



The Charlotte Observer

SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2007

www.charlotte.com

C D E F • • • | Price varies by county | 50¢

INSIDE



Nation | 6A

Ga. aquarium adds more whale sharks

The Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta greeted its newest residents on Friday: two whale sharks that made an 8,000-mile journey from Taiwan. The massive sharks can grow up to 40 feet long.

Faith | 1E

The speech he decided not to give



When Billy Graham appeared Thursday at the dedication of his library in Charlotte, he set aside his prepared speech and spoke from the heart. Read excerpts from the prepared speech he didn't give, and remarks of former Presidents Bush, Carter and Clinton.

Read excerpts from the prepared speech he didn't give, and remarks of former Presidents Bush, Carter and Clinton.

Business | 1D

Vacationers can't seem to disconnect

Did you take a laptop on your last vacation? See what percentage of Americans did just that.

Nation | 6A

Kevoorkian out after 8 years in prison



Supporters held up signs saying "Dr. K is on his way" as Jack Kevoorkian walked out of a Michigan prison Friday. The assisted suicide advocate had spent eight years behind bars for helping end the life of a man suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease.

Also in the News

► TB patient apologizes to passengers | 5A

► Tropical Storm Barry could bring us rain | 8A

► Sorensen: 49ers can win football fight | 1C

Some rain?
Low: 66. High: 85.
Scattered thunderstorms throughout the weekend. Cooler on Sunday. Forecast, 6D.

Ask Amy.....7E Horoscope.....7E
Business.....1D Movies.....5E
Classified.....1F Obituaries.....4B
Comics.....6E Sports.....1C
Editorial.....12A TV.....4E
Delivery Assistance
or to Subscribe.....800-532-5350

"It's really time for everyone to realize that this excessive watering is just not sustainable."

MAENEEN KLEIN, CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG UTILITIES CONSERVATION COORDINATOR



Juan Rodriguez of AllGreen Irrigation and Landscape installs pipe at a residential site in Charlotte on Wednesday afternoon. The use of sprinkler systems in commercial and residential development is growing in the area.

DAVID T. FOSTER III - dffoster@charlotteobserver.com

For Charlotte, staying green has its price

Eager to protect lawns and landscaping, residents rely on irrigation systems

BY BRUCE HENDERSON, AMY BALDWIN AND NICOLE MONROE BELL
Staff Writers

With lush lawns now an expected amenity in Charlotte-area houses, homeowners say they're not about to let a drought kill their pricey investments.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents pumped record amounts of water in each of the past two weeks, much of it to irrigate grass and shrubbery. The trend isn't likely to end as the population grows and landscaping becomes more elaborate.

But it also can't last forever, says a water-conservation expert who suggests it may be time for Charlotte to rethink its fixation on fescue.

In-ground irrigation systems are standard on high-end homes, and some neighborhoods require them.

About 30 percent of local homeowners had irrigation systems when he got into the business in the 1980s,



JOHN D. SIMMONS - jsimmons@charlotteobserver.com

Areas of reseeded grass near the SouthPark mall band shell were watered Friday morning.

estimates Ron Monteith, president of AllGreen Irrigation and Landscape in Charlotte. Today, he thinks it's closer to 65 percent.

The average cost to landscape a midpriced home: about \$15,000.

"These days, people have so much money invested in their yards, you really can't afford to let them die,"

SEE IRRIGATION | 10A

More Coverage | 10A

TREES HURTING AFTER TRIPLE THREAT
Drought, cankerworms and record freeze have endangered trees.

WANT TO SAVE WATER? HERE'S HOW
Advice from Garden Editor Nancy Brachey

A STORY ABOUT THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

A DAY FOR DREAMS

She followed her heart to find what she really wanted from life

BY PETER ST. ONGE
pstonge@charlotteobserver.com

On a Tuesday afternoon in May, Indu Vaidyanathan stood straight and nervous in a conference room at The Art Institute of Charlotte. A half-dozen faculty members and administrators smiled up at her. "Faculty, friends and family..." she began.

Vaidyanathan, a 40-year-old mother of two, was one of three students with superb grades auditioning for the honor of giving the valedictorian's speech at the June 15 graduation. "I know each one of us has a story," she said, and she told hers.

It was a speech not five minutes long, but she kept her eye on the clock.

She had another appointment that afternoon. Another story to finish.

In 1990, at age 23, Indu Vaidyanathan graduated with a master's from the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing. She began a career as a speech pathologist, with a focus on children with disabilities. It was, she



LAYNE BAILEY - lbailey@charlotteobserver.com

Tejus (left), 8, and Nikhil, 6, join their mother, Indu Vaidyanathan, on a swing she designed. After working as a speech pathologist, she followed her heart and looked for ways to develop her creative abilities.

believed, a worthy vocation - but not really the one she wanted.

All her life, she'd found her fullest joy in creative pursuits - drawing and painting for family and friends,

sketching and designing clothes for herself and her sisters. "I don't think I paid a lot of attention to that side of my heart," she remembers. Instead,

SEE DREAMS | 14A

Easley urges help for Guard

Politicians seeking more state, federal support for troops and their families

BY MIKE DRUMMOND
mdrummond@charlotteobserver.com

Governors and U.S. senators vowed Friday to help National Guard members deal with employment, legal and mental health problems outlined this week in a four-part series in the Observer.

Gov. Mike Easley told the Observer he wants \$1.5 million from state lawmakers for family-assistance programs for the Guard - three times as much as appropriated this fiscal year. The money would help families of deployed National Guard members cope with financial and emotional stress.

The Observer found the government let down many service members after they returned from war. Guard members face unemployment and custody battles or have trouble getting treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

"What started as a small tear in the social fabric is starting to be a rip in our citizenry," Easley said, referring to longer and more frequent Guard missions in Iraq. "Those of us not called to fight, regardless of how you feel about the war ... have a patriotic and moral obligation" to fund programs.

Easley said that the war was poorly planned from the outset and that using the Guard to fight overseas has burdened small businesses and families.

The Observer's investigation, he noted, found federal agencies sometimes are ineffective in getting companies to comply with employment laws for service members. "We're coming to a breaking

SEE EASLEY | 14A



Easley

► Online Extras

Read the "Home to a New Battle" series and watch video of members of the N.C. National Guard's 505th Engineer Battalion at WWW.CHARLOTTE.COM/505th

'ENGAGING AND DRIVEN LEADER'

J.C. Smith president to leave in '08

Yancy lauded for fundraising, helping recruit CIAA tournament

BY LINDSAY POLLARD
lpollard@charlotteobserver.com

Johnson C. Smith University President Dorothy Cowser Yancy, praised for her fundraising skills and for helping bring the CIAA tournament to Charlotte, announced Friday that she will leave the school next year.

Yancy, who became her alma mater's first female president, has led it for nearly 13 years. Her last day at the 1,475-student school will be June 30, 2008.

"I'm moving on while I can still move," said Yancy, 63, but she stressed that she's not retiring. She said she's considering consulting in higher education, and that it's time for a new vision for the school.

The board of trustees has talked about Yancy's desire to leave for eight months, vice chairman Monroe Miller said. A search committee is being formed, and Miller expects it will take a year to find someone who can live up to Yancy, whom he called creative and visionary.

During her tenure, JCSU exceeded goals set in two capital campaigns, including one that ends

SEE YANCY | 11A



Yancy