

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

NEWS UPDATES AT WWW.NEWSOBSERVER.COM • FINAL EDITION, 75 CENTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2009

©2009 THE NEWS AND OBSERVER PUBLISHING COMPANY • RALEIGH, N.C.

MORE NEWS

UPDATES ALL DAY AT NEWSOBSERVER.COM

TIGER WOODS STEPS AWAY FROM GOLF



"I need to focus my attention on being a better husband, father and person," he said. The break is indefinite. **1C**

TRAIN HAD CAMERA TRAINED ON CRASH

Black-box data and video images might help investigators understand a crash that killed two children in an SUV at an East Durham rail crossing. **1B**

GROUPS MOBILIZE FOR SCHOOL BOARD

The Wake board votes next week on year-round schools. Supporters and detractors will turn out in force. **1B**

CLIMATE MEETING HAS A DRAFT PLAN

It sets no firm figures on financing or cutting gas emissions. Negotiations are likely to go down to the wire next week when leaders arrive. **3A**

JENNY SANFORD FILES FOR DIVORCE

She said her 20-year marriage to South Carolina's governor is unfixable. Mark Sanford blamed himself. **6A**

PRESIDENT'S CORPSE SWIPED IN CYPRUS

Grave robbers stole the body of Tassos Papadopoulos, digging up his coffin during a thunderstorm before the first anniversary of his death. **8A**

CANES LOSE TO CAPS IN OVERTIME

Alexander Semin scored two goals, Mike Green connected with 3:44 left in overtime, and the Washington Capitals rallied to beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-3. **1C**

WEATHER

Today: Partly cloudy; rainy overnight. High 47; low 38.
Sunday: Drizzle and rain decreasing. High 49; low 38. **8B**

INDEX

Auto.....1E Editorials.....14A
 Business.....4B Puzzles.....5D
 Comics.....6D Real Estate.....8D
 Deaths.....6B TV.....2A



SOCCER'S ELITE COME TO TRIANGLE

Some of the nation's best boys' teams are here this weekend for the Capital Area Soccer League's showcase tournament for elite players. Play started Friday at the WRAL Soccer Center in North Raleigh and 12 other sites.

About 7,000 players were to participate in the event, which runs through Sunday.

The tournament has become one of the year's top events for young players hoping to catch the attention of the hundreds of college coaches in town for the event.



Texan Red West from Dallas, Texas, in red, battles Beach Football Club from Virginia Beach in a game during the CASL Boys Showcase at the WRAL Soccer Center in Raleigh.

CHRIS SEWARD - cseward@newsobserver.com

LOOK FOR SPECIAL COVERAGE OF THE CASL SHOWCASE ALL WEEKEND IN SPORTS

When: Friday through Sunday
Where: WRAL Soccer Center in Raleigh and 12 other locations
Teams: 388
Players: 7,000
States represented: 42
International teams: Eight
Local clubs: CASL, Carolina Soccer Club, Fuquay-Varina Athletic Association, Johnston United Soccer Association, Triangle Futbol Club, Triangle United
Online details: www.visitraleigh.com/CASL_soccer/



Lyle Adams, a 2009 Wake Forest grad, can't believe his team didn't score during the first half of their Friday game against Virginia at the NCAA Men's College Cup at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary.

ETHAN HYMAN - ehyma@newsobserver.com

Also in town is the NCAA Men's College Cup, which began Friday at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary. Three of the four teams playing in Friday night's semifinal matches came from the Atlantic Coast Conference. The North Carolina men lost to the University of Akron after

a penalty kick shootout. Wake Forest lost to Virginia 2-1 in overtime. Virginia will play Akron Sunday at 1 p.m. for the national soccer title. The UNC women's soccer team won the Women's College Cup last weekend in College Station, Texas.

NCAA MEN'S COLLEGE CUP

Friday's first game: Wake 1, Virginia 2.
 UNC 0, Akron 0 (4-5 PKs).
Sunday's title game: Virginia vs. Akron, 1 p.m.
Where: WakeMed Soccer Park

60000000000000000000000000000000ALS: Photo galleries and more coverage all weekend at newsobserver.com

A nation that doesn't exist votes anyway

By TOM LASSETER
 McCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

ACHANDARA, disputed territory of Abkhazia - It's election season in the country that doesn't officially exist.

In a bare gymnasium with mildewed walls and no working lights, the current Abkhaz leader recently appealed for votes in today's presidential elections. He also asked villagers to register their AK-47s and not to keep rocket-propelled grenades at home.



Bagapsh is running for re-election.

In the Republic of Abkhazia, Sergei Bagapsh said, people should concentrate on the democratic process, not stockpiling heavy weaponry. The only problem is that, according to almost all interpretations of international law, there's no such country. Most of the world views this small stretch of land wedged between the Black Sea and the Caucasus Mountains as a rebel province that belongs to neighboring Georgia. In short, Abkhazia isn't on the map.

The Kremlin says otherwise; it recognized Abkhazia and another Georgian region as independent states in August 2008 and sent Russian army units and millions of dollars to back their governments.

So Bagapsh, a heavyset man who favors gray pinstriped suits, spends his

Senate losing business advocates

The departures of Hoyle and Rand signal a new era

By MARK JOHNSON
 AND ROB CHRISTENSEN
 STAFF WRITERS

RALEIGH - Business leaders knew where to go in the North Carolina Senate to push legislation through or squelch a regulation they didn't like: Democratic Senators David Hoyle and Tony Rand.

Within the past few weeks, Rand, who was Senate majority leader, resigned effective at the end of the year, and Hoyle, finance committee

chairman, announced he won't run again.

"The whole dynamic within the Senate structure for the business community is going to have to change strategy," said Gregg Thompson, state director for the National Federation of Independent Business, "and look to other members to carry the ball. ... We're losing our best advocates."

Much of the Democratic Senate leadership's team roster is getting

wiped clean. In addition to Rand and Hoyle, Sen. R.C. Soles, the Democrats' caucus chairman, likely faces indictment by a Columbus County grand jury on charges of assault with a deadly weapon. He is accused of shooting a former legal client during a confrontation at Soles' home in August.

President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, of Manteo, says he's running

SEE SENATE, PAGE 12A

Crab-pot makers turn traps to trees

By JOSH SHAFFER
 STAFF WRITER

DAVIS - In this tiny fishing village, where generations caught crabs inside wire-mesh traps, you can't make a nickel on the tasty crustaceans anymore, not with cheap seafood from Malaysia flooding the North Carolina coast.

So a few years back, Neal "Nicky" Harvey cut up some of the crab pot wire lying around his shop and built a small Christmas tree. Then another. Then a dozen. Then a thousand. Now this Christmas, Fisherman Creations will send out roughly 150,000 crab-pot trees from Raleigh to New York, from Smithfield to Texas.

It took the ingenuity of an old-time crab-pot maker to transform a sheet of green mesh, a material that looks a good bit like chicken wire, into a piece of holiday charm. At 66, Harvey has seen his fishing net



Mary Smith puts lights on a Christmas tree made of the wire-mesh material once used to make crab pots. Crab pots are no longer selling, but crab-pot trees are.

CHRIS SEWARD - cseward@newsobserver.com

business dry up, watched crab-pot demand fall from 3,000 to 300 a year and lived to see the landmark Sanitary Restaurant and Fish Mar-

ket in Morehead City serve shrimp from Taiwan. With these trees, Fish-

SEE TREES, PAGE 16A

SEE ABKHAZIA, PAGE 12A