

New Year's workout

Sport-specific personal training next trend? **Health & Science, 1E**



Big cats roll

Panthers run up score on Falcons, claim playoff spot. **Sports, 1D**

The Post and Courier

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Today's best



Top trends

Several projects are in the business pipeline for 2006. **Section F**

School districts using alternative financing

Instead of using traditional means to pay for buildings, school districts are increasingly relying on a financing plan critics say makes an end run around state law. So far, the districts have spent nearly \$2 billion. **1B**

President defends warrantless spying

Bush said the eavesdropping not only is legal but is vital in the battle against terrorism. Four senators, two of them Republicans, said Bush's claim of legal and constitutional authority makes congressional hearings appropriate. **3A**

2nd major storm washes across N. California

Hundreds of homes and businesses were flooded as heavy rain sent the



Napa and Russian rivers spilling over their banks. In Southern California, for the first time in a half

century, rain is expected to fall on the Tournament of Roses Parade. **3A**

Builder's homes based on rugged bones

John Porretto wants to carve out his niche in the homebuilding business by using timber framing and insulated steel panels, all on top of substantial piling to keep the house above any floods. He says his company motto is "Beyond Code." **1B**

13 car bombs explode in Iraq in 3-hour span

At least 20 people were injured by the explosions, and other violence killed 13. Sunni Arabs made their opening bid in what could be protracted negotiations over the country's government. **4A**



Home sweet home! Back in Charleston



Today's outlook
Windy with a couple of t-storms. High 68. Low 56. Complete 5-day forecast, **8B**.

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Quake survivors' misery grows

Freezing temperatures, rain, snow bring more hardships to tent cities

BY ZARAR KHAN
Associated Press

MUZAFFARABAD, PAKISTAN — The season's heaviest rain and snow lashed Pakistan's earthquake-hit areas Sunday, grounding helicopter aid flights and deep-

ening the misery of survivors who huddled around campfires to keep warm.

Aid workers have warned that cold weather in the Himalayan foothills, where temperatures have fallen below freezing, might claim more lives after the magnitude 7.6 quake Oct. 8 left about

87,000 dead and 3.5 million homeless.

Poor visibility forced a suspension of flights by U.N., foreign military and Pakistani army helicopters, which have been delivering winterized tents, clothes, food and other provisions to survivors, said an air force officer at Chaklala air base, near the capital, Islamabad.

The weather was likely to clear up enough for flights to resume by late today, he said on condition of anonymity, in line with Pakistani government policy.

The United Nations estimates 2.5 mil-

lion people are living in tents below 5,000 feet and up to 400,000 others are in higher areas where it is feared that snow and rain will make it harder for helicopters and trucks to reach them.

Cold rain pelted the quake zone throughout Sunday, and about 12 inches of snow fell above the 6,000-foot level, said Qamar-uz Zaman Chaudhry, head of Pakistan's Meteorological Department.

On Sunday evening, heavy snow also

Please see **QUAKE**, Page 10A



Adult and immature white ibis perch on a dead tree Saturday on Bull's Island. Young birds keep their darker plumage until they are fully grown.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MELISSA HANELINE/STAFF

A bird's-eye view of Bull's Island

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

Chris Crolley has seen scores of birds in his life, but this year the Bull's Island ferry operator and Cape Romain naturalist has been impressed by the ducks and other winged creatures wintering on the Charleston County island.

Cruising out aboard the ferry on a breezy late December morning, he gave ample reason for bird lovers to visit this pristine wilderness at the southern end of the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. "The population of migratory waterfowl this year is impressive," he said. "I've never seen so many canvasbacks in one place before in South Carolina."

Early this month, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will conduct its annual midwinter survey of waterfowl by holding counts in national wildlife refuges up and down the Eastern seaboard. Using aerial and ground-based counts, biologists take a day's snapshot of prime waterfowl habitat along the so-called Atlantic Flyway — a migra-



A blue heron takes flight. The blue heron is one of 277 species of birds that call Bull's Island home at some point during the year.

tory bird route stretching from Maine to Florida. The survey does not determine the harvest allowances for duck hunters, but according to South Carolina Department of Natural Resources biologist Dean Harrigal, it is important in determining long-term trends and shifts in waterfowl populations.

"It's a snapshot out of a plane window at a given moment," he said. "It is not

an absolute count by any stretch of the imagination."

Harrigal said waterfowl counts in the state had been trending downward during the past decade, particularly in the Santee Cooper lakes region, where habitat changes have led birds to bypass the area

Please see **COUNT**, Page 7A

Inside

Map shows where the birds are being counted. **7A**

On the Net

See movies about the count. Visit www.charleston.net this afternoon.

Coming up

Take a closer look at Bull's Island, a Low-country gem. **In Get Out! on Jan. 24**

A swing toward business?

Chief justice, Alito in tune with issues from the boardroom

BY DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Business couldn't do any better than Chief Justice John Roberts and Samuel Alito on the Supreme Court.

One represented corporate interests as a private attorney; the other often sided with employers in lawsuits filed by workers. The prospect of the two on the Supreme Court signals to manufacturers and businesses that they will have allies in high places, say academics and business experts.

Beyond their decisions in individual cases, the Roberts court also has the potential to craft a consistent philosophy on business issues, something that several academics argue has been lacking in recent years since the departure of Lewis Powell in 1987.

The court's docket for the current term will give Roberts and Alito, assuming the latter is confirmed, ample opportunity to shape the court. Among the critical issues for companies are the Supreme Court's decisions in antitrust cases, government regulation of land development and the commerce clause.

Certain to catch any court watcher's attention is how the new justices decide

Please see **COURT**, Page 7A

Radical's story exemplifies al-Qaida tactics

Man faked own death with disinformation

BY SELCAN HACAUGLU
Associated Press

ISTANBUL, TURKEY — An alleged al-Qaida operative accused of serving as a key link between the group's leaders and suicide bombers hid his tracks so well that even fellow militants thought he was dead.

Loa'i Mohammad Haj Bakr al-Saqa, wanted by Turkey for 2003 bombings in Istanbul that killed 58 people, is said to have eluded intelligence services by using an array of fake IDs, employing aliases even with his al-Qaida contacts and finally faking his death in Fallujah, Iraq, in late 2004.

The Syrian radical didn't surface until last August, when an accidental explosion forced him to flee his safe house in the Turkish resort of Antalya, police say. Officers reported finding bomb-making materials meant for an attack on an Israeli cruise



Al-Saqa

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