APRIL 22, 2016

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
APRIL 16, 2016 – APRIL 22, 2016

FOR SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES, SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBERS:

NEWS ABOUT

STATE ISSUES 2

UA CAMPUS ISSUES 16

UAB CAMPUS ISSUES 29

UAH CAMPUS ISSUES 32

OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES 50

SPORTS 56

NATIONAL NEWS 75
ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

Lawmakers approve pay raise for teachers

It's the first real increase since 2008

By Kim Chandler
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Alabama lawmakers on Thursday gave final approval to the education budget and a 4 percent pay raise for teachers — their first tangible increase since 2008.

The House of Representatives and state Senate on Thursday approved conference committee reports on the legislation. The two bills now go to Gov. Robert Bentley who praised the legislative approval.

"Alabama's future sits in classrooms today, and our state's teachers and support staff work hard to prepare students for success," Bentley said in a statement.

The $6.3 billion education trust fund budget, which is fueled by sales and income taxes, is at its highest level since the 2008 recession.

Lawmakers had prioritized a raise for teachers in the spending bill. Teachers and education

SEE RAISE, A5

RAISE
From Page A1

employees making less than $75,000 annually will get a 4 percent raise. Education employees making more than $75,000 will get a 2 percent raise. Principals and assistant principals would also get the 4 percent raise regardless of their income.

"The last real raise they had was in 2008," Senate Finance and Taxation Committee Chairman Arthur Orr said.

A 2013 pay increase was entirely offset by increases in benefit costs.

The approved budget did not include any sort of one-time bonus that some legislators had sought for education retirees. Orr said lawmakers hope to make that a priority next year.

The budget and raise passed both chambers by wide margins.

The budget also boosts funding for the state's small, but highly praised, voluntary prekindergarten program from $48.5 million to $85.5 million.

Currently, there are only enough classrooms for 20 percent of all 4-year-olds. The $16 million increase, along with a $17.5 million federal grant, will enable another 2,800 children to attend, according to the Alabama School Readiness Alliance.
ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

Superintendent selection bill withdrawn

Plan would have eliminated school board role

By Drew Taylor
Staff Writer

A bill seeking to amend the Alabama Constitution to make the state superintendent work directly for the governor's office has been pulled from further review.

State Rep. Terri Collins, R-Decatur, has withdrawn a bill she had previously introduced that sought to make the governor the sole person to appoint the state superintendent, circumventing the current role of the Alabama Board of Education in the selection process.

The bill, known as HB537, proposed an amendment to Amendment No. 284 of the state's constitution to make the state superintendent part of the governor's Cabinet.

"I'm not planning on moving forward with it at all," Collins said Monday.

The bill was filed April 12, two days before the board selected Philip Cleveland as its interim state superintendent. Collins, who serves as chairwoman of the House's education policy committee, said she had previously talked with Gov. Robert Bentley and the board about the legislation. She said the governor, who previously said he was in favor of the legislation, changed his mind by April 14.

"... Some different things developed and I don't see the need for it at this time," she said, adding Bentley did not say why he no longer supported the legislation.

Jeff Newman, the state Board of Education's vice president, said he was never in favor of the bill.

"I think the connection is a lot better connection to the people if we have elected board members and the board members appoint the superintendent," Newman said. "I think it would work better that way."

Collins said her intention with the bill was for the state superintendent to have the influence of the executive office to support and implement policies passed by the Legislature and the board.

"I do believe there is a conflict of interest in that they appoint someone to direct and guide them, but if they ever didn't want exactly what they were directing, they could just fire them," she said.

Rep. Alan Baker, R-Brewton, was a co-sponsor of the bill and said it was designed to take politics out of the superintendent's role with the board, even though politics could have remained a factor in a potential Cabinet position.

"I have seen numerous times in my 10 years of service in the Alabama Legislature in which I felt some of the policies, which the state superintendent was a part of, were steered by politics," Baker said.

Newman said his fear with the bill was the board having no control over the superintendent.

"If the governor appoints him and that's who he is accountable to, I don't know what control we would have over the state superintendent then," he said. "Who you pretty much work for then is just the governor, and as it is right now, the governor is just one vote on the board."

The board is currently taking applications for a full-time state superintendent to replace Tommy Bice, who left office March 31.

—Reach Drew Taylor at drew.taylor@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0204.
Plans for BP settlement are on a collision course

Mike Cason  mcason@al.com

Alabama lawmakers face a decision on how the state should use money from a $1 billion settlement with BP for economic damages from the 2010 oil spill.

The budget committee in the Alabama House is expected to vote on a bill by Sen. Bill Hightower, R-Mobile, that would let voters decide whether to use much of the money on road projects, the largest share going to Mobile and Baldwin counties.

The committee meets Wednesday, the sixth anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion.

Last week, State Treasurer Young Boozer pitched a different plan to the committee, to use most of the money to bail the state out of a large debt — $855 million has been taken from the Alabama Trust Fund to prop up the state budget since 2010. Revenues to the General Fund have lagged behind the cost of state programs. With major tax increases not a realistic option, lawmakers have turned to the Trust Fund for the last seven years.

Boozer said spending the BP windfall without repaying the Trust Fund would be like squandering an inheritance that could pay off a home mortgage.

"States don't get opportunities like this very often," Boozer said.

Hightower's plan has won more favor so far. The Senate passed his proposed constitutional amendment by a vote of 36-0. It rejected a bill by Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, that was essentially a written version of Boozer's recommendation.

Orr said he's working on a contingency plan if the House declines Hightower's bill.

Only eight days remain in the regular session, so Orr said the Legislature needs to make a decision.

'REALLY BIG'

The state owes two debts to the Trust Fund, which was created in the 1980s to preserve royalties and revenue from gas wells in state water off the Gulf Coast.

The state borrowed $161 million from the Trust Fund in 2010. It borrowed $437 million from 2013 to 2015. Both transactions were to prop up the sagging General Fund.

A constitutional amendment mandates that the state repay the $161 million by 2020. Repayment of the $437 million is not as ironclad.

The Legislature passed a bill three years ago to set up a repayment plan that runs through 2026. It was called the People's Trust Act. So far, $15 million has been repaid, leaving $422 million.

Hightower's plan would repay the constitutionally required $161 million to the Trust Fund, but not the $422 million.

Hightower says that applying the bulk of the BP money to road projects is a better investment than plowing most of it into the Trust Fund. He said it would boost the economy and help recruit employers looking for locations with good highways.

"Right now, we need jobs and infrastructure," Hightower said. "Why don't we take these one-time dollars and do something really big with it?"

If the bill clears the House General Fund committee today, it would need approval of three-fifths of House members to be placed on the ballot for voters.

If voters agree, the Legislature would have to pass a bill authorizing a bond issue of about $650 million for the road projects. The annual BP payments would be dedicated to pay off the bonds.

Mobile and Baldwin counties would get $260 million for road projects. The other regions of the state would share a total of about $230 million.

Another $5 million would go to Strengthen Alabama Homes, a program created in 2011 to help people retrofit their houses to guard against catastrophic wind damage.

No road projects are listed in the bill, but Hightower says there are two high priorities. One is improving and extending U.S. 98 in Mobile County. The other would connect the Baldwin Beach Express to Interstate 10.

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY'

The state is to receive the $1 billion BP settlement in installments over 18 years.

Boozer's idea is to sell the payment stream and capture the current value, which he said would amount to $739 million at a 3.5 percent discount rate. That would give the state immediate cash to pay off its obligations.

Boozer said low interest rates make it an ideal time to make such a transaction.

"Pay off the debt to the Trust Fund would not only lift a huge obligation, but would boost annual revenues to the General Fund because it receives an annual payout based on the size of the Trust Fund," Boozer said. "This makes all the sense in the world," he said.

House budget chairman Steve Clouse, R-Ozark, supports the Boozer plan. "We borrowed that money on a one-time basis to get us through some tough years, and we still have tough years in the General Fund budget," Clouse said. "This gives us a wonderful opportunity to pay it back on a one-time basis.

One of the selling points for Hightower's plan is that it favors the coastal counties most directly harmed by the spill. But Boozer says its fair to tailor a plan for statewide benefit, noting there is a separate $1.3 billion settlement for environmental damages.

Still, Hightower says, most of the benefits of his plan also reach statewide. And he notes that the final decision will be left to voters. "I think people know that we have to have roads built," Hightower said.
TOURISM

Visitors spent nearly $500M last year

Report also says tourism responsible for almost 7,000 jobs last year

By Stephen Dethrage
Staff Writer

Visitors to Tuscaloosa County spent nearly $500 million in the area last year, according to a report commissioned by the Alabama Tourism Department. The ATD said travelers injected $495 million into the county’s economy and that tourism was responsible for 6,929 jobs in the area in 2015.

Their report, which was conducted by Auburn University Montgomery and will be released in full in early May, also ranked Alabama’s counties by travel-related expenditures. Baldwin County led the pack, where tourists spent $3.9 million on hotels, restaurants, shopping and transportation. Jefferson, Madison and Mobile counties followed, with Montgomery County ranking fifth place with $777 million earned from visitors.

Although Tuscaloosa County didn’t crack the top five, tourism spending there increased by 9 percent over figures from 2014, according to the report.

“We are thrilled to see strong tourism numbers for our market, said Gina Simpson, CEO of Tuscaloosa Tourism & Sports. “In our recruiting efforts, we target strategic events that have a large economic impact on Tuscaloosa. We have worked hard over the past couple years to increase the number of visitors, and we hope to see that number continue to rise from our efforts. Tuscaloosa is truly a one and only, and visitors are becoming more and more interested in our story.”

Statewide, profits grew by 7.7 percent, as 25 million travelers spent $12.6 billion in the Yellowhammer State.

“The tourism numbers for 2015 bring great economic news for Alabama,” state tourism director Lee Sentell said, adding that tourism “creates jobs, it grows local economies and generates needed tax revenues. Travel spending in Alabama has increased by 86 percent over the previous 13 years.”

According to the report, the money spent by tourists saves each household in Alabama $424 each year in taxes.

—Stephen Dethrage can be reached at stephen.dethrage@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0227.

SEE TOURISM, B2
GROWTH
FROM A1

The northern half of the county has remained quiet and largely rural. But the southern half is exploding, from Spanish Fort to Daphne and Fairhope, across to Loxley, Robertsdale and Foley, and down to Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

Shelby County outside Birmingham was once Alabama's standard-bearer for growth, but no more.

'GREAT CHOICES'

According to statistics provided by the Baldwin County Association of Realtors, the county has experienced a 39 percent increase in the number of residential properties purchased since 2011. And during the period, sales in each new year topped the previous one.

The average days-on-the-market for a house in Baldwin County was 169 in 2011 and 173 in 2012. The average fell to 158 in 2014, then to 145 in 2015.

At the same time, the median sales price went from $190,000 in 2011 to $233,007 in 2015.

"People are coming to Baldwin County because it's affordable and offers all the benefits without high crime rates, and great choices in real estate," said Sheila Dodson, CEO of the Association of Realtors. She acknowledged the ongoing construction of new subdivisions on the Eastern Shore, namely in and around Spanish Fort, Fairhope and Daphne.

The proximity to Mobile is obviously a bonus for the Eastern Shore. Mobile boasts of the coast's major workplaces: Shipbuilder Austal USA employs 4,275, the University of South Alabama employs approximately 4,000 and Mobile's hospitals have 5,000 or more.

Airbus built its first North American aircraft assembly plant in Mobile. The plant opened in 2015 and is expected to add 1,000 workers in the next couple of years.

Baldwin civic leaders and boosters can cite a long list of attributes fueling the growth. They mention the lure of the beach, relative affordability, popular schools, a coastal vibe, and on and on. And they mention that Baldwin feels safe. The latter, for County Commissioner Chris Elliott, is a sometimes understated attribute.

"We'll have petty thefts, but compared to large cities, we just don't have the violent crime," Elliott said.

Sheriff Huey "Hoss" Mack said the county doesn't have many homicides. He believes that the record would be no more than a dozen. "On average, we will have three to four homicides a year. A big year for us is six," he said.

Westward across the bay, Mobile had 26 homicides in 2015, and is on pace to exceed that figure in 2016. Eastward across the Florida line, Pensacola recorded 27 homicides last year.

"We're book-ended with two metropolitan areas with crime rates at the national averages or above," Mack said. "That's where you see the big numbers. You come to Baldwin County and see the low numbers."

That particularly stands out, he said, in light of the booming population.

'OUR CHALLENGE'

At present, Baldwin is the seventh-largest county in Alabama, but it's on track to leapfrog Tuscaloosa County to No. 6. Only 276 residents separate the two counties. Tuscaloosa County added 1,457 residents between 2014 and 2015.

"We're excited about the situation," said Helko Einfeld, executive director with the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Growth has been spotty, Einfeld said, with areas like Fairhope and Daphne booming and others less so. "It's a mixed bag," he said.

Baldwin's population has climbed by 21,444 since 2010, pushing it past 200,000, according to the latest Census data.

The next-quickest growers were Madison and Lee, at 18,278 and 16,697, respectively. Madison County is home to Huntsville, while Lee County includes Auburn.

In fact, those three counties have accounted for 49 percent of the state's population increase since 2010.

But it's Baldwin that stands out. The county — with a land mass larger than Rhode Island — features no single large metro. Instead, it's an array of smaller cities and their residential surrounds.

SEE GROWTH, A4

John Sharp jsharp@al.com
merce, commenting on the growth in general.

But there are obvious challenges. Among the most critical is dealing with traffic congestion.

In the summer months, when the county's biggest draw — the shiny, sandy beaches — bring tourists from all over, highways such as Alabama 59 are jammed for miles.

"That's our challenge," Elliott said. "It could mess us up."

Baldwin leaders and lawmakers are pushing for funding to extend the Baldwin Beach Express from Interstate 10 to I-65, creating a wide new path for beach-bound motorists. The first 12.8 miles of the new road opened in 2014, linking the Orange Beach/Gulf Shores and I-10.

The full Beach Express' construction is included in a bill, sponsored by state Sen. Bill Hightower, R-Mobile. That bill would divert some of the state's $1 billion economic settlement in the BP oil spill case toward funding the construction of the 24.5-mile extension.

County and city officials are also looking at ways to ease pressure on U.S. 98 and Alabama 181 on the Eastern Shore. For U.S. 98, a synchronized traffic light plan is being offered. For Alabama 181, a $3.5 million redesign of its I-10 intersection is in the planning stages.

Schools are another challenge. The countywide school system enrolled 16,000 in 1985-86; it topped 31,000 this year.

The 45-school school system pegs the growth rate at 500 students per year. That's about the size of one new elementary school annually. But Baldwin has built no new public school since 2009.

More than 90 portable trailer classrooms have been placed at school campuses to help cope with the crowding.

But last year, Baldwin voters overwhelmingly rejected new property taxes meant to pay for a $350 million school construction and renovation campaign.

With that plan scrapped, school leaders are looking at smaller fixes. The school board recently announced it would stick with a $15.5 million building plan that will add classrooms and cafeterias to six schools. The additions are expected to reduce the number of portables to 60-65.

"The growth has been tremendous," said Superintendent Eddie Tyler, who joined the school system last fall. "It's always encouraging but, there again, you have to figure out how to manage the growth."

He said, "We find ourselves in a situation with our facilities and money ... it's just difficult right now."

Elliott, the county commissioner, said the perception remains that Baldwin has quality schools, and thus is a good place for families. "Schools will continue to be a driver," he said.

But it's not just young families coming for the schools. Retirees are moving to beach cities and the Eastern Shore.

Herb Malone, president/CEO of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism, said the "quality of life" is the lure.

Said Malone: "Most people who have moved here attribute it to the overall lifestyle ... the great assets we have." He said, "To some it's the cost of living, to others it's about a nicer climate than where they are moving from. It's probably a little altogether."
HudsonAlpha teaming with cancer innovator

Parker Institute established by Napster, Facebook billionaire

Lee Roop  lruop@al.com

Huntsville's HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology will join a major new cancer-fighting effort led by one of Silicon Valley's most successful innovators.

The institute will collaborate with the newly formed Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy established by billionaire Sean Parker, co-founder of Napster and first president of Facebook.

The Parker Institute will focus on the emerging field of cancer immunotherapy, which uses the body's own immune system to fight cancer cells. Six major cancer centers are leading the effort with collaboration from more than 300 scientists and 40-plus research centers, including HudsonAlpha.

"At the end of the day, I see this as a bold experiment to see if this type of collaboration can help move the field forward faster, and bring solutions to patients," said Parker, who is investing $250 million in the institute.

Parker told Reuters that, "Any breakthrough made at one center is immediately available to another center without any kind of IP (intellectual property) entanglements or bureaucracy."

"The Parker Institute is bringing together scientists and entrepreneurs, and that is exactly the idea set and culture that HudsonAlpha established when we founded the institute in 2008," said Dr. Richard Myers, president and science director of HudsonAlpha.

"We have seen this work — bringing health solutions from the laboratory bench to patients much more quickly than in traditional organizations. We are honored to be a part of this unique research effort," he said.
GOVERNOR SCANDAL

Collier sues Bentley for wrongful termination

Ex-law enforcement secretary accused governor of having affair with adviser

By Kim Chandler and Melissa Brown
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Gov. Robert Bentley's former law enforcement secretary sued his old boss Tuesday, saying that Bentley wrongly fired him.

Spencer Collier, who the day after his firing accused Bentley of having an affair with an adviser, says in the lawsuit that Bentley and the adviser, Rebekah Mason, made misleading statements to the media to try to discredit him. "Their lies have hurt me financially, have severely damaged my reputation and they have made it their mission to permanently end my career in law enforcement," Collier said in a statement.

The lawsuit is the latest twist in a sordid political tale that has engulfed the 73-year-old governor. It has been punctuated by back-and-forth salvos between Bentley and Collier, who were once close friends when they served together in the Alabama House.

Bentley has previously said Collier was fired after an internal review found a misuse of funds at the state law enforcement agency.

"Mr. Collier was terminated of his duties at ALEA for cause. Once the facts and circumstances become public, I am confident that the justification for terminating him will be shown. We will aggressively see lawsuit," A7

LAWSUIT

From Page A1

defend this lawsuit," Bentley said in a statement.

Mason referred calls to her attorney. A message left for him was not immediately returned.

Collier's lawsuit accuses the governor of firing him because the two disagreed over a request to file an affidavit saying investigators found no evidence of misconduct by prosecutors in the ethics case against House Speaker Mike Hubbard.

Collier said he wanted to file the affidavit, but the governor didn't want him to. He says Bentley asked him to lie to prosecutors and that he was unwilling to do that because it would be illegal.

"As a law enforcement officer, I had a duty to uphold the law and to cooperate with law enforcement investigations," Collier said.

The governor is expected to be a prosecution witness at Hubbard's ethics trial next month. Among the charges Hubbard faces is using his public office to benefit his clients by lobbying the governor's office.

"The governor did not tell anyone including Spencer Collier not to comply with the law — just the opposite. The governor wanted everyone treated correctly and in accordance with the proper law enforcement procedures," the governor's spokeswoman has said.

The governor has admitted making inappropriate remarks to Mason, who has since resigned, but said he did not have a "physical affair." However, racy recordings have surfaced of Bentley making sexually charged remarks, referencing kissing and touching, to someone with the same first name.

The governor's new law enforcement secretary, Stan Stabler, said last week that it was Collier who sent a state helicopter in 2014 to fly Bentley's forgotten wallet from his hometown in Tuscaloosa to his beach house at Fort Morgan. Collier said he never approved the flight.

Bentley said he did ask state security to retrieve his wallet, but he did not know they were going to use a helicopter to do it.

The lawsuit, which names Bentley, Mason, Stabler and others as defendants, is the latest legal entanglement for Bentley.

An Alabama legislator wants the House of Representatives to vote Thursday on a resolution to create a 15-person investigatory committee to see if there are grounds to impeach Bentley.

"It's crystal clear this governor needs to go," Republican Rep. Ed Henry of Hartselle said Tuesday. "If he really cared about this state and about the people, he would put them first and resign."
Bentley scandal: For cut of UA billboard funds, Jon Mason's company served as go-between

By: Connor Sheets

The University of Alabama paid a company owned by Jon Mason tens of thousands of dollars this year in connection with billboards the company neither designed nor physically installed.

Mason is the husband of Rebekah Caldwell Mason, a former top adviser to Gov. Robert Bentley who resigned from his administration last month amid allegations that she and Bentley had an affair.

University spokesman Chris Bryant told AL.com via email that UA paid Jon Mason's company, JRM Enterprises, $74,450 so far this year "for JRM's coordination of the production, installation and rental agreements for billboards" posted in Dallas and Phoenix in advance of major Alabama football games within those cities' metro areas.

But the company did not design or create the billboard advertisements bearing the slogan "Roll Dallas Roll" that UA paid JRM to help it post in the Dallas area during the run-up to the Cotton Bowl, held Dec. 31 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

Several weeks after the game, the university made two payments totaling $45,450 to the Tuscaloosa-based advertising, marketing and design agency, using a credit card to "expedite" the processing of the money, which Bryant said was for work related to the Dallas billboards.

And the university has over the past seven years paid more than half a million dollars to subsidiaries of the company that rents out the billboards. For those transactions, UA has forgone an intermediary like JRM in favor of direct payments to the billboard company, university spending records show.

Bryant offered an explanation via email Tuesday evening for why UA sometimes buys billboards through JRM. He did not answer questions about how the university selected or vetted JRM, beyond stating that "[t]hey were selected because they are a Tuscaloosa business that offers media buying services."

"Media buyers, such as JRM, find available locations, negotiate rates, coordinate production and finalize rental agreements in a more efficient and cost-effective manner than handling it in house, which saves the university money," Bryant wrote.

"UA has its own graphic design staff. We don't know if JRM provides this service or not."

Last month, The Tuscaloosa News reported that four University of Alabama employees won the American Advertising Federation Tuscaloosa award for integrated advertising campaigns for their work on the "Roll Dallas Roll" campaign.

See next page
UA pays those four employees annual salaries totaling well over $200,000 to do graphic design, marketing communications and other tasks that included the Dallas billboards.

This year alone, the university has already paid JRM nearly $75,000 to "coordinate" billboards. Since 2010, UA has paid JRM a total of $245,600, university records show.

And on Monday the university issued a statement first obtained by Yellowhammer News that indicated that "[t]here are two additional invoices pending in the amount of $39,150 for billboards in Alabama that were finalized February 25, 2016."

In the Monday statement, Bryant added that UA is not aware of what percentage JRM takes as commission when coordinating billboards for the university. But he said that "[a]ccording to industry standards, a sales agent placing the billboards would typically earn a 15 percent commission from the billboard company."

Jon Mason did not respond to an email seeking comment Tuesday.

JRM served as an intermediary this year between UA and Lamar Advertising Company. It passed university money to Lamar, a national outfit that oversees the rental of thousands of billboards across the U.S., including the ones UA rented in Dallas and Phoenix, where the Alabama Crimson Tide won the National Championship on Jan. 11.

"They purchased billboards from us for years; they just purchase billboards on behalf of their clients. JRM Enterprises is an ad agency and they purchased billboards from us in the past," Hal Kilshaw, Lamar's Louisiana-based vice president of governmental relations, told AL.com via phone Tuesday morning.

"The agency handles the details of getting the billboards placed, and then bills the clients."

University records show that UA has paid Lamar subsidiaries hundreds of thousands of dollars that did not pass through JRM.

UA made dozens of direct payments to Lamar Texas Limited Partnership, a Texas-based subsidiary of Lamar Advertising Company, totaling more than $448,000 between October 2009 and September 2014, according to the records.

The university has also made a series of payments to three entities called "Lamar Media 2," "Lamar Media 3" and "Lamar Media L2" totaling more than $218,000 since 2009. So far this year, UA has paid "Lamar Media 3" more than $27,000.

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission records show that Lamar Advertising Company has a Delaware-based subsidiary called Lamar Media Corp., but it is not entirely clear if the three "Lamar Media" entities UA paid are affiliated with the company. More detailed financial records filed by universities in other states state that "Lamar Media 2" and "Lamar Media 3" indicate that the outfits provide advertising services much like those offered by Lamar Advertising Company.
Last week, Bryant sent AL.com an email explaining why UA selected JRM to sometimes handle its billboard coordination rather than going with another company or simply having UA's in-house staff handle those duties.

"JRM is a vendor we have used because they are local, and we knew they offered this service," Bryant said.

"The decision was made by UA's University Relations office, now called Strategic Communications. This office produces and purchases advertising for UA. These purchases were made by University relations, now Strategic Communications."

There have also been questions in recent weeks about why the nearly $75,000 in disbursements the university made to JRM so far this year were processed via PayPal, a rare method of payment for UA. Bryant downplayed the fact that more than half of the money UA spent via PayPal between January and March went to JRM, calling it "a common practice for universities."

In 2011, Bentley appointed Jon Mason to the top post at the Governor's Faith-Based Community Initiative, now known as Serve Alabama. He still holds that position, for which he receives an annual salary of $98,583.42.
Spencer Collier files suit against Gov. Robert Bentley, Rebekah Mason

By: John Archibald

Spencer Collier, the fired former head of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency whose words have ripped a hole in the administration of Gov. Robert Bentley, today filed suit against the governor, his former political adviser Rebekah Mason and others, claiming he was improperly fired and impugned.

The suit, filed this morning, names the Council for Excellent Government, the secretive 501c(4) that contributed to Mason's pay. It names current ALEA Secretary Stan Stabler, the Bentley campaign and Mason's company, RCM Communications, among others.

The suit claims defamation of character, invasion of privacy, wrongful termination and reckless conduct, among other things. It says Collier suffered financial and personal harm, and seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages.

The complaint – as Collier has alleged from the beginning – says he was punished by Bentley, at the direction of Mason, because he refused to lie to the attorney general's office about prosecutorial misconduct alleged by the defense in the case of Alabama House Speaker Mike Hubbard.

"As a law enforcement officer, I had a duty to uphold the law and to cooperate with law enforcement investigations," Collier said. "When Governor Bentley asked me to lie to a prosecutor from the Attorney General's Office, he was asking me to commit a crime and I refused to comply with that request. That is why Governor Bentley fired me and then participated in a campaign to ruin my name and reputation."

Collier, from the day he initially made the claims, has repeated that he would make them under oath. The lawsuit could allow that to happen, and could force others in the case do the same.

The governor's office did not immediately respond to questions about the suit.

Collier attempts to penetrate the sovereign immunity of state officials by suing the governor and Stabler personally, claiming their actions were malicious and fraudulent. He argues that Mason was not a government employee at the time of the wrongs and is therefore not eligible for immunity.

The case lays out much of the same story Collier has given since he revealed the existence of the governor's explicit text messages and audio recordings he claims:

* On the evening of April 5, 2014, Collier and Chief Ray Lewis, Stabler's supervisor, drove Bentley to a political event in Greenville and confronted Bentley about the text and recording, where Collier advised Bentley that it would be a crime if he used state resources or campaign
funds to facilitate a relationship with Mason, and Bentley denied using state resources or campaign funds to facilitate the relationship.

* On or about January 11, 2016, Baron Coleman went to the ALEA office requesting to meet with Collier. Coleman alleged that the prosecutor in the Hubbard case had illegally leaked Grand Jury testimony. "Under Collier's orders, ALEA investigated Coleman's allegations and concluded nothing was done wrong by the Attorney General's Office and closed the file."

* Bentley told Collier to tell the Attorney General's Office that the ALEA investigation was still ongoing despite the fact that the ALEA investigation was closed. Bentley also instructed Collier to not provide an affidavit. Collier, believing that was illegal, disobeyed Bentley's orders. Collier, with input from his counsel and the Governor's legal advisor, provided a truthful affidavit to the Alabama Attorney General's Office.

* Bentley and Mason became furious with Collier. In a February 16, meeting in Bentley's office, "Bentley and Mason screamed at Collier and openly chastised him and his staff for not following Bentley's orders."

* Bentley put Collier on medical leave "to punish him for cooperating with the Attorney General's Office and Bentley told reporters that Collier disobeyed Bentley's order to not provide an affidavit." Bentley appointed Stabler as ALEA Secretary.

Perhaps most interesting in the suit, to the people of Alabama, are the interrogatories, or questions to both Stabler and Mason. In those interrogatories, he asks, among many other things, about Mason's pay and employment in recent years, whether she has had a parking spot at the Capitol before or after her resignation, and a photo ID.

He asks her to describe her duties as chief political adviser, and asks who paid her, and whether she has worked for the governor in any way since her resignation. He asks that she identify everyone who contributed money to her directly and indirectly, or to her husband's company.

It asks for "any and all cell phone records, including those of 'burner phones' that you used from January 1, 2010 to present."
What happened this week

Monday
› Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley visited the Alabama Robotics Technology Park, again offering no comment on the sex scandal that has engulfed his administration. Pre-briefing “ground rules” are routinely used to warn media and others that Bentley will not discuss the alleged affair with his now-former senior adviser, Rebekah Caldwell Mason. Following the event at the robotics park in Tanner, Bentley said: “I have no plans to step down. We have done nothing illegal,” and added there was “absolutely no basis” for impeachment.

› The commission of state legislators who would investigate Bentley to determine if impeachment is warranted began to take shape. State Rep. Danny Crawford, R-Athens, — one of 10 lawmakers who co-sponsored a resolution outlining articles of impeachment brought by state Rep. Ed Henry — said there would be 10 Republicans and five Democrats on a group given the authority to “look into it and see what’s going on.”

Tuesday
› AL.com reported that Rebekah Caldwell Mason did not disclose all the sources of her husband’s income to the State Ethics Commission while serving as Bentley’s Communications Director in 2013. An analysis of economic interest documents showed Mason didn’t list his consulting income earned as JRM Enterprises.

› JRM Enterprises — a Tuscaloosa-based advertising, marketing and design company founded in 2005 — has received a total of $245,600 from the University of Alabama since 2010. Jon Mason didn’t report income from JRM or UA on his 2011 disclosure forms, despite receiving two payments from the university in January and February of that year.

› AL.com reported former Alabama Secretary of Law Enforcement Spencer Collier’s wife was on Bentley’s payroll earlier this year, and is still listed as a state employee. State records showed the governor’s office issued Melissa M. Collier seven paychecks totaling $14,262.96 between Dec. 31 and March 30. The most recent of those was issued about a week after her husband was fired and went public with allegations about the Bentley-Mason relationship.

› The move to impeach Bentley appeared to stall, as House Rules Chairman Mac McCutcheon said the resolution to set up a committee to investigate impeachment articles is not yet ready with just 10 days remaining in the legislative session.

Wednesday
› An AL.com report confirmed Bentley had his protection detail deliver his wallet to him in Gulf Shores after he stormed out of his Tuscaloosa home following a marital spat. Alabama Law Enforcement Agency flight logs confirmed that on December 26, 2014, an ALEA helicopter left Montgomery for Tuscaloosa and then flew from Tuscaloosa to Gulf Shores.

› Within seconds of ending a speech in Huntsville, Bentley bolted from the venue and avoided the media — the first time since the scandal broke in March that he refused media questions during a public appearance. Bentley got a tepid response from the audience — polite applause but no standing ovation as he covered an array of topics with the underlying theme of making Alabama a stronger state.

› Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey told the Auburn Plainsman, the campus newspaper for her alma mater Auburn University, that the scandal surrounding Bentley’s administration has been “disappointing.” Ivey reiterated she was prepared to serve as governor if Bentley steps down or is forced from office, but did not call on Bentley to resign, saying that remained “his call.”

Thursday
› Jon Mason refiled a series of financial disclosure forms to reflect the tens of thousands of dollars he was paid by the University of Alabama.

› Bentley addressed the use of a state helicopter to deliver his wallet from Tuscaloosa to Gulf Shores, saying the incident “looks bad,” but was not illegal. “You have to have your wallet for security reasons,” he told reporters. “I’m the governor. And I had to have money. I had to buy something to eat. You have to have identification.” The governor said he asked that the wallet be brought to him but did not ask for a helicopter to be used.

› Bentley reported his use of a state helicopter to deliver his wallet from Tuscaloosa to Gulf Shores, saying the incident “looks bad,” but was not illegal. “You have to have your wallet for security reasons,” he told reporters. “I’m the governor. And I had to have money. I had to buy something to eat. You have to have identification.” The governor said he asked that the wallet be brought to him but did not ask for a helicopter to be used.

› AL.com reported that Bentley, Mason, Ardis, the governor’s Deputy Chief of Staff Jon Barganier and his security detail all flew to Las Vegas on a state plane to attend the Republican Governors Association Annual Conference late last year and caught a Celine Dion concert along the way. Bentley went backstage and made Dion an honorary Alabamian, posed for pictures, and enjoyed a concert Ardis called “amazing.”

Ardis said Bentley paid for all the Celine Dion tickets, and the association reimbursed the Bentley campaign for the cost of the conference and the flight.

Collier said Bentley made a concerted effort to keep his security detail away from events including the concert and called that “highly unusual and against protocol.” Ardis said the security detail didn’t have tickets to the concert, so it waited outside, just as it did at some breakfasts inside the governors association conference. Otherwise they were there to protect Bentley as usual, she said.
They call her ‘Google Goggles’

Internship, eyewear help player excel

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

Google "Chandler Dare" and you'll find she plays softball for the University of Alabama.

What you won't find is for whom she spent last summer as an intern — Google.

The junior from Moundville, who played at American Christian Academy in high school, was based in Tech Corners, part of the company's futuristic Googleplex campus in Sunnydale, Calif. Each day, she said, was an adventure.

"There was always something new that you see, something absolutely cool," she said.

Like the time she was walking around a breakfast area — employees and interns are fed three meals a day — and saw a guy wearing Google-issue plaid pajamas.

SEE GOGGLES, A7
walking his dog into his office.

"I asked and somebody said you can wear whatever you want here, and you can bring your dog to work as long as they’re trained," she said.

She also saw colorful bicycles the company provides for people to wheel from one place to another on campus. There was a courtyard with a swimming pool and beach volleyball courts. And soccer fields where Google folk play Quidditch, the favored sport in the Harry Potter book series.

“They weren’t actually flying, but I’m sure they probably do have flying brooms — you never know,” she said. “Anything you can imagine, they had.”

A public relations major, Dare spent time with the company's head of PR. She was introduced to Google X, a division that works on such things as balloons that deliver wifi to areas that don’t have it and self-driving cars, although she can’t talk about some of the top-secret projects.

“T’m not allowed to say anything about Google X and some of their other stuff,” she said.

Dare worked on Google Cardboard, a product with cheap headsets that work through smartphones to deliver images and information. It can do things such as give a virtual tour of the Eiffel Tower.

“You know how most internships you don’t do anything? Well, she was on a team that created something,” teammate Leona Lafaële said. “She’s super smart.”

Dare insists she didn’t actually create anything, even if she did get to work on it.

Since her return, Dare has served as a Google ambassador on the UA campus, demonstrating product innovations to fellow students while also participating in research directed from Google’s headquarters.

The experience opened Dare’s eyes.

“I knew it was big, but once I got there and listened and learned about everything, I am absolutely blown away with what all they’re doing,” she said.

Something else happened last summer that impacted Dare’s vision: She began wearing glasses, without which she batted a healthy .347 in 2015.

With them, she’s hitting over .400 this season.

“I wasn’t really seeing the ball well,” she confessed. “Sometimes I’d be like, I really didn’t see that pitch. Since I got the glasses last summer, I’ve been seeing it.”

Dare, who is 5 feet, 2 inches, couldn’t find any adult sports glasses that would fit, so she settled for a children’s model. It has oversized black borders around the lenses and a strap around the back of her head that holds them in place.

Her first reaction when she put them on and looked into a mirror: “Oh, my gosh.”

But her coach, Patrick Murphy, isn’t interested in fashion statements.

“Whatever helps, wear them,” he said.

With some help from her teammates, Dare has made peace with her bespectacled game day look.

“The team actually calls me ‘Google Goggles,’” she said. “They fit my head and I can see the ball, so I don’t care. I had to put appearance behind me. If I can see the ball, that’s what matters most.”

Dare carries a 3.95 grade-point average and will graduate next month. She has already been accepted into graduate school and will pursue a master’s degree in business sports management while she plays out her senior season.

She wants to work in sports technology. She figures her athletics background at UA and her Google internship will be a good combination on her resume.

Her distinctive eyewear serves as a symbol of both worlds.

“It is a kind of nerdy look,” she said, “but somebody nerds are going to rule the world, so that’s my opinion on it. I’m a nerd.”

Something else you won’t find on Google.

— Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
UA SYMPOSIUM

Scholars will salute Shakespeare

Event marks 400th anniversary of death

By Mark Hughes Cobb
Staff Writer

Why celebrate the 400th anniversary of the death of a man who never reigned, probably never got rich, and didn’t even leave a large family of descendants behind?

Because, despite his lack of material power, William Shakespeare reshaped the world.

“All our lives are enriched, if not changed, by Shakespeare,” said Steve Burch, professor of theater history and playwriting in UA’s Department of Theatre and Dance and co-artistic director of The Rude Mechanicals, Tuscaloosa’s summer Shakespeare-performance troupe.

“One-hundred years away, we will still see ourselves in his words,” said Deborah Parker, Burch’s wife and a frequent actor with the Rude Mechanicals and other local groups.

Sigmund Freud looked to the Bard’s dissection of motivations in developing his theories. Renowned critic Harold Bloom suggested Shakespeare created the modern person, defined and outlined what it means to be human, to be alive. We

SEE SCHOLAR, B2
The Tuscaloosa News
Thursday, April 21, 2016

Scholar
From Page B1

might not think or feel — and certainly wouldn’t
speak — the same, Bloom argued, without the man
from Stratford upon Avon.

Around the world — his translated works are
performed in virtually every reach of the great
globe itself — Shakespeare-based exhibitions,
performances, screenings, conferences, papers,
lectures and more are being held in commemo-
ration of his death, April 23, 1616.

Tuscaloosa’s no exception. The Tuscaloosa
Symphony Orchestra titled its 2015-2016 season
as “A Celebration of Words & Music.” Its final
concert, “A Salute to the Bard,” will be at 7 p.m.
May 9 in UA’s Moody Concert Hall. It will offer
selections from Mendelssohn’s “A Midsummer
Night’s Dream,” Bernstein’s “Symphonic Dances
from ‘West Side Story,’” Kollog’s “Pyram-
us and Thisbe” and more.

This Friday and Sat-
urday, UA will celebrate
“The Poet’s Shakespeare —
A Symposium on the
Occasion of the 400th
Anniversary of Shake-
peare’s Death,” sponsored
by the Hudson Strode
Program in Renaissance
Studies and the Program
in Creative Writing at the
Department of English.
All symposium events, on and off campus, are free and
open to the public.

Shakespeare’s work is
“incredibly generative” for
scholars, both faculty and
students, said Nicholas R.
Helms, an instructor in the
Hudson Strode Program in
Renaissance Studies at UA.

The two-day Shakespeare Symposium’s will be at
Bryant-Ko man Hall on the Bryce Campus of UA unless
otherwise noted. All events are free and open to the
public.

Friday

■ 10 a.m. — Heather Dubrow (Fordham University): “Be
thou the tenth muse?”
■ 11 a.m. — Kimberly Johnson (Brigham Young Univer-
sity): “Shakespeare and the Grammar of Perception”
■ Noon — Lunch at Bryant-Jordan
■ 1:30 p.m. — Aaron Kunin (Pomona College): “What’s the
Opposite of Negative Capability?”
■ 2:30 p.m. — Malachi Black (University of San Diego):
“Shakespeare in an Age of Incongruity”
■ 3:30 p.m. — Aaron Shurin (University of San Francisco):
“Sometime of the Night”
■ 7:30 p.m. — Readings by the speakers at the Jenison-
Van de Graaff Mansion, 1305 Greensboro Ave.

Saturday

■ 10 a.m. — Greg Miller (Millsaps College): “The act a
slave to limit: Shakespeare and Freedom’s Play of Mind”
■ 11 a.m. — Laurie Ann Guerrero (poet laureate of Texas):
“When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes”
■ 2 p.m. — Linda Gregerson (University of Michigan):
“Stealth Shakespeare”
■ 3 p.m. — Joseph Campagna (Rice University): “Shake-
peare’s Curse”
■ 4 p.m. — Roundtable discussion
■ 5:30-7:15 p.m. — MFA reading at the Dinah Washington
Cultural Arts Center, 612 Greensboro Ave.

“We really got that they were taking
Shakespeare off the pedestal, and bringing
him down to earth.”

—Nicholas R. Helms, an instructor in the Hudson Strode
Program in Renaissance Studies at UA

leading not just to perfor-
mancess and readings, but
active engagement. In
earlier years of his doc-
toral studies at UA, Helms
co-created Improvable
Fictions, a staged-reading
group for classical theater,
as a spin-off of The Rude
Mechanics, for which he
has served as dramaturg,
assistant director and
actor. Helms said he real-
ized how crucial it was for
students to not just read
the words on the page, but
hear them, see them.

“Seems to me theater
professionals like the
challenge of his work”
said O’Dair, professor of
English and director of the
Strode Program of Shake-
peare. “The richness of
his writing can help you
think about yourself, your
identity, about how you
treat other and about how
you want to be treated.
You can learn a lot about
actual life. And simply,
he’s just fun.”

Though regarded now as
a poet, not just for his son-
ets and long-form works,
but for the verse and prose
in his plays, Shakespeare
wasn’t writing for posteri-
ity. Few even read plays
in his day; the First Folio
wasn’t published until
seven years after his death,
compiled by his colleagues
John Heminges and Henry
Condell, replacing earlier,
flawed publications.

“He was a working play-
wright, getting people in
the seats, building a
name, so the ‘Shake-
ppeare’ meant something to
an audience,” Burch
said. “He thrilled them; he
entertained them.”

“It’s not just high art,
but a living art,” Helms
said.

The scholars vividly
remember their introduc-
tions, their “Shakespeare
gateway drug,” they joked.
O’Dair played Hamlet...in
the fourth grade. She added
Scrooge to her repertoire
the next year. “‘Then I got
shy,” she said.

Parker memorized a
passage from “Romeo and
Juliet” for an eighth-grade
class, one she can still
recall today.

“The more I dug into
it, the more richness and
complexity I found,” she said.

Helms’ high school in
Georgia used to bus
students to Atlanta’s
Shakespeare Tavern for
performances.

“We really got that they were taking
Shakespeare off the pedestal, and bring-
ing him down to earth,” Helms said.

The down-to-earth playwright reshaped
the world through lan-
guage. Shakespeare
created hundreds, perhaps
thousands, of words now
in common use. If you’ve
ever gone on an obscene
rant; felt lonely eyeball-
ing a majestic moonbeam;
found yourself aroused and
blushing in your bed-
room at dawn; failed to
believe gossip about a
flawed, unreal, barefaced
savagery; admired your
champion’s frugal radi-
ance, you’d understand
how hard it is to compile
those Shakespeare-crafted
words into phrases.
Students' work linked to space missions

Mechanical engineering teams design tools for NASA competition

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Two teams of mechanical engineering students at the University of Alabama have spent their senior year designing tools for a NASA competition inspired by the space agency's plans for human exploration of the solar system.

Each of the six-person teams are competing in NASA's Microgravity Neutral Buoyancy Experiment Design Teams (Micro-g NExT) competition. The teams were selected after submitting proposals in October, UA senior Trent Lesley said. They are among approximately 22 teams from schools nationwide.

The teams are designing prototypes for tools NASA anticipates it will need for a planned mission in the next decade that will attempt to land a craft on a near-earth asteroid and redirect a multi-ton boulder from the asteroid into the moon's orbit where it can be studied further. NASA plans to use the asteroid redirect

SEE NASA, B9

Online
To see more photos of University of Alabama engineering students working on prototypes of instruments that NASA someday might use for space missions, go to www.tuscaloosanews.com.
mission in the 2020s to develop new technologies and spaceflight experience for a manned mission to Mars in the 2030s.

The student teams developed proposals based on one of five tool prototype challenges, senior Blake Thompson said.

The students developed designs, cost estimates, and secured grants for funding. The projects took up both semesters of senior design, Lesley said. The teams spent the fall and spring semesters refining and testing the designs and doing outreach at schools across the state for the NASA project and generally to increase interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields, Lesley and Thompson said.

Typically, the mechanical engineering program likes for its seniors to have a chance to do a project that brings together the skills learned in class, associate professor Beth Todd said. While this is the first competition for students involving neutral buoyancy, previous student teams have worked on earlier rounds of NASA projects.

Todd, a faculty advisor for the teams, said the students are designing and fabricating parts but they are also interacting with manufacturers and NASA as part of the experience. "I think these projects for Micro-g NEXT hit it all on the head," she said.

The teams will travel to Houston and NASA's Johnson Space Center Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, where divers will test the tools with the help of the students. Thompson's team will travel to Houston later this month for the first round of testing. Lesley and his teammates will travel to Houston for testing in early June.

Lesley and his teammates are working on a gap spanner boom, a telescoping arm meant to bridge the gap between two craft. Thompson's team is developing a prototype for a float sample grabber, a tool designed to be used by astronauts to collect loose surface material.

The grabber is a handheld device that operates individual collection pods mounted in a carousel. The device would allow an astronaut to make multiple sample collections of surface material. Most of the parts were created using a 3-D printer, Thompson said.

"It needs to be simple to use," Thompson said.

The teams received feedback through the early design process from NASA and have access to a NASA mentor, Thompson said.

The boom prototype is made of carbon fiber tubing, and steel and aluminum fixtures, Lesley said. It's 62 inches long when extended and 17 inches when completely retracted. It currently weighs 6 pounds, 3 ounces, team member Stephen Peter Rowe said. One end is a base and the other is a head with cleats meant to anchor an Orion spacecraft, the primary vehicle for the solar system exploration, to an asteroid redirect vehicle.

The team working on the grabber includes Thompson, David Rollins, Alex...
University of Alabama engineering students Blake Thompson, left, and Jacob Hughes on Thursday demonstrate the float sample grabber their team created in a NASA-backed competition. The grabber tool is designed to allow astronauts to easily pick up small samples from the asteroid. STAFF PHOTOS/GARY COSEY JR.

Orbeck, Alex Mitchell, Alex Villarejos, and Jacob Hughes. The boom team includes Lesley, Rowe, Logan Cook, Andrew Sanders, Hope Thompson, and Rene Gromotka.

The other challenges were a coring device for the loose layer of material on an asteroid's surface called the regolith, an anchoring device for the regolith, and a rock chip sampling device.

After Houston, the teams will receive feedback from NASA, which will ultimately own the rights to the designs.

"It is like having a kid and sending it off," Lesley said of the end of the competition.

Both of the prototypes are built in anticipation of training by astronauts in large pools to simulate the weightlessness of space. Accordingly, the tools are being constructed for operation underwater rather than space. The designs would undergo further revisions if they were chosen to go to space, according to the students.
Last season’s co-captains put hands, cleats in cement

By Leila Beem Nunez
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

To the cheers of hundreds of Alabama football fans, four University of Alabama football players left their mark at the school Saturday. Last season’s team captains pressed their cleats and hands into newly laid cement at the Walk of Fame at the base of Denny Chimes as part of A-Day activities.

Quarterback Jake Coker, running back and Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry, center Ryan Kelly and linebacker Reggie Ragland left their prints. The foursome continued a tradition dating back to halfback Harry Gilmer’s first impression made in 1947. The co-captains spoke to crowd as did Alabama head football coach Nick Saban.

Saban, marking his 10th A-Day, said the ceremony is an important one in recognizing the co-captains, who were selected by their teammates and who he said helped lead the team to its 10th national championship in January.

“This is a great tradition that we have at the University of Alabama, especially to honor the captains who had a significant role, were selected by their teammates in terms of how they impacted other people on their team by the example that they set, the care that they showed for others, and how they served the people in the community,” Saban said.

The four team leaders comprised a senior class that last season finished 5-6 over four seasons, breaking the Southeastern Conference record and tying the NCAA record for wins. Coker, Henry, Kelly and Ragland thanked the fans in attendance, whose support they said helped the team in its accomplishments.

“This is truly a special event, and you guys truly make everything that we do worthwhile,” said Kelly, winner of the 2015 Rimington Award given to the nation’s top center. “These guys up here that are standing next to me are incredible guys, and on

Online
To see more photos and video of A-Day, go to www.tuscaloosanews.com.
A-DAY
From Page A1

behalf of all of us, we’d like to say thank you and what an honor it is to be a part of this team and how much fun we had.”

The four also each expressed their appreciation for their co-captains. Ragland, 2015 first team All-American and SEC Defensive Player of the Year, said he is grateful for his fellow team leaders and what they did to help the team during their four years at Alabama.

“To go 50-6 as seniors is a blessing,” he said. “I’ll love these guys until the end of time.”

Stephen Fordham, an Crimson Tide fan at the event, said hearing the players and Saban was an enjoyable experience. A UA graduate, he said it made his first trip to A-Day a special one.

“I got up here and took a few pictures, yelled across the way at Derrick and he turned around and waved, yelled across to Jake and he turned around and waved,” Fordham said.

“It’s my first A-Day game. I went to the engineering school here and went back to some games here, but it’s my first A-Day game, so it’s been a lot of fun.”

The Million Dollar Band performs on the quad during the team captain ceremony at Denny Chimes on A-Day Saturday. STAFF PHOTO/ERIN NELSON
University of Alabama honors students work with clients at Caring Days in the Bringing Art To Life Program on Friday. Frances Burroughs is surrounded by students Kelsey Ryan, left, Elayne Smith, center and Lauren Letang, right. STAFF PHOTOS/GARY COSBY JR.

Program connects generations through art

Students work with clients at Caring Days

By Gary Cosby
Photo Editor

Dr. Daniel Potts had the unfortunate task of watching his father, Lester, suffer through Alzheimer's disease before his death in 2007. Potts saw one bright spot during the ordeal. When Lester Potts became a client of Caring Days, he began painting and painting gave him hope.

"Dad had never painted before coming to Caring Days. He began working with watercolors down here. It changed his life and gave him a new lease on life," said Daniel Potts, a Tuscaloosa neurologist.

FRANCES BURROUGHS and student Elayne Smith interact as Burroughs creates a piece of art.
specializing in caring for Alzheimer's patients.

Lester Potts passed away in 2007. One of his watercolors now hangs on the wall inside the Caring Days facility at 31st St. E in Tuscaloosa, but his legacy is far more than the painting. What Daniel Potts saw in his father's demeanor when he painted prompted him to start a foundation to bring art therapy to other people suffering with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The Cognitive Dynamics Foundation was born and now teams with the University of Alabama Honors College, bringing undergraduate honors students to Caring Days every week to spend an hour in art therapy with clients.

Student Elayne Smith said the program lifts her spirits every week. "I always leave here with a smile," Smith said. She works with Frances Burroughs. "She (Burroughs) brings so much joy to us. She is very funny. Being able to share these moments with her every week is amazing. All my stresses and worries vanish and it is really the highlight of my week," Burroughs said she enjoys the interaction as well. "I love these girls. They are so friendly and helpful and I love them," Burroughs said.

That interaction between generations is a side benefit of the program that Potts hoped would happen when he started the foundation. The cross-generational ties help students build empathy for the clients and helps students gain understanding into an issue that could otherwise be nothing more than a statistic.

"At the end of this, we want our students to grow in compassion and empathy and in understanding of Alzheimer's and other dementias. We want the clients to know their dignity cannot be stolen. We want to assure them of that. They are valuable and important folks," said Potts.

The art produced over the life of the program can be seen in the Ferguson Center Gallery on the campus of the University of Alabama. The gallery is open from 8 am to 10 pm daily and the art will hang through April 22.
Research reveals UA was unnecessarily dragged into the Bentley-Mason scandal

By: Cliff Sims

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — The complex web of financial dealings that has emerged in the wake of the Bentley-Mason scandal ensnared the University of Alabama in recent weeks, but a more in-depth look at the university’s financial relationship with Jon Mason, a Bentley administration official and the husband of the governor’s former senior advisor Rebekah Mason, reveals that for perhaps the first time in this story, things are more innocent than they may have initially appeared.

A series of AL.com headlines have portrayed Jon Mason as a highly paid consultant, receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars in payments to his company, JRM Enterprises, from the university for murky reasons.

“Jon Mason refuses to explain $245,600 from UA,” one headline reads. “UA used PayPal to ‘expedite’ $45,450 payment to Jon Mason’s company,” added another one. “UA paid Rebekah Mason’s husband’s company another $29,000 via PayPal in March,” a third one declared. Yellowhammer’s research reveals that Mr. Mason’s professional relationship with the university began long before Bentley was ever elected governor. The payments to Mr. Mason, which at first blush seem enormous, are actually for billboard advertising. The way the process typically works is a media buyer — in this instance, Mr. Mason — places ads with a media company and pays for them on behalf of the client. The buyer works out a deal with either the client or the media company to keep a percentage of the buy as his payment, typically in the neighborhood of 15 percent.

In this particular case, Mr. Mason’s company was paid by the university strictly for the cost of the billboards. He then worked out his commission with the billboard company.

The university issued the following statement to Yellowhammer in response to questions about the payments:

“The Office of University Relations at The University of Alabama has done business with Tuscaloosa-based JRM Enterprises for seven years. University Relations makes purchasing decisions on behalf of UA as the primary unit responsible its marketing and advertising needs. JRM has leased billboards for student recruitment purposes at the direction of the University Relations office since January 2010, handling production, installation and rental agreements.

Payments made to JRM for billboard advertising have totaled $274,600 over seven years. There are two additional invoices pending in the amount of $39,150 for billboards in Alabama that were finalized February 25, 2016. The billboards were installed, photographic confirmation has been received, and these invoices are being processed for payment. Some payments made for the cost of billboards have been made by check and some by credit card. This is a common practice based on the vendor’s request.

We have no knowledge of any commission arrangement between JRM and the billboard companies. According to industry standards, a sales agent placing the billboards would typically earn a 15 percent commission from the billboard company.”
In short, there are plenty of other bizarre, unusual, and perhaps even nefarious angles to the Bentley-Mason scandal. The University of Alabama’s long-held process for purchasing billboards is not one of them.
Health and wellness

Birmingham's life expectancy surprisingly bucks national trends

Dr. Mark E. Wilson for AL.com

Birmingham got a big surprise from a landmark study in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The study, authored by economists at Stanford University, takes an in-depth look into the already well-established fact that wealth predicts health. Specifically, higher income leads to greater life expectancy, and the degree to which this is true varies depending on where you live. No big surprises here.

Here's the surprise: During first part of this century the poorest fourth of the population in the Birmingham area had one of the highest increases in life expectancy compared to the poorest fourth of the population in the rest of the United States.

In fact, they had the second highest increase among the 100 most populous areas. From 2001 to 2014, the average lifespan for adults in the lowest quarter of income in and around Birmingham rose 3.8 years for men and 2.2 years for women. This far outstripped the national average, and there were several other areas of the country that had a decrease in lifespan among low-income people.

This is encouraging news for a community accustomed to being near the bottom of the heap in many health statistics, and it won Birmingham some positive mentions in the national media.

This is worth celebrating, but we are far from being able to say “mission accomplished.” There are several caveats to this data-rich study.

First, there is still a gap between the life span of high income and low income people, and even though our lower income population has seen a dramatic improvement, they and our higher income population still lag behind many parts of the country.

Second, this study does not look at overall life expectancy, but that of adults over age 40. So, infant mortality and deaths among youth are not included here.

Third, the study controls for race; racial and ethnic differences in life expectancy were factored out so that different geographic regions could be compared evenly. Inequality in health outcomes such as overall life expectancy and infant mortality rate related to race, income, and zip code continue to be a major challenge for the Birmingham area, and we should strive to eliminate those differences.

Unfortunately, the reverse was true for the wealthiest fourth of the older population in Birmingham. They actually saw a decrease in life expectancy during the period. As the study points out in its general conclusion, this may be related to lifestyle issues including obesity.

Why the unexpected improvement in life span for low income older adults? One possible explanation might be Jefferson County’s indigent care system and the local tax revenue that is dedicated to support Cooper Green Mercy Health Services and the Jefferson County Department of Health, which both provide health care to the poor and uninsured. And of course, UAB’s Health System and training programs have been an integral part of that system. Other local hospitals and health care providers have certainly played a part as well.

It is difficult to prove cause and effect with these types of data. This is conjecture based in part on a lack of alternative explanations for this time period.

We should take this opportunity to reflect on our success. We need to think about what we have done right, and be careful to preserve that. We need to also build on this success to further address the many areas in which we need to improve the health of all people in our community, regardless of income, race, or zip code. While access to quality health care is important, we must continue to address the many other factors that determine health outcomes, especially factors that influence our lifestyle choices.

Much work remains to be done.

Wilson is Jefferson County Health Officer.
UAB research highlights losses since BP spill

Ben Raines braines@al.com

The world's most endangered sea turtle, the Kemp's ridley, suffered a 34 percent decline in the number of nests laid in 2015 compared to the year before the BP oil spill, according to a new study authored by scientists at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The study analyzes both the recent decline, seen since 2010, and a stunning 99 percent drop in the overall population between 1947 and 1985. The status of the present population is measured against a historic estimate based on film footage shot on a Mexican beach in 1947.

That footage is simply astounding. In it, tens of thousands of Kemp's ridley turtles are seen lumbering from the sea en masse to nest in an aggregation called an arribada. The camera pans up and down a beach so crowded with turtles that they have a difficult time finding an open spot to dig a nest. In some of the shots, the turtles are barely visible due to all the sand being thrown in the air by their digging. The turtles stretch off in the distance, as far as the eye can see.

The grainy footage was shot by Andres Herrera, a Mexican sportsman and naturalist. While it was clear from the film that incredible numbers of turtles were on the beach, the camera was hand-held and shaky, with lots of pans along the horizon.

Using modern digital video equipment, the UAB scientists were able to dissect the film in a new way and create composite images of vast stretches of the beach by combining various shots. From those images, Thane Wibbels and Elizabeth Bevan made estimates for the nesting population.

By their count, about 26,000 turtles were laying eggs on a two-mile stretch of beach on a single day in 1947. Further extrapolation suggests the overall Kemp's ridley population at the time involved 180,000 nesting turtles. Last year, scientists believe there were about 14,000 Kemp's ridley nests in the entire Gulf region.

"I consider it a signature species for the Gulf of Mexico," said Thane Wibbels, one of the study's co-authors.

"The northern Gulf of Mexico appears to possibly be the most important foraging ground, developmental habitat, and migratory corridor for the Kemp's ridley. They grow up and live here but head back to the western Gulf to nest for a couple of months every year on a beach near Rancho Nuevo." Herrera spent two years searching for the mass turtle nesting spot near Rancho Nuevo after hearing about it from locals. Ultimately, he discovered it after making 33 flights along the coast in his small plane, then returned to film it. His film was first seen by scientists in 1961, a dozen years after it was made. It caused an international sensation among turtle scientists, who had been searching for nesting sites for the species for decades.

The Kemp's ridley is easily
Here's an upclose view of a Kemp's ridley sea turtle during a release event at the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge on the Alabama coast. File

the most common turtle seen in Alabama waters and along the northern Gulf today, and the same was likely true before the population began to decline. Mobile Bay is considered one of the most important juvenile feeding places, but dead sea turtles turn up with distressing regularity in Alabama.

Now, Herrera’s discovery provides a window into the past that scientists hope will lead to further recovery for the Kemp’s ridley. The great mystery is what caused the recent decline.

The overall population was experiencing exponential growth in the years since 1985, Wibbels said, when scientists believe about 750 nests were laid. By 2009, that number had climbed to around 21,000 nests. Scientists expected the recovery to climb steadily. But that hasn’t happened.

Instead, in the years since the spill, nesting has fallen off. Some point to limits on habitat and to growing coastal residential development.

"Another hypothesis among the field is that environmental pollution, in particular the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, may have significantly impacted the population, and many years may be required before the species regains an exponential recovery rate," said Elizabeth Bevan, working toward her doctorate at UAB.

A decline in prey items, such as blue crabs, may have also played a role.

"Solving the mystery will require continued monitoring of turtles on the nesting beach, a better understanding of the ecology of the Kemp's ridley in its foraging and developmental habitats, and an evaluation of potential changes in the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem since the 1947 Herrera film," Wibbels said. "It's a local species. The Kemp's ridley is definitely part of Alabama's heritage. Probably the most abundant sea turtle in this area until it almost went extinct in the 1980s. Hopefully, it will get back to that status in the future."

The study was published by the Ecological Society of America.
UAH nursing undergrad will present research on Capitol Hill

By: Staff

A research poster by Lina Garrard, a senior in nursing at The University of Alabama in Huntsville, has been accepted for the 20th Annual Posters on the Hill in Washington, D.C., on April 19-20.

This is the third year in a row that a UAH student has been selected for the event in the Rayburn House Office Building. Those invited to attend are representatives from federal funding agencies and nearby foundations, members of Congress and Congressional staff.

Entitled "Identification, Assessment, and Referrals for Women Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence: An Educational Session for Maternity Nurses," the poster was among more than 300 highly competitive applications and was accepted as one of 60 posters for the event. Selection criteria included project quality, communication skills and disciplinary and geographical distribution.

"Having a UAH undergraduate selected for this prestigious award for the third year in a row shows the high levels achievable by UAH students involved in research and the quality of mentorship provided by our faculty and professional researchers," says David Cook, UAH student research program coordinator. "Their efforts demonstrate excellence in supporting collaborative research and creative activity with our students, and emphasize UAH's commitment to making undergraduate research an important part of the UAH educational experience."

Garrard submitted a 250-word abstract of her research, describing its disciplinary significance, and a letter of recommendation from her advisor, Dr. Ann Bianchi, an associate professor of nursing. She will accompany her poster to Washington to make presentations and answer questions for those in attendance.

"I was beyond ecstatic when I found out I was accepted," she says. "I was sitting in lecture one afternoon when I received the acceptance email. I can still remember how surprised I felt reading the email stating my submission was accepted."

She was previously accepted to present at the 30th annual National Conference of Undergraduate Research (NCUR) at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

"My research is actually a twofold study," Garrard says. "In the summer of 2015, through the Research and Creative Experiences for Undergraduates program within UAH, Dr. Bianchi and I were first able to go into the hospital setting and inquire about the current intimate partner violence screening practices of maternity nurses."

They discovered that the majority of the maternity nurses within their 31 focus groups did screen for IPV, but the nurses identified as having barriers to screening, a finding that is also supported

See next page
in the literature. The data gathered from the focus groups established that the nurses wished to receive an educational session about IPV.

"The data was then further analyzed to formulate an education session for the nurses' identified needs, which is the second part of my project," Garrard said. "Two social workers and Dr. Bianchi, an expert on IPV, were brought in to educate and collaborate with the maternity nurses to increase their knowledge and assist in improving their screening practices for IPV."

Nurses involved in the educational session submitted follow-up evaluations.

"The study we completed, tied in with the educational session we created, influenced the nurses to improve their practice," Garrard said. "Knowing that is a remarkable feeling in itself. IPV is a prevalent issue occurring in one in every four women."

"Lina's study gave the nurses a voice into what they believe would benefit their practice and elevate their skills in identifying and assessing for intimate partner violence," Bianchi said. "The nurses now have the knowledge and feel more comfortable in screening for IPV, which will promote 100 percent compliance in screening all women for IPV, so abused women are provided with the resources that best serve their health and safety needs."


"This is such an excellent opportunity to speak with Congress and other government representatives to increase the awareness of the importance of funding undergraduate research," Garrard said. "This gives me the opportunity to convey the importance of funding undergraduate nursing research that focuses on improving health outcomes.

Garrard says that funding undergraduate research, specifically nursing research related to health care, offers undergraduate students an opportunity to contribute to evidence-based practice that serves to improve patient outcomes.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville is a Tier 1 research university that prepares students for demanding positions in Engineering, the Sciences, Business, Nursing, Education, and the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Located within one of the largest research parks in the United States, UAH is considered one of the nation's premier research universities.
Was north Alabama forgotten about after the April 27, 2011 tornadoes?

By: Lee Roop

Was north Alabama forgotten in the days after tornadoes raked Alabama on April 27, 2011? It seemed that way.

"The thing I heard most from citizens that were affected was a frustration that they had sort of been overlooked and forgotten," remembers National Weather Service Meteorologist Chris Darden.

Darden's job then was to travel out from the Huntsville NWS office to assess damage after the storms. Today, he's meteorologist in charge of that office.

Darden remembers talking to a man in the northeast Alabama town of Henagar "and he, in a very nice way, lamented the fact he had not seen anyone offer assistance or come by."

Five years later, search the Web for "Alabama tornadoes April 27, 2011" and the first images you see are of Tuscaloosa, where an EF-4 tornado hit near the University of Alabama. It killed 66 people in Tuscaloosa County and next-door Jefferson County.

Tuscaloosa is where President Obama came two days later, and Tuscaloosa led the first national reports from Alabama. Typical was the National Geographic website's April 29 headline about a "monster storm" in Tuscaloosa.

North Alabama was out of the spotlight, but it wasn't ignored. It's more complicated than that.

Details emerge slowly

In North Alabama as elsewhere in the state, details were slower to emerge. It took time to learn that two EF-5 tornadoes had crossed the area killing 98 people and scouring parts of five counties.

A flattened communications grid didn't help. Power and telephone lines were down. All of Huntsville was blacked out, and power didn't come back on until May 2. The Huntsville Times designed its April 28 newspaper with power from an RV's generator.

"Keep in mind, the only thing they were hearing was on the radio," Darden says of survivors. "We went to very few places that had power, at least the first week or so. All they were hearing about was the president coming to Tuscaloosa or other dignitaries."

Overwhelming damage

Damage in North Alabama was so widespread the National Weather Service didn't know a tornado had hit Bridgeport for three days, Darden says. It didn't know until mid-May that an EF-2 tornado had passed near Fort Payne.
Meanwhile, people across the nation were watching the video of the Tuscaloosa tornado again and again. And it was amazing.

"There was the same video of the tornado that moved across Limestone County," Darden says. "There was the same video of Cullman. For whatever reason, it didn't get the same play. It didn't affect the university."

Overwhelmed responders

Beyond poor communications and damaged infrastructure, public and private response agencies were "overwhelmed," in Darden's words. It took days for the response to ramp up to the scale of the disaster.

Meanwhile, the national story itself was soon bigger than Tuscaloosa or even Alabama. It was the story of a "super cell" outbreak spawning 199 tornadoes in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Tennessee. In all, 324 people died.

And five days later on May 2, just as the power was coming back on in Huntsville, U.S. forces in Pakistan killed Osama bin Laden. The death and destruction in one section of one state became a secondary part of what was now the second-biggest story in America.

How bad was it in North Alabama? "The extent of the devastation was unparalleled," the National Weather Service would say later, "with countless homes, neighborhoods and portions of cities either partially or completely destroyed. Houses were removed from foundations, churches were flattened and debris, livestock and people were thrown large distances through the air."

University of Alabama in Huntsville meteorologist Tim Coleman told NASA science writer Dauna Colter that, "Brick homes were blown apart.... Some of these tornadoes were almost unsurviveable. Only in a well-built storm shelter would you make it through."

Three quick stories

Darden tells three quick anecdotes to illustrate. In the first, he's in Phil Campbell, where 20 people died and 800 structures were destroyed. It's a Sunday afternoon just before crews are about to begin burning whatever's left.

"I remember standing there, looking around, and there literally was not a single thing that was recognizable, not a car, a house, a mail box, nothing," Darden says.

In the second story, Darden is in Higdon with a woman who saw the tornado, rushed home from a birthday party at a friend's house and found her mother, father and younger sister dead.

"She was the first one on the scene," Darden says. "She hadn't left and hadn't said hardly a word. We walked up and asked if we could take some photographs. 'I've lost everything,' she said. 'I have nothing left.' She started crying. That was really hard, really, really tough."

See next page
The next street over, a woman and her two daughters stood in pile that used to be a farm house.

"There was literally nothing left," Darden says. "They owned 40 head of cattle and had to put 21 down, not for puncture wounds, but impact wounds. They had been picked up and thrown by the tornado."

North Alabama today

In North Alabama today, people understand what they survived. Roger Lingerfelt, who works for a telephone co-op, was a Rainsville city councilman then and still is today. His attitude is typical of what you find in the region.

Standing in front of his farmhouse in late March, Lingerfelt said he understands the early attention on Tuscaloosa and other areas. He doesn't begrudge it a bit. Like others here, he focuses on pride at how his community and other utility and telephone co-ops rallied.

Volunteers did come from more than 20 states, said Tim Eberhart, executive director of the Rainsville Chamber of Commerce. They brought "a lot of food, a lot of water, and they were here for months" working hard to help people clean up and start over.

"The volunteers said they'd never come to a community like this," Lingerfelt said. People, if they had anything at all for dinner, would say to take the donated meals down the road "to someone who needs it worse."

Rainsville is back

Five years later, Rainsville is basically back. Only a few shattered trees mark the storm's path north of town. Victory Baptist Church is whole again, and the DeKalb County Schools Coliseum is rebuilt and home to a monument to the 35 who died here.

But some psychological scars remain. Lingerfelt admits he called his insurance agent as this spring approached to check his home and property coverage – just to make sure.

"If the weather turns bad," Linda Samples of Rainsville said, "it's the first thing that pops into everyone's head."

People get on edge, Lingerfelt agreed, "and they want to be in the right places – safe places. Kids notice it. They get nervous."

Celebrating recovery

Samples led the committee that built the memorial monument. "We worked on it every Saturday rain or shine," she said. "Everyone wanted to help. People were making lunches, carrying blocks."

See next page
There's been a remembrance ceremony every April 27 since 2011, Samples said, but this year will be different.

"This year we will be celebrating the recovery," she said. "We'll be looking to the future."
3D Printing Our Way To The Year 2050
By: Jason Lederman

The original Star Trek television series premiered in 1966, fifty years ago, but modern society is still inspired by the technology that could boldly bring the crew of the Enterprise where no man had gone before. The communicators used on the show inspired the flip phones of the early 2000s, and the PADD, or Personal Access Data Device, influenced the development of the tablet computer.

Just as technology from the original series captured the imaginations of engineers and scientists, so too did the devices from Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Star Trek’s conversant computer we might now call Siri," Liz Kalodner, Executive Vice President and General Manager of CBS Consumer Products, told Popular Science. (Author’s note: CBS owns the rights to the Star Trek television franchises.) "The universal translator influenced Google Translate, and Geordi La Forge’s visor inspired Google Glass. As for today’s virtual reality, it’s really the Holodeck come to pass. Science fiction has become science reality."

One technology that has yet to be replicated though is perhaps the most famous of the series—the replicator, a machine that recycles matter to create any object that has been programmed into its database. Replicators seemed, at best, far-fetched when Star Trek: The Next Generation premiered in 1987, and more likely impossible. But with consumer and commercial 3D printers becoming much more commonplace, the concept of a replicator-like device isn’t so impossible anymore.

This past February, Future Engineers, an online platform that hosts challenges for young inventors, issued the Star Trek Replicator challenge in partnership with NASA, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Foundation and Star Trek. The competition, which seeks to inspire the next generation of makers, challenges K-12 students (with the help of college-aged or older mentors) to design a digital 3D model of a non-edible food item to be 3D printed aboard the International Space Station and beyond in the year 2050. Coming up with solutions for the astronauts of the future will require the makers to think of all aspects of eating, from growing and storing crops to disposing of food waste, and how they can be achieved in a sustainable manner. "3D printing is also a way to empower students with the overall idea that if you can dream it, you can build it," Deanne Bell, co-founder of Future Engineers and a member of the ASME Foundation, told Popular Science. "The earlier we introduce that to a student, the bigger they will dream and build."

Those makers may not be students who consider themselves to be good at math or science. Niki Werkheiser, a Future Engineers co-founder and NASA Project Manager for In-Space Manufacturing, told Popular Science this competition aims to teach children and teens who are more artistically-focused that engineering is a mindset, not a degree. "We need that creativity, folks that can think outside the box, and that design process is very creative," she said. "A lot of times people don’t think of that when they think of engineering. Some of those artists are our best designers."

Any person wishing to enter the Star Trek Replicator challenge should read the rules and has until May 1st, 2016 to submit his or her design on the Future Engineers website. All submissions
in both the Junior (ages 5-12) and Teen (ages 13-19) categories will be featured in the Star Trek Replicator challenge gallery. The winners in each category of the competition will receive a trip to New York City to see the Space Shuttle Enterprise with an astronaut, as well as the Starfleet Academy experience at the Intrepid Sea, Air, & Space Museum, and receive a "Star Trek mystery prize pack."

3D PRINTING ON EARTH

3D printing, or additive manufacturing as it is also known, was invented by Charles "Chuck" Hull, and patented on March 11, 1986. Much like in the early days of computing, early 3D printers were much larger than the ones we see in homes and schools today.

"The way computers started, they first came to schools and computer labs at universities. We see the same thing with 3D printing," said Johan-Till Broer, Director of Public Relations at 3D printer manufacturer Makerbot. "Computers went into homes, and from there to laptops and the smartphone. We see a similar trend for 3D printing, and we’re at the stage where 3D printing today is very similar to computers in the ‘80s."

Werkheiser also compares 3D printers of the modern era to computers of the 1980s, including their lack of user-friendliness. "When computers first came out you had to be a ‘computer person’ to really operate a computer," she said. "Now, the computer is very user friendly and it’s just a mechanism to do a million things that we want to do and that’s where 3D printers are heading. They’re working on how to interface and use those for any kind of meaningful application you might have here on Earth on a day-to-day basis."

When patents for 3D printers that use plastic filament (the 3D printer equivalent of ink) began to expire in 2009, companies like Makerbot, which focus on making easier-to-use desktop 3D printers, began to spring up. More than half a decade later though, these desktop 3D printers are not the norm in most homes, a fact that Broer is aware of. "There was a lot of hype around 3D printers going into homes and consumers adopting it," he confessed, "and there are consumers that use 3D printers today, but it’s still a very small group."

There is, however, a growing number of schools though that are buying 3D printers, and subsequently educators incorporating additive manufacturing into their curriculum. In fact, some school districts, like the Montclair Public School District in Montclair, New Jersey, are investing heavily and buying 3D printers in every school in their respective districts.

Broer imagines a student from Montclair starting to learn 3D printing skills in their elementary school, refining those skills in middle school and high school, and teaming up with an entrepreneur to create real products once they attend college at a school like Pennsylvania State University or Montclair State University, which each recently purchased a Makerbot Innovation Lab (a lab of 30 or more networked 3D printers bought from Makerbot). "When you think about it that way, and see the journey of a student that starts really early, and that student will one day enter the workforce, you can really see the impact [that a skill learned in childhood can have on a person’s life]."

See next page
Teaching 3D printing, or any subject within a science, tech, engineering, or math (STEM) curriculum, is about more than that individual subject. "At the core of it is the problem solving aspect," says Broer, "the collaboration between students, and learning from failure. Those are the core skills that will help these students to succeed."

And students are using 3D printing to succeed. Five of the participants at this year’s annual White House Science Fair, including three individual inventors and two teams, 3D printed a prototype or final version of their projects. The youngest of those competitors, nine-year-old Jacob Leggette, got a printer company to donate a printer in exchange for feedback on how easy it was for a then eight-year-old to use. As 3D printers become more common on Earth, the International Space Station, and beyond, they will need to be user-friendly for makers of all ages.

3D PRINTING IN SPACE

As the Star Trek Replicator challenge is drawing to a close, NASA is preparing to 3D print a winning design from the first Future Engineers challenge [in 2014], a Multipurpose Precision Maintenance Tool by then-high school senior Robert Hillan. "I wanted it to be as useful as possible, and I know NASA is big on saving as much space and weight as possible, so that's why I came up with a multi-tool," Hillan, who now studies Aerospace & Mechanical Engineering at the University of Alabama Huntsville, told Popular Science. His tool will be the first-ever student-designed product 3D printed aboard the International Space Station (which NASA employees refer to as "Space Station" or simply "Station), and it will be printed by the end of the year.

The ability to 3D print aboard Station is becoming more and more important to NASA. Werkheiser conservatively estimates that 40 percent of the parts and materials used during a mission will fail at some point. NASA must have backups for each and every part though, since they can't know which will need to be replaced. "On Station we still consider the operations and the planning for that very Earth-dependent because the crew is literally hours away from Earth," says Werkheiser.

In the past, every single item that was loaded onto a rocket had to be reviewed by a NASA safety panel before it launched to Station. NASA astronauts aren’t even allowed to have forks aboard the International Space Station because one could poke an astronaut in the eye. Instead they are each given one long, skinny spoon with which to eat and they don’t get a replacement if they lose it. So spoons were, understandably, towards the top of the list of things astronauts asked to have designed and printed by NASA. "It’s creature comfort, but it’s a real-world thing," according to Werkheiser. "You have to eat and that seems pretty important." Now the safety panel is given a printed version of the item, and must trust that the item printed on Station will be identical to the one they inspect since they are both created from the same model. Werkheiser also made mention of one other item requested by Commander Barry "Butch" Wilmore during his stay on Station—an assembled (3D printed object that must be made in multiple pieces because it is larger than the volume of the printer it is made in) backscratcher. The arid environment of Station dried out his skin and made it itchy. "Of course the first item he asked for," she joked, "was a long, pointy object he can scratch himself with."

See next page
Long-term exploration missions, like those that will see humans go to Mars or an asteroid, pose a bigger problem. NASA's exploration missions to Mars will take roughly three years to complete; it will take nine months for the crew to get to the red planet, they will spend 12 to 18 months on the surface, and then it will take another nine months to return back to Earth. If a part fails in-transit or on surface, the astronauts can't rely on NASA to get them a replacement. Additive manufacturing is changing the way NASA operates though.

Each mission has very strict constraints on the volume and mass of objects that can be sent within the rocket. Werkheiser says a three-year exploration mission would produce approximately 700 kilograms (over 1500 pounds) of trash, including but not limited to plastic bags, foam, and food containers. That trash takes up valuable space aboard the ship and requires NASA to purchase additional fuel to overcome the rocket's mass and get it into orbit. Rather than loading the additional mass of three years worth of spares on a ship, NASA could reduce both mass and volume of materials sent by instead loading enough filament to replace the 40 percent of parts that will statistically fail.

A 3D printer could also prevent another Apollo 13-like scenario, where something that NASA couldn't account for goes wrong. If that case, NASA engineers could design the necessary part and remotely print it aboard the ship or surface habitat for the crew.

One other piece of technology that will ultimately cut down the launch mass is a filament recycler, which is currently being built by Tethers Unlimited. Once a job that requires a 3D printed object has been completed, that object can be melted down and re-printed as something completely different, creating a need for less filament per mission. The recycler is expected to completed and launch to Station at the end of 2017.

NASA realizes that this all seems futuristic, and lot more work needs to be done before additive manufacturing is integrated fully into NASA's operations. Tests must be run to see if and how microgravity affects the filament during and after printing. Preliminary results look promising though, and the lack of sag caused by gravity on Earth may allow engineers to design in new ways not possible on the ground. "It sounds like we're talking Star Trek," admits Werkheiser, "but this is really bringing these to reality because these are technologies that are being developed on the ground now."

3D PRINTING IN THE YEAR 2050

One of the biggest challenges to 3D printers becoming a mainstream consumer technology is accessibility. 3D printers are not in every home and to use one requires the knowledge of CAD (computer-aided design) 3D modeling software. By the year 2050, that knowledge may not be necessary though.

"Look at the rise of on-demand media, and the rise of apps," says Bell. "It's clear that people want what they like when they want it at a price they can afford. I don't think everyone out there wants a one-of-a-kind product, nor does everyone want to invest the time needed to personally design such a unique product. But when we are able to 3D print what we like, when we want it, at the quality & cost we desire, on-demand hardware will become as commonplace as on-demand media."
Hillan agrees that the first step to making this technology more widespread is, rather than teaching everyone to design with software currently available, is creating apps that will allow anyone to be a designer. "The biggest thing that's going to help to overcome that hurdle is...an AutoCAD software that allows you to tell the computer what you want, give it some dimensions and features you want the design to have, and the computer generates its own design of the object. That's where I think we need to go—to go towards have computers design the objects."

No matter how designs find their way to makers, not everything that needs to be 3D printed can be made with filament. In August 2015, MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab created a 3D printer that could simultaneously print with up to ten materials at once. It also allows for electronics, such as circuits and sensors, to be embedded with an object, something that Werkheiser says is crucial for NASA's road map to Mars. "We know that on Station about 30% of the failures have been electronic in nature," she says, "so we'll need to have that capability."

As additive manufacturing grows in popularity, it will also allow for more customization of objects. Adidas, Nike, and New Balance have all experimented with 3D printing shoes or parts of shoes. Broer sees bigger potential for the future, where anyone can walk into a shoe store, have their foot measured, and walk out with a product custom-printed to fit their feet exactly.

It's not just shoes. Wrenches, furniture, and even supercars and guns have already been 3D printed. As consumers and manufacturers gain access to newer, easier-to-use machines that can use more materials, the possibilities of what can be created are endless. "As additive manufacturing technologies advance and materials improve," says Bell, "we'll start to see more engineers designing to the strengths of 3D printing—more intricacies, faster design iteration, and internal features that were never possible with traditional manufacturing methods."
NASA's Fermi telescope poised to pin down gravitational wave sources

By: Staff Writers

Last year on Sept. 14, waves of energy traveling for more than a billion years gently rattled space-time in the vicinity of Earth. The disturbance, produced by a pair of merging black holes, was captured by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) facilities in Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana. This event marked the first-ever detection of gravitational waves and opens a new scientific window on how the universe works.

Less than half a second later, the Gamma-ray Burst Monitor (GBM) on NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope picked up a brief, weak burst of high-energy light consistent with the same part of the sky. Analysis of this burst suggests just a 0.2-percent chance of simply being random coincidence. Gamma-rays arising from a black hole merger would be a landmark finding because black holes are expected to merge "cleanly," without producing any sort of light.

"This is a tantalizing discovery with a low chance of being a false alarm, but before we can start rewriting the textbooks we'll need to see more bursts associated with gravitational waves from black hole mergers," said Valerie Connaughton, a GBM team member at the National Space, Science and Technology Center in Huntsville, Alabama, and lead author of a paper on the burst now under review by The Astrophysical Journal.

Detecting light from a gravitational wave source will enable a much deeper understanding of the event. Fermi's GBM sees the entire sky not blocked by Earth and is sensitive to X-rays and gamma rays with energies between 8,000 and 40 million electron volts (eV). For comparison, the energy of visible light ranges between about 2 and 3 eV.

With its wide energy range and large field of view, the GBM is the premier instrument for detecting light from short gamma-ray bursts (GRBs), which last less than two seconds. They are widely thought to occur when orbiting compact objects, like neutron stars and black holes, spiral inward and crash together. These same systems also are suspected to be prime producers of gravitational waves.

"With just one joint event, gamma rays and gravitational waves together will tell us exactly what causes a short GRB," said Lindy Blackburn, a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a member of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration.

"There is an incredible synergy between the two observations, with gamma rays revealing details about the source's energetics and local environment and gravitational waves providing a unique probe of the dynamics leading up to the event." He will be discussing the burst and how Fermi and LIGO are working together in an invited talk at the American Physical Society meeting in Salt Lake City on Tuesday.
Currently, gravitational wave observatories possess relatively blurry vision. This will improve in time as more facilities begin operation, but for the September event, dubbed GW150914 after the date, LIGO scientists could only trace the source to an arc of sky spanning an area of about 600 square degrees, comparable to the angular area on Earth occupied by the United States.

"That's a pretty big haystack to search when your needle is a short GRB, which can be fast and faint, but that's what our instrument is designed to do," said Eric Burns, a GBM team member at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. "A GBM detection allows us to whittle down the LIGO area and substantially shrinks the haystack."

Less than half a second after LIGO detected gravitational waves, the GBM picked up a faint pulse of high-energy X-rays lasting only about a second. The burst effectively occurred beneath Fermi and at a high angle to the GBM detectors, a situation that limited their ability to establish a precise position. Fortunately, Earth blocked a large swath of the burst's likely location as seen by Fermi at the time, allowing scientists to further narrow down the burst's position.

The GBM team calculates less than a 0.2-percent chance random fluctuations would have occurred in such close proximity to the merger. Assuming the events are connected, the GBM localization and Fermi's view of Earth combine to reduce the LIGO search area by about two-thirds, to 200 square degrees. With a burst better placed for the GBM's detectors, or one bright enough to be seen by Fermi's Large Area Telescope, even greater improvements are possible.

The LIGO event was produced by the merger of two relatively large black holes, each about 30 times the mass of the sun. Binary systems with black holes this big were not expected to be common, and many questions remain about the nature and origin of the system.

Black hole mergers were not expected to emit significant X-ray or gamma-ray signals because orbiting gas is needed to generate light. Theorists expected any gas around binary black holes would have been swept up long before their final plunge. For this reason, some astronomers view the GBM burst as most likely a coincidence and unrelated to GW150914. Others have developed alternative scenarios where merging black holes could create observable gamma-ray emission. It will take further detections to clarify what really happens when black holes collide.

Albert Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves in his general theory of relativity a century ago, and scientists have been attempting to detect them for 50 years. Einstein pictured these waves as ripples in the fabric of space-time produced by massive, accelerating bodies, such as black holes orbiting each other. Scientists are interested in observing and characterizing these waves to learn more about the sources producing them and about gravity itself.
Merging black holes, gravitational waves provide new insight into how the universe works

By: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

On Sept. 14, waves of energy traveling for more than a billion years gently rattled space-time in the vicinity of Earth. The disturbance, produced by a pair of merging black holes, was captured by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) facilities in Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana. This event marked the first-ever detection of gravitational waves and opens a new scientific window on how the universe works.

Less than half a second later, the Gamma-ray Burst Monitor (GBM) on NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope picked up a brief, weak burst of high-energy light consistent with the same part of the sky. Analysis of this burst suggests just a 0.2-percent chance of simply being random coincidence. Gamma-rays arising from a black hole merger would be a landmark finding because black holes are expected to merge "cleanly," without producing any sort of light.

"This is a tantalizing discovery with a low chance of being a false alarm, but before we can start rewriting the textbooks we'll need to see more bursts associated with gravitational waves from black hole mergers," said Valerie Connaughton, a GBM team member at the National Space, Science and Technology Center in Huntsville, Alabama, and lead author of a paper on the burst now under review by The Astrophysical Journal.

Detecting light from a gravitational wave source will enable a much deeper understanding of the event. Fermi's GBM sees the entire sky not blocked by Earth and is sensitive to X-rays and gamma rays with energies between 8,000 and 40 million electron volts (eV). For comparison, the energy of visible light ranges between about 2 and 3 eV.

With its wide energy range and large field of view, the GBM is the premier instrument for detecting light from short gamma-ray bursts (GRBs), which last less than two seconds. They are widely thought to occur when orbiting compact objects, like neutron stars and black holes, spiral inward and crash together. These same systems also are suspected to be prime producers of gravitational waves.

"With just one joint event, gamma rays and gravitational waves together will tell us exactly what causes a short GRB," said Lindy Blackburn, a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a member of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration. "There is an incredible synergy between the two observations, with gamma rays revealing details about the source's energetics and local environment and gravitational waves providing a unique probe of the dynamics leading up to the event." He will be discussing the burst and how Fermi and LIGO are working together in an invited talk at the American Physical Society meeting in Salt Lake City on Tuesday.

Currently, gravitational wave observatories possess relatively blurry vision. This will improve in time as more facilities begin operation, but for the September event, dubbed GW150914 after the date, LIGO scientists could only trace the source to an arc of sky spanning an area of about 600 square degrees, comparable to the angular area on Earth occupied by the United States.

See next page
"That's a pretty big haystack to search when your needle is a short GRB, which can be fast and faint, but that's what our instrument is designed to do," said Eric Burns, a GBM team member at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. "A GBM detection allows us to whittle down the LIGO area and substantially shrinks the haystack."

Less than half a second after LIGO detected gravitational waves, the GBM picked up a faint pulse of high-energy X-rays lasting only about a second. The burst effectively occurred beneath Fermi and at a high angle to the GBM detectors, a situation that limited their ability to establish a precise position. Fortunately, Earth blocked a large swath of the burst's likely location as seen by Fermi at the time, allowing scientists to further narrow down the burst's position.

The GBM team calculates less than a 0.2-percent chance random fluctuations would have occurred in such close proximity to the merger. Assuming the events are connected, the GBM localization and Fermi's view of Earth combine to reduce the LIGO search area by about two-thirds, to 200 square degrees. With a burst better placed for the GBM's detectors, or one bright enough to be seen by Fermi's Large Area Telescope, even greater improvements are possible.

The LIGO event was produced by the merger of two relatively large black holes, each about 30 times the mass of the sun. Binary systems with black holes this big were not expected to be common, and many questions remain about the nature and origin of the system.

Black hole mergers were not expected to emit significant X-ray or gamma-ray signals because orbiting gas is needed to generate light. Theorists expected any gas around binary black holes would have been swept up long before their final plunge. For this reason, some astronomers view the GBM burst as most likely a coincidence and unrelated to GW150914. Others have developed alternative scenarios where merging black holes could create observable gamma-ray emission. It will take further detections to clarify what really happens when black holes collide.

Albert Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves in his general theory of relativity a century ago, and scientists have been attempting to detect them for 50 years. Einstein pictured these waves as ripples in the fabric of space-time produced by massive, accelerating bodies, such as black holes orbiting each other. Scientists are interested in observing and characterizing these waves to learn more about the sources producing them and about gravity itself.
E-Sail Technology To Use Solar Wind For Interstellar Space Travel

By: Alyssa Navarro

Next-generation spacecraft sailing to interstellar space may soon rely on harnessing solar wind to produce momentum, as scientists from NASA begin experimentations in Alabama for an advanced propulsion system.

Designed for very long distance missions, NASA's HERTS E-sail technology (Heliopause Electrostatic Rapid Transit System Electric Sail) can potentially halve the time it takes for spacecraft to go into interstellar space. It could send spacecraft even to the "edge" of our solar system, known as the Heliopause, at a speed faster than ever.

After initial trials are over, the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) will use computer models to examine NASA's results.

How the E-sail Technology Works

The E-sail propulsion system is expected to consist of at least 10 electrically charged, bare aluminum wires that radiate from the inside of the spacecraft to make a circular "E-sail."

Lead E-sail engineer Bruce Wiegmann said the sun ejects electrons and protons into the solar wind at very high speeds of up to 750 kilometers per second (approx. 1.6 million miles per hour), and they will take advantage of this solar power.

The E-sail's special wires are capable of electrostatically repelling rapid-moving protons of the solar wind, with the momentum acting as the spacecraft's thrust. Each tether would only be one millimeter (0.039 inch) thick but 20 kilometers (12.42 miles) in length.

"The E-Sail would use these protons to propel the spacecraft," said Wiegmann.

Spacecraft with the E-sail would be able to rotate at one revolution per hour, with centrifugal forces expanding the special wires into position. It would then be navigated by controlling each wire's voltage, changing the force applied to different portions of the propulsion.

The tests at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville will try to discover the rate of electron and proton collisions with a positively charged wire.

Implications for the Future

NASA's Voyager mission is currently exploring the interstellar medium. The use of the E-sail technology could become a breakthrough for these kinds of "ambitious missions," said UAH scientist Gary Zank.

Astronomers expect the new propulsion system to be expeditious. Voyager 1 took 35 years to reach the Heliopause, but HERTS E-sail could do it in a shorter amount of time. Wiegmann said

See next page
their investigations reveal that spacecraft with E-sail could travel to the Heliopause in just 10 years.

"This could revolutionize the scientific returns of these types of missions," said Wiegmann.

What's more impressive is that the propulsion system could be used for shorter missions, too. Wiegmann said the design is extremely flexible and adaptable. It could be used for missions in the Heliopause, within the inner interplanetary system, as well as on the outer interplanetary, he added.

The HERTS study was funded in 2015 by the Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD). It was one of the Phase II NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) projects.
DI teams to vie at globals

By: Gregg Parker

Six Destination Imagination (DI) teams in Madison qualified to compete at DI Global finals at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville on May 25-29.

Bob Jones High School will advance in Technical and Fine Arts Challenges and one other challenge. Horizon Elementary School qualified in both Structural and Service Learning Challenge and a ‘wildcard’ slot for Alabama; Heritage Elementary School for Improvisational Challenge; and West Madison Elementary School for Fine Arts Challenge.

To qualify, these Madison teams won first-place honors at the DI State Tournament at The University of Alabama in Huntsville on April 2.

“For about the tenth consecutive year, Madison City Schools will be the most-represented school district in the Alabama Gloabls delegation,” North Alabama Regional DI Director Robin Dauma said. Dauma teaches English at Bob Jones, serves as the district’s advanced-placement English lead and sponsors Bob Jones and Discovery DI teams.

Each team’s expenses for global finals will be about $6,000. “School coordinators and parents have moved into fundraising mode to make a dent in the $40,000 needed. We will be soliciting support from the community and businesses as we seek to support these hard-working, creative students as they represent our district and our city well,” Dauma said.

At Horizon, all three DI teams won global invitations to Knoxville. Two are going.

For their outreach to Manna House, the Cotton Candy Frappuccino team and the Howling Wolves team both won first place in the middle school level for the Service Learning Challenge and Structural Section, respectively, Beth Bero said.

Bero is Horizon’s gifted special, DI sponsor and Howling Wolves team manager.

The Extra-Terrestrial Corn Chips team rated second for elementary in Technical Challenge for building a vehicle that carried a team member across the stage 40 times with two different propulsion methods. “They built a hover car that floated on air using a leaf blower,” Bero said.

“Now we’re busy raising $10,010 to send these students to Knoxville,” Bero said.

Any organizations, businesses, or individuals can support DI students by contacting any school sponsor by phone, email or mailing a check payable to the school to the sponsor’s attention. Other sponsors are Rachel Gibbs at Heritage and Wendy Tibbs at West Madison.
RATE INCREASE
Tuition hike OK'd for 2-year colleges
The Associated Press

OPELIKA – Alabama Community College System board of trustees have approved an annual tuition rate increase for the state's two-year college system.

The tuition will increase by a uniform $2 per credit hour for the 2016-2017 academic school year, Opelika-Auburn News reported. The tuition rate is set at $117 per hour for Alabama residents and $232 for nonresidents, beginning in fall 2016.

The adjustment is expected to produce about $3,975,000 in additional revenue to be shared among the 26 campuses across the state. The money will help offset the continued increase in operational costs, according to the board.

Chancellor Mark Heinrich said the system is making changes that he hopes will eliminate the need for tuition increases in future years. The annual increase was established by the state board of education, which formerly oversaw the two-year system, in 2009.

"I don't like the fact that we have to increase tuition," Heinrich said.

District 6 board member Milton Davis said he doesn't want to see the tuition increase, but he understands the positive implications it will have on certain schools.

"I'm like the chancellor, I hate to see it, but I know it's going to help the colleges that need it," he said.

Chuck Smith, district 7 board member, believes the board should work together and collaborate with the Legislature to address the issue.

"It starts as a group thing to solve this problem," he said. "Let's try to make a better effort."
Higher education

‘Pathway USA’ expands to Mississippi coast

Bob Lowry  University of South Alabama
Marketing and Communications

The University of South Alabama recently announced that Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is now a partner in “Pathway USA.” The collaborative venture creates a seamless transition to USA for transfer students who receive their associates degree.

MGCCC is the third community college to join in “Pathway USA.”

“One of the pillars of the University of South Alabama’s strategic plan is making higher education more affordable and accessible,” said USA President Tony Waldrop. “We know that commitment is shared by our colleagues at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and we look forward to working with them to provide more opportunities for students to earn a four-year degree from South.”

“We are excited about the opportunities the Pathway USA partnership will afford MGCCC students who plan to continue their education after completing their associates degree with us,” said Mary S. Graham, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College president. “Student success is our institution’s top priority, and offering our students seamless transfer options gets them one step closer to reaching their educational goals.”

The university earlier this year announced similar partnerships with Faulkner State Community College and Bishop State Community College.

USA’s agreement with MGCCC, which will begin with the 2016 fall semester, is geared toward students who are not admitted at South as well as students who may simply prefer to launch their college education in a community college setting. A unique application will be created for MGCCC students to complete and submit.

MGCCC students who enter the Pathway USA program will enjoy benefits such as:

› Guaranteed admission to USA upon successful completion of the associates degree, with a cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 or higher.

› A USA academic adviser assigned to them who will meet them at MGCCC and provide individual guidance on course selection and map out degree plans.

For additional information on Pathway USA, contact USA’s Admissions Office at 251-460-7834 or email recruitment@southalabama.edu.

The University of South Alabama marketing and communications team provides stories about USA students, faculty, staff members, academic programs and research initiatives, all posted online. The university’s Web address is southalabama.edu.
When Angela Bendolph's daughter graduated from college, she told her mom to pursue her dream of earning her doctorate. Bendolph took her daughter's advice, while also finding a vehicle for expression in her lifelong commitment to empower women and young girls.

As a result, Bendolph — who is in the University of South Alabama's instructional design and development doctoral program — has been chosen to serve on the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) Task Force.

"Things have come full circle for me," Bendolph said. "When I first became a member of AAUW, I received a career development grant while pursuing my master's degree at South Alabama. And as I work to complete my doctorate, I get to change lives and serve women and girls thanks to the national AAUW." Bendolph, an AAUW member for nearly 20 years, has also conducted technology training workshops. During those sessions, she shares the importance of introducing girls and young women to STEM subjects.

Bendolph also introduced her daughter to STEM programs as a middle schooler along with supporting her attendance at a summer camp in Kansas.

University of South Alabama doctoral candidate Angela Bendolph will help encourage girls and young women to enter the STEM fields: science, technology, engineering and math. University of South Alabama.

"Now she has found a place in the national AAUW STEM Task Force that will allow her to make a difference both in the local community and in the Southeast," she said. "It has been a huge sacrifice to go from a full-time career as director of web services for the university to being a full-time student."

Bendolph, who also had a career as an electrical engineer, knows firsthand how financially beneficial a STEM field degree can be for women. And, by serving on the AAUW STEM Task Force, she saw an opportunity to help women and girls on a national level have the chance to thrive in the STEM fields. She hopes to launch her own nonprofit organization to help mentor, inspire and support women and girls in Mobile and surrounding areas.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, women hold fewer than 25 percent of STEM jobs, but more women are majoring in STEM fields in college. The greatest disparities are occurring in engineering, computer science and the physical sciences. Women who work in STEM areas can earn 33 percent more income than in other career pursuits.

Because of her passion and commitment as a member of Mobile's AAUW branch, the national board members knew Bendolph would be an outstanding representative.

"As a member of the AAUW STEM Task Force, Angela has been a valued team member," said Ana Kay Yaghoubian, STEM senior manager with the national AAUW office. "She has provided research support, recommended grant reviewers and served as a resource while attending AAUW's Tech Savvy event for elementary and middle school girls held annually at Delta State University."

Said Gayle Davidson-Shivers, professor in instructional design and development in the USA College of Education, and Bendolph's graduate advisor: "Angela is conscientious, dedicated and committed. I strongly believe that she has great potential to become a top scholar and professional in the ID field. I know she will do well for the national AAUW."

Leevones G. Fisher, president of the Mobile branch of AAUW, is thrilled Bendolph will work on the national level to support AAUW's initiative to break barriers for women in STEM fields. "Angela is a 'spark plug' for STEM," Fisher said. "She goes the extra mile to push for educational and mentoring resources that include girls and women from various backgrounds with an emphasis on gender equity."

The Mobile AAUW is collaborating with South Alabama to plan a technology conference this summer for middle school girls. USA is considering starting an AAUW branch. Upcoming interest meetings will be announced, and faculty, staff and students are welcome to attend. All events will align with the university's mission and priorities.

AAUW was founded in 1881 with a mission of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

The University of South Alabama Marketing and Communications team provides stories about USA students, faculty, academic programs and research initiatives, all posted online. The university's Web address is southalabama.edu.
Ready to ‘broaden the horizons academically.’

Lawrence Specker  lspecker@al.com

Timothy L. Smith, a leader with a background in academia and medicine, has been named the fourth president of the University of Mobile.

Smith follows Mark Foley, the university’s president since 1998. Foley announced last fall that he planned to retire this spring.

According to information provided by the university, a 10-member committee, aided by an outside firm, held a nationwide search that drew 38 applications. Six finalists were interviewed, with Smith emerging as the unanimous selection.

A university news release on the process identified Smith, 52, as the provost of Anderson University in South Carolina and the former dean of the School of Nursing at Union University in Tennessee. According to the university statement, Smith holds a doctorate in leadership from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and a doctorate in nursing/anesthesia from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

The University of Mobile is home to a nursing program producing 30 to 40 graduates per year. In remarks after his introduction, however, Smith stressed that it would not be his sole focus. “We will examine that program,” he said in response to questions. “I will say that’s one of many.”

His broad priorities, according to Smith:

SEE SMITH, A6
SMITH
FROM A1

» Continue the university’s theological emphasis.
» Conduct a thorough review of UM programs, looking for opportunities to “continue to broaden the horizons academically.”
» Extend the university’s network of community partnerships.

That third goal affects everything from fundraising, to making sure that students have plenty of internship opportunities, to approaching companies such as Airbus to see how the university can address their workforce needs, Smith said.

Smith praised Foley’s stewardship and repeatedly emphasized his appreciation of the university’s role as a “Christ-centered academic institution.”

The university, established in 1961 and known until 1993 as Mobile College, is affiliated with the Alabama Baptist State Convention and enrolls more than 1,500 students. The full-time faculty and staff number more than 200.

The university is known for its Center for Performing Arts, with programs in which students travel nationally and internationally performing with nearly two dozen concert ensembles.

The chair of UM’s Board of Trustees, Fred Wilson, said that Smith “will be a president for every constituency of the university.”

Later, introducing Smith to an assembly of students, faculty and staff, Wilson said it wasn’t the search committee’s job to create a president or impose its will on the process. “The heart of the search committee was that we would find the next president, that God had already chosen, for the University of Mobile,” he said.

Foley, meanwhile, offered the assembly a good-natured look ahead to the day he departs.

“One other thing before we leave,” Foley said. “Dr. Smith will assume responsibilities as president on May 16. That is Monday after our graduation. So you have to be nice to me until that morning. And [then] you can, you know, say stuff.” As the audience laughed, Foley continued: “My administration will run until that morning, we will officially change hands, I’ll give him the key, I’ll be the one with the smile on my face.”

Foley went on to offer a blessing to his successor.

Terry Harbin, chair of the search committee, said in a university news release that Smith was the right man for the job in more ways than one.

“He is unbelievably well-qualified through his academic preparation,” Harbin said. “Secondly, he has practical experience. He has done in other places what we need done at the University of Mobile. And thirdly, he has demonstrated humility. A man who has accomplished what he has accomplished in life to come in and be a down-to-earth, Christ-centered servant is amazing,” Harbin said.

Smith’s wife Penney, is a healthcare administrator consultant, according to information provided by UM. The Smiths have two children: daughter Ashley Wainscott, 24, of Tennessee and son Blake Smith, 21, an engineering student at Clemson University.
School released sex details illegally, fired Alabama A&M professor says

The tenured Alabama A&M professor fired last month for engaging in sexual activity on campus with students and storing videos of the encounters on school computers has fired back at the school.

The professor, Edward Jones, said that Alabama A&M released information about the sex acts in an illegal and inappropriate manner "to sway public opinion and influence any potential jury and this court," according to court documents filed earlier this month.

Through his attorney Lee Loder, Jones is seeking a protective order in federal court to stop Alabama A&M from releasing more information.

Alabama A&M opposed the request, saying that Jones is "desperate to hide the truth" and seeking a "blanket gag order."

U.S. District Judge Madeleine Hughes Haikala set a hearing on the protective order motion for April 21 in Birmingham.

The legal battle is part of a federal lawsuit Jones brought against Alabama A&M in February after the school began termination proceedings after what the lawsuit described as years of harassment when Jones attempted to bring to light administrative issues.

Alabama A&M, in court filings, spelled out that three videos were discovered on Jones' school-issued laptop of Jones participating in sex acts in a campus academic building. Two of the videos involved oral sex with two different Alabama A&M male students.

Once the videos were discovered, Alabama A&M informed Jones he would be fired.

In his motion for protective order, Jones argued that the school's telling of why they chose to fire him violated mandates in the faculty handbook.

In seeking the protective order, Jones is asking the court for three provisions:

- Order the school to issue a statement that these are allegations only and that Jones has not had the opportunity to inspect the evidence against him and that the school retract its previous statements.

- "The gag provisions sought by plaintiff do not seek to protect the fair trial rights of anyone, but rather seek to prevent the university from properly defending itself with the truth and seek to hide the truth from the public," Alabama A&M wrote in its response. "A sweeping gag order limiting speech by parties, witnesses, attorneys and media, particularly in this civil case, is unwarranted."

The school concluded its response by saying, "Plaintiff's motion is without legal or evidentiary support and, therefore, it is due to be denied."
UAB to pay Ehsan $450K

New UAB basketball coach Robert Ehsan's contract was formally approved on Wednesday by the UA System Board of Trustees Compensation Committee.

The 33-year-old Ehsan, who spent four seasons as an assistant at UAB before succeeding Jerod Haase as the Blazers' head coach earlier this month, will earn a salary of $450,000 per season on a five-year contract.

This began on April 3, 2016, and runs through April 1, 2021.

Haase's salary for his final season was $850,000. His salary prior to that was $525,000.

Ehsan's base salary is $400,000 with a radio & talent fee of $25,000 and a promotional & fundraising fee of $25,000.

If UAB terminates Ehsan's contract before it ends, the school owes Ehsan $400,000.

If Ehsan leaves, he would owe UAB $450,000 if it was during year 1 or 2, $375,000 in year 3 and $300,000 in year 4.

Ehsan shaping Blazers staff

New UAB head basketball coach Robert Ehsan said one of his first recruiting battles was keeping Turner Battle on the Blazers' staff.

Battle, going into his third year at UAB, will be Ehsan's associate head coach. UAB formally announced the addition of two other full-time assistants in Kevin Devitt and Dannton Jackson to Ehsan's staff.

Devitt spent three years at UAB in a support staff role before coaching at Wright State as a full-time assistant last season. Wright State won 22 games and reached the Horizon League tournament championship game in Devitt's lone season.

Jackson put together a 294-150 record in 13 seasons as the head coach at Xavier (La.) in New Orleans.

Jackson coached Xavier to the NAIA Division I Tournament in each of the last six seasons.
Spring Swing coming to Tuscaloosa

By Becky Hopf
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

The Tuscaloosa Spring Swing is a novel tennis tournament that will be held April 30 and May 1 at NorthRiver Yacht Club. It's hosted by the University of Alabama's wheelchair tennis team.

What separates this tournament from others is how inclusive it is. It does not have USTA levels, so those new to competitive tennis can make their first attempts here, but it's also open to USTA level players. There is a wheelchair division and there is an up-down division where standup players team with wheelchair players. The divisions include men's and women's singles and doubles, mixed doubles and wheelchair singles and doubles. The tournament is a fundraiser for Alabama's wheelchair tennis team.

"The goal is to create a competitive tournament for the city. Anyone can play, any level of player, any age, and it's also inclusive, so we have an adapted wheelchair division," said Evan Enquist, Alabama's Adapted Athletics' wheelchair tennis coach. "The funds raised will go toward our travel and our equipment and other expenses. It will help our team get to the next level by being able to get to more tournaments."

The University provides some funding for the club team, which includes both men's and women's players, some of them Paralympians. But the funding doesn't cover all the costs involved, which add up with tournament travel, lodging and registration fees, as well as uniforms and equipment. Enquist also hopes it will help cover some of the costs of hosting a major International Tennis Federation wheelchair tennis tournament on campus in September.

"We were talking about ways to raise money, and, at first we thought of doing a tournament on campus but then thought, 'Why don't we do something for the whole city and build it like an actual competitive tournament, not just a small event?' Let's do a real big tournament with all division,'" Enquist said. "We're going to have an able-bodied/standup division, a wheelchair division, as well as what we call an up-down division."

In that division, the able-bodied player will get one bounce and the wheelchair player two before returning the ball across the net.

"That's kind of the core of the idea, to have able-bodied matches, a wheelchair match — they're all going to be intermixed taking place on all the courts."

The team also plans to include an exhibition court where players or spectators can experience the skills it takes to play tennis in a wheelchair.

Play begins both mornings at 9 a.m. The format calls for 8-game pro sets. Each player is guaranteed at least two matches as there is a main draw and consolation. Cost is $50 for one event and $70 for two, such as playing in both singles and doubles, for the public. For high school and college students, the entry fee is $30 to compete in one event and $50 to compete in two. The entry fee includes a T-shirt and lunch on Saturday. The registration deadline is April 27 and can be done online on Alabamaadapted.com.

"The goal is to play the maximum amount of tennis," Enquist said.

NorthRiver Yacht Club has hosted events for the team before, including the collegiate wheelchair national championships.

"They're supportive of wheelchair tennis," Enquist said. "Gary Henderson (NYRC's director of tennis) is a really good guy, and he and the club have been really supportive of what we're doing. I approached him about hosting the event, and he said, 'Absolutely.'

"My goal is to have this become an annual event where all the tennis clubs in the city are involved and maybe even move it from tennis club to tennis club around town."

— Evan Enquist, Alabama's Adapted Athletics' wheelchair tennis coach

“My goal is to have this become an annual event where all the tennis clubs in the city are involved and maybe even move it from tennis club to tennis club around town.”

— Evan Enquist, Alabama's Adapted Athletics' wheelchair tennis coach
ALABAMA TENNIS

O'Shaughnessey a quiet leader for Tide team

By Terrin Waack
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

When Alabama men’s tennis coach George Husack locks his office door late at night, he assumes he’s the last one to leave the courts. Once he turns the corner, more often than not, he realizes he’s wrong. Becker O'Shaughnessey is at his locker.

Husack admires the lone senior’s attention to detail as O'Shaughnessey organizes his belongings, does his laundry, strings his racquet and simply goes about his business.

"Since the first day I got here, I’ve always wanted to be the first to practice, the last to leave,” O'Shaughnessey said. “This year, I don’t know if I’m always the first to practice, but I’m always the last one to leave the facility.”

Husack’s and O'Shaughnessey’s bond surpasses the normal coach-player relationship. Originally, O'Shaughnessey was recruited by former Alabama coach Billy Pate, but the summer before O'Shaughnessey arrived on campus, Pate left and Husack was hired. It has been the two of them from the start.

Husack said O'Shaughnessey has been like an adopted son for the past four years and like any father-son, coach-player combo, Husack and O'Shaughnessey have had their moments.

“We’ve gotten into it,” O'Shaughnessey said. “I’ve made as few as ten saves, but no one really knows who’s my dad. It’s been a good relationship, though.”

O'Shaughnessey has a strong relationship with everyone in the program, as he was voted captain by his teammates. He said it has been an honor. He has always wanted to be the leader since he entered freshman year alone.

It was his lead-by-example personality that paid off in the end.

“He doesn’t say a lot,” Husack said. “His actions say a lot.”

O'Shaughnessey is the first person to admit he’s not the loudest individual. His roommate and teammate, junior Hayes Brewer, is the second.

No matter how much his teammates harass him about being quiet and monotone, Brewer said O'Shaughnessey has done a great job as captain. He’s always there for his team, without a doubt, while others players may not be as reliable.

“He’s just a guy we can follow,” Brewer said. “We know he’s always going to do the right thing, doing what he’s supposed to.”

The rare moments that O'Shaughnessey does get loud and excited are when he’s competing, not on a court, but in a bet. Brewer said O'Shaughnessey is very competitive and will make a bet out of everything and anything – he’s made bets over milkshakes.

Making bets excites O'Shaughnessey. It fuels his competitive side.

“I just like to always have something on the line,” he said. “You’re always playing for something, just anything you do, to make things more interesting.”

The Crimson Tide puts the SEC Championship on the line, starting today against Ole Miss at 1 p.m. O'Shaughnessey hopes his career comes full circle, ending with an advancement to the NCAA Tournament, like his freshman year.

He'll return to Alabama's tennis program in the fall as a coach while finishing up two classes, but after that, it’s on to the next chapter in his life, whether it be utilizing his finance degree or playing tennis professionally.

“It’s not a relief, but I’m also not going to be too upset because I know I've done everything,” O'Shaughnessey said. "I've pushed myself as hard as I could."
Tide wins third SEC golf title

Knight, Talley and Abe finish in top five

From staff reports

BIRMINGHAM —

The No. 1-ranked University of Alabama women's golf team fired a 7-under par 281 on Sunday to capture the 2016 SEC Women's Golf Championship at Greystone Golf and Country Club. The title is the third all-time SEC women's golf championship for the Crimson Tide. Alabama won the league's championship in 2010 and 2013.

The Crimson Tide finished 5-under for the tournament (286-292-281-859) to take the crown. Florida finished second at even par (292-286-286-864), and Arkansas finished third at 18-over (300-294-288-882).

"This is a group of girls, (that), at the beginning of the year, we weren't sure what we had," coach Mic Potter said. "Cheyenne (Knight), as a freshman, had a good junior career but hadn't played like she has here. And to be as dominant as she has as a freshman has made a big difference. At the beginning of the year, who knew? But the more

SEE WOMEN'S, C9
WOMEN’S
From Page C1

we play, the better they get. I had faith they could come out here and shoot a low score. But Florida’s a good team and they can, too. All you can do is do your best.”

The Tide finished the round with three players under par for the day and the weekend. Knight led Alabama with a 3-under par 69 final round and finished third in the individual race with a three-day total of 212 (72-71-69). Senior Emma Talley finished fourth overall, one stroke behind Knight at 213 (70-73-70). Sophomore Lakareber Abe finished in a tie for fifth, two shots behind Talley at 215 (70-74-71).

Senior Jamie Jackson finished in a tie for 13th with a 4-over par 220 (75-74-71). Sophomore Nicole Morales finished in a tie for 27th with an 8-over par 224 (74-76-74).

Alabama entered the final day tied with Florida for the team lead at 2-under par but jumped to a three-shot lead on the front nine then turned in a solid final nine holes at 2-under par to secure the win.

Next up for the Crimson Tide is the NCAA Regional, which Alabama will host May 5-7 at Shoal Creek Golf and Country Club in Birmingham.
Tide finishes in 11th at SEC Championship

Davis Riley leads Tide with 25th-place finish

From staff reports

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, Ga. – The ninth-ranked Alabama men’s golf team finished in 11th overall in the 2016 Southeastern Conference Championship on Sunday, with a three-day total of 880 (294-292-294).

“We didn’t play very well the entire weekend, and it was very disappointing,” Alabama head coach Jay Seawell said. “You aim for the SEC Championship and unfortunately we didn’t play very well. We need to take a little time, flush our system and get back to work. There’s still a lot left to play for. We are looking forward to hosting an NCAA Regional here in about four weeks while getting prepared for the second part of the postseason, which is the NCAA s.”

Georgia (853), ranked third in the nation entering this year’s championship, finished three shots ahead of No. 28 Texas A&M (856) to claim the team title.

Sixth-ranked Florida (861) and 23rd-ranked Arkansas (861) tied for third, while No. 5 LSU (864) was fifth.

Freshman Davis Riley led Alabama, marking the third time this season the Hattiesburg, Miss., native has been the Tide’s top finisher in an event. Riley tied for 25th overall with a 9-over par 219 (72-71-76).

Junior Robby Shelton placed 31st with a 54-hole total of 10-over 220 (75-72-73). It marks just the second time in his stand-out career that he has not placed among the top 25 individual finishers in any tournament he has played. Furthermore, it’s only the 10th tournament in his collegiate career (out of 32) in which he finished over par.

Junior Dru Love tied for 38th overall at 223 (73-78-72), followed by sophomore Jonathan Hardee (80-76-79) and senior Tom Love-lady (74-73-73) in 66th and 68th position, respectively.

Georgia’s Lee McCoy claimed medalist honors with a 3-under par 207, finishing two strokes ahead of Kentucky’s Tyler McDaniel (209).

Alabama will next host the NCAA Tuscaloosa Regional, which will be played May 15-17 at the Ol’ Colony Golf Complex. The NCAA will announce the rest of the regional field in early May.

SEE MEN’S, C9
COMMENTS

Pelphrey ready to get to work

“The reason I am here,” Pelphrey said, repeating a media question. “It’s Avery Johnson.

“I didn’t know him before this season,” Pelphrey said. “The SEC Network (where Pelphrey worked as a color analyst) gave me chance to do that. I worked their games three times here and five times overall. I was impressed with what I saw on the court and also with what I heard from Avery when we would talk about his team.

“But our conversations weren’t about me taking a job here until about a week before I got on campus.”

Pelphrey said that Johnson didn’t go through the “friend-of-a-friend” network, or rely on a search firm.

“That impressed me,” Pelphrey said. “He handled it himself. He took the time to get to know me first, then asked what my interest level was. He said to make sure we get the wives together, and that wasn’t just talk. We did that the first time we went to dinner and he spent more time talking to my wife than to me. That was genuine.”

See Hurt, C3
Pelphrey said that in his short time here, he has seen Johnson have the same effect on other people.

"After a couple of nights recruiting in the prospects' homes, you can see the way people gravitate to him," Pelphrey said.

One thing Pelphrey didn't need was a crash course in Alabama basketball. Through a variety of connections, he has been close to most of the Crimson Tide coaches of the last half-century, from C.M. Newton to Wimp Sanderson (who tried to sign him out of high school), Mark Gottfried to Anthony Grant. His Arkansas teams played Alabama frequently.

"We had Riley Norris on campus for a visit at Florida," Pelphrey said. "We had Nick King (who started his career at Memphis) on campus at Arkansas. So I have a preliminary relationship. I've seen them a lot, played them a lot and have a good feel for this roster."

Even though Retin Obasohan, to no one's surprise, walked away with most of the 2015-16 hardware at the banquet, Pelphrey is optimistic about the future — and ready to contribute.

"I think it is great timing to be coming into the league right now," he said. "There can be a lot of movement at the top. I'm excited to be a part of it. One thing I'm not is half-in and half-out. I'm in it all the way."

—Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
ALABAMA GYMNASTICS

Tide finishes third in Super Six championship

By Kevin Brockway
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

FORT WORTH, Texas — Alabama gymnastics coach Dana Duckworth knew the Super Six was going to come down to the wire — a .025 meet, as she predicted on Friday.

The Crimson Tide gave Oklahoma and LSU a run before falling behind both schools on Saturday night in the NCAA gymnastics championships on Saturday. Oklahoma won the national title with a 197.6750 score. LSU (197.4500) narrowly edged Alabama (197.4375) for second place.

Duckworth found several positives in Alabama’s third-place finish.

“That was a very tough competition,” Duckworth said. “We knew it was going to be a tough competition and I think what we were really most proud of is that the girls just trusted themselves.”

After a bye in the first rotation, Alabama got off to a strong start in the floor routine with a score of 49.3750. Kiana Winston and Lauren Beers led the way with 9.9 performances.

The Tide carried that momentum into the vault, with Beers (9.9) and Nickie Guerrero (9.875) turning in solid scores.

Through the halfway point of the meet, the Tide led all teams at 98.7. But Alabama couldn’t quite carry it over to the uneven bars, finishing the event with a 49.2875 score.

Carley Sims performs her floor exercise routine during Saturday night’s Super Six championships in Fort Worth, Texas. She scored a 9.875. PHOTO/ALABAMA ATHLETICS

SEE GYMNASTICS, C10

GYMNASTICS
From Page C1

despite 9.8875 scores from Winston and Mackenzie Brannan.

“We came out on floor on fire,” Duckworth said. “We did an amazing job on vault, could have stuck a couple of more landings, really went for all of our hand stands and everything on bars, again a couple of things short.”

But Duckworth was most proud of how Alabama closed the event on beam. In the most pressure packed event, Alabama had no falls. Guerrero scored a 9.95, with Brannan and Aja Sims both posting 9.9 scores. Alabama finished the event with a 49.45 to lock up third place ahead of Florida.

“That kind of fight, that kind of drive, last event on beam, I could not be more proud of the grit that these ladies showed,” Duckworth said.

Coming off the third place finish, Duckworth envisions a bright future for the program. Alabama has won six national titles in school history, with its last coming in 2012.

“We lose two seniors that have graduated but we have three amazing athletes that are coming next year,” Duckworth said. “So I believe the firepower behind the future of Alabama gymnastics is so bright and we will learn from this experience.”

Team scores
1. Oklahoma: 197.6750
2. LSU: 197.450
3. Alabama: 197.4375
4. Florida: 197.350
5. UCLA: 196.825
6. Georgia: 196.8125
SEC’s best job? Spurrier should know Alabama is superior

Kevin Scarbinsky  kscarbinsky@al.com

LSU and Georgia? Seriously? LSU and Georgia the two best football coaching jobs in the SEC? Really?
Did Alabama move to the NFC South when we weren’t looking?

No less an SEC legend than Steve Spurrier squatted that nonsense Wednesday on his birthday appearance on the SEC Network’s Paul Finebaum Show.
Hey, let the Ball Coach eat cake. We’ll be over here slicing up his argument.

“Really, if you want to win championships you have to recruit good players…right? And that’s what Alabama and Georgia are good at.”

What are the best two jobs in the SEC? I think Georgia and LSU are basically the best two,” Spurrier said. “Of course, Nick Saban has made Alabama the best right now. But as far as recruiting advantages, LSU doesn’t have much competition in their state, and Georgia pretty much should own their state there.”

Valid points, but there’s more to a good job than having an in-state recruiting advantage in a talent-rich state. Spurrier himself used to wonder how Georgia had better players on signing day but Florida’s players were better on game day.
That was evil genius.

A really good job is a good job over time. A really good job is good, at times, in spite of the coach.

Spurrier knows this. Spurrier acknowledged it in 2012 when he suggested, if Saban wanted to be considered one of the all-time greats, “he has to go somewhere besides Alabama and win because they’ve always won there at Alabama.”

Must be a pretty good job then. Must be the best job in the SEC.

There’s one school that’s won more SEC titles than LSU and Georgia combined.
There’s one SEC program that’s won four national titles since LSU’s last one and five since Georgia’s. There’s one SEC team that’s won at least one conference title in every decade since the league was founded in 1933.

Spurrier’s been there and been undone by that team. He was victimized by the Crimson Tide long before Saban arrived.
While he was kicking grass and taking names at Florida, Darth Visor once lost to Mike DuBose twice. In the same season. One of those games was in The Swamp, where Spurrier used to dominate. The other was in the SEC Championship Game, which Spurrier used to own.

SCARBINSKY
FROM B1

Spurrier will go down as one of the best coaches in college football history. DuBose will not. If their 1999 head-to-head record — DuBose 2, Spurrier 0 — doesn’t tell you how good the Alabama coaching job is, nothing does.

But wait. There’s more.
Mark Richt couldn’t get Georgia to build an indoor practice facility. At least he couldn’t get it done before he got fired. Alabama expanded Bryant-Denny Stadium, bulking up the north end zone, with Mike Shula as head coach.

LSU wanted to fire Les Miles last year, botched the hit job and instead turned the Mad Hatter into a sympathetic figure. Alabama fired Mike Price before he ever coached a game.

That’s just some anecdotal evidence of the power of the Alabama job. The numbers make the case even stronger.

Four of the top six coaches in winning percentage in SEC history coached at Alabama. Five different coaches have won at least one national championship at Alabama. Seven different coaches have won at least one SEC championship at Alabama.

Every single Alabama coach since Paul Bryant answered Mama’s call to come home in 1958 has won 10 games in a season at least once. That list includes Bill Curry, DuBose, Dennis Franchione and Shula.

Think about that for a minute. Now think about this.

Bill Curry and Mike DuBose won SEC titles at Alabama. Steve Spurrier didn’t win an SEC title at South Carolina.

There’s no question which job is superior.
Beating the odds

Even as a parasitic amoeba threatens his vision, Ryan Parris continues pursuit of dream to play for Tide

Joseph Goodman jgoodman@al.com

He played a total of two plays, and all on special teams. He's not on scholarship.

There are no guarantees he'll be on the team in the fall.

For Ryan Parris of Madison, Ala., limited participation in Alabama's 2016 spring game might have been the beginning and the end of his college football career.

If that was it, and the parasitic amoeba fighting to take over his left eye forces him to give up on his dream, then at least he had the opportunity to run down the field inside Bryant-Denny Stadium in front of nearly 80,000 fans.

Why did an Alabama walk-on football player participate in Saturday's A-Day game when there is an amoeba attacking his eye? Three reasons. One, SEE PARRIS, B4
PARRIS

FROM B1

he loves football. Two, he loves Alabama. Three, he's really, really tough.

He also follows all of Nick Saban's rules.

On Saturday, he wouldn't talk to me about his amoeba and his long battle against the persistent little devil because talking to reporters without permission is not part of "the process." Parris doesn't fear the parasite that's doing the backstroke atop his cornea. He does, however, fear Saban.

Smart kid.

For those unfamiliar with amoebae, science calls them single-celled animals that catch food and "move about by extending finger-like projections or protoplasm." They live in damp warm places, or in your eyes.

In other words, Ryan has the mother of all eye floaters. But this one is eating his eye.

Doctors call this rare affliction Acanthamoeba keratitis. In short, a microscopic organism has invaded Ryan's eye and is threatening his vision. It's scary.

If you want to cheer for one player next season no one has ever heard of, then make Ryan Parris your guy. He'll be the redshirt freshman backup long snapper wearing new age rec-specs.

For now, Ryan is OK, and on track to participate in Alabama's offseason conditioning program. A few days ago, he thought his career might be over.

Last Monday, or only six days before his first A-Day game, Ryan's vision in his left eye had deteriorated to the point of legal blindness. He had been battling the amoeba in his left eye for months, and suddenly the amoeba seemed to be winning.

How bad?

Ryan's father was there in the doctor's office in Birmingham when his son couldn't read the first letter on the eye chart.

"But that's not it," Butch Parris said. "So, after he couldn't read any of the chart, the technician put her hand up in front of his face about two feet."

Ryan could see a hand moving, but couldn't count the fingers.

After months of treatment, and with the spring game so close, things were going from bad to blind. The ophthalmologist gave Parris 48 hours.

If his vision didn't improve, then he would probably need a corneal transplant. The doctor increased Ryan's medication, and the family hoped for the best.

"We really just bombed his eye with medicine," Butch said.

Ryan's eyesight improved, and he avoided a corneal transplant. The procedure would likely have ended his college football career before it ever started. Ryan redshirted last year, and he'll likely be on the sidelines next season behind senior long snapper Cole Mazza.

But never mind football.

At this point, the Parris family just wants their son to be healthy, and have the chance to enjoy college like a normal student. The last six months have been hell.

For one thing, the eye drops needed to beat back the amoeba have been a hassle. When Ryan first started his treatment, he had to give himself one drop every hour. Naturally, the drops needed to be refrigerated at all times.

You know those Yeti cooler cups that are the height of Southern posh-neck fashion? They keep Bud Light and bourbon cold, sure, but they can also double as a portable fridge for amoeba-fighting eye drops.

Parris walked around campus all winter with a Yeti tumbler. It never carried a drink.

"He has been using it to carry his medicine," Butch Parris said.

And by "medicine," Butch actually means medicine.

The eye drops are nothing, really, when compared to one of Ryan's other medical interventions. The transplantation of "amniotic membrane discs" is an interesting thing.

We'll let Ryan's father explain:

"They take shavings from the placenta after the birth of a woman who has had a C-section."

And they drop it on the eye like a blanket.

"This is where medicine loses me," Butch Parris said. "I'm not a dumb guy, but this is unbelievable what they do."

Ryan began feeling irritation in his eye last November. It started the day of Alabama's game against LSU.

"We had some friends we were tailgating with, and he showed up and his eye looked terrible," said Ryan's father. "That was the beginning of it. The amoeba was starting to grow."

Squeamish words. If you feel the need to rub your eyes... do not.

The Parris family still isn't sure how Ryan contracted the amoeba. Most likely, he washed his hands incorrectly. Here's a pro tip: never use tap water or your mouth for the job.

"It could have been any number of things, and we'll never really know for sure," said Ryan's father, "but the highest risk group to get this are teenagers wearing contacts. Because teenagers are less likely to wash their hands properly, and less likely to clean them properly."

(Teenagers are also less likely to read this, unfortunately.)

Amoebae like Ryan's can live in between the space where a contact meets the eye. If left untreated, the disease can cause blindness. Ryan isn't "out of the woods," says his father, but he is expected to make a full recovery.

Of course, the great irony of Ryan's troubles this past winter and spring is that long snappers don't need extraordinary vision to do their jobs. It's all muscle memory. The long snapper at Tulane, Aaron Golub, is legally blind.

Golub and Parris shared the same long-snapping coach in high school, guru Chris Rubio (RubioLongSnapping.com). Rubio has put hundreds of undersized football players into college by turning them into long snappers. Parris is only 6-1, 209 pounds.

"If a D-III linebacker or a high school linebacker can snap the hell out of the ball, he can end up becoming a D-I long snapper," Rubio said.

That's how Parris got to Tuscaloosa. He was the center for James Clemens High School in Madison before being invited to walk on at Alabama. Parris played in one playoff game his entire high school career. To prepare for college, he attended offseason camps for long snapping and mastered the art.

He's so good at long snapping, Parris could do it blindfolded. Or with a single-celled organism fluttering its protoplasm in his cornea.
UA RECRUITING

A-Day sways Sanders to commit

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

Trey Sanders has had his share of surprises lately.
There was, for example, last weekend’s A-Day game at the University of Alabama, and the 76,000-plus crowd on hand.

“A-Day was amazing,” said Sanders, a 2019 football prospect from Port St. Joe, Fla. “I had heard they’d never seen that many attendees. It was just shocking. I didn’t believe it at first.”

That shock wasn’t as big as the scholarship offer he got from UA head coach Nick Saban. He accepted last Saturday to become the first member of his class to make a public commitment.

“Just to be offered like this, it’s very exciting,” he said. “I never dreamed it. I come from a small town and a small school. In Port St. Joe, you’ve got two stop lights. I thought my first offer would be when I was a senior or something.”

The 6-foot-1, 205-pound prospect is listed as an athlete. He plays running back and safety in high school, and said UA is recruiting him as a running back. He is currently a high school freshman, and has played with the varsity since seventh grade.

Sanders chose Alabama over offers from Auburn, Florida, Florida State and Georgia.

“I knew I was offered by big teams,” he said, “but there’s nothing like Alabama. It’s a dream come true.”

Sanders made an unofficial visit to the UA campus a couple of weeks ago. On A-Day, he toured the campus and talked with coaches and players.

He attended the Walk of Fame ceremony at Denny Chimes, where last year’s team captains had their handprints and cleat prints enshrined in concrete, and the Walk of Champions when players arrived for the spring game.

He knew he was going to accept Saban’s offer when he walked into Bryant-Denny Stadium.

“That’s my first time being in the stadium,” he said. “Something came over me that this is where I need to be.

“The fan base and how Coach Saban takes pride in the team, the way he takes care of his team and the coaching, it was amazing.”
AU FOOTBALL

Conclusion for A-Day: Don't draw conclusions

CECIL HURT

Nick Saban says, whatever you do, don't rely on the draw.

"Don't draw conclusions," he cautioned after Alabama wrapped up its annual A-Day game, a 7-3 Crimson team victory that probably would have unsettled a fan base that hasn't grown accustomed to seeing low-scoring spring scrimmages turn into championship offenses in the fall.

Why shouldn't we draw conclusions? "Because you'll be wrong," he said.

That reasoning is a synthesis of three factors. First, everyone knows you can't read too much into an A-Day, or any scrimmage. Second, he was talking to the media and Saban automatically assumes that we are wrong 90 percent of the time. Third, things were particularly difficult for the first offense on Saturday because the deck was stacked against them, working against the first defense.

But, with Saban's guarantee that any conclusion will be off base, let's at least make some cautious observations before we crash through the ice and into the deadly waters of speculation.

First, if you set aside everything Saban said and simply watched the game as if every player has equal ability, that every offensive tackle was the same as every other offensive tackle and so on, you could make a case that freshman Jalen Hurts had the best day of any of the four competing quarterbacks. His statistics were decent. He played with poise. If the quarterbacks were able to make running plays without a two-hand touch defense, Hurts certainly showed the ability to do that.

And now a counterpoint from Nick Saban...

"Let me say this," Saban said. "Who you're playing against has to match you. So, the twos were playing against the twos. Our No. 2 defense probably played not as good as our No. 2
HURT
From Page C1

offense, to be honest. Especially with Johnathan Allen and Dakota Ball, who are both in two deep, not in there. So all of a sudden, the guys who replace them on the twos are threes.

"I think that the depth at defense is one the concerns that we have, so it wasn't surprising to me that the second offense was able to move the ball more effectively, but the first defense played a little better. We have some (offensive linemen) who missed some pass rush, which probably made it more difficult for the quarterbacks.

So, all these factors are things that you don't really look at on the surface. You just look at the result and then you (in the media) start drawing conclusions without drawing out the facts."

Thus, saying Hurts played well is an observation. It's not a conclusion, saying that he will play ahead of Cooper Bateman in the fall. He almost certainly won't. Quite probably, Hurts will redshirt and the quarterback competition will stay open well into August.

You can do the same thing at running back. The fair observation is that Damien Harris, similarly situated with the second offense working against the second defense, had a strong day, running with confidence that wasn't so evident last year. To stretch that into a conclusion and say he's jumped ahead of Bo Scarbrough would be premature at best. But because they are running backs, not quarterbacks, and will therefore split time anyway, it's a less feisty debate.

Ultimately, A-Day looked like other recent A-Days. Alabama isn't a finished product but has all the raw material of a championship contender. As Saban said, it matters who you are going against. Most teams going against Alabama in 2016 will figure that out, if they haven't already.
Former Tide players gather to honor their head coach

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

Friday night in the North Zone section of Bryant-Denny Stadium, a collection of former Alabama players gathered to honor and show appreciation for Nick Saban during the A-Club dinner as part of the festivities surrounding A-Day.

The names are recognizable, some of the best players in the history of the program. They stood at the front of the room and spoke from the heart to and about Saban. Then they presented him with a personalized golf bag and club.

"It was really heartfelt for me," Saban said. "I've talked about a lot of guys coming back for the Clemson game, and being in the locker room, staying around talking to me, but for all those guys to come see me last night, there had to be about 30 or 40 of them in there that have played on our team since we have been here in the last nine years.

"For them to say some of the things they said, and give me a golf bag and some things on a golf club, it was very touching. But, at the same time, it's exactly what we are trying to do in terms of helping people be more successful. Whether it be personal development, the lessons they learned so they can be more successful in life. Whether it's making sure they get an education, so they get a better quality of life. And, how they develop as football players.

"All these things are our goals for the program, so it really makes me feel good when the guys come back and say things to me like, 'You helped me do that. The program helped me do that. The people helped me do that.' And to see that appreciation, that's great. But that should not go just for me. It goes out to a lot of people. I just drive the bus, but we had some really good quality people here on the way from administration, right on down that contribute to having the kind of program that we have that helps the players contribute and benefit for themselves."

Saban sack

Blake Barnett helped Saban register his first career Alabama sack. Not really, but it did provide for a moment of comic relief during Saturday's scrimmage.

Barnett dropped back to pass and began to scramble when the defensive pressure got to him. As he gave ground, he somehow found himself right next to Saban, who coaches and observes the game on the field behind the offense.

The officials blew the play dead, but it drew a laugh from the crowd.

"On more than on occasion, when there's a scramble, everybody seems to get attracted to me," Saban joked. "Sometimes when there's an interception, there's seems to be an unusual attraction for players to converge on me. I think it's intentional to
some degree. But as long as I don't get hurt, I really don't care. "I usually can get out of the way but I didn't do a very good job of that today."

Second team

Alphonse Taylor started all 15 games last season at right guard. Saturday he was with the second-team offensive line, and until further notice that's where he will stay.

"He's going to continue to be on the second team if he doesn't get his weight down and get in shape," Saban said.

Most improved

Saban said redshirt freshman outside linebacker Anfernee Jennings was among the team's most improved players this spring.

"...last year he was hurt, so he missed part of the season," Saban said. "When he came back he was just on the scout team. So he was really starting at ground zero in terms of his knowledge of what the expectations was, what the job was, understanding the defensive system. He's really made a lot of progress."

Tidbits

Inside linebacker Keith Holcombe did not play due to a concussion he suffered earlier in the week...The official attendance was 76,212...The team captains were O.J. Howard and Cam Robinson for the Crimson team and Ryan Anderson and Eddie Jackson for the White team...It was the eighth largest A-Day attendance in program history...The defenses combined for 14 sacks.

—Reach Aaron Suttles at aaron@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0229.
ON FBS RULING

This NCAA rule makes some sense

CECIL HURT

The NCAA takes a regular beating over student-athlete welfare, and maybe that's deserved, even when people tend to conflate the Indianapolis bureaucracy and the member schools that do the voting and actually implement many of the policies.

That happened last week, when plenty of media members and even some coaches took out their cudgels and started whacking away over satellite camps, even though the issue is nuanced and the majority of FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision) conferences voted to do away with the camps. Cooler heads may revisit that issue later.

For now, the camps sleep with the fishes, as they'd say in The Godfather.

But sometimes, policies are implemented that actually make sense. That happened at the latest Division I Council meeting, the same place where the satellites all crashed.

With little fanfare and much wisdom, though, another rule was passed. This rule will allow FBS schools to pay for parents or guardians to accompany prospects on their official visits. This is not a comparison of that rule with the satellite camp rules, which would be a distinct case of apples and oranges. But the rule does do some of the things that satellite camp supporters complained about losing with the camps. It helps the student-athlete, especially in cases where a family may not have the financial means to make five trips in a short time frame. It may even have the additional benefit, at some places, of making sure that recruiting weekends aren't all-party, no-academic blowouts. It might even help those schools in areas far away from prospect-rich areas — like Michigan, to choose a random example — to bring in more young men from Florida or Texas or even Hokes Bluff.

In all, it's a non-controversial, feel-good move.

"We are still trying to

SEE NCAA, C6
NCAA
From Page C1

figure out the impact of all the changes from the new rules," Alabama athletics director Bill Battle said on Tuesday. "But this is a rule we certainly support.

"We like to get players and families on our campus together. This allows us to get to know the player better, as well as his family. It allows those who can’t afford to come otherwise to visit our campus and see what we have to offer."

There are a few things that the rule doesn’t do, certainly not in the case of Alabama and other major football powers. It doesn’t uncover any diamond in the rough prospects. Remember, this doesn’t apply to unofficial visits, the kind that largely account for the game weekends where a couple of hundred prospects might be on campus. A school can only have a maximum of 56 official visits in a football year. At Alabama, a good percentage of that 56 will consist of national top 150 players.

The rule will cost many.

There will be 112 extra visitors per year, although that won’t put a terrible dent in the recruiting budget of most SEC schools.

"We think the benefit will outweigh the expense," Battle said.

Naturally, some people will look for loopholes. People have already raised the possibility of the player who takes the family along to Hawaii, San Diego State, Miami and Tulane before signing with Purdue (for example.) The fact is, Hawaii and Miami probably know how to weed out the serious candidates already.

There have been other measure to help families in recent years. UA, Clemson, Michigan State and Oklahoma were able to help families attend the College Football Playoff games. The same is true for the men’s and women’s Final Four.

There’s more to be done, but every sign of a heartbeat in NCAA matters is a positive.

—Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Beyond the four-year degree

The assumption that a college education should take four years is baked into American culture. Colleges in the colonial days were founded on the premise of a four-year degree, a concept imported from Europe. Harvard University experimented with a three-year degree when it was founded in 1636, but the test was short-lived, and the four-year degree has been the standard ever since. We expect students to enter college at 18 and leave when they turn 22, and we worry about those who take a more circuitous route to graduation.

But we need to reconsider that long-established, one-size-fits-all model. For many students, attending college for four consecutive years is no longer the right path. The dynamic economy requires more flexibility, especially in fields outside the traditional liberal arts.

Take data science. In the last five years, there has been a sevenfold increase in demand for data scientists, according to Burning Glass, a company that analyzes job ads. But in the same time span, the requirements for the job have changed, requiring greater training in data visualization and less familiarity with deep quantitative reasoning. In this and other areas, the relevant skills are evolving so rapidly that no traditional undergraduate curriculum can keep up.

Instead of maintaining the four-year norm, we should reimagine a college education as a platform for lifelong learning, one that would provide students with multiple opportunities to develop soft skills as well as critical technical skills — not just between the ages of 18 and 22 but whenever necessary.

Stanford University has provided a model for how a college for life might work. In 2014, its design school developed a proposal for what it called an “open loop university,” which would admit students for six years of study that could be undertaken at any time.

Under this new system, students could start college when they were ready — at 16, 18 or 26 years old — and distribute the six years as they saw fit. They could “loop out” after two years to work for a Silicon Valley startup and then “loop in” a few years later if the startup failed or they wanted to try something else.

Students who returned after looping out could use the time that remained on their six-year clock to move toward new careers in their 30s or 50s.

Granted, students are rushed through college in part because of ever spiraling tuition prices. But new advances in the delivery of education can assist in lowering the cost of a degree, so that more time won’t necessarily equal higher prices. Online and hybrid classes, which mix virtual and face-to-face learning, are both less expensive to offer and more flexible than a traditional lecture- or seminar-based course. At the University of Central Florida, 60 percent of the university’s 53,000 students take online or hybrid classes, and can mix and match them with traditional classes in the same semester.

Students at many colleges already acquire knowledge in a variety of settings — through internships, co-curricular activities and independent research projects — yet most of the credits they earn and pay for in college are based only on the time they spend sitting in a classroom. By giving students credit for experiential learning as well, colleges could help integrate in-class education with the hands-on experiences valued by employers. This change would also help students learn how to take control of directing their professional development.

Courses in this new model for education wouldn’t need to be offered solely by traditional universities. College and universities could curate trusted sources outside their campus walls to supplement their offerings, including free open online courses; boot camps that offer short-term skill classes; and online training programs, such as Lynda.com.

With an expansion of the ways higher education is provided, students wouldn’t be locked into studying at a particular place and in one set period of time. Instead, a student could move in and out...
of college, going back when new skills and information are needed, and higher education would become what it needs to be — a lifelong and adjustable acquisition of knowledge.

— Jeffrey J. Selingo, a professor of practice at Arizona State University, is author of "There Is Life After College: What Parents and Students Should Know About Navigating School to Prepare for the Jobs of Tomorrow."
Inside How Missouri’s Leadership Scrambled to Quell a Campus Crisis

By: Jack Stripling

As protests over race relations at the University of Missouri threatened to boil over last fall, administrators scrambled behind the scenes to assess threats of violence, mollify demonstrators, and grapple with a social-media frenzy that fed on anger and spread panic across the system.

A review of more than 150 pages of emails, obtained by The Chronicle through a public-records request, provides a window into top-level administrators’ frenetic efforts to restore order at Missouri over a six-day period from November 6 to 11, beginning with the Mizzou football team’s decision to boycott games in solidarity with a graduate student on a hunger strike and concluding two days after the university’s top two officials resigned.

Timothy M. Wolfe, the system president, and R. Bowen Loftin, chancellor of the flagship campus in Columbia, communicated regularly throughout the crisis. Both men had taken some criticism amid student complaints over racially-charged incidents on the campus, though it was Mr. Wolfe who ultimately became the target for protesters, who accused him of being apathetic. Yet, as the emails show, all the administrators felt a growing pressure to respond to a situation that threatened to spiral out of control.

November 6

On the same day that Mr. Wolfe issued an apology to demonstrators, he wrote in an email to Mr. Loftin and others about providing "mental health resources" to the protesters, who had set up an encampment on the quad. Mr. Wolfe had met earlier that Friday with Jonathan Butler, who at that point was five days into a hunger strike that he said would not end until Mr. Wolfe resigned.

"Please make sure," Mr. Wolfe wrote, "we are reaching out to them and making available the resources required for these passionate protesters."

"Also," he continued, "I heard that the people that are camping out are being harassed or being called names and the request for security or something that would protect their rights and safety is required. Please address this as well."

Mr. Wolfe was, by this point, under scrutiny by the national news media and facing tremendous pressure to step down. But Mr. Loftin had his own problems. A group of nine deans on the flagship campus, upset with Mr. Loftin’s management style, had been working for weeks to force him out.

November 8

Mr. Wolfe’s apologies did little to placate the protesters, who had assembled under the name Concerned Student 1950, a reference to the year Missouri admitted its first black student. On November 8, Missouri officials discussed via email what they might offer up to the group, which

See next page
had written a list of demands that included hiring more professors from minority backgrounds and improving mental-health resources.

In a draft statement, which Mr. Loftin distributed to system officials, the chancellor pledged to seek more money from the system to improve diversity hiring efforts, and he said that he would "strongly encourage" faculty members to augment curricula to address "inclusion, diversity, equity, and the experiences of marginalized groups in society."

Zora Z. Mulligan, the system’s chief of staff, responded with a number of questions, including what she described as "the big one."

"Do you think this will reverse or slow the escalation of anger and protest on the campus?"

If the Columbia campus was a powder keg, Missouri officials had now come to view social media as a match. Yik Yak, a smartphone application that allows users to post anonymously, became a platform for threats of violence. The messages on Yik Yak and other social media like it were concerning enough to Mr. Loftin that he contemplated whether he could or should shield them from the view of students.

The proposal was never carried out and the statement was never made public, but internally it engendered discussion about whether blocking smartphone apps might infringe on users' Constitutional rights. In her email to the chancellor, Ms. Mulligan said that she had gotten a note from "Paul," presumably Paul R. Maguffee, the system’s general counsel, who said "it might be a first amendment issue but unlikely to be pursued."

Christian Basi, a spokesman for the campus, said in an email to The Chronicle on Thursday that "our policy is to only block sites that are known to be hosting malware, and thus, pose a direct security risk to our network and systems."

November 9

Both Mr. Loftin and Mr. Wolfe announced their resignations on November 9. But tensions persisted. At 3:39 p.m., Charlie J. Parker Jr., coordinator of diversity programs, sent an email to his colleagues in the Office of the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative expressing concerns for his personal safety. Mr. Parker, who is black, wrote that he and another black member of the staff had felt threatened by "a white male student who attempted to fight us" while the two men walked across campus.

"He turned around and yelled ‘are you guys talking to me?’ ‘Do you have a problem?’ While saying these things he approached us in a manner as if he was going to fight us. We were both rightfully surprised and extremely upset by his provocation, but we decided to turn away and ignore his advances."

"This is an example of when a person of color states a space is unsafe," Mr. Parker continued. "If we as professional staff of color cannot walk out of our office building without be threatened then we have a huge problem. I say all this to express that my main concern is for the safety of
the students, and I would submit that as an office we need to focus on how we can take IMMEDIATE measures to ensure safety of students of color on this campus."

At 8:36 p.m., Noor Azizan-Gardner, chief diversity officer, forwarded Mr. Parker’s email to Henry (Hank) C. Foley, who by now had been designated as Mr. Loftin’s interim successor.

"I fear that the backlash will be coming in full force," Ms. Azizan-Gardner wrote. "We should strategize for possible scenarios."

But Missouri officials appeared genuinely perplexed as to what to do. Minutes later, Mr. Foley emailed Gary L. Ward, vice chancellor for operations and chief operating officer, asking, "What do you think we can do? Can we increase police presence on campus or would that have unintended consequences?"

November 10

By now, a literal and figurative storm was brewing. Campus police worried that a bad weather pattern could threaten encamped demonstrators, and Yik Yak users were spewing racist vitriol. "I’m going to stand my ground tomorrow and shoot every black person I see," one anonymous user wrote.

A counterprotest movement, fueled by outrage that administrators had seemingly bowed to an angry mob, had begun to take shape.

"I am getting calls from all groups of people now saying they are coming to campus to protest the protesters," Maj. Brian Weimer, a public information officer with the University of Missouri-Columbia Police Department, wrote to Mr. Ward, the chief operating officer. "This is going to completely tax all our resources if this occurs in addition to watching out for others on campus due to various threats."

A day earlier, an incident at the protesters’ encampment had intensified the crisis. Melissa A. Click, an assistant professor of communication at Missouri, was caught on video at the demonstration site, where she grabbed the camera of a journalist and called out for "some muscle" to get rid of him. Ms. Click and Janna Basler, the campus’s assistant director of Greek life, who was also seen blocking a reporter in the video, were painted as icons of political correctness, defending the safe space of students at the expense of the rights of the press.

Missouri officials, concerned about how to handle a nationally organized protest movement that might descend upon the campus, consulted with a host of law-enforcement agencies about what to do, records show. The encampment, administrators were told, was a lure for outsiders.

"This is what the FBI is telling us," Mr. Ward wrote, at 1:49 p.m.

"The longer they stay the more likely the professional protesters will be here."

Within a minute, Mr. Foley replied, "I believe they are coming."
Mr. Ward had been skeptical of the encampment from the start. When the protesters requested, through the diversity office, that the university provide a gas generator, Mr. Ward pushed back, suggesting the demonstrators should "move off our quad."

"I very much appreciate our students and their right to protest but they are right now killing the grass and putting stakes in the ground where we have underground sprinkler system," Mr. Ward had written on November 6 to Ms. Azizan-Gardner, the chief diversity officer, cc'ing Mr. Loftin, the chancellor. "No other group or individual have been allowed to set up home on our quad."

But the students prevailed, helped in part by Michael A. Middleton, a veteran civil-rights lawyer and retired deputy chancellor at Missouri's Columbia campus. "This will be on national news in the next few days," Mr. Middleton, who has since been named the system's interim president, wrote to Mr. Loftin. "I think we need to do everything humanly possible to support our students in their free expression."

Once the students got power, they asked for more.

"The generator is set up," Mr. Ward later wrote. "They want a fire pit. We told them 'no.'"

Meanwhile, the threats on social media to the campus had increased, and Missouri officials grappled with whether to cancel classes, sought to comfort students, and fielded criticism for failures to communicate adequately.

The challenge of student safety was so confounding that, on the night of November 10, the chancellor took matters into his own hands, inviting several student leaders to stay in his home.

But this, too, raised concerns. "To your residence?" asked Mr. Foley, when Mr. Loftin told him about the houseguests. "Is that advisable Bowen?"

"I hope so," replied the chancellor, noting that the campus police were monitoring his home. "We will be fine."

Mr. Foley remained uneasy. "Just be aware," he wrote to Mr. Loftin, "that things have a way of whipsawing."

The university, which faced some pressure from lawmakers, parents, and students to cancel classes, never did so. Instead, officials encouraged students to call 911 if they felt they were in any danger, conveying this message through Mr. Loftin's Twitter account, where he uses the handle @bowtieger.

But many people remained ill at ease.

"Note there is criticism for not communicating," Mr. Foley wrote to Mr. Loftin and other top officials at 10:53 p.m. "Don't think Bowtieger's Twitter is adequate."
At 11:16 p.m., James Spain, the vice provost for undergraduate studies, wrote to the group, relating a call he had received from a student’s mother "on my home phone."

"He wanted to leave his dorm and the campus," Mr. Spain wrote. "He indicated white supremacists were on campus — there were riots and threats for shootings."

Mr. Foley assured Mr. Spain that there was no evidence of such threats, but Mr. Spain underscored that "right now, social media is spinning out of control — I think we need to make a statement."

When Mr. Foley passed these concerns along to Ellen de Graffenreid, vice chancellor of marketing and communications, she said, "We are pushing social media."

"AOK," Mr. Foley replied.

November 11

To some extent, records show, the university was conscious of the symbolic messages it was sending as well. On the morning of November 11, Mr. Wolfe, the departing president, told a group of vice presidents that he thought it appropriate to cancel a social event that evening.

"Hi guys — In the constantly shifting series of events that is our new normal … let’s hold off on tonight’s gathering," Mr. Wolfe wrote. "Several members of the team are going to be tied up with the board meeting, and with the mood on campus ‘fun’ just doesn’t feel right."

That afternoon, university leaders released a public statement.

"We feel the weight of the world’s eyes upon us," they wrote. "We will not flinch from the work ahead."