

Inside GMLC
You might want to swab that deck. Blackbeard's back in Charleston. 2B



LOCAL & STATE

Index
Business 7B
Obituaries 4, 5B
Weather 12B

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On the Web: charleston.net

Section B

East Side effort deemed successful

City cleanup initiative to move to southern end of community in April

BY DAVID SLADE
The Post and Courier

Charleston's effort to clean up the most blighted section of the East Side proved tougher than expected, but as Operation Neighborhood stretches into its 15th month, the city is preparing to declare victory and move on.

The initiative is designed to raise the standards of a neighborhood through intensive blight removal, policing, code enforcement and improvements such as street lighting and trees. After a monthlong burst of city services, the community is supposed to take it from there.

In Charleston's East Side, the initiative

kicked off in January 2005, with a march through the community led by Mayor Joe Riley, neighborhood leaders and city staffers who took notes on the abandoned homes and cars they saw along the way. The city planned to spend six months on the area from Columbus Street north to Stewart Street, then move on to the southern side of the neighborhood, from Columbus to Mary Street.

By last summer, however, there were complaints about the lack of progress, and the initiative was extended to the end of the year, and then extended again. "The city came back to the (neighborhood) association and asked if they should go on to the next phase, and we basically said 'no,'" said Pam Zaresk, a board member of the association.

She said the city has been responsive and recently elected Councilman Robert Mitchell has been tremendous, but progress in some areas has been elusive.

"I think there has been a lot of cooperation from the city, but we still have an awful lot of street crime," said Zaresk, of Columbus Street. "Honestly, I see more of it on my street than before."

She said the city has demolished eyesore buildings and hauled away abandoned

cars, but there's only so much the government can do in a neighborhood with lots of transitional residents, who might rent for a short time and then move.

"The people from the area say they've seen a change, particularly with more police officers coming through the area," Mitchell said.

He said police are limited, however, in what they can do about people hanging out on street corners if they aren't clearly breaking the law. Mitchell worries that drug dealers will just change locations as

Please see EAST, Page 6B



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRAD NETTLES/STAFF

Mt. Zion Elementary School fifth-graders Darius Stanley (top) and Felix Tadeo check out the tight sleeping quarters sailors used on the Yorktown.

Phone service out 2 days

1,100 customers in Charleston affected

BY JESSICA VANEGEREN
The Post and Courier

John Middleton just assumed he was having a dull Saturday night — nobody was calling him — until his neighbor came over and told him a bunch of residents in their East Side neighborhood had lost their phone service.

Turns out, a bunch was actually 1,100 BellSouth customers who primarily live in the downtown Charleston neighborhood surrounding the work zone for the demolition of the two old Cooper River bridges.

Monday morning, roughly 48 hours after four BellSouth lines were severed near the intersection of Lee and Meeting streets, Middleton, along with 190 other people, still were waiting to get their phone service back.

"We have been working around the clock to fix the problem," said Ted Creech, BellSouth's regional director. "We have as many technicians working to restore the service as physically possible."

Phone service was restored to all customers by 9 p.m. Monday.

Still, the extent of time without service infuriated Middleton. The Lee Street resident said many elderly people live in the community who can't afford to be without phones for emergency reasons. The inability to report other sorts of emergencies also concerned him.

"This is the East Side. We have a lot of crime over here. Think about the number of crimes that could have been committed over the weekend that weren't reported," Middleton said.

He particularly took issue with the fact that no one, including BellSouth, the demolition contractor, the Jay Cushman Inc./Testa Corp. Joint Venture, or the state Department of Transportation tried to inform residents of the outage by contacting the local media.

Creech said customers are not always notified, especially when you have a "weekend situation like this, when fewer people are by TV or radio."

The accident, which occurred while workers were installing a drainage pipe beneath Meeting Street, is the latest disturbance residents have endured since the \$59.6 million demolition job began in August. The ground-shaking operation of tearing down the bridges has caused residents to complain about the dust, the noise and the impact the project is having on nearby homes. An effort is under way

Please see PHONE, Page 6B

Field trips give students hands-on learning

But shortage of funds in Charleston County limits those who can go



Chris Jackson shows Geraldine Green's fifth-grade class a spider crab during the science portion of a history and science program on board the Coast Guard cutter Ingham on Monday at Patriots Point.

BY DIETTE COURRÉGE
The Post and Courier

The only Charleston County students who went on field trips before last year were at schools that made the excursions a priority.

Field trips are planned and paid for on a school-by-school basis, and the money for them can be tough to find.

"The bottom line is field trips cost money, and that's something we have precious little of," said Mary Girault, spokeswoman for the district.

To remedy the problem, Charleston school leaders started countywide field trips last year for fourth-grade students and added one for fifth-grade students this year. That means, regardless of the school they attend, students would go on at least one field trip.

The district paid for the trips' admis-

sions and transportation costs using South Carolina lottery money, so it doesn't cost students a cent.

All of the 2,700 fourth-graders in Charleston County schools visited Drayton Hall last year for either "A Day in the Life of a Plantation" or "The Revolutionary War" programs.

This year the district created a Patriots Point trip where its 2,900 fifth-graders explored World War II history and ecosystems science. The three-hour trips, which started in January, incorporate social studies and science curriculum standards, and Charleston teachers helped develop the field trip's content.

School leaders say they hope they'll see higher test scores as a result.

When fifth-graders from Mt. Zion Elementary School on Johns Island

Please see TRIPS, Page 6B

Golf magazine pulled from stores over cover

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

The cover of the February/March issue of The Green magazine carrying a reproduction of a 1784 poster headlined "Negroes for Sale" is a stark reminder of a past many would just as soon forget.

The recent issue of this black and multi-culturally oriented golf publication argues that upscale golf resorts have displaced Gullah and Geechee communities across the Lowcountry.

The cover was too much for at least one nationwide retailer. Late last month, all 385 branches of The Sports Authority, including the location in North Charles-

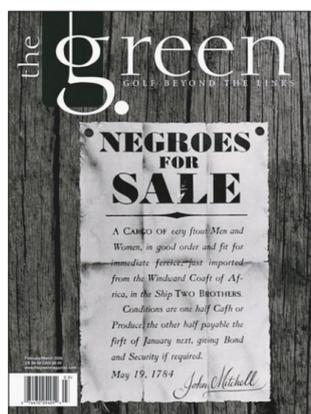
On the Net

To purchase a copy of The Green magazine or to locate a retail store that carries the magazine, connect to www.thegreenmagazine.com

ton, were ordered to remove and destroy all their copies of The Green, according to Sobukwe Odinga, the author of the article. He called the move censorship.

"I expected there would be controversy, but I didn't expect the magazines to be pulled and destroyed," said Odinga, also the publication's managing editor.

Please see GOLF, Page 6B



The February/March cover of The Green, a golf publication targeting a multicultural audience. All copies of this issue reportedly were pulled from Sports Authority stores.

Ethics report forces resignation in Hanahan

BY NADINE PARKS
The Post and Courier

HANAHAN — Planning Commission Chairman A. Cleve Gillette has resigned after a State Ethics Commission opinion said his public service represents a conflict of interest with his business.

Gillette is owner and president of Trico Engineering Consultants Inc. of North Charleston, a company that frequently provides engineering plans for private projects in Hanahan. Although Gillette said he has abstained from voting when his company submits requests to the Planning Commission, the practice has come into question several times in recent months.

Recusing himself isn't enough, said Cathy Hazelwood, assistant director and general counsel for the ethics commission. She said that unless a city ordinance requires that one Planning Commission member be an engineer — Hanahan's does not — the commission can hear no requests when Trico is involved. The law is in place to prevent companies from getting special favors from other commission members, Hazelwood said.



Gillette

Please see ETHICS, Page 6B