

'EAT PRAY LOVE' FILM DIVERGES FROM THE BOOK, BUT ENJOYABLE

WEEKEND



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MORE NEWS

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DAVIS: NO CALL ON PLAYERS YET

UNC football coach Butch Davis says it's too early to decide the status of the players in an NCAA inquiry. **1C**

JOHNSTON DWI CASES CLOSED

A district court judge refused to allow the reinstatement of charges in 33 cases illegally dismissed. **1B**

WAKE SCHOOL FOES SPAR ON TV

The two sides of the student assignment controversy argued during taping of "NC Spin." **1B**

BLAGOJEVICH JURY STILL DELIBERATING

Jurors in the corruption trial of the former Illinois governor have decided on just two of 24 counts. **3A**



A NEW LOOK AT THE GOLDEN CORRAL

The Raleigh-based restaurant chain seeks to rev up sales with a new look, starting today at its flagship Glenwood Avenue site. **1B**

\$50 MILLION FINE FOR BP'S '05 BLAST

The oil company was cited for violations in a refinery explosion that killed 15. **4A**

BLUE CROSS TO LAY OFF UP TO 90

The state's largest insurer says the layoffs of data entry workers is part of efforts to cut \$200 million. **4B**

WEATHER

Today: Partly cloudy. High 94; low 72. A little relief is coming.
Saturday: Slight chance of thunderstorms. High 86; low 72. **8B**

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A B ● ● ●

Tourists are heading back to the beach



Scott Boutiler carries an umbrella to place on the strand at Ocean Isle Beach, where he has a summer rental business. He said tourists seeking shade have kept him busy this season.

PHOTOS BY CHUCK LIDDY - cliddy@newsobserver.com

Long lines, 'no vacancy' signs and state stats point to improvement

By MARTHA QUILLIN
STAFF WRITER

OCEAN ISLE BEACH — Towns like this one have their own economic indicators. How far is traffic backed up at the bridge coming onto the island? How long is the line for a table at Sharky's?

"You'll want to go early," Maria McCarthy, front desk clerk at the Ocean Isle Inn, cautioned a couple as they checked in and made their supper plans one afternoon this week. "Otherwise, you may have to wait awhile."

Longer lines, fewer discounts and more "No Vacancy" signs indicate that tourism business along the North Carolina coast has been better this summer than in the previous two.



Rebecca Beyer, 7, of Denver, N.C., chases a wind-driven toy across the sand at Ocean Isle Beach.

State tourism figures confirm that travel is up across the state, with the southeast region, which includes New Hanover and Brunswick

counties, showing the biggest increase — 9 percent — in room occupancy rates for June compared to last year. "And we expect to see the

same for July and August," said Margo Metzger, public relations manager for the state Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.

It's not clear whether business is better because the economy has improved in general, or because some visitors came to North Carolina this year instead of Gulf Coast states to avoid the oil spill, or because the division of tourism amped up advertising last year as room occupancy rates flagged.

Tourism is big business in the state, accounting for more than 190,000 jobs and more than \$1.3 billion in state and local tax revenues.

"It has been a great sea-
SEE **TOOL**, PAGE 8A

For holy days, N.C. bends a bit

By ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

On days when faith and school collide, Sana Khan of Raleigh has learned to compromise.

Though the UNC-Chapel Hill senior would prefer no distractions on Eid al-Fitr, a Muslim holy day marking the end of Ramadan, a lecture or exam may beckon.

"You have to weigh the pros and cons of missing class," said Khan, president of the campus Muslim Students Association. "We'll go to prayer in the morning and back to class in the afternoon."

A new state law may ease Khan's predicament. It requires all school systems, community colleges and public universities to allow students at least two excused absences each academic year for religious observances. The law standardizes an informal practice. But some administrators hope it won't create exam-week havoc.

The law attempts to ease the minds of parents who want to take their children out of class to observe holidays not recognized by school systems, said state Rep. Rick Glazier, a Cumberland County Democrat who co-sponsored the bill. Generally, parents and school leaders are able to work around religious obligations, but parents sometimes grow frustrated when educators are unwilling to accommodate them, said Glazier, a former Cumberland County school board member.

"There's no reason for any parent or child to worry about these absences," Glazier said. "It's an easy fix."

The law sends a supportive message to fami-
SEE **HOLY DAYS**, PAGE 12A



Alzheimer's patient Dorothy Eckert holds her husband's hand. Scientists are finding new ways to diagnose the disease.

2007 AP FILE PHOTO

Setting egos aside to make progress on Alzheimer's

By GINA KOLATA
THE NEW YORK TIMES

In 2003, a group of scientists and executives from the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the drug and medical-imaging industries, universities and nonprofit groups joined in a project that experts say had no precedent: a collaborative effort to find the biological markers that show the progression of Alzheimer's disease in the human brain.

Now the effort is bearing fruit with a wealth of recent scientific papers on the early diagnosis of

Alzheimer's using methods like PET scans and tests of spinal fluid. More than 100 studies are under way to test the drugs that might slow or stop the disease.

And the collaboration is already serving as a model for similar efforts against Parkinson's disease. A \$40 million project to look for biomarkers for Parkinson's, sponsored by the Michael J. Fox Foundation, plans to enroll 600 study subjects in the United States and Europe.

The work on Alzheimer's "is the precedent," said Holly Barkhym-

SEE **DIAGNOSE**, PAGE 12A

DWI tool is curbed in N.C.

State restricts ankle bracelets

By AMES ALEXANDER
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

North Carolina has prevented the state's drug and DWI treatment courts from using technology that has helped thousands of alcoholics stay sober.

Guidelines approved in 2007 prohibit those courts from using the ankle bracelets commonly employed to ensure that offenders don't drink.

That decision has puzzled and frustrated some officials, who ask whether opposition to the technology was sparked in part by turf battles and personality conflicts.

David Wallace, director of the National Center for DWI Courts, said he's not aware of any other state that has imposed such restrictions.

"I'm very surprised," said Wallace, whose organization helps train officials in setting up DWI courts. "...It takes away one more tool that could be used to monitor people ... so they're not out there risking the community's safety."

The decision to prohibit the bracelets in the drug treatment courts follows opposition by two high-ranking state officials who have raised concerns about the technology. Few dispute some of their chief contentions: The devices are pricey, and they can't stop someone from driving drunk.

The state's more than 40 drug and DWI treatment courts are designed to help rehabilitate repeat offenders who suffer from addictions.

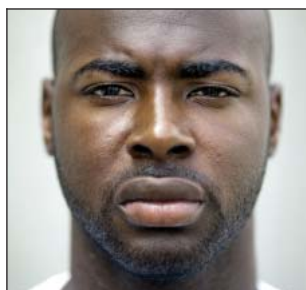
SEE **TOOL**, PAGE 8A



The bracelets have helped thousands stay sober. ALCOHOL MONITORING SYSTEMS INC.

AGENTS' SECRETS

JUNK SCIENCE, TAINTED TESTIMONY AT THE SBI



COMING SATURDAY

Jemaal Green is in prison for 23 years, in large part because of ballistics testimony from SBI agent Beth Desmond. Independent analysts, examining photos of two bullets, say her work is way off the mark. But the SBI refuses to check again. Read part four of our series, "Agents' Secrets."

Catch up on previous installments at newsobserver.com/agents_secrets.