

Inside GMLC
Lowcountry rednecks
blamed for interstellar
incident. 2B

Monday, June 5, 2006

On the Web: charleston.net

Section B

COMING UP

TODAY

FARMERS MARKET: Local farmers, artisans and vendors will offer a variety of the freshest local produce and handmade crafts, including honey, beeswax candles, flowers, cane stools, rocking chairs, shell jewelry, sweetgrass baskets and more. 4-8 p.m. Freshfields Village. Free. 768-4691.



TUESDAY

GARDEN TOUR: Design philosophy and commentary by Philip Simmons in celebration of his 94th birthday. Followed by "Fundraising and Marketing Brainstorming-Bee" for the restoration of the "Lost" Olmsted Garden at historic Cannon Park and Simmons' "Opus29401" story of Charleston's history in wrought iron. 4-6 p.m. St. John's Reformed Episcopal Church, 91 Anson St. Free. Reservations required. 343-4409.



FILE/STAFF

STONE CARVING: Simeon Warren (above), professor of stone carving, will be reproducing a mock-up of the steps at Drayton Hall Plantation's main house using Texas limestone. Get an introduction to the art of masonry and see examples of Flemish and English bonds commonly found in Charleston architecture. Kids can build with blocks of their own. 4-6 p.m. Freshfields Village. Free. 768-6491.

WEDNESDAY



FILE/MARGARET BLACKMER

Endangered wood storks perch at a protected site on Wadmalaw Island.

BOAT RIDE:

Lewis Hay, director of land protection, will guide a tour by water of protected properties around Wadmalaw. Meet at Bohicket Marina at 8:45 a.m. to board the "Pirate's Lady." Pack a lunch for the trip; drinks will be provided. \$30 Lowcountry Open Land Trust members, \$40 nonmembers. Reservations required. 577-6510.

THURSDAY

BROWN BAG LUNCH: Reese McFaddin from Workplace Benefits and Beth Cavanaugh from United American Insurance Company will discuss affordable health insurance solutions. Part of "An Affordable Life," a series of brown bag lunch discussions. Free. Noon. Center for Women, 531 Savannah Highway. 763-7333.

DOWNTOWN SUNDOWN: The Charlestonian social and networking group will meet at this week's Downtown Sundown event. This fun event will feature plenty of food, drinks, fun and live music, performed by the Zac Brown Band. Free. 5:30-9 p.m. Maritime Center, 10 Wharfside St. 853-3625.

FRIDAY

SPOTLIGHT ON LITERACY GALA: Dance to the music of Party on the Moon. Buffet, beer and wine are included. A raffle and auction will be held. All proceeds will benefit Trident Literacy Association, a nonprofit organization that offers adults instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, GED prep, English as a Second Language and basic computer skills. 7-11 p.m. Family Circle Tennis Stadium, Daniel Island. \$50. Purchase tickets online at www.tridentlit.org or call 747-2223.

MOONLIGHT MIXERS: Lowcountry radio personality Rob Duren will spin oldies and beach music. Food and beverages will be available for purchase on-site at Locklear's Beach City Grill and the Gangplank Gift & Tackle Shop. 7-11 p.m. Rain date is Saturday, June 10. \$8 in advance for Charleston county residents, \$10 for nonresidents. 795-4FUN or www.ccprc.com.

SATURDAY

FOLLY ISLAND SUMMERFEST: Third annual family-friendly festival, featuring game booths, food vendors, jump castles, live entertainment for children and live bands 3-9 p.m. Festival noon-9 p.m. Folly River Park, Center Street. Admission and games free. 532-8045.

RUMMAGE SALE: Clothes, shoes, books, toys, household items and more. 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St. Free parking and admission. 723-4617.



CHRIS DIXON/STAFF

The banks of the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge rise from the water opposite Pitch Landing at the refuge's northern end.

Hurdles many for road

Some say region needs escape route, others fear ruin of pristine refuge

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

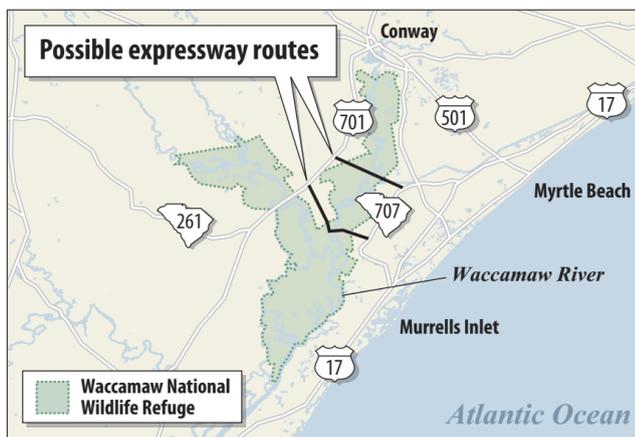
GEORGETOWN — An old idea for a new highway across the Waccamaw River has reignited debate in Horry and Georgetown counties.

Proponents say a new expressway across the river between state Highway 707 and U.S. Highway 701 will help speed hurricane evacuations from the Grand Strand's burgeoning U.S. Highway 17 corridor.

But opponents say that the road, which would first empty onto Highway 701 and eventually run to U.S. Highway 378, will encourage development and traffic and do little to speed evacuation.

By crossing the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, the road also faces significant federal hurdles. And with three other high-capacity roads already on the horizon, some question whether this is the most pressing road for the budget-conscious Department of Transportation.

The Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge runs from Georgetown County along the Big and Little Pee Dee and Waccamaw rivers into Horry County. The refuge owns nearly 11,000 acres within a 55,000-acre planned acquisition boundary. Another 17,129 acres are protected from development by state and other entities.



SOURCE: ESRI, TeleAtlas

Refuge manager Marshall Craig Sasser has been involved here since a long-running battle over a bridge and development project that would have linked the pristine 9,000-acre Sandy Island to the Grand Strand via Highway 701. That battle ended in 1997 with the protection of the island and served as the precursor to the establishment of the refuge.

Driving along the refuge's remote western boundaries, Sasser said the DOT has not announced a preferred route for the road but significant federal issues could affect the project.

The first is Section 4-F of the Federal Highway Act. This prohibits the use of any funds for federal highway projects unless there are no other feasible alterna-

tives to building a road through a wildlife refuge or historically significant area.

"It wouldn't be the kiss of death, but it would require serious litmus tests," Sasser said.

Fish and Wildlife Service division chief Rick Schultz added that because the connector was not approved when the refuge was established, permitting a major highway would be almost unprecedented.

National wildlife refuges are also protected from roads by a compatibility test. "Whether it's a road or bridge or new improvement to the refuge, we have to decide whether that project will materially interfere with the purpose for which that refuge was established," Schultz said.

The tiny and largely black Bucksville community is a possible spot for the connector's western touchdown. Here, Janie Scott, 74, and neighbor Esther Spain, 54, said families pre-date the Civil War and local opposition to the road and development is strong.

"It's a touchy subject, I know," Spain said. "I understand that there's a need for roads because of heavy traffic and the evacuation of the beach, but why do these roads always seem to damage the smallest communities where people want to live in

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FILE/WADE SPEES/STAFF

Elizabeth Bennett weaves a sweetgrass basket at her stand along U.S. Highway 17 outside Mount Pleasant in September 2004. Some basket makers have been displaced by development along the highway.

Time has come to save basket stands, and the communities that create them

More than 100 sweetgrass basket stands line U.S. Highway 17 east of the Cooper River. That's about 30 more than two decades ago and twice as many as existed 50 years ago.

But this is a case where numbers lie: The proliferation is actually proof that the stands, and the African-American culture that created them, are under threat.

Many of the stands that can be seen today are unoccupied. As development moves out from Mount Pleasant, the basket makers move out, too, creating a new stand further out on the highway. Mount Pleasant Town Councilwoman Thomasena Stokes-Marshall has



Robert Behre
ARCHITECTURE

watched it all occur.

"Much of that development has displaced some of the basket stands along Highway 17," she says. The stands themselves might survive, but they increasingly stand empty.

Jeannette Lee, head of the Original Sweetgrass Marketplace Coalition, has watched it happen.

"One family can't get to their stand

because of a huge metal building put in front of it," she says. "You can't see it from the highway."

The bad news is that if people in the Lowcountry don't rally soon, this craft might not survive in anything resembling its current state.

The good news is there are signs of that rally.

Stokes-Marshall recently appeared before the S.C. African American Heritage Commission to enlist its support in a wide-ranging effort not only to preserve the stands but also the source of sweetgrass and the traditional

Please see SWEETGRASS, Page 5B

Mom tells of last talk with victim

BY NADINE PARKS
The Post and Courier

A week before a North Charleston woman was stabbed to death, she was in a car accident that broke her arm and killed her two dogs, her mother said. She sought treatment just hours before her death.

Shantel Bryant, 19, called her mother, Henrietta Bryant, about 6 p.m. Friday to tell her she was headed to the emergency room to have doctors check her fractured arm, which was in a cast. It was the last time the two would speak.

"She said that she loved me, and I told her I loved her, too," said Henrietta Bryant, who lives in Bonaire, Ga., where Shantel Bryant was raised.

The teenager was stabbed to death in her Kraft Avenue apartment after an argument early Saturday morning. Police, responding to a 911 hang-up call, found her body in the apartment.

Fred Richardson, 34, was charged with murder. He went before a magistrate Saturday afternoon, but no bail was set because only a circuit judge can set bail on a murder charge.

Shantel Bryant had gone to Georgia to visit her mother a week before her death and flipped her car on the way home, Henrietta Bryant said. Her two pit bulls were killed in the crash.

Shantel Bryant's neighbors complained about noise coming from her home.

"There were always 15 or 20 people in there. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week," Chuck Smith said.

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