

BRIEFLY

Children to test plumbing at arena

Children from V.V. Reid Elementary School will participate in a ceremonial First Flush at the new Carolina Center on Monday. The students will help test the plumbing at the arena by simultaneously flushing the toilets. The First Flush will begin at 10:30 a.m. After helping with the flush, the children will receive T-shirts and a special behind-the-scenes tour of the facility.

The Carolina Center's grand opening is less than a week away. Home of the men's and women's Gamecock basketball teams, the Carolina Center will also hold concerts, touring family shows and special events.

The University of South Carolina's Athletics Department is the Carolina Center's primary operator. Global Spectrum, a division of Comcast-Spectacor, the Philadelphia-based sports and entertainment firm that owns the First Union Center, the First Union Spectrum, the Philadelphia Flyers and the Philadelphia 76ers, manages the center.

CAFE Day

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faith communities, elected officials and the public about climate change and energy policy."

"The effects on global warming can no longer be ignored," said Inman Omar Shaheed, a religious leader at Masjid as-Salaam who accompanied Jones at CAFE Day.

Honda Cars of Columbia was on hand with a Honda Insight for people to test-drive, along with the new Toyota hybrid, the Prius. The campaign members said these half-electric, half-gas cars will benefit the environment and reduce the nation's dependence on the Middle East for oil.

Paula Randler, secretary of USC's Newman Club, a Catholic student organization, said the United States' vehicles have the lowest average fuel economy since 1980.

"There is no excuse for cars that pollute when clean technology is available and already in use by other companies," Randler said.

The Interfaith Climate Change Campaign is pushing for tougher demands on vehicle emissions. The group is non-denominational and encourages all

people of faith to speak out.

Jones said, "We must recognize that our dependency on oil for the cars we drive is a significant contributor to global warming, public health problems and the causes of war."

Randler quoted a psalm to illustrate her purpose.

Interfaith's campaign focuses on reducing America's dependency on oil. American automobiles use 8 million barrels of oil a day, according to a news release from Interfaith.

The group said the best way to do that is to raise the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards on light trucks and cars.

Its campaign suggests raising the CAFE standard to 40 miles per gallon during the next 10 years. According to the group's research, this would lead to fewer carbon-dioxide emissions, the No. 1 cause of global warming, and save consumers money at the pump.

Scott Weidner of Students Allied for a Greener Earth was also on hand at a booth to encourage students to join SAGE, a student organization that promotes environmental issues.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockudesk@hotmail.com

STATE

Meth lab cleanup costs S.C. taxpayers

LEXINGTON (AP) — Methamphetamine use is growing in South Carolina, and it costs taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars for authorities to clean up the dangerous makeshift labs where the drug is made.

Three years ago, only five meth labs were found in the entire state, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

In South Carolina, the biggest meth problem is in the Upstate. In 2000, Greenville-area police found 13 labs. So far this year, they've closed 77 labs — about 80 percent of the labs found in the state.

Through Aug. 31 of this year, the state had racked up cleanup costs of \$290,970. Cleaning up a meth lab, on average, costs about \$4,000.

Next 'American Idol' could be from S.C.

GREENWOOD (AP) — He had to spend the night on an Atlanta sidewalk, spend hours practicing and beat out hundreds of competitors, but now Abbeville's Robert Jordan is headed for Los Angeles.

Jordan, 22, will compete for a slot on Fox's show "American Idol," which gives ordinary people a chance at stardom.

Last season's "American Idol" winner, Kelly Clarkson, earned a \$1 million recording contract. Her first single, "A Moment Like This," rose to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and is still in the top 10.

Jordan, who especially likes singing gospel music in church, heard about auditions in Atlanta for the 2003 show and decided to go for it.

With the help of manager Clarence Searles, one of his co-workers at Lowe's in Greenwood, he headed for Georgia. Searles, who has a background in show business, as well as a management company called Over the Top, said Jordan has definite potential.

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NATION

Last chance to see meteor shower

PASADENA, CALIF. (AP) — This week might be the last chance until 2099 to see a truly spectacular meteor shower, scientists say.

The annual Leonid meteor shower usually delivers only a few visible meteors. But there could be thousands each hour Tuesday — the largest such shower expected until the end of the century.

Despite a full moon, scientists predict Tuesday's shower will be visible in the night sky from Western Africa to the Eastern United States.

"If you're ever going to see them, this might be the year to try," Don Yeomans, an astronomer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, said in a statement.

As many as 2,000 to 5,000 tiny meteors per hour might be visible as they burn up in the atmosphere. The peak hours in the United States will begin early Tuesday, at around 5:30 a.m. EST.

Al-Qaida letter has no new threats

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the Senate set to approve the agency he's expected to lead, President Bush's homeland security adviser on Sunday played down as "really nothing new" an alleged al-Qaida threat of attacks in New York and Washington.

Tom Ridge also said he doubted the Bush administration would create an agency separate from the FBI to gather domestic intelligence.

Ridge would not discuss whether he wants to become secretary of the Homeland Security Department. A senior administration official confirmed Sunday that Ridge, a former Pennsylvania governor and close friend of Bush, is the president's choice for the job.

"We're familiar with that piece of information. There are no new threats. There are the same old conditions," Ridge told "Fox News Sunday."

WORLD

Allied strike kills 7 civilians, Iraq says

BAGHDAD, IRAQ (AP) — A U.S.-British airstrike in southern Iraq killed seven civilians and wounded four, the Iraqi military said Saturday.

An unidentified military spokesman told the official Iraqi News Agency that warplanes bombed areas in Najaf province, 93 miles south of Baghdad on Friday.

The report didn't provide further details. The U.S. military did not comment immediately and it was impossible to independently verify the claim.

U.S. and British warplanes monitoring no-fly zones over southern and northern Iraq regularly attack Iraqi military facilities in what they say is a response to hostile Iraqi fire.

The zones were established shortly after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurdish and Shiite Muslim groups. Iraq, which considers the zones violations of its sovereignty, frequently tries to shoot down allied planes.

Security foils Israel hijacking attempt

JERUSALEM (AP) — Security guards on Israel's national carrier El Al overpowered a man who tried to take hostage a cabin attendant on a flight from Tel Aviv to Istanbul, Israeli radio stations reported.

The reports said none of the 170 passengers on board were harmed and the plane landed safely in Istanbul.

An official at Istanbul's Ataturk International Airport confirmed that El Al flight 581 sent out a hijacking signal as it approached Istanbul, but the suspect was overcome.

Turkey's private CNN-Turk and NTV televisions quoting police sources said the hijacker was an Israeli Arab.

He reportedly threatened a flight attendant with a knife and tried to approach the cockpit, but he was then overpowered by two security guards, CNN-Turk television said.

Donaldson

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academic credentials," Donaldson said. "He helped recruit and mentor promising students; he organized and rearranged the university's library collection at the present Caroliniana Library, and most importantly, Greener demonstrated that African-Americans had the intellectual ability and leadership skills to thrive in a very difficult climate."

Donaldson urged everyone to communicate through dialogue and discuss diversity issues to ensure a culture of development.

"Dialogue is not always an easy process," he said. "Differences always have the po-

tential to produce tensions and anxiety."

When Donaldson asked, "What do we want to be recorded?" there was silence until Edrin Williams, a fourth-year African-American studies student said, "Maybe they'll just turn the page, since all we have to say is silence."

Williams said he thought the turnout of about 30 people was good, but he wanted a larger and more diverse crowd.

"USC could definitely stand some diversity," he said. "We always hear statistics about how diverse we are, but we know numbers can easily be distorted. There are very few students who can mingle with all crowds; most students only are comfortable with people who look and think exactly the same."

Williams said BOND mem-

bers think they should not have to wait until February to celebrate black history.

First-year electronic journalism student Duane Venner thought the seminar was beneficial.

"The turnout showed that if people enlighten themselves and are more well informed about the history of other people's cultures, we would all be better off," Venner said.

Donaldson said all students would benefit if they were more aware of history.

"At times, aspects of our past are not flattering, but we should embrace and acknowledge times of difficulty and tension and learn from them," he said.

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