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SPORTS



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He saw shadows.
He was angry.
He wanted help.

Records show Kenny Chapman sought mental health treatment before killing his wife, two children and himself.

BY CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.,
ELY PORTILLO AND
APRIL BETHEA
Staff Writers

Kenny Chapman knew he needed help. He saw shadows of people who weren't there. He felt inadequate, like he didn't belong. He'd been arguing with his wife – and was thinking about killing her.

So for the second time in two weeks, Chapman walked into Mecklenburg's mental health center and told doctors what was going through his head, according to records obtained by the Observer.

It was just after 2 a.m. on March 16

when Chapman filled out a questionnaire.

Why did you decide to come to the Emergency Department today?

Harm somebody

What do you expect from your visit to the Emergency Department today?

Help

Chapman, 33, spent the next four hours in interviews and observation – talking to nurses and doctors about his mental state, medical history and his worries. After a while, he told them he could refrain from hurting any-



Kenny Chapman in a Facebook photo

body, the records show. He was released around 6 a.m. with medication for anxiety and depression and instructions to call back for a therapy appointment.

But later that day, police say Chapman killed his wife, teenage stepdaughter and toddler – then lived in the home with the children's bodies for two weeks. Also in the home were his two other children, living a nightmare that would shock the city and bring veteran investigators to tears.

SEE CHAPMAN, 7A

Stories of Rebirth

Robert Conway found a new life when a death ended his old one. Freddie Sherrill's rebirth came after hitting bottom himself. And for Gayle Montgomery and Sam Om, their own ambitions had to die before more inspired ones were born. Starting at sunrise this Easter, Christians will again gather to hear the story of Jesus' defeat of death. They'll also be invited, in sermon and song, to find their own renewal.

— TIM FUNK

On 6A: Four profiles of transformed lives.

TODD SUMLIN - tsumlin@charlotteobserver.com

These four Christians all had major personal turning points and are now living lives of renewal. They are, from left, the Rev. Gayle Montgomery; the Rev. Robert Conway; Freddie Sherrill, building supervisor at Myers Park Presbyterian Church; and the Rev. Sam Om.

Wages in county continue to fall

Some jobs are returning, but economists say Mecklenburg's pain could last for a few more years.

BY KIRSTEN VALLE
kvalle@charlotteobserver.com

Mecklenburg County's private-sector wages continue to shrink, the latest sign of the region's long and difficult path to economic recovery, new government data show.

Private-sector employers paid out a total of \$5.8 billion in the third quarter of 2009, down 8 percent from the same period a year earlier. That brings county wages back to their 2006 levels. Nearly every sector experienced a similar decline, though there were rare bright spots, particularly in health care and private education services.

Economists say the report paints a complicated picture: The local job market is stabilizing, and some jobs are returning – yet the region is still fraught with economic distress that could take years to reverse.

"A lot of folks are essentially losing ground," said John Quintero of South by North Strategies Ltd., a Chapel Hill economic research firm. "We're in a situation now where we have such high levels of unemployment. That really tends to put a brake on wages."

Mecklenburg County lost more than \$336 million in private-sector payroll when you

SEE WAGES, 3A

WINNERS AND LOSERS
A look at the industries that grew and suffered during the recession. 3A

TODAY'S MUST-READS

Tommy Tomlinson on seeing hope flower anew. 1B

Ron Green Jr. on nine storylines to watch at the Masters. 5C

81° 55°

Warm: Pleasant today. Mostly sunny Monday. 6B

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Vol. 141, No. 94

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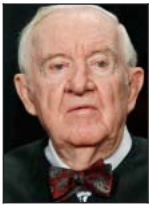
STEVENS WEIGHS PROS, CONS OF LEAVING

U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, who turns 90 this month, says he's reluctant to leave the job. But he hints that he's leaving, and the White House is bracing for another summertime confirmation battle.

THE BIG PICTURE

Kind heart, bare feet

Scott Fowler talks with S.C. basketball coach William Knopf, who stands up for what he believes in – sometimes while barefoot. SPORTS



Stevens



Knopf

Vacation lots remain vacant land

Some buyers sue as others walk away from loans. Property is often worth a fraction of what it sold for.

BY JAY PRICE
jay.price@newsobserver.com

They were lovely weekends, those choreographed sales events at North Carolina's eruption of new coastal and mountain subdivisions during the height of the vacation-lot boom between 2004 and 2006.

At several developments, invitation-only crowds – some staying in free hotel rooms – grazed on catered buffets under rented tents, picked up gift bags and listened to live music. Helicopter tours became almost standard.

But the parties ended along with the real estate bubble, and angry buyers have filed lawsuit after law-



CHUCK LIDDY - cliddy@newsobserver.com

In 2006, buyers entered a lottery for lots at Ocean Ridge Plantation near Sunset Beach.

suit against the developers, appraisers and lenders, alleging fraud.

At least 10 suits are now in state and federal court, half of them filed

in the past four months. Involved are nearly 700 plaintiffs and at least nine subdivisions – some with more than

SEE VACATION, 4A

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