

**INSIDE
TODAY**

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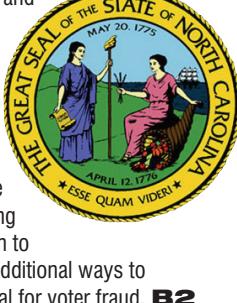
**NATION**

Trying to find footing in a shifting landscape of international power plays and intrigues is the **American** military, which right now appears more focused on how to adjust to mandatory budget cuts. But the bigger question might be: What role might **American** power play in the coming years? **A7**

In a stinging rebuke of the military's efforts to curb sexual assault, members of a **Senate** panel hammered **Defense Department** officials on Wednesday for making too little progress in combating the crimes and failing to improve a military justice system that victims described as slow and uncaring. **A7**

STATE

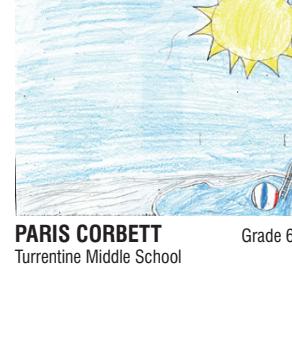
Election attorneys and representatives of advocacy groups speaking to **North Carolina House** members disagreed Wednesday on the wisdom of requiring photo identification to vote, but offered additional ways to reduce the potential for voter fraud. **B2**



Weather: Mostly sunny

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POPE FRANCIS

Cardinals elect Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina; Buenos Aires archbishop becomes first pontiff from the Americas



The Associated Press

Pope Francis speaks from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Wednesday. The former Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio was elected on the fourth ballot, becoming the 266th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

By Nicole Winfield
The Associated Press

More to the story

■ Pope Francis comes to the Vatican as an outsider with a complex past / **A2**

need a vigorous, young pope who would reign for decades but rather a seasoned, popular and humble pastor who would draw followers to the faith and help rebuild a church stained by scandal.

The cardinal electors overcame deep divisions about the future of the church to select the 266th pontiff in a remarkably fast, five-ballot conclave. Francis asked for prayers for himself, and for retired Pope Benedict XVI, whose stunning resignation paved the way for the conclave that brought the first Jesuit to the papacy. Francis also spoke by phone with Benedict after his election and plans to see

him in the coming days, the Vatican said.

"Brothers and sisters, good evening," Francis said to wild cheers in his first public remarks as pontiff from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica.

"You know that the work of the conclave is to give a bishop to Rome. It seems as if my brother cardinals went to find him from the end of the earth, but here we are. Thank you for the welcome," he said.

In one of his first acts as pope, Francis this morning planned to visit Benedict at the papal retreat in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome.

American Cardinal Timothy Dolan said Wednesday night at the North American College, the U.S. seminary in Rome, that

See **POPE FRANCIS** / Page **A2**

>> REGISTER OF DEEDS

County workers taking Spanish

Significant number of office's customers not native English speakers

By Chris Lavender
Times-News
lavender@thetimesnews.com

GRAHAM — Employees at the Alamance County Register of Deeds office are taking Spanish language classes to better serve those who use English as a second language.

Register of Deeds Hugh Webster said Wednesday that an Alamance Community College instructor teaches the class one day each week. Employees' attendance is voluntary, Webster said.

"I was pleased all my employees wanted to do it," Webster said. "I am very happy they wanted to learn Spanish."

The three-hour class is held at the Register of Deeds office after work hours from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and is scheduled to continue for another four weeks. Classes started four weeks ago.

Webster, who speaks Spanish, said since the classes are voluntary and are conducted after work hours, there's not a requirement that employees be compensated for their time spent in the classes. Webster said he is participating, along with all 11 employees of the office.

Webster said some of the employees had offered to pay to take the classes; however, the county is paying the \$65 fee per person to allow the employees to take the classes over an eight-week period.

See **TAKING SPANISH** / Page **A2**

>> MARCH MADNESS

Basketball pools: Fun, lucrative — and illegal

While technically gambling, cops most likely will let you slide

By Steve Huffman
Times-News
shuffman@thetimesnews.com

TheTimesNews.com

Comment on this story

They're also illegal.

Well, technically. At least we think so.

Several local law enforcement officers said, officially, engaging in such pools is misdemeanor gambling.

But rest easy, those of you wagering \$5 on your favorite team to win it all. The odds of you being prosecuted for such a transgression rank right down there between slim and none.

Randy Jones, a spokesman for the Alamance County Sheriff's Office, said prosecution of such an offense

would first require that a complainant come forward. Then officers would have to build a case.

At some point, the Alamance County District Attorney's Office would have to get involved.

At best, Jones said, the end result would be conviction of a misdemeanor offense.

"Is it worth the time and paper-work?" Jones asked. "I can't imagine it."

As one law enforcement officer who spoke on condition of anonymity put it, "Speeding 37 in a 35 zone

See **BASKETBALL POOLS** / Page **A2**



Mike Hicklin, Chase Gillis and Charles Thomas from Condor Flag Company in Charlotte hang a banner in the front entrance to the Greensboro Coliseum on Wednesday in preparation for the men's ACC Basketball Tournament that starts at the complex today at noon.

Scott Muthersbaugh / Times-News

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