



Virginia Tech tops Virginia in the teams' first meeting as ACC rivals. /Sports E1

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## COMING TOMORROW



### House detectives

Discovering your home's history provides link to past.

Home & Garden

## FRIDAY



### In this corner . . .

"Million Dollar Baby" is a contender with a lot of heart, writes Dan Neman.

Flair /D1

### Hey, you!

How do you address Richmond's mayor? However you want, he says.

Metro /B1



### 'It doesn't get any easier'

NASCAR race team owner Rick Hendrick is still dealing with tragedy.

Sports /E1

### To our readers

Because of production problems, the North of the River and South of the River sections do not appear today. They are available at TimesDispatch.com.

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## WEATHER

Mostly sunny.  
High: 33.  
Low: 15. /B8



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## 'HE ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT'



LINDY KEAST RODMAN/TIMES-DISPATCH

Seth Nuckols displays the mask he wears to protect the burn scars on the left side of his face. Seth, who lives in Goochland County, remembers the fire, his mother says.

# Family struggles to heal after fire

Toddler was severely burned in a blaze that started in the family's pickup a year ago

BY MARK BOWES  
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

In one horrific moment a year ago today, 2½-year-old Seth Nuckols was awash in flames. Strapped in his car seat, he struggled inside his father's Ford pickup outside the Tuckahoe YMCA as the fire, started by a cigarette lighter, swept up from the floorboard and over his body. The blaze burned off the fingers of his left hand and scorched his entire left side, including his face. Half his hair was seared away. His left ear melted like candle wax. Before his father, Greg Nuckols, could run back to the vehicle and pull his son

from the inferno, Seth was burned on more than 45 percent of his body.

"He almost didn't make it a couple of times," Seth's mother, Heather Bruce, said of the numerous medical complications that arose as her son struggled to survive in the weeks after the fire.

That was a year ago. Despite leaving Seth disfigured and facing years of skin-graft operations and reconstructive surgery, the fire didn't break his spirit.

At 3½, he's nearly as active and inquisitive as any boy his age. On Wednesday, Seth, a Power Rangers fan, was happily playing with his 5-year-old brother, Cole, in the living room of their Goochland County home.

Because he had visitors, Seth was allowed to briefly remove the clear plastic mask he must normally wear to safeguard

SEE HEAL, PAGE A9 ►



An Iraqi in Australia holds a Kurdish flag and voting card.

## Developments in Iraq

- At least 12, including a U.S. Marine, were killed as insurgents stepped up attacks in advance of election. **Page A15.**
- As Iraqis in Australia began voting, Iraqi security forces and U.S. troops secured polling places for Sunday's vote. **Page A14.**

# Father: 'You're never prepared'

Midlothian family suffers loss of son, 20, in an ambush in Iraq

BY PAIGE AKIN  
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

With pacifist parents and no family members in the military, Karl Linn was an unlikely Marine.

But the events of 9/11 changed him.

"I think he wanted payback, as well as some discipline," Richard Linn said of his oldest son. "I'm the Peace Corps type, but I didn't object."

So after he graduated from James River High School in 2002, Karl Linn earned the blessings of his family and joined the Marines. Lance Cpl. Linn and his unit — the 2nd Platoon, Company C, 4th Engineering Battalion

out of Lynchburg — shipped out to Iraq in the fall.

Now, the unthinkable has happened.

Linn and three others from his unit were killed Wednesday in Iraq's Anbar province during an ambush on their convoy. Linn, 20, was from Midlothian. The other victims were identified as Sgt. Jesse Strong, 24, of Orleans, Vt., a graduate of Liberty University in Lynchburg; Cpl. Jonathan Bowling, 23, of Patrick County; and Cpl. Christopher Weaver, 24, of Spotsylvania County.

Linn's interest in engineering was evident from an early age. In 1998, he and five classmates from St. Michael's Episcopal School in Bon Air designed a winning entry in the Junior Solar Sprint — a miniature solar-powered car. Later, Linn founded

SEE IRAQ, PAGE A14 ►



## The casualties

- Cpl. Karl Linn, Chesterfield (pictured)
  - Sgt. Jesse Strong, Orleans, Vt.: (Liberty University)
  - Cpl. Jonathan Bowling, Patrick County
  - Cpl. Christopher Weaver, Spotsylvania County
- Details, Page A15

# FCC won't appeal on media ownership

But several companies will push for change on acquisition limits

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration won't appeal to the Supreme Court to revive sweeping changes in media ownership rules that were thrown out by a federal court.

However, several media companies, including Media General Inc. of Richmond, plan to appeal the ruling that blocked media companies from acquiring more local TV stations and newspapers.

The Federal Communications Commission had until Monday to decide whether to appeal a ruling by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. The Justice Department, in consultation with the FCC, decided against an appeal, FCC spokeswoman Rebecca Fisher said yesterday.

The regulators must now return to the drawing board and revise the rules. Fisher did not explain why the administration decided not to appeal.

Tribune Co. and three television networks — News Corp.'s Fox, Viacom Inc.'s CBS and General Electric Co.'s NBC — will ask the high court to review the

SEE MEDIA, PAGE A12 ►

# Added cost looming for Henrico homes?

Supervisors consider having developers pay extra fee to aid schools

BY MEREDITH BONNY  
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Buying a home in Henrico County may carry a bigger price tag if the Board of Supervisors proceeds with plans to require developers to pick up more of the costs.

During a six-hour work session yesterday, board members discussed implementing a cash-proffer policy of nearly \$12,000 per single-family home to help

pay for schools — a change in Henrico, where there currently is no policy for accepting cash proffers.

Proffers are payments from developers to help offset the costs of building schools, roads and other public facilities.

The board also agreed to further investigate allowing the county to design and construct water and sewer lines and then charge developers a pro-rated fee for each residential lot connecting to the system.

"This would be a dramatic change in our overall policy," said Henrico County Manager

SEE PROFFER, PAGE A9 ►

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2005

### Super-sized lawsuits

If you gain weight, you have only yourself to blame.

That's the crux of a bill cleared yesterday by the House of Delegates. It aims to end lawsuits in Virginia by obese people who claim food producers and sellers are to blame.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Details, Page A8

# Fourth law of motion: Fidgeting burns the fat

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS — It turns out some couch potatoes spend more time on the couch than others. And that could be a key to obesity.

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic believe it's not the trips to the gym, but the everyday pacing, fidgeting and restlessness that may play a bigger role in whether someone's fat or thin, according to a small study of self-described couch potatoes.

The scientists found that the obese people they studied sat for about 150 minutes

more a day on average than their lean subjects, and that meant they burned about 350 fewer calories a day.

The researchers looked at the role of routine activities such as sitting, standing, walking and talking.

If the overweight subjects could match the behavior of their lean counterparts, that could work out to a weight loss of about 33 pounds a year, the study said. And it's not necessary to go to the gym to do that.

"I think our study is a bea-

SEE FAT, PAGE A11 ►