

Ducks 'terrorizing' Ladson woman



The Post and Courier

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THURSDAY

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Briefly



It's shrimp-baiting time in the Lowcountry again

The shrimp are nice-sized and plentiful in the Charleston area this year. Net some shrimp-baiting and casting tips from a professional, catch more shrimp and get etiquette advice, fast facts and more. 1D



Gator trapper might offer head to victim

A state contractor who caught and killed the alligator that tore off a man's arm said the 59-year-old victim has expressed interest in having the head. 1B

Rather files \$70 million lawsuit against CBS



Longtime CBS anchor Dan Rather alleges that the network made him the scapegoat after a discredited story on President Bush's National Guard service. 2A

O.J. freed after judge sets bail at \$125,000



The former football star who beat a double-murder rap years ago left a Las Vegas jail after agreeing to surrender his passport and not have contact with any witnesses in the case. 2A

Chazz Fest offers area a whole lotta jazz

The Charleston Music & Heritage Festival brings in big-name acts Saturday, including Branford Marsalis, Galactic and Kool and the Gang. Get all the details on "Chazz Fest." Preview



Today's outlook
Rain, late storms.
High 81. Low 70.
Complete 5-day
forecast, 12B.

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Union wants fire chief out

Mayor says Thomas is committed to making necessary changes

BY RON MENCHACA AND GLENN SMITH
The Post and Courier

Charleston Fire Chief Rusty Thomas has lost the faith of his men and must go, the head of the state firefighters union said Wednesday.

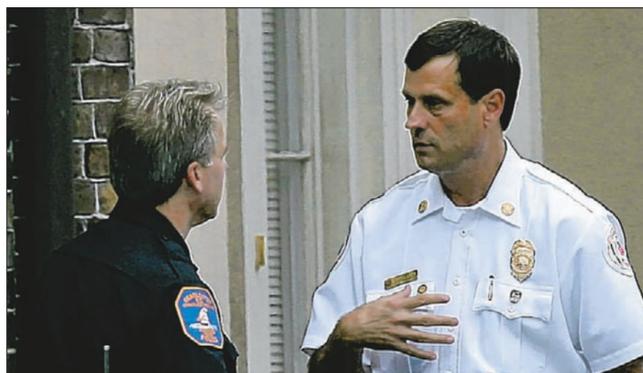
Michael Parrotta, president of the South Carolina Professional Firefighters Association, said the Charleston Fire Department never will move forward as long as Thomas remains chief. He described Thomas as a "dinosaur" who clings to tradition while the profession has evolved

and become more safety-conscious.

"He should have already been suspended and relieved of duty," Parrotta said. "He needs to go."

Parrotta spent 25 years fighting fires with departments in the Myrtle Beach area. The association he oversees represents about 735 firefighters around the state, including roughly 100 firefighters in Charleston, about half of the city's firefighters. Parrotta said he could no longer hold his tongue on the issue after a televised address Tuesday in which Mayor

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Charleston Fire Chief Rusty Thomas (right) talks with Police Chief Greg Mullen outside City Hall on Wednesday.

The road to Jena

Charleston area residents joining Louisiana protest



Carol Richardson of Charleston boards a bus headed to Jena, La., on Wednesday to join a protest over the treatment of a group of black students following the beating of a white student.

BY ADAM PARKER
The Post and Courier

The push toward Jena is under way as hundreds of vans, cars and chartered buses are expected to converge on this small central Louisiana town, their passengers prepared to protest what many are calling a pivotal case of racial injustice.

A mass rally is planned for 10 a.m. today by the courthouse where Mychal Bell, 17, a black student at Jena High School, was convicted of second-degree aggravated battery after an initial attempted murder charge was reduced. A state appeals court overturned the conviction Friday, saying Bell should have been tried as a juvenile, not as an adult. Five other black students still face aggravated battery charges in the beating of a white student.

Fights between white and black



On the Web

To see more photos, go to www.charleston.net.

students were sparked when a black student wanted to sit in the shade of a tree used by whites. The next day, white students hung three nooses from one of the tree's branches.

The three white high school students were briefly suspended but not charged with any crimes.

The school superintendent called

the incident an "adolescent prank."

District Attorney Reed Walters, breaking a long public silence Wednesday, denied racism was involved.

Walters said the suffering of the beating victim, Justin Barker, has been largely ignored. Barker was knocked unconscious, his face badly swollen and bloodied, though he was able to attend a school function that night.

"With all the emphasis on the defendant, the injury done to him and the serious threat to his existence has become a footnote," Walters said of Barker, who accompanied the prosecutor but declined to speak.

Walters also said the reason he did not prosecute the students accused of hanging the nooses is because he could find no Louisiana law they

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Suspect pursuits must run in family

Sheriff's wife stays on trail of man she saw rob bank

BY BO PETERSEN
The Post and Courier

The man in a blue hooded sweatshirt caught Kay Nash's attention Wednesday while she waited in the bank drive-up lane to cash a check.

Then she saw the handkerchief over his mouth, the way he gestured over the counter at the tellers. Even through the drive-up window she could see what looked like a gun barrel sticking out from his sweatshirt sleeve.

She grabbed her cell phone and dialed the number of someone she knows well — her husband, Dorchester County Sheriff Ray Nash.

If the robber counted on getting a lead on police pursuit, he was out of luck. With police on the phone, she wheeled her car around to the far side of the First Federal of Charleston bank on Dorchester Road to get a description and possible license plate.

When the suspect ran from the bank, she followed him in her car around the corner of Plantation Square shopping center at Dorchester and Ashley Phosphate roads.

Sheriff Nash talked to his wife on one phone and to a police dispatcher on another while "the biggest chicken in the world," in her own words, followed a suspect she was wasn't going to let get away.

"I was shaky," she said. "It was scary," Sheriff Nash said. "But

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Berkeley supervisor might hire ex-deputy solicitor



Davis



Jennings

BY SCHUYLER KROPF AND ANDY PARAS
The Post and Courier

MONCK'S CORNER — Former Deputy Solicitor Blair Jennings' time away from Berkeley County government may be short-lived and he could soon be back handling some prosecutions and working for law enforcement. County Supervisor Dan Davis said

Wednesday he has discussed hiring Jennings but that it would be on a short-term basis not to go beyond June 2008, the end of the fiscal year.

The job being considered would be far-ranging in scope, with Jennings working for both the county attorney's office and also the Sheriff's Office, Davis said.

Among his proposed duties would be assisting in deputy training, pursuing asset forfeitures, working magistrate court

prosecutions and as a press spokesman for the Sheriff's Office, Davis said.

The job would officially be under the county attorney, Davis added, with Jennings picking up some of the duties that currently get contracted out to attorneys in private practice. Some of those jobs include pursuing fines and forfeitures.

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