

All-ACC teams announced, B3

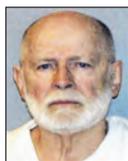
SPORTS



NATION

With crime at historic lows, **New York City** leaders have rolled out a series of proposals aimed at unclogging courts and jails and undoing damage done to poor, minority neighborhoods by generations of mass incarceration. **A8**

Investigators who spent years building a criminal case against gangster **James "Whitey" Bulger** have long believed he had multiple helpers when he fled **Boston** and went on the run — but time is running out to bring them to justice. **A8**



STATE

GOP front-runner plans visit to **Eastern N.C.** **B2**

About 600 dogs and cats seized from an unlicensed shelter in **Hoke County** are ready for adoption later this month now that the owners have surrendered them. **B2**



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Times-News

>> POLITICS

Is Cruz GOP's best alternative to Trump?

Some now view senator as party's most realistic shot at stopping billionaire

By Julie Pace
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders on Sunday grappled with the prospect that the best hope for stopping Donald Trump's march to the nomination may be Ted Cruz — the only candidate who causes as much heartburn among party elites as the billionaire businessman, if not more.

The Texas senator split contests with Trump in Saturday's voting, bolstering his argument that only he can defeat the real estate mogul. Trump and Cruz are now significantly outpacing Marco Rubio in the delegate count, further shrinking the Florida senator's already narrow path to the nomination.



Cruz

If Rubio's slide continues, he would be the latest establishment candidate to fall victim to an angry, frustrated electorate that cares little about endorsements from party leaders or newspaper editorial boards. Rubio has rolled out both at warp speed in recent weeks, but his appeal with voters is not keeping pace.

Rubio did pick up a victory Sunday in Puerto Rico's primary, his second win of the 2016 cycle. Democrats were holding a caucus Sunday in Maine.

The wary interest in Cruz from more mainstream Republicans is the latest unexpected twist in a GOP race where talk of a contested convention or third-party candidate is becoming commonplace.

"If Ted's the alternative to Trump, he's at least a Republican and conservative," South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said. While Graham made sure to note that it's "not like I prefer Ted Cruz," he encouraged Rubio and Ohio Gov. John Kasich to "decide among themselves" whether they can be a realistic alternative to Trump.

Mitt Romney, the 2012 GOP presidential nominee, said Cruz is indeed "emerging" as the chief anti-Trump candidate.

"I think a lot of people were surprised by how well Ted Cruz did," said Romney, who has thrust himself back into the political

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Sam Roberts / Times-News

Jason Witherspoon, seen here at the paddle access on the **Haw River** at **Shallow Ford Natural Area** off **Gerringer Mill Road**, is the northern parks manager for **Alamance Parks**. **Witherspoon** uses his role at **Recreation** and **Parks** to encourage people to try new things, such as an upcoming course in introductory stargazing, and in his spare time organizes meet-ups for old-fashioned board game nights.

Creating connections

County parks manager wants people to try new things — and meet each other

Jason Witherspoon is constantly trying to fill a social need.

In his work as the Northern Parks Manager for the county Recreation and Parks Department, he pitches new programs — like an upcoming introduction to stargazing course — that encourage county residents to try a new activity, while in his spare time he organizes board game meet-ups, all to tap into people's social needs.

REAL PEOPLE
with **Anna Johnson**

"I think a lot of people are hesitant to try new things," said Witherspoon, 40. "... If they are doing something that gets their interest, and puts them where they are dependent on other people to teach them something new, it puts them in an advantageous position. It helps form new relationships with other people. So if you put yourself in a position where you learn from other people, I think it gives you a social advantage. It just takes humility to get there."

When Witherspoon turned 26, he left the United States for the first time and

spent two years working in Chile for the International Mission Board looking at the needs of people in villages surrounding Santiago, and then matching up businesses, nonprofits and churches that could address those needs.

"People didn't have a lot of their social needs met," he said. "If you had a social job, yeah, it was different. I had a lot of friends in the city who were around people all day long. And they got to talk, and it's a very casual environment. When you go to the country, in a lot of these places, people just worked. And often times, they were looking for the government to be the answer to their problems."

The experience forced him to become a better communicator — he jokes that he knew about 20 words in Spanish before moving to the South American country — and gain new insights into a difficult culture and how to create a new social network.

When he came back to the United States, he worked in construction before he and his wife, Lauren, moved to Denmark for another two years with the International Mission Board.

"I had no job description going there," he said. "We were part of a team

WANT TO GO?

WHAT: Introductory Stargazing
WHERE: Shallow Ford Natural Area, 1955 Gerringer Mill Road, Elon
WHEN: 7 p.m. Wednesday and 8 p.m. April 6
COST: Free, but people are asked to register at www.alamance.recdesk.com/
MORE INFORMATION: This is an introductory course to teach people the basics of stargazing — finding major constellations and points of interest like the Big Dipper, the North Star and Orion — and what tools they'll need to learn more.

that were pioneers in what the Mission Board could do in a highly developed country. So part of what we did was similar to what I did in Chile. It was doing studies to identify social needs, social action needs, trying to be a matchmaker to nonprofits, businesses and churches that wanted to engage those needs."

It was in Denmark that he picked up modern board games as a hobby

See **CREATING CONNECTIONS** / Page A2

>> PUBLIC LIVES

Nancy Reagan's life marked by loyalty to husband, strength of will

Former first lady died in California Sunday at age 94

By Christopher Weber and Connie Cass
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — First lady Nancy Reagan swept into the White House in 1981, a swirl of designer gowns and pricey china, and was quickly dismissed as a pre-feminist throwback concerned only with fashion, decorating and entertaining. She needed a less frivolous image. And she

got it. By the time she packed up eight years later, the former movie actress was fending off accusations that she'd become a "dragon lady," wielding secret, unchecked power within Ronald Reagan's administration — and doing it based on astrology to boot.

All along, she maintained that her only mission was to back her only "Ronnie" and strengthen his presidency.

"I'm a woman who loves her husband," she said, "and I make no apologies for looking out for his personal and political welfare."

Mrs. Reagan died Sunday at her home in the Bel-Air sec-

tion of Los Angeles of congestive heart failure. She was 94.

She was Ronald Reagan's closest adviser and fierce protector throughout his journey from Hollywood actor to governor to president — and finally, during his 10-year battle with Alzheimer's disease. She served as his full-time caregiver as his mind melted away, and after his death in 2004 dedicated herself to tending his legacy through his presidential library in Simi Valley, Calif.

She also championed Alzheimer's patients, raising

See **NANCY REAGAN** / Page A2



This December 1986 file photo shows first lady Nancy Reagan holding the Reagans' pet Rex, a King Charles spaniel, as she and President Reagan walk on the White House South lawn. Nancy Reagan died Sunday at 94.

The Associated Press



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