gullah. But she doesn't consider herself Gullah. To her, Gullah folk lived around Hamlin Plantation, "but maybe some word I speak soundin' Gullah," she said.

Squeezed by development

Bostic moves slowly, hobbled by a bad heart, shortness of breath and failed kidneys that send her and Ethel to dialysis treatment twice a week. Relatives, including her 11 children and many more grandchildren, visit often, she says, but it's not like it was when she was young.

"No, no. Used to be, in days past and gone, you get up in the morning, wash the clothes, lay 'em on the line, clean your house and then you could go walk around from neighbor to neighbor and talk. In the evening time, all the neighbor chirren' would get together and play hopscotch and all kind of things. Can't do that no more."

According to county records, Bostic lives in an Awendaw tax district. Though she gets her water from Mount Pleasant, the toilets empty to a septic tank and the family pays a private company to collect garbage. "Funny thing though," she said, "when we pay tax, it says that we are also paying for garbage, but we don't get no service."

Bostic says she was asked several years ago by Mount Pleasant to annex into the city, but she declined because her yearly tax payments might have climbed from \$579 to \$2,500. She has also received sales queries from developers. But so many family members could have potential claims to a portion of the ancestral land, settling title to the land could leave her with very little compensation. She finds herself at the same difficult intersection with the state DOT.

Heirs property

Because the Bostic parcel was built by Mary Alice's late grandfather and remains in his name, this becomes a classic heirs property dispute case. In thousands of instances across South Carolina, blacks in particular have deliberately not transferred land title through generations on the belief that if a title were difficult to trace, it would be more difficult to break up long-held parcels of land.

While this has certainly come to pass, it also means at least two

generations of relatives can lay claim to a portion of the two remaining family parcels. Bostic has 11 siblings and 11 children. Thus, securing clear title could involve contacting and financially settling with scores of relatives, including many who may not even live in the area or know Bostic at all.

And if one family member decides to initiate an action to claim his or her share, it could mean dissolution of the entire property.

"The property goes and we don't hardly get nothing for it because so much would want it," Bostic said.

Offers declined

According to DOT Attorney Chris Murphy, Bostic and her heirs were offered \$101,603 for the taking of land in front of her home and \$65,528 for the loss of the land where her basket stand is located. If the case settles, a Master-In-Equity or circuit court judge will decide how to divide the money among Bostic's heirs, and Bostic will not be required to vacate her home, which still stands on family land.

But Bostic has not accepted the money, and according to her attorney, Faith Rivers, she does not intend to settle until she is moved. She has a piece of property near two sisters on Venning Road where she would be glad to settle.

A distant niece of Bostic's and a lawyer for the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, Rivers said the Snype family has endured a history of difficult change at the hands of the DOT. Generations ago, Highway 17 originally followed a right of way that took it behind the house where Mary Alice was born. When 17 came through on its current route as a two-lane road, the DOT rotated the house 180 degrees to face the new road and split the family property in half. "Through a series of condemnations," Rivers said, "they have basically destroyed this piece of property. And they don't even want to compensate them for it."

Rivers recently moved to Vermont to teach at the Vermont Law School. She said she was prepared to argue the case, but the DOT filed a motion and made an offer and then waited over a year before settling on a final court date. With too short a notice, she was unable to return to South Carolina to argue on behalf of Bostic.

She has asked that the court reconsider a relocation on the grounds that the noise and exhaust-racked home is essentially unlivable. "Relocation is a federally funded program," she said. "There is no reason to deny this."

But Murphy said that granting relocation funds is not a proper use of taxpayer funds when Bostic's home does not lie in the right-of-way of the actual road. The right of way, he said, could even have taken out Bostic's porch without requiring a relocation. "I'm not

saying she's in an ideal situation," he said. "She's got 50,000 cars a day, but her property has dramatically increased in value."

Yet he did concede that once the property was divided among Bostic's heirs, she could be left with little money to settle elsewhere.

Plea for federal help

It's precisely this sort of situation and fears for the future of basket making culture that has brought scores of black residents to recent meetings of a task force that has formed to help steer growth and find solutions for basket makers and others impacted by the explosive growth along Highway 17.

One member of that task force is Mary Alice's cousin Louis Jefferson. A retired U.S. Customs Agent, Jefferson took a seat on the task force to push for the preservation of basket making culture and to ensure that if Hungryneck Boulevard is extended from the Isle of Palms Connector to Porcher's Bluff Road, the impacts are low and residents are properly compensated. He is also among several now advocating that a federally protected basket making corridor be declared along Highway 17.

Jefferson said his cousin has been squeezed out of her livelihood and made a prisoner of her own home by the state's intractability and the difficulty of dealing with her heirs property dispute. He said that were the compensation money ear-

marked to move Bostic rather than to be distributed among the heirs, Mary Alice could have moved to her property on Venning Road. "They could have very easily relocated her," he said. "It impacts her and reduces her quality of life to almost being homeless. What's she going to do other than get bitter and die that way? It's about the worst

thing you could do to a person."

But Bostic says she'll persevere. "The Lord will make a way somehow," she said. "Oh yes. And I'm not going to let it bother me. Because if I let it bother me, I'll have to go home before I'm ready to go."

Reach **Chris Dixon** at 745-5855 or cdixon@postandcourier.com.

Low Cost on Long Term Care Insurance Now Available

We offer an affiliation discount to members of:

- AMA • ANA • NSPE
- ABA • NAUS • NDTA
- Members of over 60 University Alumni Associations. Is yours here?

(Click on "**at-a-discount**")

@

www.eatonassociates.biz
or call 971-9673 Mt. Pleasant

R56-F42798



A.T. Merritt
Restoration Specialist
crystalrepair.com

CHIPPED CRYSTAL RESTORED and BROKEN PIECES BONDED

Antique & Collectibles Show
APRIL 27TH-30TH
(Thursday - Sunday)

Northwoods Mall

R61-F42200

CV JOINT SPECIAL



Rivers at Remount (Tires Only)
4900 Rivers at Mall Drive
Savannah Hwy at Magnolia Rd.
3900 Dorchester Rd.
1635 Hwy. 17N, Mt. Pleasant
9680 Dorchester, Summerville

Includes:
One New Joint (Not Rebuilt),
New Boot, And All Parts.
Add \$50 For Installation.

Most American & Foreign Cars.

No Dealers - No Carry Outs Prices Good Thru 5/6/06 with this ad

"Look for us in the bright orange buildings!"

www.geraldstires.com (For Secure Credit App.)

GERALD'S

R52-F40125

AIR DUCT CLEANING

SAFE, UNIQUE CLEANING PROCESS

HELPS REMOVE

- *Dirt, Dust, Spot
- *Mold Spores
- *Pollen
- *Bacteria
- *Dust Mites
- *Mildew
- *Animal Dander
- *Safe on all Ducts

WHOLE HOUSE AIR DUCT CLEANING

Only **\$25⁰⁰**

Includes Up To 5 Vents With This Ad expires 05/05/06

VACUVENT
800-661-5305
Licensed and Insured

Having Second Thoughts?



Dermatology and Laser
Center of Charleston

now has the most advanced safe
TATTOO REMOVAL

Call for an appointment today,
and start enjoying your summer!

843.556.8886

Expertise you can trust



DERMATOLOGY &
LASER CENTER
OF CHARLESTON

www.dermamlaser.com

R27-F1304

GET BACK INTO THE SWING

Hip or Knee Pain Stopping You?

Attend one of our free seminars and learn what you can do for hip or knee pain. Join us to learn more about advanced treatments that may offer dramatic relief of your pain, including information on medications, nutrition and exercise.

Tuesday, April 25 at 6 p.m.

Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital
Mall Classroom 1

For more information or to register,
please call 402-CARE.

ROPER
ST. FRANCIS
Joint Replacement Center



R27-F32245

Iraqi parliament picks leaders

IRAQ From Page 1A

speaker, Mahmoud al-Meshhedani, in a government that reflects a lengthy debate over how power would be divided between the ethnic and sectarian groups that make up Iraq's population.

"We have been able to accomplish several things today, and with these accomplishments we shall complete the building of the new Iraq on the basis of freedom, equality, plurality for all," al-Maliki said at a news conference after the parliament's meeting in Baghdad.

U.S. officials hope a government that fairly shares power between Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds will help reduce violence, in turn allowing some of the 125,000 U.S. troops in Iraq to go home. It is still unclear, however, if the situation can be resolved quite so neatly. Al-Maliki has been given a month to form a Cabinet of officials who will run key ministries controlling the army, police and oil sector.

President Bush said Saturday that the new political leadership in Iraq will shoulder the burden

for securing the country, but he did not commit to a drawdown of American forces. "There's going to be more tough fighting ahead in Iraq and there'll be more days of sacrifice and struggle," he said.

As the political developments here were unfolding, U.S. military officials announced that five U.S. soldiers were killed. The military released few details but four died when their vehicle was hit in a roadside bombing Saturday south of Baghdad. The fifth soldier also died in a roadside bombing.

Since Iraqis voted in parliamentary elections Dec. 15, the process of forming a government has been stalled by charges of election fraud and a debate over incumbent Prime Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

New Construction?

We have the largest variety of extra tall stools in the area.

For the House

"The Barstool Shop"
921-A Houston Northcutt Blvd.
(next to Whole Foods)
Mt. Pleasant • 881-7073

PS- F42816

Closed Mondays

April 27-30, 2006
Charleston Harbor Marina
at Patriots Point

Thursday, April 27 • 3pm - 6pm
Friday, April 28 • Noon - 6pm
Saturday, April 29 • 10am - 6pm
Sunday, April 30 • 10am - 5pm

Admission
\$8 Adults
\$3 Children, Seniors & Military

For More Information Call
843.345.0369

Or Visit
www.SCInWaterBoatShow.com

SOUTH CAROLINA
In - Water
BOAT SHOW
April 27 - 30, 2006
Charleston Harbor Marina

- Largest in-water boat show between Annapolis and West Palm Beach
- Located at the Charleston Harbor Marina at Patriot's Point
- Over 100 boats in the water
- Over 120 exhibitors on land
- Seminars
- Special events
- Family entertainment
- Prizes and giveaways
- Food, drink & live music

THE POST AND COURIER
BECAUSE KNOWING MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

CHARLESTON HARBOUR MARINA

Carolina Ford Dealers
Driving the Carolina

C01-F44351