



Bridge booty
Collectibles from old spans are truly hot items. **Local & State, 1B**



Heart healthy
Hospital gala showcases nutritious — and tasty — fare. **Food, 1D**

The Post and Courier

THE SOUTH'S OLDEST DAILY NEWSPAPER

April 19, 2006 • Charleston • North Charleston, S.C.

WEDNESDAY

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Briefly

New mayor will take reins on Folly Beach



Beckmann
Benson in a runoff election. **1B**

Voters who said the city's politicians weren't doing enough to protect the quality of life on the barrier island swept in another new face Tuesday when Carl Beckmann beat City Councilman Wallace Benson in a runoff election. **1B**

Education law may be fostering segregation

The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools to show progress of students in specific racial, social and economic groups. If one group fails, the school fails. Some schools are resisting efforts to diversify out of fear of not meeting the law's requirements. **6A**

Burke High principal to resign after school year



Amos

Curtis Amos, who was hired last year to implement reform efforts at a school that has been a source of controversy, submitted his resignation Monday. Amos is the school's sixth principal in seven years. **1B**

Compromise reached on marsh island bridges

Property rights advocates and environmentalists said they could live with a deal limiting bridges to about 220 of the state's 2,400 undeveloped marsh islands. The compromise was reached before a House committee vote was expected to pass less-restrictive rules. **1B**

Fed interest rate news sends stocks soaring

Federal Reserve policymakers reported that they believe their run of interest rate increases is nearing an end. The Dow gained 194.99, to close at 11,268.77, while the Nasdaq rose 44.98 to finish at 2,356.14. **7B**

Coming Thursday



THE PLEX TURNS 5
The North Charleston nightclub marks its anniversary this month with a series of big shows. Preview talks with Plex owner Joe Meli and reviews the bands that have performed over the years. **Preview**



Today's outlook
A couple of afternoon thunderstorms. High 73. Low 54. Complete 5-day forecast, **14B**.

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When growth threatens a culture

Basket weavers hoping for the protection that national registry offers

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

MOUNT PLEASANT — Two things become clear when you talk to black, longtime Mount Pleasant residents about progress: They want their sweetgrass basket-weaving culture preserved and protected, and they don't want their historic neighborhoods further divided by highways or subdivisions.

One way to ensure the protection is to have the basket weavers placed on the National Register for Historic Places, a move that will be taken up Thursday by a task

force that's charged with issuing recommendations on the extension of Hungryneck Boulevard in Mount Pleasant.

Pressure is increasing on the roadside stands that provide families with their livelihood. The strongest champion for winning recognition for the basket weavers and their stands from the National Register of Historic Places is Michael Allen, the National Park Service education specialist at Fort Sumter and the Charles Pinckney Historic Site.

At a meeting of the task force April 5, Allen addressed the importance of basket weaving to South Carolina's heritage.

He followed up with a conversation Tuesday with officials at the National Register, who agreed that generations of basket-weaving families along U.S.

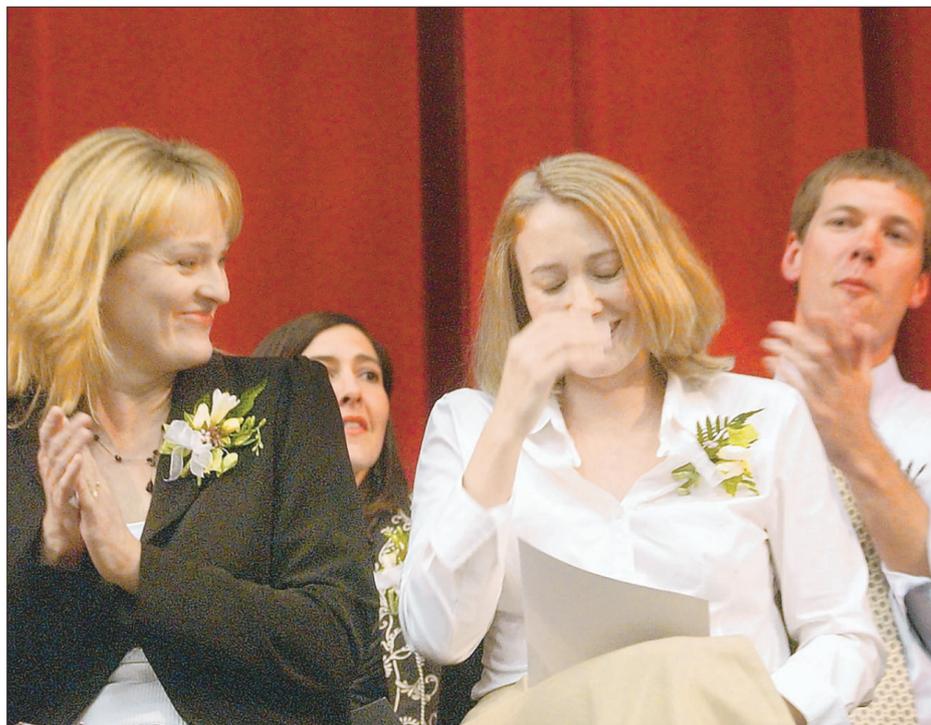
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MELISSA HANELINE/STAFF

Elijah Ford packs up his sweetgrass wares Tuesday near the intersection of Highway 17 and Hamlin Road in Mt. Pleasant. Ford learned the trade from his mother "50-some" years ago, and taught nine of his 10 children the skill.

HEAD OF THE CLASS



MELISSA HANELINE/STAFF

Jennifer Middleton (right), a sixth-grade science teacher at Military Magnet Academy, reacts to winning Charleston County Teacher of the Year as her colleagues cheer her on Tuesday at Wando High School.

Military Magnet educator named Charleston's Teacher of the Year

BY DIETTE COURRÉGE
The Post and Courier

MOUNT PLEASANT — Sixth-grade science teacher Jennifer Middleton gave up countless planning periods to give one-on-one tutoring sessions to a student who needed extra help.

The Military Magnet Academy teacher helped the failing student catch up, and he went on to make honor roll and hold leadership positions at the school.

Middleton's dedication and commitment to students was rewarded Tuesday night when she was named Charleston County Teacher of the Year.

She will be the district's nominee in the state teacher competition.

After her name was announced, she said she was honored to be a semi-

finalist, surprised to be a finalist and shocked to be the district's winner.

"I feel so fortunate to have the job that I have," she said during her acceptance speech. "My job is so rewarding on so many levels and in so many ways."

The award was an opportunity and a challenge, she said, to work even harder so she can represent teachers well.

She returned to her seat on the stage in the Wando High School auditorium, shaking her head and grinning at her family.

Her husband, Benjie Middleton, screamed and clapped when she won. He was in the hallway afterward calling her co-workers and family to tell them the news.

He said his wife stays up at night working on her lesson plans and that people say she could sell them because

they're that good.

"It's her life," he said. "She's just an extremely hard worker."

Anderson Townsend, principal of Military Magnet, has worked with Middleton for the past four years. He said she connects with her students, her lessons are hands-on and she's a role model.

"She's the type of teacher who goes overboard for her students," Townsend said. "She gives it all she has. If she's sick, she's going to come to school."

Middleton also receives a one-year lease on a 2006 Volvo from Rick Hendrick Imports, the fifth consecutive year the dealership has given that reward to the district winner.

School leaders also recognized the

Please see **TEACHER**, Page 13A

S.C. lags in black business owners

Rate among nation's lowest despite growth

BY KYLE STOCK
The Post and Courier

The number of black-owned businesses in South Carolina grew by 23 percent between 1997 and 2002, but on a per-capita basis, the state has one of the lowest ownership rates in the country, according to figures released Tuesday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The number of black-owned businesses nationwide surged 45 percent to 1.2 million in the five-year period, growing more than four times faster than total U.S. business growth. Revenue generated by black-owned businesses jumped 25 percent to almost \$89 billion.

Renaissance Media, a Charleston-based video and photography business, was one of the enterprises behind the surging statistics. Tony Bell, a former information technology worker and Charleston native, launched his venture in 2001.

"Making the crossover to being able to have white clients, that, for me, was the big challenge," Bell said. "You rarely see a black person taking pictures at a white wedding."

Today, only about 40 percent of Bell's clients are black. "Once people realize the quality of your work, they don't even realize what color you are," he said.

Charlestowne Associates, a financial management firm, gets about 70 percent of its revenue from blacks, according to founder Keith Waring.

"If there were not growth going on, we'd be out of business," Waring said. "In particular, the younger generation, they realize the need to mainstream and they're having success."

Waring, a former chairman of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, remembers a time when all of the black business owners in town knew each other.

That is not the case anymore. There were 4,463 black-owned businesses in the Charleston metro area in 2002, 31 percent more than in 1997.

Those ventures boasted \$288 million in sales, also 31 percent higher than five years earlier. But most of those firms are struggling. They averaged only \$65,000 in annual revenue, and the vast majority were one-person ventures. The few black-owned companies that had employees paid them just \$16,747 a year on average.

Black-business ownership rates across the South are far below black population levels. Almost 30 percent of South Carolina residents are black, but only 9.8 percent of the state's businesses were black-owned in 2002.

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Dorchester considering dog, cat limits

BY DAVE MUNDAY
The Post and Courier

Dorchester County, which includes the rapidly growing Summerville area, is considering limiting the number of dogs and cats people can own.

People who live in densely populated neighborhoods — areas where lots are smaller than 14,500 square feet, or about a third of an acre — would be limited to no more than three dogs and three cats over 4 months old, if the county adopts

the proposal.

People who live in neighborhoods with bigger lots could own as many as six dogs and six cats, but they would have to get a \$35 permit annually to have more than three of each.

Neither Charleston County nor Berkeley County has limits on pets, but Charleston and Goose Creek have enacted similar laws to the one Dorchester County is considering. It won't be easy to get the proposal approved in Dorchester County. The county dropped a plan to require dog

licenses a couple of years ago after widespread opposition.

"It's probably going to be a real controversial issue when it comes before council," said County Councilman Richard Rosebrock, who introduced the idea Monday at a meeting in St. George. "I think as far as a residential neighborhood, it's a reasonable ordinance. It's just a situation that I think is out of control as far as cats are concerned."

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