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AUGUST 22, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 4, 2013

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Mobilians head to the polls Aug. 27 for city elections, and we profile the City Council candidates and have Q&As with the candidates for mayor.

Sandy Stimpson

Mayor Sam Jones

Lighting bid raises questions

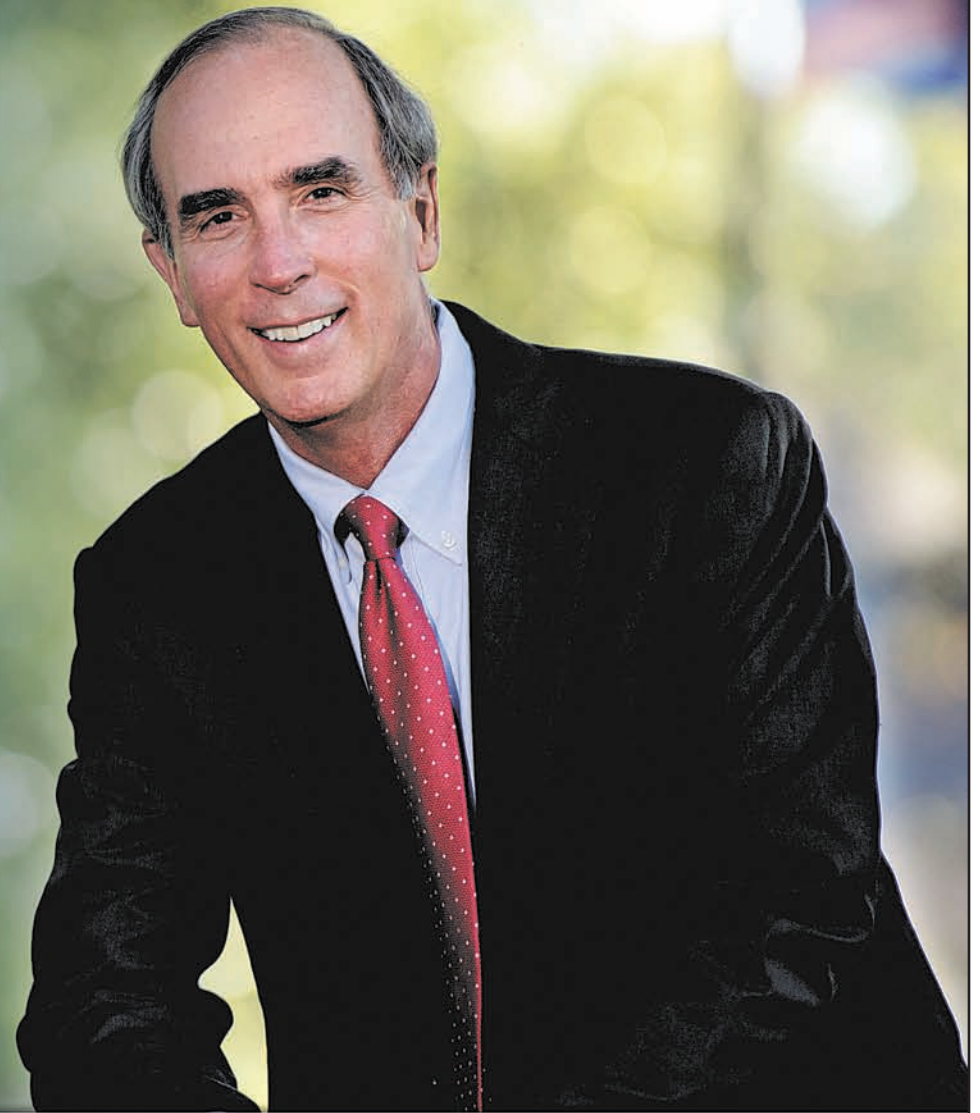
Sandy Stimpson

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PAID FOR BY SANDY STIMPSON FOR MAYOR PO BOX 70106, MOBILE, AL 36670

Ashley Toland-Trice
Co-publisher/Editor
ashleytoland@lagniappemobile.com

Rob Holbert
Co-publisher/Managing Editor
rholbert@lagniappemobile.com

Steve Hall
Marketing/Sales Director
shall@lagniappemobile.com

Katie Nichols
News Editor
katie@lagniappemobile.com

Kevin Lee
Associate Editor/Arts Editor
klee@lagniappemobile.com

Gabriel Tynes
Web Editor/Reporter
gabe@lagniappemobile.com

Andy MacDonald
Cuisine Editor
fatmansqueeze@comcast.net

Stephen Centanni
Music Editor
scentanni@lagniappemobile.com

Colin Merritt
Sports Writer
colin@lagniappemobile.com

Daniel Anderson
Chief Photographer
dan@danandersonphoto.com

Laura Rasmussen
Graphic Designer
www.laurarasmussen.com

Brooke Wilder
Advertising Sales Executive
brooke@lagniappemobile.com

Leigh Wright
Advertising Sales Executive
leigh@lagniappemobile.com

Beth Williams
Advertising Sales Executive
bwilliams@lagniappemobile.com

Contributors:
Asia Frey • Brian Holbert
Jeff Poor • Jennifer McDonald
Ron Sivak • Colin Merritt
Susan Larsson
Greenberry Taylor

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On the Cover: The Choice.
By Dan Anderson

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ZHUZHU

“Operation Impact” employs Nazi techniques

An open letter to Mayor Jones:

Authority to set up police checkpoints on the streets of Mobile, or to cancel them, evidently belongs exclusively to the mayor of the city of Mobile. Not counting additional two roadblocks this month, at your direction, 697 “arrests,” citations, and confiscations of autos and property of Mobilians took place in only one evening, on July 23. Mobile Police Department’s “Operation Impact” hit the city, shall we say, like a bomb. Wow. I wonder if it was intended as relief of some pesky city financial shortages?

While not wishing to be harsh, it is nearly impossible to hide dismay at the travesties perpetrated on Mobile motorists by the mayor’s office through the Mobile Police Department within the last several weeks. Worse, and news to me, one Mobile lawyer commented on Facebook, “Municipal Court i\$\$\$ not about the law!” As one who loves Mobile, I feel sick at heart.

As a citizen of Mobile, I urge the office of the mayor of this city to publically show discernible constitutional justification for stopping a group of Mobile citizens at city roadblocks in which proof of their of “papers” is required without lawful “probable cause”... (Nazi Germany used these techniques.) The only constitutional reason I can find anywhere for city interference on our right to freely travel city streets (“unmolested”...constitutional term) is to warn unsuspecting motorists of impending peril that could cause injury or death. But, even if there were a “safety benefit” related to roadblocks, it would not outweigh the negative totalitarian nature of this practice. The people of Mobile do have a right to know your legal rationale, not personal opinion.

Bully tactics of directing unconstitutional (Alabama Constitution, Section 5), checkpoints harass and intimidate Mobilians. This malevolent action flies in the face of any honest definition of freedom. It is really unpalatable to believe the purpose for such roadblocks is to provide the city with increased revenue and/or promote a personal political agenda.

Sadly, “Operation Impact” has

created negative feelings between the citizens of Mobile and the mayor’s office. And most importantly, it pits the good policemen of Mobile (unconstitutionally) against its own fellow citizens. So, in the very least, a “divide” now grows between the people of the city and certain areas of city government who are meant to SERVE and protect its citizens.

Notably, checkpoint dates are published, but without notification of planned locations. Therefore a general moratorium on commerce in the city of Mobile settles as a pall over normal business activity when these roadblocks are set up. People stay home. Dominoes come to mind. A vicious cycle is created.

Diminishment of growth of commerce

Lower reputation for city government

Less desire/enjoyment of living/working within city limits

Financial Bottom Line: Net zero.

Maybe your actions come at a good time. Mobilians have a chance to clearly see the need set a course correction for our city by electing a different leader on August 27. We really need a mayor who truly loves the people of this city, respects the Mobile Police Department, and can find constructive ways of raising revenue without vacuuming the pockets of its citizens.

Katharine Baumhauer Trawick
Eldest granddaughter of former Mayor Charles A. Baumhauer

Mr. Holbert:

I’m very impressed with your determination to get the facts regarding MPD Explorer’s travelgate. If not for the work of Lagniappe, this criminal behavior would never have been exposed. Both our city government and judiciary have been, and still are, complicit in this debacle.

It was predictable, but telling, that Judge Stout deferred the responsibility of the MPD to produce any records until AFTER the mayoral elections.

Thank you again for your fine work!

Lane Rushing
Semmes

CORRECTION:

In Rob Holbert’s Aug. 8 column “No one takes blame for crude oil pipeline,” he stated that the Plains Southcap pipeline running through Mobile County would carry crude oil from Canada. Company spokesman Jon Gray says the pipeline will carry oil from other parts of the world, not Canada.

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OPPONENTS VANQUISHED BY QUIN HILLYER:

- Sen. Ted Kennedy
- Former Klansman David Duke
- A press aide for horrid Attorney General Eric Holder
- Skinhead muggers in the French Quarter
- Opponents of the judicial nomination of Mobile’s Bill Pryor
- A t-t-t-truly t-t-t-terrible childhood st-st-stutter
- A former governor of Louisiana
- Defeatism in Prichard after its first bankruptcy
- Mike Wallace and 60 Minutes
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BY KATIE NICHOLS, News Editor, katie@lagniappemobile.com

The city of Mobile's 2013-2014 budget is coming to the city clerk's office near you ... but just not quite yet.

During the City Council meeting on Aug. 20, City Finance Director Barbara Malkove told the councilors the budget for the city would be delivered by the deadline dictated by law, which is Aug. 20. However, the budget will not be delivered until the evening. It is expected to be made public on Aug. 21.

Malkove did give two details about the budget. One is that it is a balanced budget, which is also stipulated by law. The next news wasn't the most positive for the city.

"We will be at \$0 by the end of the year. We have used the \$13 million carry forward and there doesn't seem to be a carry forward for the next year," she said.

While Malkove kept mum on the budget, she did deliver the July 2013 monthly finance report.

"Sales and use taxes collected by businesses brought in \$5.4 million more than 2012, but were over budget by only \$1.3 million," she said. "Property taxes increased and licenses decreased. The licenses have decreased partly because of the Semmes area incorporating."

The sales tax increase is still tracking as expected and should bring in \$33 million in revenue, which is what city officials were anticipating.

On the other side of the city's finances, the expenditures are under budget. However, some of the savings are unmain- tainable.

"By managing our departmental expenditures, we were

under budget by approximately \$1.7 million and the same for total expenditures," Malkove said. "We have reduced expenditures since 2009.

"We still have some unsustainable reductions such as the youth center, metro jail and city hall overhead, which we cannot control."

The city is over budget on one expense by more than \$1

"We will be at \$0 by the end of the year. We have used the \$13 million carry forward and there doesn't seem to be a carry forward for the next year," Barbara Malkove, City Finance Director

million.

"We continue to have escalating expenditures in garage parts, repairs and fuel," Malkove said. "At July 30, we were again over budget by approximately \$1.1 million."

Malkove noted there is nothing the city can do to combat the fuel costs.

"While we have carefully monitored these departmental expenditures, we cannot always control the non-departmental costs," she said. "Total expenditures and transfers were over budget by \$2.6 million. This will rise by year-end considering the non-departmental costs and transfers."

Also during the Aug. 20 meeting, the councilors approved more funding to improve roads leading to Airbus.

The city accepted a grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) for the Broad Street Rehabilitation and Improvement Design. The city will have to contribute \$1,012,098 for the project, but officials were expecting to spend nearly \$5 million on the improvements. However, Nick Amberger, city engineer, was able to work with ALDOT and expedite an Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program grant.

Typically the grants take much longer to secure, however, Amberger worked with officials in ALDOT to save the city nearly \$4 million.

Mayor Sam Jones commended Amberger for his work.

"Nick Amberger worked hard to get this grant for the city, and it has led to a substantial amount of savings for the city," he said.

The councilors also approved an agreement with the Alabama State Port Authority to develop and maintain a system of roads to haul the oversized components from the port's container terminal to the Airbus facility. The expected cost of the project is \$500,000.



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BY KATIE NICHOLS, News Reporter, katie@lagniappemobile.com

A selection process for a \$1.2 million lighting contract that one bidder called “a rigged carnival game” contained specifications issued by the city that could only have been met by the maker of the LED light that won the contract, potentially flying in the face of state and federal law.

In a request for quotes (RFQ) dated Aug. 22, 2011, city officials made a list of requirements they wanted in LED lights that would be paid for through a U.S. Department of Energy grant, but some requirements were so specific that only one light could possibly fit the bill.

The bids submitted ranged from \$355.35 to \$1,193 per LED light, but the work went to the second highest bidder on the list.

WESCO Distribution, which bid \$1,070 per light, was awarded the contract. The city put up 1,144 lights, which meant WESCO Distribution was paid \$1,224,080 for the project, according to city records.

The bid records obtained by Lagniappe for this story were only provided by the city after nearly three months of requests. Initially the city sent a single document that said WESCO had won the bid. Questioned further as to who the other bidders were, the city eventually sent over two pieces of paper with the 23 bidders hand-written, claiming it was the only document that existed. Eventually, after continued requests, the city provided the full file for the bid.

In reviewing the RFQ, it appears to have been written in a way that would be consistent with purchasing an item based on proprietary qualifications rather than performance. A proprietary RFQ can only be used under specific conditions, according to state and federal law. Most of those specifications deal with safety issues, but those do not apply to the restrictive requirements used in this RFQ. A proprietary RFQ is so specific that it essentially ensures an exact make, model or manufacturer will win the bid.

For example, under a proprietary RFQ for police vehicles, a person writing the RFQ could copy and paste the specifications from a vehicle like a Dodge Charger. Then, any company bidding

something other than that specific would not be able to meet the exact requirements such as weight and abilities. That means the Dodge Charger would have to be selected.

The RFQ for the LED lights appears to have been treated this way by the city, as several lower bids were kicked out because they did not meet some very specific criteria.

According to the city RFQ, the light selected needed to “meet or exceed a 2-foot-candle average radius,” be able to be spaced out 150-feet along the road, weigh no more than 50-pounds and have a specific maximum effective projected area of “1.44-square-foot.” Several of the lights bid met or exceeded the 2-foot-candle average radius requirement, and were lower in price, but were not selected.

The requirement that the light have an effective area of exactly 1.44-square-foot appears to have ensured only the Cooper light selected could have been chosen. The effective projected area (EPA) is in reference to how much wind the light can withstand. Being that Mobile often deals with hurricane winds, this is important. However, the RFQ states the EPA should be specifically 1.44-square-foot. It does not state it should meet or exceed, which would make for a light that could withstand more wind, thereby eliminating a better light.

Also, at the time of the RFQ’s issuance, the only light tested to see if it could withstand a 3,000-hour salt spray test, which test its waterproofing, was the Cooper light. The city’s specifications call for a light able to “withstand a 3,000-hour salt spray test as specified in ASTM designation: B117,” which exactly meets the Cooper specs.

Though city bid records do not mention any of the bidders being rejected for the salt spray test and EPA requirements, they appear to have played a role in the process as six of the rejected companies bid lights that were cheaper than those offered by WESCO and in fact met or exceeded the 2.0-foot-candle average. Even though the RFQ said lights could “meet or exceed” the 2.0 average, according to city notes on the bids, those six were all

rejected for not coming in exactly at that number.

For instance, a light by Stuart Irby Co. that would have been \$607.64 actually had an average of 2.1-foot-candle — above the RFQ mark — and it was also not considered because it didn’t come in right at the 2-foot mark. Had that bid been accepted it would have saved nearly \$530,000.

A to Z Moni-Dot was similar to Stuart Irby Co. and had an average of 2.12-foot-candle, but was also not accepted because it exceeded the requested average. The difference of 0.1-foot-candle means a light can be seen 1.2-inches further. The lights also can be adjusted to illuminate a desired area.

No other notes provided by the city showed any other reason why those particular bids were thrown out. However, the lights from Stuart Irby Co. and A to Z Moni-Dot did not specifically meet the salt spray test or the specific maximum effective projected area of 1.44-square-foot.

The two specifications do not appear to fall into the exceptions for proprietary RFQs laid out by state and federal law.

Interviewed for a previous story on this, City Attorney Larry Wettermark assured the process was fair, but offered several caveats.

“The city has received a lot of complaints I know,” he said. “From my understanding, and this is a broad brush on the project, this was a complex process that had a specific color, radiance arc, etc. Many city departments worked on this and at the end of the day the lowest responsible bidder that met the specifications was selected.”

However, several of the bidders disagree. An anonymous bidder told Lagniappe earlier that he feels the process was manipulated.

“It’s like this is some sort of rigged carnival game,” he said. “You have a light I see that is \$607.64 and it is (0.1-foot candle) over the average and it doesn’t get selected over a \$1,070 bid because it doesn’t meet 2-foot-candle specification. It’s absolute insanity.”

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Appeals court to weigh new trial for capital defendant

BY GABRIEL TYNES, Web Editor/Reporter, gabe@lagniappemobile.com

The case of an Alabama death row inmate awarded a new trial last year by a Mobile County Circuit Court judge is inching through the appeals process. On Oct. 15, the panel of judges on the state Court of Criminal Appeals is expected to hear the Attorney General office's arguments contesting an order Judge Sarah Stewart issued in favor of William Ziegler, who was convicted for the February 2000 stabbing death of Allen Baker in West Mobile.

In a brief filed in March, Assistant Attorney General Lauren Simpson requested the hearing, alleging Stewart's ruling found "no claims in the State's favor" and "wrongly granted post-conviction relief based on Brady violations, ineffective assistance of counsel, and juror misconduct."

Stewart's order was the result of a 2010 "Rule 32" hearing, which procedurally allows capital defendants to seek relief based on "collateral issues" of their case, after the direct appeals process has been exhausted. In Ziegler's case, a pro-bono team of attorneys called 24 witnesses and introduced more than 600 pieces of evidence indicating he was pinned for the murder after the initial investigation was tainted by conflict-of-interest, material witnesses changed their stories originally implicating other defendants, prosecutors discarded exculpatory evidence and Ziegler's defense team was wholly ineffective, from entering pleas of not guilty by reason of temporary insanity without his consent to spending a minimal amount of resources on its own investigation.

Stewart also determined Ziegler's jury was corrupted by one juror who had served and recommended the death penalty in a separate case and a second juror whose cousin and brother-in-law were both victims of homicide. Also during the hearing one witness, Vicky Bosarge, went so far as to recant her original testimony, saying contrary to earlier testimony she hadn't overheard Ziegler refer to Baker as "a walking dead man" and she couldn't identify who did. In fact, Bosarge and two other witnesses testified Ziegler wasn't even present when the claim was made.

Stewart concluded in her order the court found "by a preponderance of evidence that Ziegler's constitutional guarantees were not fulfilled...Whether because of multiple violations of his due process protections...because of the myriad failures of trial and appellate to provide constitutionally adequate representation under the Sixth Amendment, or because of the significant failures in the selection of the jury, Ziegler's constitutional right to a fair trial was violated in numerous respects. Under any analysis, this Court cannot say that Ziegler received a fair trial and, accordingly...he is entitled to a new trial."

But the state sees the results of Ziegler's Rule 32 hearing differently. In its brief, the Attorney General's office claims the "Rule 32 court abused its discretion when it found that the State withheld exculpatory material, that Ziegler's trial counsel were ineffective in virtually every aspect of their representation, that Ziegler's appellate counsel was ineffective for failing to raise to certain issues, and that Ziegler's juror misconduct

claim was not procedurally barred. As such, that court's order granting Ziegler a new trial should be reversed."

Regarding the Rule 32 court's finding that the prosecution suppressed exculpatory evidence, the state contends since the issue was not raised at Ziegler's original trial or on subsequent appeal, rules of criminal procedure prohibit the allegation from being raised during Rule 32 proceedings. At issue is whether a car belonging to co-defendant Jay Bennett should have been admitted into evidence, considering a creditor who later repossessed the vehicle testified to finding "blood all over the back," as well as a discarded evidence bag containing a bloody sweatshirt.

Ziegler was convicted on testimony of co-defendants who alleged Baker was stabbed to death in the woods near Ziegler's apartment following a sustained beating inside. Yet a veteran investigator with the Mobile County Sheriff's Office said the scene where Baker's body was found looked more like a "dump site," on account of a suspicious lack of blood. Witness statements that originally implicated Bennett and another defendant, William Randall, eventually evolved to pinpoint Ziegler as the person who stabbed Baker dozens of times and later, nearly severed his head with a knife.

Despite the seemingly damning testimony indicating the victim was never transported in Baker's car, the state's brief claims "even if Baker's body had been in the vehicle, it would not have exculpated Ziegler."

Ziegler and Patricia Davis, his girlfriend at the time, both admitted to hitting Baker, but maintained the victim left the scene, alive, with Bennett and Randall afterward. Davis and Ziegler had been hosting a Mardi Gras party that night, which was also attended by witnesses Sarah Meyers and Dawn Kohn.

Kohn, 14-years-old at the time, was the niece of then-MC-SO Detective Dale Kohn, who was the first law enforcement officer to respond to a missing persons report filed on Baker's behalf. Dale Kohn's investigation quickly led him to Bennett, who in turn led him to Baker's mutilated body near Ziegler's apartment. Dawn Kohn would subsequently give three different statements of what happened that night, the first implicating Bennett, but later implicating Ziegler.

Although Dale Kohn would later be removed from the investigation, it wasn't until after he had first spoken to his own niece about the incident or until after he had been left alone with Baker's body.

"These facts, particularly when combined with the conflicted role of Detective Kohn, could have given a reasonable juror reason to believe that the investigation of the Mobile County Sheriff's Office was improperly directed away from potentially implicating Dawn Kohn in Baker's death," Stewart wrote. "Had Baker been killed or transported in Bennett's car at a time when Kohn was in the car, Dawn Kohn could have potentially have been charged as an accomplice or accessory in Baker's death. If the jury had learned that Dawn Kohn initially implicated Bennett alone as Baker's killer, but only

changed her story after coming to the Sheriff's Office, the lingering question of why her statement had changed could have provided fertile ground for the jury to find reasonable doubt about whether the police had charged the right person in Baker's death."

Regarding Bosarge's recantation of testimony, the state dismissed her as "bizarre" and "erratic," claiming "it is baffling that the Rule 32 court found Bosarge a credible witness." In its brief, the Attorney General's office argued Bosarge was a secondary, circumstantial witness who "had nothing to gain by implicating," Ziegler whose original testimony was corroborated by other witnesses.

The 168-page brief, which can be viewed in its entirety on www.lagniappemobile.com, arbitrarily refutes every other aspect of Stewart's ruling, from the ineffectiveness of his trial and appellate defense team to the process by which jurors were selected and sentencing was considered. October's oral arguments are largely procedural, but provide each side 30 minutes for an impassioned plea before the court.

Multiple attempts to speak with members of Bennett's family have been unsuccessful, but Ziegler's mother, Odella Wilson, said while her family was relieved by Stewart's ruling last year, they are guarded about the state's response. Ziegler has remained on death row in Holman State Prison while the order for a new trial is being contested.

"It's a process, unfortunately a long drawn-out process," Wilson said. "I don't know of a single case where a ruling was determined during oral arguments. The state is pulling on every technicality of the law to drag this out longer, and they're entitled to do that according to Alabama criminal appeals law.

She said while her communication with her son was "limited," she knows he is "highly frustrated" by the state's ability to potentially "drag it out another three-to-five years."

"Anybody who looks at this with an unbiased and untainted view, you have to ask what is going on at the state AG's office," she said. "We have a situation where on twisted, manipulated, circumstantial evidence they sentenced a person to death and the state withheld all the valid forensic evidence which proved the person they were convicting was innocent. It blows the mind."

Speaking with Lagniappe last year, Assistant District Attorney Deborah Tillman, who originally prosecuted the case, disagreed with Stewart's ruling, noting Ziegler's previous appeals were rejected by both the Court of Criminal Appeals and the Alabama Supreme Court. A guidebook on the state's death penalty appeals process published by Attorney General Luther Strange refers to capital murder cases as "some of the most difficult and complex to prosecute," a task that "does not become easier on appeal. The appeals process moves at a much slower pace than the trial court process," the book cautions, adding "many times it will take decades to reach a conclusion."

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BY GABRIEL TYNES, Web Editor/Reporter, gabe@lagniappemobile.com

Hillyer intends to use media savvy, coalitions to serve District 1

Quin Hillyer was just a young legislative page when he got his first major headline. A news photographer snapped his picture as he was running a message between lawmakers at the 1980 Republican National Convention in Detroit, where Ronald Reagan accepted the party's nomination for president and it was syndicated nationally.

In more than 30 years since, Hillyer used his ensuing experience on the Capitol Hill press corps to make a career as a prolific conservative columnist and commentator, experience he believes gives him the advantage over other candidates for Alabama's District 1 in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hillyer will be on the ballot alongside eight other candidates in the special primary election Sept. 24.

"I've been fighting for national and regional conservative public policy for a long, long time," he said. "I was a Reagan administration appointee to serve for the VA, I did some journalism and political work and ended up as Bob Livingston's press secretary and later did media for the house appropriation committee among some of the best years in the past 40, when the appropriations committee cut \$50 billion in real money at a time when \$50 billion was much bigger part of the domestic discretionary budget. That effort set the stage for welfare reform and the first time in the decade we balanced the budget."

Hillyer, a New Orleans native whose grandfather was from the Eufala area, said he returned to the Gulf Coast in 1996 to accept a position on the Press-Register's editorial staff, where he won "mainstream and conservative journalism awards at local, state and national levels." Hillyer said he developed a reputation as a "Investigating columnist" who often broke stories before competitors and identified controversial public policy issues before they became state or national news.

He later became a senior editor at American Spectator, but has also been published in the Washington Times, the National Review and dozens of other print and online publications and organizations including the Center for Individual Freedom, a prominent free-market advocacy group. He is also a writer-in-residence at the University of Mobile.

"I've juggled a lot of things and made a name for myself in national, conservative journalism," he said.

On issues important to District 1, Hillyer identifies industrial growth and increased tourism, both of which are dependent upon improved infrastructure, as key legislative goals of Alabama's next congressperson.

"Austal is getting close to 4,000 jobs and we have to make sure we keep it very healthy," he said. "It's not just a local issue. I've been pushing amphibious landing ships since '93 or '94 with Bob Livingston because there is a real defense need for them. They are the wave of the future. I'm in a good position to make the case for Austal not just because it's local so-called 'pork,' but also because it's a military necessity. So having done [media] for 20 years, I've got more credibility than somebody who just goes up there and says 'we need the local jobs.' We do need the local jobs, but people in California or Kansas don't care if we need the local jobs. But they do care if it's a military necessity and I can make that case."

Whether in a pursuit of jobs for the maritime or aerospace industry, funding for a new I-10 bridge over the Mobile River, or legislation easing restrictions on recreational harvesting of red snapper, Hillyer believes in the power of numbers to achieve common goals. Using snapper limits as an example, Hillyer said as a congressman, he'd build national coalitions to tackle local issues.

"You have to build coalitions," he said. "You have to show how it affects other people. I've written columns showing the same regulatory structure governing red snapper limits is harming oyster farmers in California, crabbers in the Chesapeake Bay and other people making a living on the water. If you tie it all together and understand how legislation interacts with regulation, you can make the case that it's not just a local concern, it's a national concern. Then, you can build those coalitions to get other congressmen to support us in Alabama or along the whole central Gulf Coast to change the regulations or the way the regulations are enforced so you've got something that makes more sense than a 28-day snapper season at the same time they are killing thousands and thousands and thousands of snapper by blowing up

abandoned oil wells that serve as reefs while there is no reason to blow them up. It's crazy."

Gaining endorsements from the likes of former Pennsylvania senator and republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum and the National Right to Work Committee, Hillyer decries today's Republican National Committee as "a failed organization of party insiders, burdened by a whole class of consultant leeches."

"I am not a fan of the RNC and its hangers-on and where they have taken the party I grew up in," he said. "I'm for the conservative constructive critics who want to reform the RNC, take it away from the insiders and bring it back to the grassroots."

Of the hot-button issues currently part of the national dialogue, Hillyer's comments about the Obama administration's foreign policy stood out. The State Department has been "horrendous and God awful," he said.

"Hillary has been one of the worst Secretary of States we've ever had and our standing in the world is worse than it's been in ages and ages. What happened in Benghazi was an atrocity not just by the bad guys, but also in terms of the incompetence the White House and State Department showed. Not to mention the dishonesty."

Hillyer said his campaign has been progressing admirably, with "campaign signs going up everywhere" and a host of local endorsements imminent. In summary, Hillyer concludes "nobody else can go up to Washington and hit the ground running like I can. If you get up there in a special election you are 435 out of 435 in seniority and the last man on the totem poll. I make up for that with my experience on the inside and my criticism on the outside. I understand how to get things done, and I've got the media experience to get on TV to make the case for south Alabama's interest and values. Nobody else has that ability."

Fincher aims to carry 'Christian, conservative' torch for District 1

State Rep. Chad Fincher, who has served constituents in portions of west and north Mobile County since 2006, believes his experience in Montgomery, coupled with a successful career in forestry and real estate, has prepared him to inherit a congressional seat that has only changed hands three other times in the past 48 years. Fincher is a native of Mobile County, where he currently lives with his wife and two children and holds a degree in forestry from Auburn University.

He cites a successful track record on education reform and a leadership position as the chairman of the House Agricultural and Forestry Committee as particularly noteworthy, and has garnered endorsements from Washington D.C.'s GOPAC and the Mobile County Farmers Federation.

"I've taken on some big tasks in Montgomery," he said. "My first taste of education reform was as the sponsor of the bill where there was a teacher in Washington County that was being dismissed in connection with a crime, but she was still receiving a state paycheck and benefits because the tenure law was so protective of [her] status. It was an absolute abuse of power. So I passed a bill that said 'if you're convicted of a felony, your benefits and your pay stop immediately.' Of course any issue with teachers and education the [Alabama Education Association] always gets involved, and they are opposed to anything you want to deal with in tenure reform. But that was my first battle and I was successful."

Fincher said he went on to work with State Sen. Trip Pittman to repeal old teacher tenure legislation and pass new legislation that "protects teachers rights and also keeps abuse out of the system."

"AEA opposed it out of the gate, but we took them head on and we defeated them," he said. "It was a major accomplishment and not because we defeated AEA, but because it was the right thing to do. The old teacher tenure system was abused by employees and was just not fair to the people of Alabama."

Fincher went back to battle the AEA last year as a sponsor of the Alabama Accountability Act, which provides tax credits for parents of students in failing schools to apply toward private tuition. Fincher called the passage of the AAA "another major victory," which paved the way for "the first time ever in Alabama history parents have an opportunity to have a choice where they decide to send their children to school."

In issues unique to District 1, Fincher said it would be important as the next congressman to maintain and foster business

relationships while also focusing on improved infrastructure.

"We know Airbus is just the beginning and we know other companies will be coming in that will be providing assistance to Airbus in that manufacturing process and other aerospace industries are already looking at Mobile," he said. "We need a congressman that has experience working with these companies knowing what to do to provide that business-friendly environment and I have that experience. But with the growth of industries, our roads are crowded and that's something we need to change immediately. I know it's going to take some time with the (I-10) bridge, but with my relationship with the [Department of Transportation], I'm going to sit down and see if there are any alternatives where we could provide temporary relief. Are there alternate routes we can propose during specific times? Can we better utilize the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge to get some traffic from going through the tunnel? I think those are some issues a leader needs to explore because the bridge is going to come, but it is going to take time and be very expensive."

For recruiting new industry and business, Fincher also pointed to the Port of Mobile as a key piece of south Alabama's economic puzzle.

"We have such diverse industry already and I think technology is already here, it's just not on the scale that you see some of the other industries," he said. "I think right now all we need in in south Alabama is an auto manufacturing plant and we'd have every spectrum of our state economy whether aerospace, steel and shipbuilding. That's why we have to remember how very special and important our port is to this area. It's one of the largest ports in the country and it continues to expand. The Panama Canal is expanding and the growth and the opportunities we have there are very important, and for the next congressman that is a very important role they play in continuing to work closely with the port authority and make sure we take advantage of those opportunities. I already have that relationship in my experience in working with the port as part of the state government."

He also mentioned the potential for growth in rural areas and along transportation corridors like I-65 and U.S. Highway 43. On national issues, Fincher is well versed in Republican party talking points regarding healthcare, the budget and economy. With immigration, he spoke about balancing reform with the manpower vital to local agricultural operations.

"I think we definitely have to continue to have discussions and have to get to point to reform the current system," he said. "Like any federal issue it's broken and I'm a very strong supporter of keeping out illegal immigrants and setting up a system to continue providing a labor force (because) those are legal workers coming to this country to work under permits."

Fincher also spoke highly of Jo Bonner's tenure in Congress and said he was interested in continuing the District's "legacy" of strong, conservative leadership.

"I'm just concerned about the direction this country is going," he said. "As a father I'm concerned about the type of country my children and your children will inherit. As a small business owner I'm just as frustrated by over-taxation and regulation by the federal government. I really want to go to Washington and fight for small business and fight to restore Christian, conservative values and I know that'll make a difference."

Byrne touts experience in economic development, cleaning corruption

The last time he was a political candidate in such a crowded field, Bradley Byrne received more votes than any of his competitors. That was the 2010 Republican gubernatorial primary, and recalling it now Byrne said he was sidelined in the runoff by the influential Alabama Education Association, which essentially handed Gov. Robert Bentley the office he holds today.

But as a Mobile native with a wide variety of previous experience in state government — eight years on the state school board, five years in the state senate and three years as chancellor of the two-year college system — Byrne believes he retains the political capital necessary to rise above other candidates vying for Jo Bonner's former seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

He ran for the state school board after serving in an advisory role on the Mobile Chamber of Commerce's education committee. While a state senator, Byrne served on the education

Congressional candidates make their cases

committee, the judiciary committee, the budget committee and chaired the oversight committee for state parks. As chancellor of the two-year college system, he led an effort to reform abuses and mismanagement that were the subject of two grand jury investigations.

He credits a team effort for subsequently cutting \$75 million from the budget without raising tuition or cutting essential services. After his gubernatorial campaign, Byrne returned to private practice as a business attorney, and has been involved with economic development projects, he said.

“We’re in a magic moment because of all the economic development opportunities we have and our congressman has always played a big role,” he said. “But in a bigger sense, we can’t develop our economy down here if we can’t do something about getting the American economy growing at a faster pace. They say we’re in a recovery, but it hardly feels like it and the reason is the federal government has put so much of a regulatory burden and a tax burden on the private sector. If you take that level of taxation and inappropriate regulation off, you release the entrepreneurial energy of the people of America and you also release hundreds of billions of dollars of private sector money sitting on the sideline waiting to get that signal.”

“That is the ultimate stimulus plan for the American economy. When you do that and you get the economy to grow at two or three times the rate is now and you have fiscal discipline in Washington, you can balance the budget. At that point or before I would hope we can turn to serious tax reform — getting rid of deductions, credits and special treatments people have and get a flat tax that will reduce tax rates on every taxpayer in this country. If you do that at the national level, then we can have dramatic economic growth down here.”

Like many Alabamians, Byrne was once a registered Democrat, but said as the party became more liberal and interested

in regulations and taxing, he no longer felt aligned with its principles. In the Republican party’s self-reflection after the presidential election last year, Byrne defends its relevancy and says its poised to take control of Capitol Hill in 2014 and the White House in 2016.

“If we didn’t have Republicans in Washington then we would have ever-increasing amounts of taxation, ever-increasing amounts of regulations and a gun bill and an immigration bill the people of this country don’t want,” he said. “And I can tell you for a fact the people of this area do not want Obamacare. So I think the Republican party is very relevant. Now, you can’t do what we want to do and just say ‘no.’ We also have to have our own policy that we’re advancing as an alternative and one of the things that excites me is I can go to Washington with my background and help develop and help implement a positive alternative. If we’ll do that and stay focused on the real issues, I think not only will we take the U.S. Senate next year, but we’ll win the presidential election in three years. But it takes that positive program and that positive message which is exactly what Ronald Reagan did in 1980.”

As for healthcare, Byrne said after Obamacare is repealed, the best approach would be to “go back to square one” and address the inefficiencies in the healthcare delivery system. He said there was a way to structure reform without taking anything away from Medicare, which supplements thousands of elderly people in the District 1.

Byrne, a resident of Fairhope for the past 12 years, said he was also personally motivated to solve the homeowners insurance crisis along the coast.

“Allstate cancelled my policy,” he said. “There are some things the state can do, but most importantly I think we can form a pact of coastal areas around the country, because we’re all affected by this. We form a pact where part of our premiums can

be held back to a reinsurance pool that operates on a not-for-profit basis. If you put it together that way, then we can create a stabilized reinsurance pool that I think will bring the old players back into the market and new players in the market and with any classic market, when you get more players and more supply, you’ll get lower prices. I’m certainly personally motivated for that because of what happened to me.”

But in an elevator pitch, Byrne would propose people vote for him based on what he has accomplished, and believe in his potential to meet fulfill obligations going forward.

“I go around this district and I talk to a lot of people and they are concerned the federal government is corrupt that it is spending too much money and doing things it shouldn’t be doing,” he said. “They are worried it has gotten so far, it can’t be fixed. I heard those same things when Gov. Riley asked me take over the two-year college system. Well, we did fix it. So when people tell me we can’t fix these problems with the federal government, I know that we can because I have.”

“I believe I can bring to Washington on behalf of the citizens in this area that unique experience in having done that in a big part of state government successfully. At the same time I can bring to that job this experience I’ve had over the years of bringing economic development at a magic time for our area. If you marry those two things together, I think I can as their congressman bring some increase in the quality of life for the people of the area in a way that perhaps I could not have done prior to the experiences I’ve had in past several years.”

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of interviews with the candidates. Lagniappe will continue to profile the remaining candidates in upcoming issues.

Council features a few hot races

BY KATIE NICHOLS, News Reporter, katie@lagniappemobile.com

For residents in Districts 1, 5, 6 and 7, the only choice they have to make during the Aug. 27 Mobile municipal election is who to select for mayor. In the other districts, residents will be selecting the person to be their advocate on the City Council for the next four years.

District 1 Councilman Fred Richardson, District 6 Councilwoman Bess Rich and District 7 Councilwoman Gina Gregory will all remain in their positions come November since they had no opponents challenge them.

Newcomer Joel Daves, who also ran unopposed, will take over from City Council President and District 5 Councilman Reggie Copeland. The longtime councilor is retiring after 28 years representing his district.

The other districts are still up for grabs.

District 2

Lakeshia Dotson — The native Mobilian, who has a Bachelor’s in Health Services Administration from Auburn University and a Master’s of Public Administration from Troy University, is committed to placing a greater focus on District 2’s public safety and public works, a greater focus on neighborhoods and providing greater resources for small businesses. She also said abandoned homes and overgrown lots are one of the biggest issues facing District 2. Her platform is strength, leadership and integrity.

Levon Manzie — Manzie, who is a native and current Mobile County School Board Commissioner, said he wants to trade his seat on the school board to possibly be a City Councilor because of the opportunities that abound for Mobile and the ways he could continue to help the education system by being on the council. Manzie is concerned about downtown, quality of life, a biking friendly community, infrastructure and most of all, providing a voice for everyone in District 2.

Florence McElroy — McElroy wants to see District 2 change back into the community she knew it to be when she was grow-

ing up — a place where the entire community worked together and where neighbors looked after one another’s children and told each other of their misdoings. The native Mobilian said Mobile is facing a lot of urban issues like blight, abandoned houses and issues facing senior citizens and would work to remedy those problems.

Karlos Turner — Turner is not only a native Mobilian, he also grew up in City Council District 2. The candidate said the problems and issues for District 2 are to improve communication, resolve blighted property, continue to fight crime, enhance the infrastructure and improve our parks specifically bike trails and soccer fields. The candidate wants to try to maintain and attract more sports tournaments to Mobile in order to add the additional revenue to the city’s coffers.

Greg Vaughan — Vaughan, an attorney at Holtson Vaughan LLC, came to Mobile in 2004 after he earned his law degree from the University of Alabama. He has lived in District 2 since he began calling Mobile home and now he wants to represent the area. Public safety is the biggest issue facing District 2 and Mobile, he said. To combat this, he would work on expanding the Mobile County Metro Jail.

The District 2 candidates will square off in a debate hosted by the Old Dauphin Way Association on Aug. 22. The debate will take place at St. Mary’s School gymnasium on Old Shell Road at 7 p.m.

District 3

Kimberly Evans — Kimberly Evans may be best known for her namesake bar — Kimberly’s on Old Shell Road — but she wants to be known as the voice of District 3 residents, which she says has been lacking. Evans also wants to work toward making District 3 the showplace for Airbus it should be. As a local business owner, Evans said she has seen the trouble other owners have in dealing with the city and would work on making the city more business friendly.

CJ Small — Small has served District 3 since Nov. 20 of last year when he took over for Jermaine Burrell, who resigned to take a job in Boston, but this marks his first election. He said he is looking forward to finally tackling Ann Street construction and to continue to focus on establishing Community Action Groups. He also is looking forward to seeing Airbus get up and running and helping them recruit more companies and suppliers to the Mobile area.

District 4

Tim Burnett — Burnett decided to run because he wants to see a united District 4 working toward the same goals. He wants to help promote transparency with the constituents from the city and make sure every citizen feels safe. He would do so by building strong relationships with community centers, small businesses, civic associations and citizens in the neighborhoods between police officers.

Milton Morrow — The candidate said sex offender clusters and a gentleman’s club are the issues facing District 4, but the biggest concern the city is facing has to do with the Mobile County Metro Jail, Morrow said. The challenger said he wants to also work for small business development for new and existing firms.

Labarron Wiley — Wiley is a native Mobilian who earned his degree from the University of Arizona in political science and speech. He has spent the last 29 years in insurance, but has a lifelong goal of serving in public office. He said he wasn’t sure what the people of the district want yet, but will listen to their concerns.

John Williams — The incumbent, who is retired from the U.S. Army, pledged to continue to work for the people of District 6. He said there is one major unique issue for District 4 — the watershed that feeds into one of the major tributaries for the city. That’s why drainage and littering need to be at the forefront, he said.

Bayou mayoral runoff will correspond with Congressional primary

BY GABRIEL TYNES, Web Editor/Reporter, gabe@lagniappemobile.com

While it wasn't immediately clear who a majority of voters would elect as Bayou la Batre's next mayor after a special election Aug. 13, a canvass of provisional ballots one week later assured residents would have to return the polls one more time.

If at least 39 of the 45 provisional ballots were validated and cast in retired businessman Brett Dungan's favor, there was a possibility he could have won the election outright. But after verifying their eligibility, the Mobile County Canvassing Board struck 21 of those ballots and Dungan only won 21 of the remaining 24. Finishing with 48.8 percent of the vote, Dungan was then forced into a Sept. 24 runoff with Henry Barnes.

Barnes, who fell just 12 votes short of defeating three-term incumbent mayor Stan Wright last November, said he welcomed the runoff. And because it will coincide with the congressional primary, there may be a larger turnout.

"This will be my fourth runoff, so it's not exactly new territory," Barnes said. "Usually an election in Bayou la Batre will draw about 700 voters and this time we only had 500, so I think that may work in my favor."

Barnes said he has been endorsed by former candidate Sylvia Raley, who garnered 51 votes in the special election. The other candidate, Bayou la Batre City Councilman George Ramires, finished with 74 votes, including provisional ballots.

Meanwhile, Dungan assumed the majority of provisional and absentee ballots were cast in his favor because he engaged in an active get-out-the-vote campaign. Probate Judge Don Davis, who has unusual oversight over the municipal election, said the fact that nearly 10 percent of Bayou la Batre's ballots were cast provisionally was not out of the ordinary.

Davis also said the town may be asked to reimburse the county for its expenses, which could be as much as \$15,000. The City Council had an opportunity to appoint a mayor after Wright was convicted on felony corruption charges and removed from office in April, but failed to do so. Gov. Robert Bentley also declined to use his statutory authority to appoint a mayor, which sent the decision to the voters.

Of the total of 500 ballots cast, Dungan had 244 votes and Barnes had 131. While Raley and Ramires were both optimistic about their campaigns going into the election, perhaps it was their perceived relationship with the former mayor that

resulted in their lack of support at the polls.

Raley is a former city councilwoman and Wright-appointee to the city's Utilities Board while Ramires served alongside the mayor for three terms on the City Council. In public meetings after Wright's conviction, residents denounced Ramires and then-candidate Ida Mae Coleman as being complicit with Wright, who was charged with stealing federal grant money and intimidating a former police captain. Coleman's campaign was derailed last month after she failed to file all the necessary paperwork by deadline.

Dungan said after the special election he was just pleased to see the small city of 2,500 residents closer to moving past Wright's conviction and removal from office.

"There has been a lot of factions and friction and it's time our town came together for some healing," he said. "The turnout is a little bit less than we anticipated, but the exciting thing is not the results. This election got a lot of people energized and I observed many people coming out that hadn't voted before. We're all excited and confident about the moving the town forward."

That sentiment was echoed by lifetime Bayou la Batre resident Jeff Ladnier, who waited after the polls closed to see the results but declined to disclose who he supported.

"I'm just looking for somebody to take care of the town and people and project a different image for the city," he said. "There is a lot of opportunity to grow the city on the water and it should be so much more than it is today. I look forward to a change."

Barnes meanwhile said he wasn't discouraged by the results and would welcome a runoff with Dungan.

"I'm not surprised and I have nothing bad to say about him," he said. "But I've got a little more experience so I look forward to it."

Barnes, a former shrimp net maker who currently operates a dump truck, served a single term on the city council ending in 2008, but has always been a vocal member of the community.

Because the Sept. 24 congressional primary is also a special election, there will be two separate ballots for voters in Bayou la Batre. The next mayor will complete the term vacated by Wright and if contested, must run for re-election in 2016.



Gabriel Tynes/Photo

Mobile County Probate Judge Don Davis has unusual jurisdiction over Bayou la Batre's special election after Mayor Stan Wright's conviction and removal from office in April.

Estle receives life sentence for murder of Justin Hasty

BY GABRIEL TYNES, Web Editor/Reporter, gabe@lagniappemobile.com

For one of the more brutal local murders in recent memory, 26-year-old Brandon Estle received the maximum sentence Aug. 13, life in prison, for beating Justin Hasty to death with a baseball bat in his midtown home last November then stuffing the victim's body into a utility box, driving it across town and firing several rounds of ammunition into it.

In June, after viewing graphic photos from both scenes, jurors took less than two hours to convict Hasty, who also admitted to committing the act in a drug-fueled rage. The death penalty was not an option in the case, as evidence didn't show there were any aggravating circumstances other than the victim and the defendant being both heavily involved with illegal drugs at the time.

But with guidelines providing a sentence of as little as 20 years, District Attorney Ashley Rich called Circuit Court Judge Charlie Graddick's life sentence a victory, but noted Estle will likely appeal the decision and may also have an opportunity for parole in as little as 15 years if the verdict stands. Graddick also ordered Estle to pay \$22,000 in restitution to Hasty's family for funeral services and additional expenses.

Throughout the trial, the courtroom was packed by supporters of both parties, who by most accounts were longtime friends and each products of upwardly mobile, middle-class white families in West Mobile.



Gabriel Tynes/Photo

Brandon Estle took the stand in his own defense last month.

"The message to all the of the young people that have been there so diligently sitting on both sides of the courtroom is that this should be a lesson to everyone about drugs and how drugs can ruin a person's life and that is the best reason why you should never try them in the first place," Rich said. "I think when all is said is done Brandon absolutely gets it and this life sentences proves his life is gone because of drugs."

Estle's defense attorney Jeff Deen said considering the defendant's youth the sentence was harsh, and he encouraged support for the convicted murderer's family, including his father Doug, who has had to maintain his composure publically as the principal of Alma Bryant High School.

"They have been somber throughout the process and recognize the hurt Brandon has caused," Deen said, adding Brandon was "remorseful" and in apologizing to the Hasty family and the court during trial and "did a good job expressing his feelings."

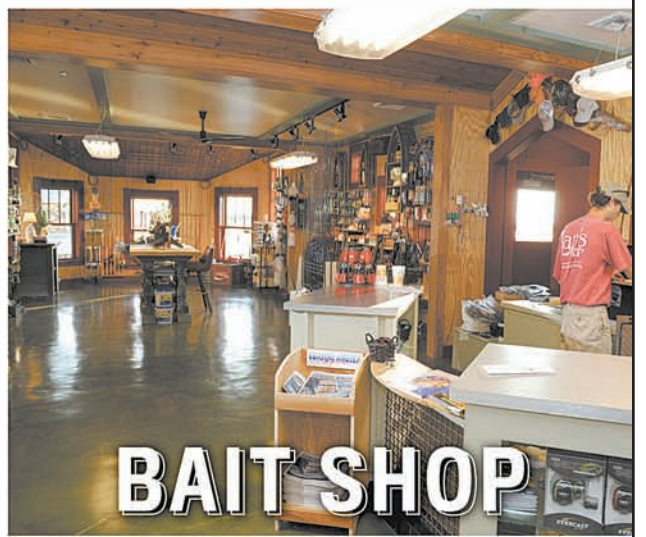
Hasty's mother Sandra made a brief statement to press after the sentence.

"Our goal from the beginning was that there would be justice for Justin and we have succeeded in that goal as much as the Alabama law allows," she said. "Our son was an amazing young man and anyone who knew him knew this to be true. He will continue to live on in our lives and in our hearts and in our memories."



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Third debate delivers few sparks

BY KATIE NICHOLS, News Editor, katie@lagniappemobile.com

With Mobile citizens heading to the polls in just two weeks, the three mayoral candidates faced off for the last time in a debate in a nearly filled auditorium at Davidson High School Aug. 13.

WKRK and the League of Women Voters of Mobile sponsored the only televised debate. Due to the constraints of television, each candidate only had as little as 30 seconds toward the end to give their opinion on things like bringing Mobile together, what to do with the RESTORE Act money and blighted properties.

The debate on Aug. 13 also marked the only time all three candidates — Doris Brown, incumbent Sam Jones and Sandy Stimpson — participated in the same debate.

While the debate was free of some of the one-liner attacks that have peppered the first two, perhaps the most memorable moments of the night came from Brown's eccentric answers to a few of the questions.

WKRK's Peter Albrecht served as moderator, and after introductions by the candidates asked what priorities they had for the budget in the next four years.

Jones and Stimpson were in agreement that the most important aspect is public safety while Brown said she would want to build a better city through better housing structures.

Jones also said services for the community should be a priority and then had a laundry list of other important things — the arts, recreational facilities, infrastructure, etc.

"Our budget is based on the plan for the city and our plan for the city is to provide the best services possible with the resources we have," he said.

Stimpson began by saying if public safety is important to the administration, then the police officers should have been given a raise in the last six years. He then said infrastructure is a major concern and should be a top priority.

"When I look around and see the flooded streets and see the right-of-ways not being properly maintained, I just wonder where are the priorities," he said.

The candidates next handled the idea of taxes specifically the sales tax increase that is expected to expire in 2014. Brown and Stimpson said they would not extend the tax beyond 2015. Stimpson said it was not a wise move to have raised the city's sales tax increase from 4 cents on the dollar to 5 cents.

"I think it was a mistake to put the tax in. Today in the state of Alabama of the top 50 metropolitan areas, Mobile's businesses are taxed the highest," Stimpson said. "That burden is making people drive outside the city limits to make purchases."

Jones spent his time defending the sales tax increase, but neglected to say whether or not he would extend the tax in 2015.

"During the worst recession in the history of the city, the city developed a plan and we had to do a lot of things to make sure we didn't have to lay off anyone and that we didn't cut services," Jones said. "As a result of that, Mobile was

listed in Forbes as one of top 10 cities to recover from the recession."

Mobile was included in a Forbes article listing the best and worst cities for recession recovery in 2009.

The candidates also weighed in on where they would place BP RESTORE Act funds, which can be used on environmental projects that promote tourism or economic development.

Stimpson said he would not spend the money on building I-10 bridge over the Mobile River like Jones suggested during the July 10 debate. Jones advocated using some of the RESTORE money for matching funds in building the bridge.

"My priority would definitely be for the environment because that's where the most harm was done," Stimpson said. "I've heard it said the money should be used for the bridge and I think that is a terrible idea. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to direct monies toward the environment, toward tourism and toward economic development."

Jones quickly shot back saying without the bridge there wouldn't be much tourism in the city.

"I don't think you've had any movement to fund the bridge, but you've certainly had movement to provide the matching share with the government to fund the bridge," he said. "Without the bridge, there is no tourism in Mobile. Without the bridge, there is no traffic moving period."

Perhaps the lightest moment of the night was when Albrecht asked the candidates to evaluate their opponents and include at least two positive characteristics.

Stimpson said Jones' service to the country, county and city are all positive, but then joked that he was concerned about Jones because he is a close friend of Stimpson's brother-in-law.

Jones returned and said Stimpson is passionate, a good businessman and a good Christian. He also said Stimpson loves the city, but feels he has blind ambition.

"(Stimpson) says he going to do things, but never says how," Jones said. "Promises are like the wind."

The night concluded with the candidates making short statements about what they will do for Mobile if elected mayor.

Stimpson said he would take responsibility, and has a vision for the city. Jones said his campaign is about performance and not promises. Brown said the city would see change just four days after she was elected.

Brown stole much of the thunder during the evening with suggestions that she would bring a horse derby, hockey team and homemade cruise ship to the city.

The last day to apply for absentee ballot is Aug. 22 and can be done so via mail or at the absentee election office in Government Plaza. The last day for emergency absentee ballot is Aug. 26 and must be done in the absentee election office.

The municipal election will be Aug. 27. The polls will open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

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A fork in the road... or a cliff?

BY ROB HOLBERT, Managing Editor, rholbert@lagniappemobile.com

So here we are at the end of a campaign that a year ago so many completely dismissed as a waste of time. Sam Jones is unassailable, they said, Sandy Stimpson is dreaming.

But now a University of South Alabama poll and even our most esteemed sports odds-maker agree it's neck-and-neck. This race is going to boil down to who is more enthusiastic about getting out of the recliner, and who can get the most absentee ballots filled out in their favor, right?

As most people have made up their minds already, any column exploring the pluses or minuses of each candidate may fall on deaf ears. But I still feel the need to explain simply why I personally believe it's in everyone's best interests for the Love Jones Movement to end.

If you read this column with any regularity you've probably caught on that I've been outraged for some time by the pervasive dishonesty, stonewalling and outright disdain for the public Jones has fostered throughout the city government over the past eight years. Maybe Jones is a different guy than he was eight years ago, but the Sam Jones we have now is often angry and never open or clear about much of anything.

My objections to keeping Jones have nothing to do with his race or even that much to do with his policies. To me it's all about openness and integrity.

For eight years we've had a mayor who hides behind a locked door in his office. When's the last time he presented anything resembling a bold vision for the future? When has he stood up and said, "Mobile, here is something we WILL achieve, follow me!" He doesn't even seem to care about simple things like litter and trash flowing into the Bay.

Information is the lifeblood of running an organization, and this mayor's office holds almost everything so closely it is nearly impossible at times to get a bead on reality. Think back to the arguing over whether we actually had a \$29 million budget shortfall or not. Jones made it practically impossible to actually look at the books. City Councilors have openly complained about being shut out of the information loop.

And I'd imagine Genghis Khan had a better relationship with the media than Jones does. His door is shut — unless you're asking about a softball story that makes him look good. Simple questions are met with anger and obfuscation or just ignored forever. Here's a simple example. For two months I've tried to just have his office tell me the last time members of the Mobile Housing Board were reappointed by the mayor — which appears to be never — and why one of the seats has been vacant for nearly two years. Is that a tough question? Does that require hours of research? Yet they won't answer.

It's well documented this newspaper has had to sue the Police Department for public records in our efforts to determine whether police officers, city workers and their children went on ski trips and excursions paid for with federal money. Not only did the Chief of Police violate the state's open records law in denying them for several months, now Jones' city attorney is wasting taxpayer money blocking us from finding out who went. They won't even supply the name of a single person who flew to Colorado in 2008 at a cost of \$17,000, among other things. Honest people don't act this way, folks.

It's the secret, tricky stuff that has typically landed Silent Sam in hot water over the past

eight years.

For example, the BayBears didn't pay rent at Hank Aaron Stadium for several years and Jones kept that secret from the public, eventually pulling some slick move to absolve nearly \$1 million in rent debt for a promise the team would fix The Hank's leaky roof by 2017. He's had missteps involving his campaign finances, Ladd-Peebles Stadium, The Gulf Coast Classic Football game, his unlicensed pistol, the Housing Board's use of CDBG money, unorthodox handling of bids, and recently he even openly violated ethics laws and city procedure by ordering on-duty police officers to appear in his campaign commercial.

The mayor's biggest political crony, City Attorney Larry Wettermark, has been given the power to appoint his personal law firm to millions in outside legal work for the city, something that to me smacks of the good ol' boyisms that make Alabama such a political backwater. Even if it is technically legal, is it a good policy?

As a leader Jones has been a no-show. For example, the cruise terminal has been empty for years now with no real plan for when something should happen there, either a new ship or a repurposing of this building that costs the city millions each year. A leader would have a plan. As for Airbus, I doubt anyone truly believes we wouldn't soon be building planes without Sam Jones. What role he played doesn't appear to have been critical.

Jones annexed areas into the city with promises of new parks and services — promises he has just now shown interest in keeping as election time nears. He's used our police and fire personnel as political pawns to frighten citizens into supporting tax increases that somehow never seem to fulfill our spending needs.

Even Jones' most ardent supporters are often at a loss when you ask them to name what it is exactly he has done that makes it so vital to our future prospects that he get another four years. It always ends up being "Well we'd be a lot worse without him," or ludicrous racial fear mongering that Stimpson somehow would like to go back to the days of separate water fountains, and tacitly that his supporters would encourage that.

As election time approaches Jones has dipped heavily into his trick bag of racial demagoguery, blasting citizens who leave the city as racists who don't want to live next to black people, creating a "hill versus valley" rant and offering the impression he generally thinks the white citizens of Mobile are a bunch of racists because so many of them support someone who dared to run against him. The mayor's tolerance of Public Services Director John Bell writing a racially insulting letter to City Councilors Reggie Copeland and Bess Rich was a real low point and a fine example of how he views relations with the council.

This newspaper has a strong record of digging into wrongdoing of people of all races and party affiliation. We call it like we see it, and what I see with Jones is someone whose decades at the public trough have given him a bulletproof sense of entitlement.

Stimpson has run an inclusive, positive campaign that talks about what we can achieve as a city and region. It's true we can't know everything he will do, but conversely it is obvious to me the broken road we will continue down with Sam Jones as mayor.

It's time to give someone else a shot at driving the bus for a while before we go off the cliff. If we achieve nothing but more openness, honesty, positivity and an ability to have a conversation with our mayor, it will be a night and day difference. I am hopeful Sandy Stimpson will achieve far more than that, but just having someone in office who doesn't think he's owed the position and eschews the input of half this city's residents will change the negative pallor that hangs over our city as we move forward.

Whether you agree with me or not, I hope each of you readers will weigh your options and vote your heart Aug. 27.

The Gadfly



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BY ASHLEY TOLAND-TRICE, Editor, ashleytoland@lagniappemobile.com

On Sept. 9, 2005, after receiving nearly 57 percent of the vote, Sam Jones beat John Peavy to become the first African American mayor of Mobile.

"By the people of Mobile, we have shown today that we can be a new Mobile. This city's new slogan is we are too busy to be divided," Jones said in his acceptance speech at his election night party at the Ashbury Suites.

Words like "unity" and "historical" and "progressive" were thrown around the ballroom that evening and former councilperson Clinton Johnson was heard saying, "This really says a lot about our city."

I was part of the 57 percent who voted for Sam Jones, and I, too, was proud of our city that September night. I had listened to all of the candidates make their cases on why they should be our mayor, and I thought Sam was the best person for the job, as did many other Mobilians. And though the historical significance of the evening was not lost on anyone, most voters made their decision based on his knowledge of the issues and experience, not the color of his skin.

But after watching this administration over the last eight years, and especially over the last few months, the Sam Jones I voted for in 2005 is not the Sam Jones I see today.

"The most important initiative is pulling our community together. I think that is vitally important to our progress, and I think we can do that. I'd like to see the people who are on the City Council and the mayor actually work together to make sure we are successful in our efforts during this period when we are getting all this attention internationally and nationally," Sam Jones said in a 2005 Lagniappe interview.

But sadly, it seems that desire to pull the community together and work with our council was lost somewhere along the way. His relationship with the council has been contentious over the years and statements made during this campaign have served to divide the community, rather than unite.

"You have a lot to learn about the political process," Jones chided his challenger Sandy Stimpson during the first debate, after he suggested Jones did not treat the council with respect and said their relationship was irreparable.

"The council has taken up to do whatever it takes to make the mayor look bad. The mayor has been dealing with conspiracies for a long time," Jones said.

So much for working together. I'll just ignore them.

During this same debate, the man who has been preaching we are "Too Busy to be Divided," made some of the most divisive statements I have ever heard a "leader" utter in a public forum.

His greatest hits included implying people were moving to Baldwin County because they didn't like minorities moving next to them.

"We know why they're moving. They're moving because other kinds of people are moving near them," the Sam Jones of 2013 said. Where was the Sam Jones of 2005?

He also accused Stimpson, who said he was proud of his own company's record on hiring minorities, of not giving

these employees the right positions.

"We all know it's about the station they're in. When I talk about diversity, I'm not talking about the laborers working in the mill," Jones said. "We know there is not a genuine goal for diversity in the city."

A racially charged flier was distributed at a downtown church criticizing Stimpson and evoking painful images from the Civil Rights movement. Though his campaign says they had nothing to do with it, instead of coming out and strongly condemning it as the divisive trash it was and calling for the citizens to remember "we are too busy to be divided," Jones' campaign manager just kind of shrugged it off and asked what on the flier wasn't true, missing a great opportunity to try and bring us back together.

Days later, Jones stood at city hall surrounded by a group of pastors who reiterated some of the same racially charged sentiments and accepted their endorsements with a smile. One of the pastors asked voters not "to sell" their votes for fish plates and blues singers, an accusation the mayor himself has also made. What a demeaning and insulting thing to suggest about the people whose votes you are trying to get – that they are incapable of judging the candidates on their merits and their values are so cheap, they can be bought with a plate of food.

Some of the chatter I have seen on social media and comments on news sites by supporters on BOTH sides during this campaign has made me just sad and sick to my stomach. We seem a million miles and years away from that night back in September of 2005, where "unity" and "progress" were parts of everyone's vocabulary. Those words have been replaced by "control" and "fear" and everyone calling each other racists.

And instead of trying to bring us together as the leader of all of Mobile, Mayor Jones has only fanned the flames. The statements he has made throughout this campaign have proven he doesn't even believe in his own campaign slogan. How can he possibly be the man to unite this city, when he doesn't believe himself there is "a genuine goal for diversity in the city?"

But aside from this disheartening and disappointing part of the campaign, Mayor Jones is fond of saying this election is about "performance, not promises." I couldn't agree more. His "performance," or lack thereof, is why I will not be voting for him again. Plain and simple.

He was part of a team that brought Airbus in, and he should be commended for that, and it's obviously wonderful for our city and will ultimately put more money in the coffers, but Airbus is not a panacea. And there are so many other issues that have been neglected over the last eight years.

And you don't have to take my word for it.

Drive around this city and look at the condition of our streets. They are just terrible and embarrassing, and I don't think some of them have been touched in over a decade or longer.

Take your kids to our parks and let them play in knee-high grass and around Mount Everest-sized ant beds or swing a racquet on cracked-open tennis courts. Drive over any bridge

that goes over Three Mile Creek or journey along Dog River and just look at all the litter blanketing their banks.

Go look at the cruise terminal to nowhere — maybe throw a party there. Try not to hit bikers as they pedal down Old Shell Road because there are no bike paths. Go and try to get to public records from the police department. Be sure to take your attorney with you because you'll probably have to sue for them.

Talk to police officers and firefighters about how they are so tired of being used as pawns and threatened with losing their jobs every time we "need" a sales tax increase. Look at officers, including two deputy chiefs, who have stuck their necks out and rallied against a sitting mayor and his chief in support of his challenger — an unprecedented move.

Ask people in Midtown and Oakleigh how often their cars get broken into or rifled through or their doors kicked in. So long laptop and flatscreen. And ask the families of the recent victims of homicide all over this city how "comfortable" they are with crime.

I realize some of these issues were inherited by the Jones administration, and they were problems that could not be solved overnight, especially during a bad economy, but in most of the examples above, it doesn't appear anything was done AT ALL. Some of the parks and streets look exactly the same way (or worse) than they did eight years ago.

If we had just seen ANY progress, I would feel better about this administration's two terms, but nothing. Or if we could have at least have heard why nothing could be done as well as Mayor Jones' long term plan to fix these issues and his overall vision for the city, but nothing. I'm not sure if he even has a plan.

When you ask about the crumbling streets, all you get is our engineer has a priority list, and we'll get to it when we get to it. But good lord, how long is the waiting list? My 4-year-old son asks, "why are we bumping?" every time we drive down Ann Street, which was like that long before he was born. I have to wonder if he will be asking the same question when he is driving down it himself in whatever beater we get him in 12 years.

This neglect, coupled with the lack of transparency and unwillingness or inability to articulate a plan for the city, is enough to lose my vote, but there is something I find even more troubling.

Judging by the way Mayor Jones practically rolls his eyes and brushes off some of the goals Stimpson has outlined for the city as ridiculous and as "blind ambition," I feel like the mayor has just decided some things can't be done and some problems have no solution, and that is the most dangerous mindset any leader can have or develop.

Once you stop believing the impossible is possible, the undoable is doable and the unattainable is attainable for your city, it's time to give the next guy a try.

At this point, that's the only path I see to the "new Mobile" that was promised on a September night eight years ago.



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SAME DAY & SATURDAY APPOINTMENTS

And you thought those frogs and owls were cute....

BY JENNIFER MCDONALD, Columnist, betterdivorce@aol.com

Mr. McDonald and I are pretty big fans of the horror genre in literature and film and we love watching scary movies together. Some of them actually contain a surprising amount of depth and intellectual value but beyond that, the simple adrenaline rush is a lot of fun. Plus, my burlier half always gets scared and I kind of like it when he snuggles in closer for protection.

It's rare to find a movie that genuinely frightens me, as most of the plots range from highly unlikely to completely ridiculous, but it's always fun to laugh at myself when I jump during a startling scene. However, my tendency is to find myself alone at night, after everyone else is asleep, suddenly thinking about a movie I've recently watched and getting all creeped out as my mind inevitably drifts into the "what ifs," however absurd.

"What if the nice cabin we reserved for later this fall is really an intricate trap designed by a government agency to sacrifice us as this year's appeasement to the powerful ancient gods who live beneath the earth?" "What if a mad German doctor kidnaps me and two friends and surgically attaches us mouth-to-posterior in an attempt to form his own human centipede?" Or even, "What if a sentient rubber car tire named Robert rolled through town and started killing people with his violent telepathic powers?" (Yes, these were all real movie plots).

'Cause, ya know, WHAT IF???

We're both pretty fond of "The Exorcist," and although we're not religious and are generally very skeptical of anything bordering on supernatural, we think it's still one of the creepier movies ever made. Most modern movies about demonic possession can't hold a candle to the classic, but nevertheless, we usually try to give them a chance. We recently enjoyed a weekend without the kids and were excited to find an opportunity to head to the theater to check out the new flick, "The Conjuring."

I thought it was OK and it did its job in offering up a couple hours of entertainment, but as usual it was mostly forgettable until I was sitting up alone a few nights later and found myself ever-so-slightly worried about the possibility my home was infested by a demon. Because WHAT IF???. As usual, I did a quick bit of research to help appease my over active imagination.

I learned that when investigating the possibility of a malevolent spiritual presence, one should first ascertain whether the home contains objects which allegedly attract and invite evil spirits into your life:

Objects overtly related to demon worship — I'm pretty sure we're good there as no one in the family has ever really been into worshipping dark spirits who identify themselves as such. However, for the time being I'm regarding the Bieber poster on my daughter's wall as highly suspect, just to be on the safe side. Something about that goofy kid's continued power over young girls just ain't right. I'm not yet prepared to say he's "not of this world,"

but I can't necessarily prove otherwise.

Incense and items related to "occult" practices — I may not actually engage in occult activities, but I didn't even need to leave my chair to spot the cute voodoo doll I picked up in NOLA a few years ago, the beautiful dreamcatcher I got from a Native American artisan in North Carolina, or the eerie framed depictions of the Superstition Mountains I got from an artist I met in the Arizona desert. Considering my house perpetually smells like Nag Champa, things were not looking good so far.

Owl and frog images — OK, well, it just so happens that my pool deck is decorated exclusively in the cutest owls and frogs I could find at Big Lots. No wonder we have so much trouble keeping the pool from turning green every summer. We've been swimming in demon water!

Rock and roll records and memorabilia — Uh-oh. Good grief! This place is a veritable devil's playground!

After searching for items that might attract unwanted evil entities, the cautious homeowner should then be wary of any signs of an actual demonic infestation:

Animals acting strangely — Well, I DID just watch the cat jump from the top of a cabinet, take a spin on a ceiling fan blade, leap to the curtains and then slowly slide down before scurrying out of the room. But then again, how does anyone really determine when a cat is acting bizarre?

Intense foul odors — Now that I mention it, I do actually detect a rather unpleasant aroma coming from just across the room. OK, never mind. I think that was just coming from the dog. Otherwise, all I smell is the Nag Champa.

Growling sounds coming from within the house — Yes! I'm quite certain I just detected a growl! Oh wait; it appears that was just my husband stepping on a Lego. This seemingly innocuous incident should not be dismissed without a healthy dose of suspicion, however, as it's difficult to believe those toys were invented without at least some level of malicious intent.

Objects flying across the room — (ducks) And there goes a shoe hurtling right across the room! Followed by my giggling son, being chased by his big sister, who is holding a lamp in a menacing fashion and threatening to destroy him if she catches him in her room again. Nothing unusual here.

Isolation, withdrawal from society, lack of enthusiasm and zest — Well that all sounds familiar. Signs of impending demonic possession? Perhaps. But it also sounds suspiciously like August in Mobile.

OK, I feel a lot better now and overall, I'd say demons are probably not a valid concern. Please do alert me if you notice anything unusual when reading this column. You know, blood dripping from the page, letters rearranging themselves to form threatening messages. Stuff like that.

By the way, reading columns about demons attracts demons. Good luck with that.



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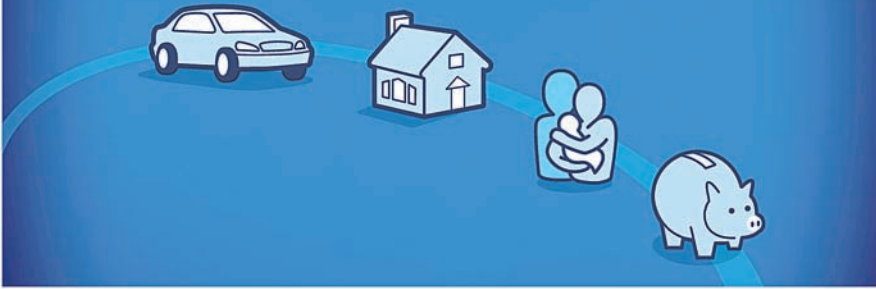
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The Alabama GOP's gay problem

BY JEFF POOR, Columnist, jeffreypoor@gmail.com

Alabama Republican Party chairman Bill Armistead has a message for card-carrying members of the party: If you support gay marriage, stay in the closet.

Last week, Alabama Republican Party committee members Don Wallace of Tuscaloosa and Bonnie Sachs of Double Springs sponsored a proposed amendment to the bylaws of the Alabama GOP that would remove any member who publicly supports a position that doesn't matchup with the party's most recent platform adopted at the Republican National Convention in Tampa last year from its steering committee.

Sachs' husband, Harold Sachs, is the most senior staffer in Armistead's office, bringing the amendment even closer to home.

Reportedly, the proposed amendment was conceived after comments made by current University of Alabama College Republicans Chairwoman Stephanie Petelos to al.com after the Supreme Court's ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act last June.

"I think a lot of people would be actively for it if they didn't live in fear of backlash from [Republican Party] leaders," Petelos said in a June 26 story by Melissa Brown. "We don't want to go against the party, we love the party. We're just passionate about a whole list of other issues, that's why we're involved."

Petelos is the daughter of Jefferson County manager and former Hoover mayor Tony Petelos and holds a spot on the Alabama GOP's steering committee as a result of being elected as the University of Alabama College Republican chair.

This whole incident drew some national headlines, but not in a good way. BuzzFeed's McKay Coppins depicted it as a "generational civil war within the heart of Dixie." And this incident will likely continue to be ammunition for detractors of the national Republican Party and the conservative movement.

Nonetheless, it is a problematic situation for Armistead. On one hand, the Republican Party is on a crusade to grow the tent, be more inclusive and thus be more competitive in national elections. But in statewide elections, taking this route doesn't do much to grow the party.

As of last November, after Republican Twinkle Cavanaugh defeated Democrat Lucy Baxley for the presidency of Public Service Commission, the Republican Party holds all statewide elected offices and six of the state's seven congressional seats. So how do you grow it from here?

Embracing gay marriage won't make Alabama's 7th congressional district turn red anytime soon. Nor will it make any of Alabama's larger municipalities more winnable for conservative-leaning candidates in those non-partisan elections.

Both of those are where the demographics tend to be dominated by African-American voters and have been problem areas for Republicans. To top it off, the African-American community has been one of the last holdouts for opposition to gay marriage.

A March 2013 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press study found 40 percent

of African-Americans support gay marriage and 48 percent are opposed to it. However, that same study found 49 percent of whites supporting gay marriage and 43 percent opposed to it.

Although that data isn't necessarily reflective of the black electorate in Alabama, there doesn't seem to be much of a political upside to having a Republican Party more open to endorsing gay marriage. The Alabama Republican Party functions as a political apparatus with the goal of winning elections for Republican candidates.

That being said, Alabama Republican Party chairman Bill Armistead, along with Don Wallace and Bonnie Sachs handled this one poorly. Outside of openly supporting a Democratic candidate, there's little justification for trying to shut down an opposing viewpoint.

In defense of his position, Wallace has publicly argued that his intentions were to have everyone on the same page of the same playbook.

"When the College Republican chairwoman made official statements in conflict with the party platform's support for traditional marriage, as well as the governor and Chairman Armistead, I believe that requires action by the Republican Party on both procedural and moral grounds," he said to the Montgomery-based website Yellowhammer News.

Since the party had taken control of Montgomery in 2010, internal bickering within the Alabama GOP hasn't been unusual. Early this year, there had been an ugly behind-the-scenes power struggle between opposing factions to determine who would be the party's chairman — Armistead or attorney and part-time University of Montevallo professor Matt Fridy.

Armistead won handily in a 221-159 vote, but not without facing the opposition of almost every major Republican officeholder in Montgomery, including Gov. Robert Bentley, Speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives Mike Hubbard and Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey.

After his win, Armistead had promised to mend fences and bring the party together. However, based on this latest effort to shut down Petelos' outspoken support for gay marriage that promise appears to have been broken, at least for the time being.

It's always good to have these internal debates about policy. You can argue the merits for and against gay marriage all day long, not that it hasn't ever been done before. However did the Alabama GOP think this strong-arm tactic of introducing an amendment to the party's bylaws would go unnoticed?

This will ultimately sort itself out. But the damage has been done. Liberal activists on MSNBC and elsewhere will likely key-in on this seemingly meaningless squabble to strengthen their case that the Republican Party and Alabamians are homophobic Neanderthals using extraordinary measures to stifle debate and that's un-American. Then they'll say, "Don't be an un-American homophobic Neanderthal, vote Democrat."

That isn't doing the intended mission to win elections any benefit. But on a larger scale it isn't doing the state of Alabama any favors. Learn how to agree to disagree.

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Shhhh, it's a secret! But Red or White serves amazing food

BY ANDY MACDONALD, Cuisine Editor, fatmansqueeze@comcast.net

I've had a lucky streak of dinners with the wife here lately, but that streak finally came to an end. We had a good run, sweetheart, but the kids are in the way when the booze comes out. So what is a boy to do? Call Mr. Bubble, of course.

I've got a tip on a hot new (sort of) restaurant with a chef that is rocking it out. It's Red or White, across the street from our lovable Dew Drop Inn on Old Shell Road. When you mention this place most people will say, "I didn't know they serve dinner." Well they do, but don't tell anybody. They are packed to the gills already, and I would love to eat there more often.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy hanging out with Bubble, and he enjoys me paying for his dinner, but this place is one of the best places I can think of to take a date. You can see why I am apprehensive about taking him, though I'm sure he will behave himself. It's a little loud, tables are squeezed in rather tight, but the people are friendly and it doesn't have the air of pretension that similar places wouldn't be able to resist. Oh, and there is wine. Lots of wine.

Wine is the lubrication in the gears of the tongue. I call it truth serum. It's a completely different buzz than a few pints of brew or the oft angry tinge of bourbon. For me it's heady and lovable. Want to know what I got you for Christmas? Pour me a glass. Who really broke your favorite lamp? You're a cork away from finding out. Once a bottle of Chianti Ruffino convinced me to 'fess up everything bad I ever did at college along with current gossip I otherwise never would have told my attentive (and sober) dear sweet mother. Lucky for me (and for Bubble) my secrets are few.

Tables were full on the night of our visit. One 10-top had two empty chairs and we were seated next to a man and six women. What kind of cologne was this guy wearing? Apparently the six women (who called themselves the Dog River Girls) are regulars. I got the feeling he was a husband along for the ride. But they were friendly enough, especially after we interrupted them mid-meal, which looked delicious.

We ordered a bottle from the \$10 table (plus \$5 corkage fee). Next thing you know the conversation loosens up at our table from "we're on a secret mission," and "we're married, but not to each other," to all sorts of ridiculous things coming out of my mouth. They recommended everything on the menu and we began with **bacon wrapped dates (\$5.99)**. Unbelievable. It was a fight for the last one, and I would have taken it to the parking lot, need be. It was a great way to start the show.

I'd done a little Facebook research before we got there.

Chef Arwen Rice usually has a nightly special plus a specialty pizza along with their regular menu. She'd just returned from Albuquerque and this evening was pushing **tacos al pastor**. Evidently the staff pushed too hard and they were out by 7:30 p.m.

No worries. We tried the **Antipasta Board (\$16)**. Well worth the price, the cheeses were as exceptional as the bread and pork. Roasted nuts were a nice touch. But the surprise was the seasoned white beans. Fantastic.

The **specialty pizza (\$10)** was not to be ignored. Caramelized plums on a pizza? Yes, sir. Add to that rosemary ham and cow's milk cheese and this was a winner. If these are the kinds of things Chef Arwen does regularly then Mobile needs to pay attention.

The **Red or White signature pizza (\$10)** was a little more traditional as a take-home pie for Missy with



Photos/Dan Anderson

There's no reason to drink on an empty stomach at Red or White, which has perfect food pairings for their extensive wine selection.

sausage and peppers, but it was also very good. Smoky red pepper sauce and feta cheese dressed up the ricotta and mozzarella. I loved it. All this is coming from a guy who isn't crazy about pizza. I could eat this twice a week.

As we finished our second bottle of good, cheap wine and bid adieu to the Dog River girls the chef brought out our to-go boxes. "I'm sorry we were out of the tacos, but I had enough to make one more." Chipotle seasoned

pork, tomatillo salsa, and fresh avocado is good enough. Add grilled pineapple to the mix and you've got the taco of my dreams. Even on top of the mountain of food we'd consumed that evening one was not enough.

I didn't inquire about dessert. I probably would have just confessed my secrets to it.

So this secret is out. Chef Arwen Rice brings her western influence to Mobile, and we are lucky to have her. Facebook posts from Red or White are the best ways to keep track of her creativity, but you can view the full regular menu at www.redorwhite.com.

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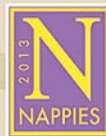
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CUISINE WORD OF MOUTH

Kitchen on George rolls out the red carpet for celebrity chef

BY ANDY MACDONALD, Cuisine Editor, fatmansqueeze@comcast.net

Kitchen on George welcomes Food Network's Ben Vaughn

You may have seen Chef Ben Vaughn cleaning up on the Food Network show "Health Inspectors." Now he's touring the country as a teacher. As luck would have it, Mobilians have a chance to catch Vaughn live and unscripted at our very own Kitchen on George.

Make plans for Thursday, Aug. 22 to catch the host in action as he teams with Virginia College's Culinary program and Kitchen on George to prepare a fantastic menu for this exclusive wine dinner. The feature is Maple Leaf Duck Farms Duck, and you'll find it in every course of the meal excluding the amuse-bouche. Expect duck confit, duck breast, and even salted duck crackling on the peach cobbler.

Tickets are \$50 per person and includes wine, \$35 for the hungry abstainers. The corner of George and Savannah is already getting excited.

"We are honored to have Food Network TV star Chef Ben Vaughn in Mobile at Kitchen on George," says Vice President of Retail Operations Ron Patak. "Guests at the event will have the chance to enjoy a unique menu accompanied by wines that will complement each course. It will be a dining experience to treasure."

The dinner runs from 7 p.m. through 9 p.m. Call to reserve your spot immediately. (251) 436-8890.

Alabama Restaurant Week in full swing

We gave you a glimpse of it a couple of issues back, but now we are right smack dab in the middle of Alabama Restaurant Week.

Running through Aug. 25, the promotion is that participating restaurants will have two-course lunch specials that range from \$5 to \$15, and/or three course dinners that fit the \$10 to \$30 parameter. The 10-day event (lucky for us they had trouble with the math) really works in favor of the diner and helps us to celebrate the fine cuisine we have here in Alabama.

Visit www.alabamarestaurantweek.com for a list by county of all the participating restaurants in this statewide promotion. Click the map, then click the restaurant to see the special. I thought we were lucky to have 14 restaurants here in Mobile County, but Alabama's (physically) largest county really cleaned up. Baldwin County has 39 participating restaurants!

MiMo's Gastropub getting a new suit of clothes

It has only been a few months since MiMo's became MiMo's Gastropub, but the owners thought it was time to make it their own. The food has been incredible, and I am sure it will remain so, but the name has changed. By the time we print Benjamin's should be up and running.

Benjamin's menu will be focusing on Southern favorites, but will remain eclectic enough to keep its gastropub status. I perused the new menu and drooled the entire time. I can't wait to try the country-fried steak with filet mignon. Head on down to Airport to the quaint building next to the former Antiques at the Loop. It's by that green house that they painted white.

Fairhope Inn hosts Christopher Lynch Cooking Demonstration

It is consistently one of my favorite places to eat. Now we can combine that with a little lesson. The Fairhope Inn will be hosting a cooking demonstration with New Orleans' Atchafalaya Restaurant Executive Chef de Cuisine Christopher Lynch.

Thursday, Sept. 12 the Church Street locale will have a champagne meet and greet with the chef at 6:30 p.m. with a demonstration at 7 p.m. The four-course dinner will follow. All of this for \$75 per person.

For those unfamiliar with Chef Lynch, the Philadelphia transplant has quite the resume. Schooling at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., stints in Washington, D.C., New York City, his hometown of Philly led him to our beloved New Orleans. Here he has worked for Gautreau's, Restaurant August, and Emeril Lagasse's flagship Emeril's. Katrina sent him home, but he didn't stay away for long. Now you will find him at the beautiful Atchafalaya Restaurant (www.atchafalaya-restaurant.com).

Don't miss the opportunity to learn from a star who is still rising. Call the Fairhope Inn at (251) 928-6226 and reserve your spot today.

Jesus on a grill cheese

I get product samples that either come to my desk or to my inbox all of the time, but I could not help but pass this one on to you. It's a sandwich press. But it is no ordinary sandwich press. This one burns an image of Jesus into the bread. The best part is the name.

The Grilled Cheesus Sandwich Press (\$39.95 retail) "lets you bring little grilled miracles to mealtime, snack time, or anytime!" Nothing could be more inspiring than the face of Christ on your gluten-loaded baked goods with processed cheese melted between each slice.

At first I thought it was a joke, but apparently it is real. As a matter of fact, the website claims to donate a portion of the proceeds to feed the hungry, and even has links to organizations with like-minded goals so you can donate directly.

See the product for yourself at www.grilled-cheesus.com. Grab a "Rise with Jesus" coffee mug while you are there. And I thought I was cool with a Saints toaster that burns a fleur de lis on one side of the bread.

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Sept. 21	at	LSU*	Baton Rouge, LA.
Oct. 5	vs.	Ole Miss*	Auburn, AL.
Oct. 12	vs.	Western Carolina (HC)	Auburn, AL.
Oct. 19	at	Texas A&M*	College Station, TX.
Oct. 26	vs.	Florida Atlantic	Auburn, AL.
Nov. 2	at	Arkansas*	Fayetteville, AR.
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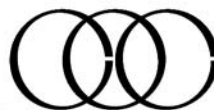
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Going to great lengths

BY SUSAN LARSSON, Contributing Writer, thirstywork@outlook.com

We've got new craft beer in the Mobile market, with the arrival of brews from the Blue Pants Brewery last month, and I've just made a pilgrimage to check out the source. Hey — some people trek to Lourdes to take the waters; I drive to the northern fringes of Alabama's longest Interstate to drink the beer.

Blue Pants Brewery opened the doors to its tap room in Madison, Ala. earlier this year, started selling six-packs in April, and claims to make "unreasonably good beers." One of the owners told me their goal was to put their own special twist on any beer style they make, like using American hops in their — typically Irish — Knickerbocker American Red Ale. I went to the taproom planning to try one or two, tried two, then rounded up friends and went back the next night for more. (Actions speak louder than words, doncha know.)

Blue Pants makes a wide range of styles and there were 10 on the chalkboard when I arrived — such as the Breeches Extra Special Bitter and the Slip Rose Strawberry Saison. Most of the beers are named for pants styles, which makes for an interesting theme (although you do wonder how many beers they can brew before they exhaust the category and have to branch out to Loincloth Lager or Pantyhose Pale Ale). Anyway, I started with the Spare Pair Pale Ale, which the owner says is a blend of two pale ale styles and I say is almost an IPA. It's bitter and hoppy, and just a bit grassy. At 6 percent ABV it's still very refreshing and food friendly — a great burger beer.

The Breeches ESB is decidedly more malty tasting and more golden colored than the Pale Ale, with less bitterness and more yeast. It's medium bodied and dry, definitely not wimpy, with 5 percent ABV. There's a hint of wood shavings from somewhere, with a long, dry finish. It and the Workman Common Lager (also 5 percent ABV) are two beers you can drink all night, although they taste nothing alike. Workman has striking floral aromas — I'd call it magnolia — with a sharp flavor edge of mandarin orange. I think it has way too much zip to be called a lager (and that's a good thing).

Knickerbocker American Red Ale hits you first with pungent, hoppy notes, but then malt flavors come in as an undertone, singing bass. This beer is dry, dry, dry — with noticeable carbonation adding to the dry sensation. It's very different from Killian's Irish Red, if you've had that. (I've drunk gallons of Killians and it's good beer; Knickerbocker is just very different — you should compare them and see.)

My favorite from Blue Pants was their Bourbon-Aged Pinstripe Stout, which is black-hole dark but not at all heavy; it is not your loaf-of-bread-in-a-glass beer. The carbonation is low and the alcohol (9 percent ABV) isn't shy, but the roasted coffee bitterness keeps it brisk. There's an appealing whiff of whisky on the nose and some

whisky flavor notes, but neither overwhelms or detracts from the beerishness of this stout. It's dry, with just enough caramelization to be lip-smacking, and a long finish.

The Highwater Hoppy Tripel makes you say "Whoa!" and "OMG!!" and will immediately replace the Pinstripe Stout as your favorite if you, like me, had thought it was. This is a rich, medium-bodied beer with flavors of orange, honey and whisky. It's dry, though, and clean, not sticky. The finish is long and makes you want more. Some Belgian Tripels can be hugely heavy; maybe it's the addition of American hops to this four-hop blend that keeps Highwater from sinking.

Rounding out the lineup — or at least what I was able to wade through — is Liberation Wee Heavy Strong Scottish Ale (the "Big and Tall" release — served in 22-oz bombers). Now this is your loaf-of-bread-in-a-glass beer (which I mean in the nicest way; I adore bread) weighing in at 13 percent ABV. It's an ultra-deep amber shade with a creamy brown head, aged in Bourbon barrels. Yeast notes dominate the flavors and the finish is very short. Like the other Blue Pants beers, though, it's dry and very drinkable.


In the end, I didn't manage to try all 10 — I missed the Strawberry Saison and the Barleywine — but I was blown away by everything I did try, as were my taster helpers. Blue Pants is now available at better wine and package stores in Mobile and my advice is: If you see it, buy it. And if you're in Madison or Huntsville, drop by the taproom. It's large and laid-back, with a direct view into the brewery and a lawn outside where there's live music on Thursday and Friday nights (and good burgers, but I don't write about food).

Several Blue Pants beers will be poured at the Dauphin Street Beer Festival on Aug. 24, by the way, much closer to home. Amber Waders of Grain will be at The Garage, while Workman Common Lager will be at Union and Slip Rose Strawberry Saison will be at the Joe Cain Café.

And speaking of Northern Alabama brews, Monkeynaut IPA (made at Huntsville's Straight to Ale Brewery) will be available at Boo Radley's during the Festival. This beer has a dark gold color — more like an amber ale — and a super-hoppy taste. It's bitter and dry, with flavors of grapefruit and pine resin and floral hop aromas (chrysanthemums, seriously). There is a slight malty undertone, like a trellis supporting the hops.

The alcohol, 7.25 percent, is not at the extreme end of the spectrum, which helps make Monkeynaut easy-drinking and refreshing. It's an approachable, all-around drink-with-almost anything (especially anything grillable) IPA. And, if you want more after the festival, it's available in cans at many Mobile package stores.

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TK Alabama alone on the chopping blocks

BY RON SIVAK, Columnist, ron@elminfo.com

According to the Wall Street Journal, ThyssenKrupp is now considering selling only its unprofitable steel mill in Alabama, a new twist in the German industrial conglomerate's troubled quest to unload its Steel Americas division.

The two plants have already cost TK upwards of \$15 billion without delivering a dollar of profit. Since the plants opened in 2010, TK has written down their value by \$10.7 billion. Book value for the two mills is currently estimated at \$4.5 billion.

To date, \$2 billion has been offered for the Alabama mill which is less than half of its original \$5 billion in construction costs. The Calvert plant was initially designed to produce upwards of five million tons of steel a year for car factories all over the Southeast.

"At some point, you need to fish or cut bait," said John Packard, publisher of Steel Market Update, to WSJ. He said ThyssenKrupp's three options now are to "sell the Calvert operations to CSN with some form of agreement to supply slabs from CSA in Brazil; sell the Calvert operations to someone like ArcelorMittal and shut down the plant in Brazil; or not to sell the holdings at all and figure out a way to make the operations profitable."

Reasoning behind TK's latest strategy is that the Alabama plant is considered a high-tech prize and thus easier to unload to potential buyers, per experts who follow the U.S. steel industry. The mill in Brazil, they say, is a lemon. "Design-wise, the Brazil facility wasn't bad, they just didn't build it right," says Charles Bradford, an analyst for Bradford Research Inc., in WSJ.

Positive ACRE report

According to the Alabama Center For Real Estate (ACRE), Mobile real estate is on the rebound. "We can possibly expect an influx of new industry coming into our area in the near future based on these positive numbers," said Devin Watson, realtor with Prudential Cooper. For the first time since the downturn of the market, every metro area in Alabama has experienced an increase in new homes sales compared to those in May 2012.

Tuscaloosa is leading the state in with the highest growth rate of 65 percent. Mobile lands the second place spot with an increase of 27 percent.

Total residential sales

Alabama home sales for May 2013 totaled 4,313 units, an increase of 487 transactions compared to 3,826 homes sold in May 2012. Also in May 2013, 17 of 25 associations (68 percent) reported positive gains vs. May 2012. Historical five-year average ACRE data indicates that home sales increased 10.2 percent from April. May 2013 statewide sales posted an 11.6 percent increase in comparison.

Median housing sales data

The median Alabama selling price in May 2013 was \$126,266. This was a .7 percent decrease from May 2012's median selling price of \$127,143. The median five-year average is \$127,332.

In May 2013, 18 of 25 associations (72 percent) reported positive gains in median price compared to the 12 months prior. Historical ACRE data indicates that May median sales prices over a five-year period traditionally increase by 1.8 percent from April. In comparison, May 2013 median sales price increases were double the average (3.6 percent).

Per the ACRE report, while pricing is beginning to stabilize, excess supply and distressed sales continue to apply pressure on year-over-year home pricing in most Alabama markets. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Average housing sales data

The average selling price in Alabama for May 2013 was \$151,411, a 1.2 percent increase from a year ago (\$149,543). In May 2013, 18 of 25 associations (72 percent) reported gains in average sales prices from May 2012. Historical ACRE data indicates that May average sales prices — over a five-year average — increase 5.8 percent vs. April. May 2013 average sales prices marginally beat that average with an increase of 6 percent.

Days on Market (DOM)

The average days in May 2013 that a home in Alabama was on the market were 157. This represented a drop of 1.3 percent from a year ago. Also in May 2013, 11 of 25 associations (44 percent) reported a positive year-over-year reduction in average DOM from May 2012. Historical five-year average ACRE data indicates that DOM in May is 149 days; 8 days below May 2013 results. The current DOM is expected to continue within

the current range (130 – 160 days) for the foreseeable future.

Total Homes Listed for Sale

Alabama homes listed for sale in May 2013 dropped by 1,089 units (3.2 percent) vs. the same period last year. In May 2013, 11 of 25 associations (44 percent) reported positive annual reductions in housing inventory. Historical five-year average ACRE data indicates that homes for sale increase 1.2 percent from April. In May 2013, however, inventory increased by only .5 percent from the month prior.

Inventory-to-sales ratio

According to the ACRE report, typical housing markets are considered to be in balance with approximately six months of housing inventory supply. Metro markets in Alabama reported an inventory supply of 6.8 months; midsize regions reported a supply of 8.3 months; rural areas across the state reported an inventory supply of 13.1 months.

The ACRE report emphasized Alabama's need to begin reducing inventory towards its historic 10-year average of 28,000 units across all categories in order to transition towards a broader level of economic equilibrium statewide.

Greer's acquires two Belle Foods stores

Company spokesperson, Jan Greer Endfinger, confirmed that Greer's has acquired two Belle Foods Stores; one located on Cottage Hill Road in Mobile and the other on Barrancas Avenue in Pensacola. Plans are to reopen both as a Greer's CashSaver Cost Plus Food Outlets.

"Our Greer's CashSavers are a new concept. Unlike other discount stores, we carry an expanded variety of items at lower overall prices. Every item in each department is priced at cost with 10 percent added at checkout," said Jackie Greer, VP of Autry Greer & Sons, Inc.

The Mobile store closed Aug. 12 for inventory and restocking with plans to reopen around Aug. 22.

"We know customers have been inconvenienced the past few weeks and invite them to come in as soon as we get the doors back open," said Endfinger.

Greer's family-owned and operated grocery chain has been part of the Port City's landscape for nigh onto a century. The first store opened its doors in 1916.

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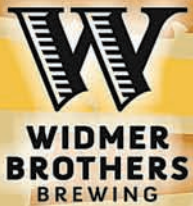
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-Blue Pants Workman Common
- 4. Brickyard -Southern Tier IPA
- 5. B-Bob's -Goose Island 312
-Back Forty Truck Stop
- 6. TP Crockmeir's -Blue Pants Knickerbocker Red
-Goose Island Honkers Ale
- 7. Flipside -Southern Tier 422
- 8. The OK Bicycle Shop -Redhook Audible Ale

- 9. Gabriel's -Great Divide Rumble IPA
- 10. The Garage -Omission Pale Ale
-Blue Pants Amber Waders of Grain
- 11. The Blind Mule -Widmer Brothers Hefeweizen
- 12. Soul Kitchen -Back Forty Fence Post Session Ale
- 13. Studio 5'4 -Southern Tier Live
-Avery Old Jubilation
- 14. Fathom's Lounge -Omission Lager
- 15. O'Dalys -Southern Tier 2XIPA
-Great Divide Heyday
- 16. Saddle Up Saloon -TBA Southern Tier Seasonal
- 17. Veet's -Budweiser Black Crown
-Fairhope Brewing Everyday Ale

- 18. Alabama Music Box -Beck's Sapphire
- 19. Pat's -Widmer Brothers Pitch Black IPA
- 20. Battlehouse/Joe Cain -Blue Pants Slip Rose Saiso
-Brash Brewing Texas Exile Oatmeal Brown Sugar Porter
- 21. Loda Bier Garten -Clown Shoes Chocolate Sombrero
- 22. Boo Radley's -Shocktop Apple Wheat
-Fairhope Brewing Section Street Wheat
- 23. Cabo Cantina -Widmer Brothers Nelson Imperial IPA
- 24. Wintzell's -Tallgrass Ethos IPA
- 25. Samurai J -Great Divide Colette Farmhouse Ale
-Green Flash Double Stout
- 26. Avalon 360 -Tallgrass Velvet Rooster
- 27. Moe's -Brash Brewing The Bollocks



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Mayoral challengers describe their vision for Mobile's future

Editor's note: With city elections on Aug. 27, we asked the three candidates for the mayor's office a few tough questions in hopes of helping our readers make up their minds about who should lead the city into the future.

Mayoral challengers Sandy Stimpson and Dr. Doris Brown both wrote their answers to our questions. Incumbent Mayor Sam Jones refused to participate.

Sandy Stimpson

What are your thoughts on the proposed I-10 bridge location and would you support putting a bike/walking lane on the bridge?

I fully support the plan for an I-10 bridge, and I believe in planning for the full range of mobility options for our citizens and businesses. That includes options for walking, biking and transit, as well as getting around by automobile. The location question has to be considered in a broader context. The city has an unrealized master plan on the books, one that the current mayor has endorsed but failed to support. Our major infrastructure decisions, from transportation policy to stormwater management, should be aligned with comprehensive strategies like those in a master plan.

I support updating that plan if need be. But when I'm mayor I'll do everything I can to follow through on goals and strategies we've already decided upon but, up till now, have lacked the leadership to implement.

Would you be in favor of and pursue lowering the sales tax but raising the property tax?

In general, sales taxes hurt low income families the most. So I'd have to see much more compelling evidence for raising sales taxes than I've seen so far. But there's a broader issue to consider.

Taxes should be just part of evidence-based strategies to realize clear community goals. They shouldn't be tactics to rescue sloppy policy-making. Like any other business transaction, the willingness to pay taxes is directly proportional to the value we get for our money. So one of the most important jobs of a mayor is to achieve broad consensus for the value of policies and services.

Do you support the Mobile Police Department's safety checkpoints? Why or why not?

I do not support checkpoints for the sake of checkpoints. There are much more effective means of fighting crime which includes prevention and rehabilitation. Enforcement is just one tool that we need to use to make Mobile the safest city in America.

What specific infrastructure projects would you focus on improving and/or creating?

This goes back to the idea of prioritizing projects and their design based on their roles in a comprehensive master plan (Question 1). No single project should be allowed to be the tail that wags the dog.

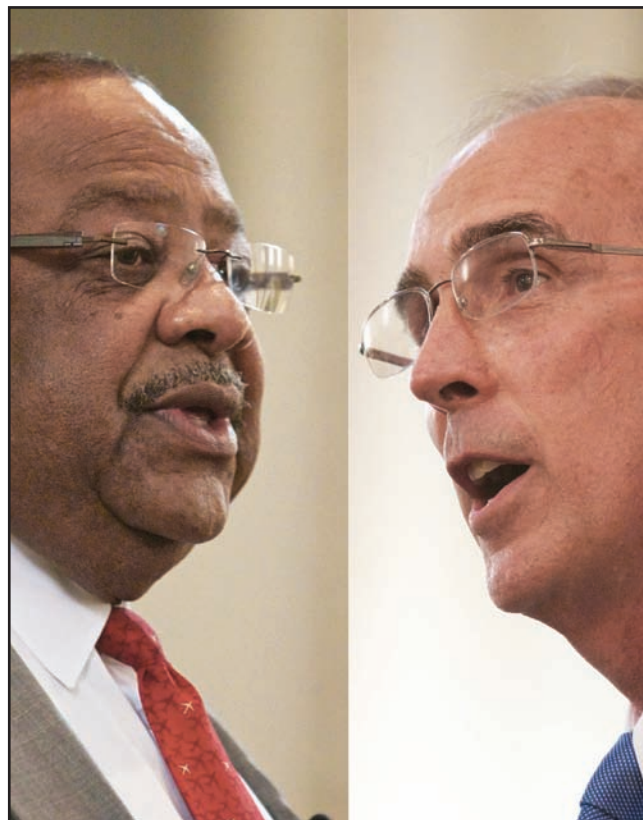
Do you think there is a crime problem? If so, what would you do to combat it?

We've had a lot of debate about this issue in the campaign. The mayor has repeatedly said that crime is simply a perception problem. However, I'm talking to people every day, especially in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods, who say they're afraid of crime. And I believe that fear is real enough, and toxic enough, to inhibit civic life and business investment.

What I want to do has nothing to do with locking more people up after they commit crimes. I'm for putting the full weight of the Mayor's Office behind proven methods of preventing crime before it occurs. I will engage neighborhood associations, youth intervention programs and other support systems that may already exist but lack the resources they deserve.

Additionally, I will provide our first responders with the tools

and resources they need to do the job well. For this reason, I have the endorsement of the largest fire fighters and police unions. While these men and women risk their lives to protect and serve our citizens they know in me, they will have a mayor who protects and serves them.



Photo/Dan Anderson

Frontrunners Jones, left, and Stimpson square off Aug. 27

What priority would you place on stormwater management and littering and what would you do to control and improve it?

Recently, the city of Mobile suffered the 2nd largest fine in ADEM's history. This is inexcusable. It must be a priority of the city to manage stormwater effectively and remain in compliance with ADEM and the federal Clean Water Act. Additionally, the mayor must be responsible for inspection and upkeep of city-owned facilities where pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers are stored and install the necessary measures to prevent trash and debris from infiltrating our drainage systems and waterways.

How long would you let the cruise terminal be empty before going on to Plan B and what would your Plan B be for the terminal?

More than anything else, the future of Mobile's cruise terminal depends on reawakening a city that's a Gulf Coast jewel; a place where visitors on either end of a cruise stop can experience the full range of cultural, entertainment and shopping experiences we know we can offer. Fortunately for all of us who live here, every step in such a reawakening improves our quality of life just as readily as it improves our prospects for attracting visitors. So we get an economic development strategy out of every investment we make in more vibrant civic life.

That is also applicable for investments in our working waterfront, which can be better connected to our downtown and nearby neighborhoods. A Plan A for waterfront renewal is also a pretty good Plan B for waiting till the cruise ship industry recognizes Mobile's quality as a destination.

What, if any, attractions would you work to bring to Mobile (i.e. museums, sports team, tournaments, etc.)?

Beloved, resilient cities are not a collection of attractions. They are built around the quality of their neighborhoods and businesses, their parks and other public spaces, their everyday function as appealing places to live as well as to visit. Great cities are attractions in and of themselves. And that intrinsic appeal is what draws private and non-profit sector investment in enterprises that add to visitor and resident experiences.

I'm open to listening to any pitch for public-private partnerships that add to Mobile's appeal. But my primary focus is on improving our quality of life through safer neighborhoods, small business growth, quality education and an improved quality of life for our citizens.

What is the key to keeping police officers in the Mobile Police Department?

Currently we are losing about 50 officers a year. That is nearly one entire precinct.

Our public employees judge their jobs the same way as the rest of us. The number one question we all ask: Is my service valued? Even higher pay can't make up for feeling unappreciated and for being prevented from making a difference in the way an organization is run.

What I'll do as mayor is what I do as a private sector leader. I'll listen to those with on-the-street experience about what works and doesn't work. Together, we'll set clear goals and paths of accountability. I will invest in a more experienced police force by providing competitive compensation packages and providing them with the tools and resources they need to do their job. And I'll hold myself responsible for assuring that those goals and strategies are supported by the resources necessary for success.

How important is transparency to you and what would you do to ensure every citizen is aware or can educate themselves on city matters?

Governments are run on trust, on securing and maintaining citizens' confidence that their leaders are doing what matters to them and that they're doing it in ways in which it's easy to measure successes and failure. So transparency is fundamental.

After eight years with the current mayor, there's a lot of trust repair to be done with both city staff and with citizens. We have to raise expectations and accountability at the same time. And the only way to prove that we're doing what we promise is to do everything in plain sight.

Mayor Sam Jones says you don't offer specifics on how to do the things you'd like and that he already knows what's at city hall. What are some of the ways you would accomplish your goals for the city if elected mayor?

Again, I think this comes down to priorities. Long term, we will create the revenue to accomplish these goals by growing the city, implementing a long-range plan, and bringing more stakeholders to the table. In the short term, we must cut waste and ensure the city is operating at maximum efficiency. Regardless of the methods, when ordinary people buy into a bold vision, extraordinary results occur. By doing so, we will make Mobile the safest, most business and family-friendly city in America.

The weakest argument any incumbent could make is that knowing "what's at city hall" somehow entitles one to reelection. That's not how new perspectives are heard, nor how new ideas are implemented, and it's certainly not how I view this race, or leadership in general. I'm not a politician. Because of this, I will bring a fresh approach for running the city.

If elected and find out the city really doesn't have money or waste, what would your next step be? What priorities would change if any?

Continued on Page 34

AUG. 27 ELECTION VOTING PRECINCTS

Some municipal polling places are different from state and county elections. Find the correct polling place by going to <http://www.cityofmobile.org/election/votingcenters.php>.

District-Precinct

1-1 Little Welcome Baptist Church, 1516 Wolf Ridge Road

1-2 Dotch Community Center, 3100 Banks Ave.

1-3 Figures Park Community Center, 658 Donald St.

1-4 Dumas Wesley Community Center, 126 Mobile St.

1-5 Kiwanis Boys & Girls Club of Mobile, 712 Rice St.

2-1 Springhill Avenue Community Center, 1151 Springhill Ave.

2-2 Bishop State Community College, 351 N. Broad St.

2-3 Thomas Sullivan Community Center, 351 N. Catherine St.

2-4 Plateau Community Center, 850 Edwards St.

2-5 Mobile Civic Center, Mobile Civic Center, 401 Civic Center Drive

2-6 VIA! Mary Abbie Berg Senior Center, 1717 Dauphin St.

2-7 St. John's Episcopal Church, 1707 Government St.

3-1 Taylor Park Community Center, 1050 Baltimore St.

3-2 Mae Eanes School, 1901 Hurtel St.

3-3 Gilliard Elementary School, 2757 Dauphin Island Parkway

3-4 Fulton Road Baptist Church, 1800 Dauphin Island Parkway

3-5 Riverside Church of the Nazarene, 2313 Riverside Drive

3-6 Eichold Mertz Elementary School, 2815 Government Blvd.

4-1 First Independent Methodist Church, 4548 Halls Mill Road

4-2 Christ Anglican Church, 3275 Halls Mill Road

4-3 The Mug Café, 5817 Grelot Road

4-4 Mt. Ararat Baptist Church, 5201 Washington Blvd., Theodore

4-5 Kate Sheppard School, 3980-B Burma Road

4-6 Laun Park Community Center, 5401 Windmill Drive

5-1 E. R. Dickson School, 4645 Bit &

Spur Road

5-2 City Church of Mobile, 3750 Michael Blvd.

5-3 Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church, 2810 Pleasant Valley Road

5-4 Sage Avenue Baptist Church, 150 S. Sage Ave.

5-5 Apostolic Church of God, 4050 Cottage Hill Road

5-6 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 3900 Airport Boulevard

6-1 Hillcrest Baptist Church, 1204 Hillcrest Road

6-2 Our Savior Catholic Church, 1801 S. Cody Road

6-3 Mobile Regional Senior Community Center, 3201 Hillcrest Road

6-4 Airport Boulevard Baptist Church, 6301 Airport Blvd.

7-1 Moffett Road Assembly of God Church, 6159 Moffett Road

7-2 Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Drive

7-3 Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 545 N. Cody Road

7-4 St. John United Methodist Church, 6215 Overlook Road

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Strategies may change, but priorities don't. Every city CEO should be out to improve citizens' quality of life and their opportunities to prosper.

It's inevitable that, once in office, a new CEO will discover challenges he or she had not anticipated — but opportunities, as well. Dialing back expectations is not the way real leaders lead. They adapt to new realities, all the while affirming overarching goals and adjusting strategies to accomplish them.

What do you think is the most unfair criticism you've received about your campaign and why?

When you choose to run for political office, you volunteer to become a target for criticism, fair and otherwise. It's part of the process. I can't think of anybody who's earned a lot of respect by playing the victim. So I've got no complaints.

You have both backed Andres Duany's plan for downtown Mobile. Looking at his plan, what is the most important and achievable part of it to you?

We're back again to my core point about having — and implementing — a plan that weaves together all the complex components of vital urban life. The attempt to single out and optimize one component — like parking convenience, for instance, or congestion relief — jeopardizes other goals. So there is no most important and achievable part of the Duany plan that should be put ahead of the determination to tie together all its parts.

When I spoke with Andres Duany about Mobile's opportunities, he talked excitedly about the city's historic "bone structure." Our earliest settlers anticipated centuries of flexible growth by the ways in which they connected commerce and family life, private and public space in the city's plan. Our growing dependence on automobiles led us to neglect many of our advantages. But the foundation remains. All we have to do is build onto it.

Dr. Doris Brown

What are your thoughts on the proposed I-10 bridge location and would you support putting a bike/walking lane on the bridge?

I will not be building a bridge or enter into any discussions on building a bridge at this time. And I will not have any bike/walking lane on any bridge at anytime.

Would you be in favor of and pursue lowering the sales tax but raising the property tax?

I will not raise any tax on property and I will not lower the sales tax. The citizens have been taxed and taxed. No benefit has been accomplished.

Do you support the Mobile Police Department's safety checkpoints? Why or why not?

I do support the Mobile Police Department safety checkpoints because it will make the city of Mobile safer. Bad behavior is an everyday adventure for many people who are sitting with the criminals and becoming the current generation of new criminals. Income and zip code does not matter when crimes happen. Driving is an everyday procedure that all people have in common. Without checkpoints many people can drive right through the city and continue on their journeys of bad and criminal behavior. These safety checks can help police identify and arrest individuals who are just riding around and hiding out. This procedure can reduce crime and help our city and state.

While on the other hand people who have not paid their car insurance and do not have car registration can be reminded to do so kindly.

What specific infrastructure projects would you focus on improving and/or creating?

Where I live trash has been stacked for days and city trucks have broke down on several occasions at my place of residence. Someone needs to be looking at these departments to make sure that employees have the proper tools to get their jobs completed. All departments will have to take a training class about their

roles as employees and employment duties. They will have to sign an agreement that they will comply with the rules and regulations that govern their employment. The landscaping department will be given dates and times to make sure that all landscaping are complete by zip code. There will be services rendered to employees and departments if tasks are not completed. I will expect the city to work as a team to make sure that all projects that are handed down by myself as Mayor Brown be completed and followed. I will extend our bus services and cab services because with the volume of tourists and visitors coming to Mobile I would like to make sure that we are all in agreement for what and how things will be done.

Landscaping, trash pick-up, maintenance of service on cars trucks and buses are a must. We need to be neat and maintained at all times.



Photo/Gabriel Tynes

Brown

Do you think there is a crime problem? If so, what would you do to combat it?

Crime is a big problem in Mobile because people know that they can participate in criminal activities and continue to walk free and be out of the jail system in 15 minutes of posting bond. Under my leadership, no means no and I will schedule a meeting with the judges and bail bond companies in Mobile to learn more about our legal system and what the rules are for punishment. This will teach me the proper procedures to stay within the law to make sure that criminals are given long-term periods of in jail time. I have contacted a well-known prison in upper state of Michigan to work with me to send people who do not "believe" that they will be leaving the city of Mobile to serve time for crime. Permanent punishment, long-term jail time and rehabilitation is one way to give the criminals a message that crime does not pay within the city of Mobile. They will be off the streets here in Mobile, Ala., immediately.

What priority would you place on stormwater management and littering and what would you do to control and improve it?

Littering and not cleaning up after yourself is an individual problem that generally stems from early childhood and manners. People litter not by age and financial background. Some people will continue to do things such as littering when they know they are in violation. I will try to work out a system with the public and private schools to have an education and clean month during the regular school years with school children. We have to start early in an attempt to offer manners to offer manners to children. I will also offer required clean up days for women and men who are in our jails to help us clean the land.

The stormwater situation is offering conflicting views for me. Each day I hear something different. I have tried to locate answers to my personal questions that I have regarding this issue. I feel very uncomfortable sharing advice on this situation without proper first hand information and basic knowledge. I will however require that the individuals and agencies involved

with the stormwater management system meet with me first to share what they have signed with additional departments. I need to know what services are taking place on the properties of Mobile right now. I will host a town meeting so that all parties can stand before the people and give honest so that we understand the stormwater issue.

How long would you let the cruise terminal be empty before going on to Plan B and what would your Plan B be for the terminal?

I never would have invited a cruise company to come to the city of Mobile without documented short and long-term goals outlined. I also would not have invited a cruise company to come to Mobile without a stable downtown business and service environment. I would not have allowed the terminal to be empty for any reason. Under my leadership we will have more than one contract with cruise lines. I will offer dinner boat cruises with other boat companies. I will have documented plans and contracts with the boating industries to make sure that the city of Mobile would have legal and first rights to the services of the vessel while it was on the waterways of our city.

I will have an exit plan documented that will be agreed upon by the city of Mobile and cruise company. So that when the ship leaves we will have a complete understanding and adhere to the agreed goals. The residents of Mobile will not have the burden of taxes and additional costs. My long-term goal is to build the Mobilian Ship with the ship builders that we have here. I would like the city of Mobile to have a permanent ship.

What, if any, attractions would you work to bring to Mobile (i.e. museums, sports team, tournaments, etc.)?

I will work very hard to bring the Mobile Horse Derby here and make it a yearly event for the city. I will organize a hockey team for the city of Mobile, soccer events, college football bowl games, National Football League special events, Long Horn rodeo, flag football tournaments, World Series, boxing special events, big time wrestling, expansion of the MoonPie New Year's Eve gala and extensive promotion around the country for the Mardi Gras. We need to have a town that is busy with good things happening to support our food service industry, hotel and restaurant and all hospitality and museums within the city.

What is the key to keeping police officers in the Mobile Police Department?

Mobile police officers need to see a new mayor that is providing better services for the city of Mobile. Officers need increased pay rates, more opportunities for advancement, improved school systems for their children and more employee benefits for themselves and families.

How important is transparency to you and what would you do to ensure every citizen is aware or can educate themselves on city matters?

I would like to offer free reading classes within the public Mobile schools and Mobile libraries for people who have poor reading skills. I will have all of the city departments listed online with the names, emails, phone numbers and employment titles for people who are employed within the city. Being able to communicate and grant opportunities for all is a must. Education is very important to me and I look forward to making resources and services available to all. If you can't read and write, understanding is limited. City Council meetings will continue to be open for the general public to attend. Their meeting dates will be posted within the city papers and online so that people will be aware of dates and times. And I will ask radio, television stations and newspapers to post City Council meetings on feature pages. However, the internet will be a great support tool to help all with education.

Sam Jones

After repeated attempts to contact Jones and his campaign officials, campaign manager Steve Raby said the mayor would not participate or answer Lagniappe's questions. Lagniappe offered Jones the same opportunity to answer these questions, as the other two candidates.



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Stars fell on Joachim Street

BY KEVIN LEE, Arts Editor, klee@lagniappemobile.com

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If “mighty oaks from little acorns grow,” then let’s add one more big thing that grew from something small at the base of a tree. I guess it’s a sign unintended consequences can sometimes be better ones.

The idea started in the summer of 2011 when local star and former Duke Ellington vocalist Lil Greenwood passed away that July. The 87-year-old was treasured by area music fans, and aficionados in the Mystic Order of the Jazz Obsessed (MOJO) wanted to honor Greenwood.

It was decided to dedicate a tree in Greenwood’s honor. As the designated epicenter of the arts district, Cathedral Square seemed the perfect location. It was where the Greater Mobile Art Awards were handed out annually, something Greenwood received in 2007. It was also the locus for the Arts Alive festival, in which Greenwood performed.

Calls were made to the city’s department of Urban Forestry, asking whether MOJO could buy a tree to be planted there for Greenwood. The park’s plans had no room for additional plantings, but they were more than happy to dedicate an existing tree for the purpose, thinking it would create more interest and concern in the trees.

MOJO decided since metal thieves were always a risk, a stone marker would be more secure than a metal plaque. Forestry merely asked that it not interfere with mowers.

A granite stone, roughly 12” by 12” by 3” was acquired by MOJO carved with the words: “This tree dedicated to the memory of Lil Greenwood, Mobile’s First Lady of Jazz and Blues, 1923-2011, The Mystic Order of the Jazz Obsessed.” In the spring of 2013, the Gulf Coast Ethnic and Heritage Jazz Festival asked MOJO to coincide the dedication with the day of an Aug. 3 concert dedicated to Greenwood’s memory.

Parks and Recreation were contacted and they agreed with Urban Forestry. Everything was set.

As MOJO president, I then received a call from an influential Mobilian, someone who once worked for the city but no longer does, though they still carry a lot of weight. They told me they had been part of Cathedral Square’s planning and asked we not place the marker. They feared it would start something that would end with a veritable hodge-podge of markers throughout the square.

They told me there were blank stones in the paved middle portion of the park that were suitable for memorials for anyone who could purchase one and pay for the engraving. I realized they were missing the point, that the reason we wanted to do something extraordinary is because Greenwood’s talent and experience was just that, extraordinary.

The MOJO board was flummoxed. We had gone through the proper channels, had

approval from the departments that mattered.

Days later, we were contacted by the mayor’s office. We were told the person who called me also reached out to the mayor’s office to express those same concerns with them. Now, they wanted us to cease our plan.

Apparently someone was indeed seeking to build a somber stone memorial in Cathedral Square dedicated to a violent death. As it was explained, I foresaw a slippery slope, something counterproductive to downtown’s success.

But the mayor’s office, Barbara Drummond to be exact, had another idea sparked by the impasse. What she conceived was a Walk of Fame to be installed in the sidewalk on Joachim Street, outside the Saenger. She put the idea in current Saenger manager Greg Cyprian’s head and he contacted yours truly.

I met Cyprian and pair of city engineers in front of the Saenger within days. We looked at the sidewalk and batted around a few ideas. Within minutes, we were tossing out names for a steering committee and setting times for meetings. We’re kicking this idea along with both feet.

Thus far, the mayor’s office is pushing, too, and wants the Friends of the Saenger to have a prominent role. Representatives from the Downtown Business Alliance, the Mobile Arts Council and other cultural players are included.

Mobile has a host of famous performing artists, most of whom have yet to receive their just due in their hometown. In 2007, this column space listed the musical stars alone and pondered why we didn’t have a local music hall of fame.

As it stands now, each plaque will be cast with the name of a Mobile performing arts great along with a brief description.

The aim is for the plaques to eventually stretch in both directions from the Saenger entrance and as the decades pass and more stars are made, to keep expanding it around the block.

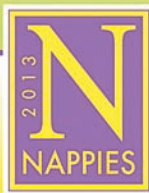
The names being batted around for the inaugural plaques are three of the most accomplished musicians Mobile has ever produced. The splash made from the unveiling and accompanying event will be big.

This is one of the best cultural ideas I’ve heard in Mobile in a long, long time. Its permanence, what it will add to public awareness of our stars and the impression it can leave on tourists, is weighty. In fact, I can’t think of a downside to it.

It’s our dream that as long as the Saenger stands, far beyond my life or any of the others involved in this project, the Grand Lady of Mobile venues will remain encircled by a galaxy of stars worthy of her association. And one deserving of our pride.

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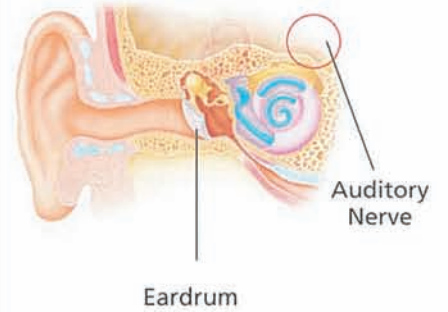
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Where: Lola Phillips Playhouse (801 Iroquois St, Chickasaw)
When: Sept. 6 – 8, 13 – 15, 20 – 22

First published in 1862, Victor Hugo's tale of human struggle and the search for redemption set against the French Revolution was not only one of the most heralded novels of the 19th century, but went on to become one of the longest running musicals in history. It won eight Tony awards, including those for Best Musical and Best Original Score. A film version premiered in 2012 and the play has only recently become available for community theater.

Friday and Saturday shows are at 7:30 p.m. with Sunday shows at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$15, \$12 for seniors, students and active military.

For more info, call 251-457-8887 or go to www.cctshows.com.

ARTS GALLERY

Zep classic live at Civic Center

BY KEVIN LEE, Arts Editor, klee@lagniappemobile.com

Black Jacket Symphony performs Led Zeppelin IV

Where: Mobile Civic Center (401 Civic Center Dr.)

When: Aug. 24, 8 p.m.

There are two halves to a Black Jacket Symphony show, which handpicks musicians specifically for whatever classic rock album they are set to feature. No detail is overlooked in these live reproductions of works such as The Beatles' "White Album" and "Abbey Road," the Rolling Stones' "Some Girls" and AC/DC's "Back In Black."

The first set features the album as a true symphonic piece. The following set also includes a selection of the album artist's "greatest hits" and is accompanied by a light display and a more laid-back symphony.

Tickets are \$25.

For more info, call 251-208-7261.

Choral group begins 16th season

Greater Mobile Choral Society auditions

Where: Government Street Presbyterian Church (300 Government St.)

Open to everyone from high school students to retirees who enjoy a wide range of music, the Greater Mobile Choral Society celebrates its 16th year with the start of open auditions. The first portion of the evening is a "Meet and Greet" social function/potluck supper. The auditions and a small rehearsal will follow.

Normal rehearsals will be on Tuesdays, 7 – 9 p.m., starting Sept. 3 in the second floor multi-purpose room. The group normally prepares three to five concerts per academic year.

For more information, call Artistic Director Terry D. Maddox at 434-9325 or email tmaddox@gspcmobile.com.

Art Awards at special time and place

10th annual Greater Mobile Art Awards

Where: 1927 Room (6 S. Joachim St.)

When: Aug. 29, 6 p.m.

For a decade now, the Greater Mobile Art Awards have gone to deserving individuals and groups in the Mobile area who have elevated the standard of living with their tireless work and dedication. Though normally held in Cathedral Square during the LoDa Artwalk, this special version of the honors will be held in the spot next to the Saenger Theatre and on a night when it can enjoy the solo limelight.

This year's recipients are as follows: Artist - Mike McKee; Business - Crescent Theater; Educator - Lori Billbrey-Vaghefi; Patron - Dr. Thomas Rosandich; Organization - Mobile Symphony Orchestra; Volunteer - Dan Silver.

A pair of special awards created for the anniversary will be handed out as well. One is the Emerging Artist Award which goes to Riley Brenes and the other is a Lifetime Achievement Award being given to Carmen Brown.

This year's physical award was created by glass artist Rachel Wright. A reception precedes and follows the presentation.

For more info, call 251-432-9796 or go to www.mobilearts.org.

Wright stuff at Skinny Gallery

Works in glass by Rachel Wright

Where: Mobile Arts Council (318 Dauphin St.)

When: Sept. 3 – 27

Rachel Wright has become one of the most heralded artists in Mobile and for good reason. An instructor at the University of South Alabama since 2000, she has exhibited in Chicago, New Orleans, Mobile, Pensacola and Panama City, Fla. In 2010, her work was featured in the National Design Triennial at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum (Smithsonian Institution) in New York.

Her art is primarily sculptural, mixing media such as glass, clay, iron, wood, wax, fabric and photographs. It's her glasswork that's the focus of this new exhibit, fittingly as she not only designed the awards for the 2013 Greater Mobile Art Awards but was the 2011 recipient of the GMAA Artist award.

An opening reception will be held during the Sept. 13 LoDa Artwalk. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Mon – Fri.

For more info, call 251-432-9796 or go to www.mobilearts.org.

John Cage Fest set; needs volunteers

BY KEVIN LEE, Arts Editor, klee@lagniappemobile.com

A collection of area arts organizations, led by the Rumor Union and the Mobile Museum of Art have released the final schedule for the multi-day festival saluting John Cage and the opportunities couldn't be more bountiful. The 101st birthday party for the avant-garde guru who breached barriers between art, music and life will stretch across the Mobile area on Sept. 5 – 7, filling public and private space with a celebration the likes of which the Azalea City has never seen.

However, none of this would be possible without the dedication of volunteered time and resources at all levels. Now, the chance arises for all of Mobile to help this become a success. Roughly 30 volunteers are needed to help with various events and happenings.

According to information from the Mobile Museum of Art, opportunities include ushering for events, helping circulate flyers, posters and other materials to audience members and venue set-up. It's a great chance for organizations and community-minded individuals alike.

There is a brief volunteer orientation event at the Mobile Museum of Art on Aug. 29 at 6 p.m. Another will occur at the same site, 10 a.m. on Sept. 5. Interested parties are advised to attend at least one of these.

As the organizers said, "This is a moment for Mobile to come together, to revel in the diversity of our voices, and to enjoy not knowing what might happen next."

Those interested in aiding this worthy endeavor can contact Howard McPhail at 251-208-5205, Fax: 251-208-5201 or email Howard.Mcphail@MobileMuseumofArt.com.

Events are as follows, with volunteer needs listed:

THURSDAY, SEPT. 5

11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Mobile Botanical Gardens

Mycology and Art Sculpture. Two volunteers for information distribution.

3:30 p.m.

Spring Hill College

A Happening: Expeiential artistic event. Three volunteers for information distribution.

5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Mobile Museum of Art

Illustrated lecture by Julie Lazar. Two volunteers for information distribution.

7 – 9 p.m.

USA Laidlaw Performing Arts Center

Percussion ensemble & dancers. Four volunteers for information distribution.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 6

9:30 a.m. – Noon

Mobile Japanese Gardens

Buddhism, calligraphy & John Cage. Six volunteers for venue set-up and information distribution.

1:30 p.m.

Crescent Theater (208 Dauphin St.)

Film: "Revenge of the Dead Indians" w/ guest speaker Frans von Rossum. Two volunteers for information distribution.

5:30 p.m.

Larkins Music Center (257 Dauphin St.)

Cellular Orchestra performance and discussion. Three volunteers for information distribution.

7 p.m.

PortAL Studios (560 Dauphin St.)

John Cage influenced performance. Two volunteers for information distribution.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 7

10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Cathedral Square

Sue Walker and Poets' mesostic readings, surprise performance. Six volunteers needed for venue set-up and information distribution.

12:30 – 2 p.m.

Space 301

Tom Leaser: John Cage and his legacy; teen workshop; t-shirt making. Two volunteers for information distribution.

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Crescent Theater (208 Dauphin St.)

Film: "From Zero" w/ guest speaker Frans von Rossum. Two volunteers for information distribution.

6:30 p.m.

The Rumor Union (561 St. Francis St.)

The Legacy of John Cage: local original works and performances. Four volunteers for information distribution.



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Strolling down Mobile's music and memory lane

BY STEVE CENTANNI, Music Editor, scentanni@lagniappemobile.com



Music is a powerful medium. Often it attaches itself to periods of time or experiences in our lives. These life experiences and the emotions associated with them can resurface whenever a person hears a certain band or a certain song. This concept has inspired one local musician to create an electric compendium of Gulf Coast music.

Meet Brett Mouron. In addition to being a dedicated husband and father, Mouron is a Production Designer for the Red Square Agency and a freelancer with Dapper Designs. He is also the father of an electronic compendium of Gulf Coast music called “The Gulf Coast Music Depository.”

Mouron began his love affair with the Gulf Coast music scene as an active participant. A musician in his own right, Mouron was a member of several bands such as Sweet Nothings, Me & T and Wormwood Inn, and his time with these groups has inspired him to take on the task of collecting Gulf Coast bands.

“I think mainly just being a musician during that time period and playing a lot of shows at the time gave me a lot of material and reason to be nostalgic,” Mouron explained. “I can’t say that I go to shows much these days, but then again, I don’t think there is as much camaraderie as there was then.”

However, Mouron’s personal nostalgia is not the only inspiration for his creation of the GCMD. During his time in the Gulf Coast music scene, MySpace was the most popular social network for bands. Many Gulf Coast bands that were performing at that time filled their MySpace pages with tons of information and pictures. Over the years, bands have chosen to use other social networks, and MySpace has gone through many changes and updates. Ultimately, many bands’ MySpace sites have lost their galleries, biographies and other information. Mouron finds the GCMD as a way of salvaging what MySpace has lost as well as a way to introduce Gulf Coast bands to future generations.

“My ultimate goal is to have new people discover old music and not care that most of these bands aren’t around anymore,” Mouron said. Hopefully, it will be a platform for other musicians to say, ‘I was in that band, but I’m in this band now. You should check it out!’ It’s a win-win for both musicians and people who love music in the South.”

Visitors to the Gulf Coast Music Depository can experience past notable bands such as The Blivits, The Negative Protons, German Honor Society and many more. Just clicking on a band’s name reveals their bio, line-up, hometown, performing status, pictures and video, but the GCMD does not stop there. Mouron provides a player featuring music from all bands featured on the website. There are also several bands such as Graveyard Safari and The Difference Engine who have donated albums to the site. These albums can be downloaded free of charge. Mouron has even caught up with members of The Blivits and Recovery Period to chat about their past experiences in the local scene and where they are now. Through his interview with Ryan Keller (Coming to an End/Hospital), Mouron was given a taste of

the local scene in the late ‘90s before he became active as a musician.

“It was a bizarre walk down memory lane,” Mouron said. “They (the bands) remembered stuff that I had long forgotten. That’s the whole purpose of the site to not only expose these old bands that were wonderful, but also to jog our memories.”

The GCMD also features an extensive and impressive gallery of show fliers. For this task, he relied on social media as well as the personal collections of friends. Steven Weber just happened to be one of those friends. When Cell Block was Mobile’s only underground venue, Weber acted as their flier designer. This generous artist provided Mouron with dozens of fliers. Mouron has been pleasantly surprised with the number of people who have kept their flier collections through the years.

“I really wish I had (kept a flier collection) now,” Mouron said. It’s funny. I’ll see fliers with Sweet Nothings and Recovery Period or Me & T playing with someone, and I’m like, ‘Oh, it’s my band.’ I’ve been really lucky to have friends that have kept collections and were more than willing to scan each and every one of them and send them my way.”

Mouron is just starting his collection of bands, and he still has a number of bands that he would like to add, like Mobile bands such as XBXR and Adelle. Mouron also wants to include Pensacola’s This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb as well as St. Augustine’s Moments In Grace (formerly Postcard Audio). For him, it is as easy as making contact with one of the members of these bands. So far, his biggest challenge has been making sure the material featured on the site is complete and pristine.

“It’s like I’m putting other people’s babies on display,” Mouron said. “I want to make them pitch-perfect. I want to make them right. I think I’m my own worst enemy. I’m constantly going back and double-checking names and errors in biographies and stuff like that.”

Currently, all the bands featured on the site could be considered underground. Mouron explained that the reason for this is that he initially contacted immediate friends who were in the featured bands. However, he is open to featuring Gulf Coast bands with original material that meet a certain criteria.

Bands wishing to be included in the GCMD should provide Mouron with a biography, pictures, audio, video footage and a full band line-up. He also requires bands who wish to be included to have performed live shows and “not just be your nephew’s garage band that never saw one show.” Ultimately, Mouron gets his greatest pleasure from being able to have a musically interactive hobby for all to enjoy and providing new sounds for those unfamiliar with the bands featured on the GCMD.

You can find this project at dapperdesign.me/thegcmd.

Photo courtesy of dapperdesign.me/thegcmd

BY STEVE CENTANNI, Music Editor, scentanni@lagniappemobile.com

Band: Jesse Payne
Date: Sun., Aug. 25 at 7 p.m.
Venue: Callaghan's Irish Social Club, 916 Charleston St., www.callaghansirishsocialclub.com
Tickets: \$7 at the door

If there is one goal that the SouthSounds Music Festival has fulfilled, then it would be exposing the Azalea City to a plethora of bands that have gone on to become local favorites. Birmingham's Jesse Payne definitely made a good first impression at this year's festival, and those who missed out on this performance will get a chance to experience the folk-infused rock sounds of this promising songwriter in the intimate confines of Callaghan's.

Payne is a natural songwriter who delivers his sound through what he calls "sonic paintings." He crafts each piece with the intentions of spreading vivid mental images throughout his audiences. Payne derives this imagery from both life experiences and natural environments. Many might find this to be a complex foundation upon which to build music, but the sheer beauty in Payne's delivery is quite effortless and infectious.

For his 2011 EP "Buffalo," Payne used a cavalcade of musicians and instruments to assist him in covering his canvas of sound. The gentle nature of this album melds well with vocal and instrumental clarity giving listeners an almost unstoppable meditation. In addition to the studio cuts, Payne provides listeners with a live version of the track "Yards of Paint."



Photo courtesy of facebook

Birmingham's Jesse Payne returns to Mobile Aug. 25 for his first appearance since the SouthSounds Music Fest.

Dirty Mike and his Boys head to LoDa

Band: Darrow Chemical Company, Post Mortem Delirium, Dirty Mikes & the Boy
Date: Wed., Aug. 28 at 8 p.m.
Venue: Alabama Music Box,
Tickets: \$7 at the door

This show is going to give Mobile a generous taste of fresh punk rock. Dirty Mike Fillingim (guitar/vocals), Dirty Mike Lagrone (bass/vocals) and Adam Whatley (drums) are all former members of Four Years Down. Now, they have joined forces as Dirty Mikes & the Boy to continue spreading their underground sounds.

Post Mortem Delirium will round out the local support for this show. This furious four-piece is Mobile's newest (and only) horror punk outfit. Drawing influences ranging from The Misfits to H.P. Lovecraft, Post Mortem Delirium has been spreading their dark rock around Mobile through the release of their single "Sick, Sad World" on various social media sites. If this song is a proper representation of their work, this group is a poisonous punk concoction laced with vehemence that leaves a metallic aftertaste.

Darrow Chemical Company will headline this event. Featuring members of Gotham Road, this group brings together notables from the modern horror punk scene. Darrow Chemical Company is on tour in support of their release "Plastic Smile." This group is guaranteed to rain down their merciless punk fury upon their Azalea City victims.

Foley to get a taste of St. James' Americana

Band: Jim St. James
Date: Thurs., Aug. 29 at 6 p.m.
Venue: Gelato Joe's, 202 E. Michigan Ave. #A (in Foley), www.gelato-joes.com
Tickets: Free

Hailing from the Midwest, Jim St. James has dedicated his life to Americana. Eventually, he made his way to the Gulf Coast, which he now calls home. Armed with his trusty acoustic, St. James began releasing his homespun original sounds in 1999 with his debut "Guitars and Radios." His artistic persistence paid off in 2008 when his single "Caroline" shot to number one on the "Roots Americana" Chart. Currently, he is preparing to release his sixth studio album ("Till the Wheels Fall Off") and begin his "Western Troubadour" tour, which will take him to California.

St. James skillfully mingles various elements of Americana. His songs are a perfect blend of folk and country. Songs like "My Guitar" and "Roll Away" feature Dylan-esque vocals set to country-infused acoustic guitar. This blend gives St. James' song an eclectic nature that is truly unique.



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THE RUNDOWN

Local pickers remember the legendary Jody Payne

BY STEVE CENTANNI, Music Editor, scentanni@lagniappemobile.com

The music world has lost an influential guitarist, and many locals have lost a close friend and mentor. On Aug. 10, guitarist Jody Payne passed away due to cardiac complications. He was 77. This Stapleton resident began his career in country music as a bluegrass artist backing Charlie Monroe. However, he was most well-known as Willie Nelson's guitarist.

He spent over 30 years touring and recording with Nelson. During this time, Payne moved to Stapleton, Ala., where he resided until his death. While living on the Gulf Coast, Payne spent his time performing locally and passing on his knowledge to young musicians as a guitar instructor at Picker's Paradise in Stapleton. However, Payne also made quite an impression on many local musicians, who were quite saddened by his passing.

"Jody Payne said to me, 'It won't cost you nothing to be my friend. Now, let's pick,'" said local guitarist Luther "Blue Lou" Wamble. "He was the best: man, friend, mentor and running buddy. He changed my playing in life, and now since he's gone, even my guitar misses him. But now, like his song, he is riding in the wind."

Fat Man Squeeze guitarist Andy MacDonald also had fond memories of Payne. MacDonald was a fellow guitar

instructor at Picker's Paradise. He found his daily interactions with Payne to be a "humbling learning experience." In addition to his teachings, MacDonald also found pleasure in Payne's dry sense of humor and good nature.

"He rarely spoke ill of anyone and was as good of a listener as a teacher," MacDonald explained. "As a picker, he could replicate anything and get the job done with half the energy."

Payne will be missed by friends, family, and everyone he touched through his music and/or friendship.

The Gulf Coast Blues Society has chosen their representatives for the 2014 International Blues Challenge. Andrew & Joel will be representing this organization in the "Solo/Duo" division with Marcy Chatelain coming in as the runner-up. After 10 bands played their sets, Johnny Barbato & the Lucky Doggs will be representing the Gulf Coast Blues Society in the "Band" division. Mississippi three-piece Michael Vincent Band came in the runner-up. Mobile's Ric McNaughton Band came in the second runner-up. Both Andrew & Joel and Johnny Barbato & the Lucky Doggs will travel to Memphis in January to compete against bands from around the world for the title of International Blues Challenge champion.



Photo courtesy of Willienelson.com

Stapleton resident Jody Payne, who recognizably shared the stage with Willie Nelson for more than 30 years, passed away Aug. 10.

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MUSIC LISTINGS AUG 22 - SEPT 4

THURSDAY AUG 22

Bill & Charlie's—Karaoke
BlueGill—Al & Cathy
Blues Tavern—Wayne Sharp & The Sharpshooter Band
Bojangles—Sorry For Party Rockin' Thursdays featuring DVDJ Lynch, 9p
Brickyard—Josh Ewing
Callaghan's—Charlie Young
Felix's—Jeri
Hangout—Mojiles/Jay Williams Band
Hayley's—Karaoke
Joe Cain Café—Ryan Balthrop, 7:30p
Legacy Bar and Grill—Ryan Balthrop
Lulu's—Tony Brook, 6p
Moe's BBQ (Daphne)—Yellow Hammer Productions, 8p
Old Grill 27—Phil Proctor, 6:30p
Royal Knight—Karaoke
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 6:30p
Tacky Jacks (Fort Morgan)—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Adam Holt Duo, 5p
Tropics—Karaoke
Veets—Steve Varnes & the Lizards, 8p

FRIDAY AUG 23

Bill & Charlie's—Last Call Rodeo
BlueGill—Brittany Grimes, 12p Wes Bayliss and Ricochet Creek, 6p
Blues Tavern—Larry Garner
Bojangles—Bojangles Unplugged featuring
Brickyard—Albert Simpson
Courtyard @ 311—Gretsch Lyles & the Modern Eldorados, 9:30p
Felix's—Blind Dog Mike
Grand Central—Looking 4 Juice
Hangout—Mario Mena Band/ Foxy Iguanas
Hard Rock Casino—Ted Nugent
Joe Cain Café—Greg Brown, 7:30p
Legacy Bar and Grill—Hunter Lawler
Lulu's—Kyle & Karl, 6p
Margaritaville—Eddie McDaniel, 6p//Hank Berumen, 9p
Moe's (Daphne)—Brett LaGrave, 8p
Old Grill 27—Jimmy Lee, 6:30p
Record Bar—Cameron Zion, 9p
Royal Knight—Tommy Morse Band, 8p
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 7:30p
Soul Kitchen—Drivin n Cryin
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—BayFest Battle of the Bands, 7:30p and Peek, 9p
Tacky Jacks (Fort Morgan)—Les Linton, 7p
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Johnny Barbato, 12p and Charlie & Mel, 6p
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Rhythm Intervention, 5p
Traders—Elmo & The Bluesmen, 8:30p
Tropics—MudBucket
Windmill Market—Michael Tilley, 11a Dale Drinkard, 6p
Veets—The Family Jewels, 9p

SATURDAY AUG 24

Alabama Music Box—Growl//The Vivid Verbs, 9p
Bill & Charlie's—Last Call Rodeo
BlueGill—Brandon Whighal Project, 6p
Blues Tavern—The Fortunate Few Revue
Bojangles—Saturday Nite Live featuring
Brickyard—Wes Bayliss//Ricochet Creek
Callaghan's—Glass Joe
Courtyard@311—The Budz, 8:30p
Felix's—Al & Cathy
Grand Central—Sherry Court, 5-8p and Innervation, 10p-2a
Hangout—Mario Mena Band//Foxy Iguanas
Hard Rock Casino—Steve-O and Tom Green
Kimberley's—Karaoke w/ Kristin
Joe Cain Café—Phil Proctor, 7:30p
Legacy Bar and Grill—Soulshine Trio
Lulu's—Albert Simpson, 6p
Margaritaville—Michael Vincent Band, 7p//Myles Sharpe Band, 9p
Moe's BBQ—Sweet Jimmy Carter and the Outlaws, 8p
Moe's BBQ (Daphne)—Yellowhammer

Productions, 8p
Old Grill 27—Mid Life Crisis, 6:30p
Royal Knight—Karaoke
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 7:30p
Soul Kitchen—The Molly Ringwalds
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Trick Foto
Tacky Jacks (Fort Morgan)—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Chaz Brown
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—John Joiner Jason Justice Trio
TP Crockmiers—
Traders—Modern Eldorados, 8:30p
Tropics—Unseen Evidence
Veets—The Family Jewels, 9p
Windmill Market—Jimmy Lumpkin, 11a

SUNDAY AUG 25

American Legion (Fairhope)—Midlife Crisis, 6p
BlueGill—Dale Drinkard Jr, 11a Mulligan Bros., 6p
Blues Tavern—Al & Cathy
Bojangles—S.I.N. Night w/ Wes
Callaghan's—Jesse Payne
Felix's—Bobby Butchka
Hangout—Van Etten Bros./ Jeff Glass Band
Hard Rock (Center)—
Legacy Bar and Grill—Live Music w/ Fuego's, 6:30-10p
Lulu's—Albert Simpson, 6p
Margaritaville—John Hozey & Chuck Lofton, 4p//Double Dee, 7p
Old Grill 27—Lisa Zanghi, 11:30a
Royal Knight—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Ryan Balthrop
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Little Cypress
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Reed Lightfoot Bud Smith
Traders—Sean Donahue, 4p
Tropics—Trigger Root
Windmill Market—Craig Brayer, 11a
Veets—The Family Jewels, 8

MONDAY AUG 26

Bojangles—B.Y.O.B. Trivia @ 7pm / Stand Down Comedy, 9:30p
Felix's—Brett Lagrave
Hangout—Wes Bayliss// Brooks Hubbert
Hayley's—Karaoke
Lulu's—Brent Burns, 6p
Moe's—Trivia, 7p
Royal Knight—Ryan Balthrop, 7p
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 6:30p
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Karaoke

TUESDAY AUG 27

BlueGill—Van Etten Brothers, 6p
Bojangles—Karaoke w/Jordan, 9p
Brickyard—Wes Bayliss
Butch Cassidy's—Al & Cathy
Felix's—Grant Dunaway
Hangout—Category 4/ Trigger Root
Legacy Bar and Grill—Live Music w/ Fuego's, 6:30-10p
Lulu's—Grits N Pieces, 6p
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 6:30p
Serda's—Trivia, 7p
Veets—Lisa Zanghi, 7p

WEDNESDAY AUG 28

Alabama Music Box—Darrow Chemical Company//Dirty Mikes and the Boy//Post Mortem Delirium, 8p
BlueGill—Ross + I, 6p
Blues Tavern—Meacham Motor Co.
Bojangles—Open Mic, 8p
Brickyard—The Van Etten Brothers w/ Ben Leininger
Dahlia's Piano Bar—Tony Bowers
Felix's—Brandon & Shea
Hangout—Cool Rays// Jeff Glass Band
Joe Cain's Cafe—Loose Cannons, 7:30p
Legacy Bar and Grill—Brent Loper
Live @ 360 Jazz Café—

Lulu's—Category 4, 6p
Royal Knight—David Jernigan & Randy Landers, 7p
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Tommy Morse
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Reed Lightfoot
Tropics—Songwriter's Open Mic Night
Veets—Open Mic with Grits n' Pieces, 7p

THURSDAY AUG 29

Bill & Charlie's—Karaoke
BlueGill—Little Cypress, 6p
Blues Tavern—MudBucket
Bojangles—Sorry For Party Rockin' Thursdays featuring DVDJ Lynch, 9p
Brickyard—Josh Ewing & Matt Neese
Callaghan's—Brett LaGrave
Felix's—Chris Powell
Hangout—Mulligan Bros./ Foxy Iguanas
Hayley's—Karaoke
Joe Cain's Café—Ryan Balthrop, 7:30p
Legacy Bar and Grill—Gabe Willis
Lulu's—Lee Yankie, 6p
Moe's BBQ (Daphne)—Yellow Hammer Productions, 8p
Old Grill 27—Fat Man Squeeze, 6:30p
Royal Knight—Karaoke
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 6:30p
Tacky Jacks (Fort Morgan)—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Les Linton
Tropics—Karaoke
Veets—John Keuler, 8p

FRIDAY AUG 30

Alabama Music Box—Digital Oranix//Cyborgnics//Kice of Course//Beat Battle, 9p
Bill & Charlie's—Less Than Stellar
BlueGill—Brittany Grimes, 12p Innervation, 6p
Blues Tavern—Ric McNaughton Band
Bojangles—Bojangles Unplugged, 9p
Brickyard—Josh Ewing
Felix's—Grit's N Pieces
Grand Central—Trick FOTO
Hangout—Mulligan Bros./ Krissta Allen
Hard Rock (Live)—The Band Perry with special guests Cheryl LuQuire
Joe Cain Café—Greg Brown, 7:30p
Legacy Bar and Grill—Hunter Lawler
Lulu's—Webb Dalton, 6p
Margaritaville—Ian Taylor, 6p//Eddie McDaniel, 9p
Moe's BBQ (Daphne)—Charlie Wilson Trio, 8p
Old Grill 27—Gretsch Lyles & The Modern Eldorados, 6:30p
Record Bar—Stag Nation, 9p
Royal Knight—Johnny No, 8p
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 7:30p
Soul Kitchen—Strongfold, Farthest Side Down and D.R.E.A.D.
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Peek
Tacky Jacks (Fort Morgan)—Les Linton
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Ric McArthur and Tommy Morse
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Kyle & Karl
Traders—Soulshine, 8:30p
Tropics—Old School
Veets—The Family Jewels, 9p
Windmill Market—Howell N' Jones, 6p

SATURDAY AUG 31

Alabama Music Box—Glish//The Sunshine Factory//Baron Krelve, 9p
Bill & Charlie's—Less Than Stellar
BlueGill—Fat Lincoln, 6p
Blues Tavern—Jay B. Elston Band
Bojangles—Saturday Nite Live featuring DVDJ Lynch, 9p
Brickyard—The Investments
Courtyard @ 311—Trigger Root, 8:30p
Felix's—Raising Karma
Hangout—US Band/ Peek
Grand Central—Foxy Iguanas
Kimberley's—Karaoke w/ Kristin
Joe Cain Café—Phil Proctor, 7:30p

Lulu's—Webb Dalton, 6p
Margaritaville—Myles Sharpe Band, 7p//Brennan Roybal, 9p
Moe's BBQ (Daphne)—Yellow Hammer Productions, 8p
Old Grill 27—Them Again, 6:30p
Royal Knight—Karaoke
Royal Street Tavern—John Anthony, 7:30p
Soul Kitchen—Otis Lotus - tribute to the Grateful Dead
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—TBA
Tacky Jacks (Fort Morgan)—karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Shiny Objects//Glen Templeton
Traders—Fat Man Squeeze, 8:30p
Tropics—Midlife Crisis
Veets—The Family Jewels, 9p
Windmill Market—Jimmy Lee Hannaford, 11a

SUNDAY SEPT 1

BlueGill—Dale Drinkard Jr., 11a
Bojangles—S.I.N. Night w/Wes featuring
Callaghan's—Grayson & The Lost Cause Minstrels
Felix's—Brandon Bailey
Hangout—US Band//Framing The Red
Lulu's—Cornbred, 5p
Old Grill 27—Leavin Brothers, 6:30p
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—TBA
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Lonesome Mel
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Shiny Objects//Glen Templeton
Traders—Jimmy Lee Hannaford, 4p
Tropics—Budman

MONDAY SEPT 2

American Legion (Fairhope)—The Modern Eldorados, 6p
Bojangles—B.Y.O.B. Trivia, 7p // Stand Down Comedy, 9:30p
Felix's—Bryant Gilley
Hayley's—Karaoke
Lulu's—Brent Burns, 6p
Moe's BBQ—Trivia, 7p
Royal Knight—Ryan Balthrop, 7p
Royal Street Tavern—
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Karaoke
Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)—Glenn Templeton
Veets—Jukebox, 4-10p

TUESDAY SEPT 3

Bojangles—Karaoke w/ Jordan, 9p
Brickyard—Wes Bayliss
Butch Cassidy's—Chris Powell
Felix's—Greg Brown
Legacy Bar and Grill—Live Music w/ Fuego's
Serda's—Trivia, 7p

WEDNESDAY SEPT 4

Brickyard—Vann Etten Brothers//Ben Leininger
Felix's—Bobby Butchka
Legacy Bar and Grill—Brent Loper
Lulu's—Jimmy Lumpkin, 5p
Moe's BBQ (Daphne)—Trivia, 7p
Royal Knight—Megan T. McMillian, 7p
Tacky Jacks (Battleship Pkwy.)—Tommy Morse
Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)—Open Mic/ Nigel
Tropics—Open Mic

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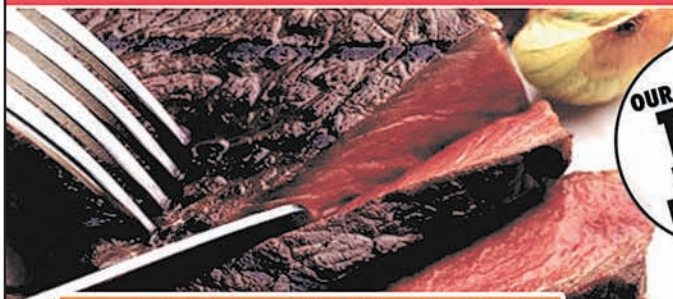
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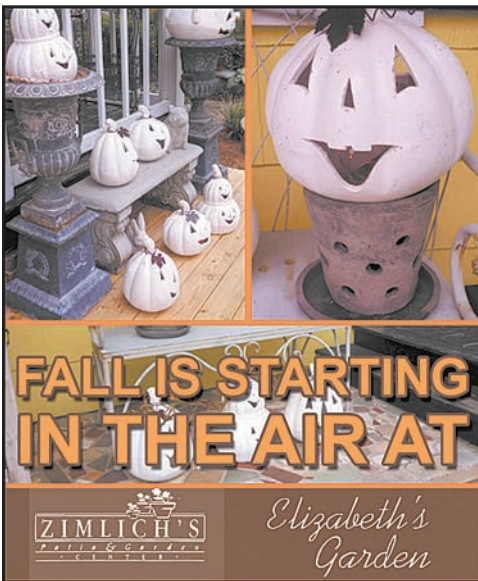
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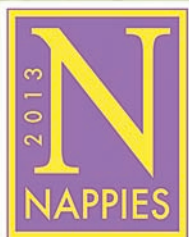
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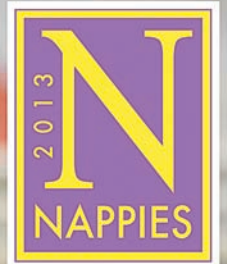
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'On the Road' remains faithful to its source

BY ASIA FREY, Film Critic, afrey@lagniappemobile.com

It's impossible to separate my feelings about the film "On the Road" from my feelings for its source Jack Kerouac novel. Adults don't typically run around espousing their love of the book as often as teenagers and young adults do, and it has been years since I've proudly waved the paperback around as a badge of initiation into the world of required cool reading.

Director Walter Salles again delves into the world of photogenic male road trippers that he also explored so beautifully in his 2004 Che Guevara biopic "The Motorcycle Diaries." Both that and "On the Road" evoke the rambling, unstructured worlds of their protagonists as they get behind their respective wheels and simply go, and sometimes rambling is another word for "boring" or "repetitive."

However, if you don't like the film "On the Road," I don't think it's Salles' fault; I found the adaptation to be extremely faithful, and if anything, it was its faithfulness to the source that occasionally hurt it. Reading and watching simply aren't the same thing.

So, can it be argued that the main characters, Dean Moriarty and Sal Paradise, are self-involved, naïve, and self-indulgent? Most definitely. It's hard to see them as heroes, but plenty of people do. I thought it was interesting to witness my own reaction to their antics now that I'm older. This time around, I mostly worried about their various cast-off progeny, and don't even get me started about William S. Burroughs' poor kids.

The success of the film rests on the shoulders of the male protagonists, Dean and Sal. The story is only about Sal's life as he experiences it with Dean. Fortunately, two relatively unknown guys played them. I was initially worried about Dean, whose irresistible charisma basically drives everything that happens in the story, which is basically sex, but Garrett Hedlund won me over. Maybe he was a little too clean cut, but his performance was good.

Hedlund especially gave Moriarty a sense of conflict about his actions, one which he rarely acted upon. Still, you could tell he felt bad about some of the crazy stuff he was doing. The movie simplifies him a bit, and reduces some of the creative urges he exhibits in the novel until primarily the carnal ones remain. Nevertheless, the oft-nude Hedlund is convincing as a guy who

shakes up almost everyone he meets.

Meanwhile, Sal Paradise, the name Kerouac gave himself, is our narrator, and British actor Sam Riley was also affecting. He was appropriately reticent, hanging back, observing, and writing it all down. If you found their dialogue to be too poetic, and their drive to "live" to be too dreamy — dare we say, immature? — then you're missing the point. Even Sal Paradise has moved on by the end, and this distance enables him to tape together that roll of



Photos courtesy of imdb.com

As a novel, 'On the Road' was a monumental achievement. But the film adaptation can stand on its own.

two children, and her scenes, in which she scornfully calls Dean out for behaviors which she no longer finds exciting or free, are some of the film's most resonant.


And, for pure author impersonations, I am hard pressed to choose between Viggo Mortensen as William S. Burroughs or Tom Sturridge as Allen Ginsberg, or as he's named in the novel "Carlo Marx." Both of their screen time is so limited compared to the two leads, so maybe it was just that I didn't have time to grow weary of them, but they energized their surroundings every time.

It is tempting to try place the film in context with its history as a book, or the real people and events that inspired the book, or with your own experiences, but I think it's best to simply let this movie happen and see how you feel. Nothing will ever affect me the way reading that book when I did affected me, but this was a film experience that can stand on its own as an achievement, even if that is not possible.



paper and start his novel.

The female roles were all filled by more famous actresses, and Kristin Stewart reminded me of why I liked her in the first place, in movies like "Into the Wild." Quiet and natural is more her thing, and she was seductive and believable and also oft-nude here. Kirsten Dunst was more grown up than I have ever seen her as the woman unlucky enough to bear Dean Moriarty



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Let's inject reality into college football

BY COLIN MERRITT, Sports Writer, colin@lagniappemobile.com

The most recent NCAA versus a college football player in a legal matter is the Johnny Manziel, er, "Johnny Football," taking cash for autographs fiasco. Last year's Heisman Trophy winner, Manziel, is basically being told by the NCAA that he can't make a little coin off his signature. Johnny Football is a smart kid from a wealthy family, he already knew he couldn't, and he doesn't need the cash, but he did it anyway. Sort of makes you think this kid is intentionally dancing with the devil.

This legal tango involving the NCAA and an athlete, most specifically a college football player, which, let's face it, is the only sport we really care about down here, has once again stirred up media coverage and talk of paying college football players. Which I don't think is a good idea.

This seemingly annual debate always makes me think, however, about how ridiculous the entire process of college football as a conduit to the NFL really is. In fact, the process for an athlete that is not academically suited for higher learning to go play college football is so screwy it's made colleges skirt the foolishness by basically cheating for decades in order to continue the charade.

Think about it, if you are a superior athlete on the football field, possessing all the attributes to progress to the NFL and a steady paycheck, then why do you have to go to college classes and make certain grades? It's like telling an astronaut that before he can become a space cowboy he has to first learn to ballet dance – and, by the way, it's going to take four years. You don't have to be Baryshnikov, but you can't have two left feet either.

Can't you just imagine the tap dancing NASA would have done to ensure Neil Armstrong, the astronaut's astronaut, pointed his toes and perfected his pliés. It's ludicrous, just the thought. But that's what we do to college football players and the universities, and we never blink an eye. It's like fitting round pegs into square holes. It just doesn't make sense.

But that's just the way it is, right? That's the sentiment I run into every time I talk about the absurdity of players being shoe-horned into colleges in order to make it to the next level of football – the National Football League and the millions of dollars that come with it.

So, here's a solution. When a high school player makes the transition to college football he has the choice of a four-year scholarship or the cash equivalent. If the player selects the scholarship, it's business as usual, but if he chooses the cash option then he never has to attend one single class. Just show up and play football.

If you make it to the next level, good for you, if you don't, enjoy the immediate financial windfall. But, let's face it, \$40,000 or whatever the ballpark figure may be, is nowhere near life changing.

And don't feed me this importance of a college education. Everyone knows it's important. In a perfect world everybody gets one and goes on to be corporate lawyers and millionaires. But it's not a perfect world and that sentiment just isn't always the case anymore. Besides, I don't see anyone crying for the droves of baseball players who leave high school and go play minor league ball for years and have to call it quits before ever making the big leagues.

There is no scenario in which I think college football players should be paid a salary. I believe any attempt at such is just going to snowball into more and more money and corruption. If you start paying college athletes it won't take long for bidding wars to produce the first on-campus millionaire. Then, how long before the money seeps down to the high school level? Just give the athlete and the college the option to let a kid play football without having to go to class or to chase a degree. What's the harm in that?

As far as Manziel's recent waltz with the NCAA over the \$7,500 he allegedly collected putting his John Hancock on some 8x10 glossies, I say let him have it, and even more, open up further the financial avenues for other college players to profit from their hard work. Olympic athletes face some pretty stringent rules in order to keep their amateur status and therefore remain eligible to compete for the gold, yet they are still able to make some money off their name – thank you Wheaties cereal boxes.

So I say good for Johnny Football for stepping on the toes of the always lead-footed dance partner, the NCAA. If nothing else hopefully it will help put some money in these kids' pockets by loosening the NCAA's always too strict and too silly rules.

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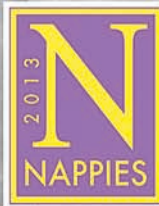
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Crawford leaving and Jones coming as WPMI shakes up staff

BY ROB HOLBERT, Managing Editor, rholbert@lagniappemobile.com

A year after being purchased by Sinclair Broadcast Group, it looks like a big shakeup is in the works at WPMI and sister station UPN.

In addition to moving a number of on-air staffers around, the station is not renewing the contract of longtime Sports Director Lance Crawford, and is bringing in a new morning show host from Kansas City, Mo.

Crawford confirmed he is leaving the station by at least Sept. 16 in a move that seems to follow the trend of local stations downgrading their commitment to sports coverage. The move will leave Clement Townsend as Local 15's only sports anchor/reporter. Both WALA and WKRQ also have one-person sports departments now.

"Yeah, I found out they weren't renewing my contract. They said it was not based on performance. A new company bought us and my contract was coming up," Crawford said.

He said he and his family would love to stay in the area, but he's not sure that will be possible.

"I've done 15 years in the Mobile market — 10 years at Channel 10 and five years here. It looks like my Mobile TV career may be ending," he said.

Crawford added that he is hopeful something will open up locally in television, but said he's more interested in making sure his family is happy and is considering all options.

Crawford's departure also means reporter/anchor Andrea Ramey will take over hosting Sunday night's "Law Call" as of Sept. 22. The legal call-in show airs live every Sunday night at 10:30 and Ramey anchors the 10 p.m. newscast.

Another big change taking place is on "Local 15 Today,"

the station's morning show, where Tami Brehse is being replaced by Kelly Jones, who joins the morning team Sept. 9. Jones comes from KCTV in Kansas City where she worked as an anchor, reporter and host.

"I am excited to have such a well-rounded journalist joining our news team," said Local 15 News Director Bob Noonan in a press release. "Kelly brings a great personality plus strong story telling skills."

Jones is a 13-year news veteran who has previously worked as an anchor and reporter in California, Michigan, Montana and Arizona. WPMI's press release also said Jones has worked at the American embassies in Tirana, Albania, and Brussels, Belgium, as well as serving as a Family Readiness Officer for military personnel and their families at the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, Calif.

It's not yet clear whether Brehse will continue anchoring as well as reporting.

The changes don't stop there, though. Insiders say meteorologists Dietra Tate, who works weekends, and Kelly Foster, who works mornings, will switch positions. We're also told the morning show will soon kick off earlier in the day at 4:30 a.m., and Local 15 will add a 6:30 – 7 p.m. newscast on UPN 44. Efforts to confirm those details with station management were unsuccessful prior to deadline, however.

Sinclair Broadcast bought both stations last summer as part of a \$412 million deal between Sinclair and Newport Broadcast.

More newspaper real estate on the block

It looks like the Press-Register isn't the only newspaper getting rid of its offices. Gulf Coast Newspapers has listed its warehouse/offices in Robertsdale and the Fairhope Courier offices for sale.

Insiders confirmed the sale, and the Robertsdale property is listed online at Coastal Real Estate and Development as having more than 12,000 square feet, with a price of \$578,500. The warehouse serves as the printing plant, business hub and editorial offices for the Robertsdale Independent.

As the P-R has done in its deal with Bishop State Community College, GCN is said to be looking for a buyer willing to lease back the offices. GCN is comprised of the Independent, Courier, Baldwin Times, Foley Onlooker and The Islander, which serves Gulf Shores/Orange Beach.

The Fairhope property has served as the Courier's offices for more than 50 years and is a historic building that was actually Fairhope's first post office. The building is nearly 3,000 square feet, and the asking price is not known at this time.

What the sales mean is unclear at this time. GCN management did not respond to inquiries prior to deadline.

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John Prince: A Retrospective (1950 - 1978), It's A Small World and I Have A Dream

Three exhibitions — paintings and a few works in other media; models by the Mobile Miniature

Club; and works by community members depicting their dreams for Mobile, on the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech — will be on display at Mobile Arts Council, 318 Dauphin St, through noon on Aug. 23. Contact: 251-432-9796. www.mobilearts.org.

Thursdays at the Museum

Free admission and access to all galleries and special programs from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Drive. Free. Contact: 251-208-5200. www.mobilemuseumofart.com.

Bassoonist Rebecca Mindock

Rebecca Mindock will perform a faculty recital at 7:30 p.m. at the University of South Alabama, Laidlaw Recital Hall, 5751 USA Drive S. General/ \$8; USA faculty & staff, students, youths under 18 and all senior citizens/ \$5 (cash or check only) Contact: 251-460-6136. www.southalabama.edu/music.

Girls of Fall: Football, Fashion and Fun

Unlock the mysteries of the gridiron at this one-of-a-kind 'clinic' hosted by the Senior Bowl and AL.com from 6 p.m. at 8:30 p.m. at the Mobile Convention Center. Cocktails, samples and entertainment followed by three concurrent Breakout Sessions with football experts covering the rules of the game and food experts bringing the latest tailgating tips. The final quarter: fashion show, featuring co-ed looks that take you from the first game to the Senior Bowl. The cost will be \$20 for each participant with all proceeds going to Senior Bowl charities. Contact: www.seniorbowl.com/community-ladies-101.php

2013 Business Expo

Make plans to attend Mobile's largest business-to-business trade show. Attendance exceeded 1,900 people and 220 exhibitors in 2012. Features keynote speaker Greg Canfield, the Alabama Department of Commerce Secretary. Free admission with a business card!. The event is from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center.

Wine Dinner with Food Network Star Chef Ben Vaughn

Culinar, the Culinary Institute of Virginia College in Mobile is teaming with Kitchen on George restaurant to host a dinner by Food Network TV star Chef Ben Vaughn, who is host of the Food Network's television show "Health Inspectors," and this year's World Food Championships in Las Vegas. The chef will direct Culinar students in preparing a four-course dinner featuring Maple Leaf Farms Duck. The event will be held at Kitchen on George in the historic Oakleigh neighborhood. \$35 (without wine); \$50 (with wine). Call to reserve (251) 436-8890

August 23

The Science of Beer

For 21 and up, the Science of Beer includes samples of more than 20 beers samplings from local and regional as well as food pairings from The Bull and The Hungry Owl. There will be a panel discussions on homebrewing, chemistry of brewing and more by professional and home brewers; commemorative 5 oz. tasting glass from Fairhope Brewing Company and Bud-Busch Distributing. Benefits the 100 Memberships for 100 Families campaign. The event will be from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center, 65 Government St. In advance: Members/ \$32; nonmembers/ \$40; not available at the door. Contact: 251-208-6873. www.exploreum.com.

Saenger Nite Live

Saenger Nite Live brings musicians, dancers, skits, cheer and drum teams and more to the Saenger Theater at 7 p.m. Contact: www.saengernitelive.com.

August 24

Workshop: Kids Studio

A workshop for kids ages 6 - 12 will be at 11 a.m. at the Centre for the Living Arts, CLA Classroom, 301 Conti St. Free. Contact: 251-208-5658 (Brennan Gibson). www.centreforthelivingarts.com.

Kickoff for Sight Run

The Kickoff for Sight Run 5k and fun run will be at USA campus. For more information, contact Margaret Olive at 251-401-8039 or mloive@bellsouth.net.

Black Jacket Symphony

PERFORMS LED ZEPPELIN'S IV Black Jacket Symphony will perform Led Zeppelin's IV at 8 p.m. at the Mobile Civic Center, 401 Civic Center Drive. In advance/ \$25; day of show/ \$25. Contact: 251-208-7261.

Film: "Shaft"

The Saenger Theater will show the film "Shaft" at 8 p.m.

Dauphin Street Beer Festival

The annual event held every August is back. Downtown Mobile taverns and restaurants allow participants to sample over 90 different microbrews and imports from all over the world from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Contact: www.facebook.com/DauphinStreetBeerFestival.

August 25

Summer Sunday Soiree

Dinner and music benefiting the Mobile Opera will be from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, 2058 Airport Blvd. \$125. Reservations required. Contact: 251-432-6772. www.mobileopera.org.

Open Studio

Artists at work and complimentary mimosas from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cathedral Square Gallery, 612 Dauphin St. Contact: 251-694-0278 or lhall699@aol.com. http://cathedralsquaregallery.blogspot.com.

August 26

Auditions: "Dracula" and "A Christmas Carol"

Dracula auditions are open to ages 13 - mid-20s and requires reading from the script. Carol auditions open to ages 6 - mid-20s and requires singing and/or dancing. Performances for Dracula will be the last two weeks of October at the Playhouse. Carol performances will be the first week of December at the Saenger Theatre. Auditions will be Mon & Wed, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Playhouse in the Park, 4851 Museum Drive. Contact: 251-602-0630. www.playhouseinthepark.org.

Jazz Jambalaya: Lionel Hampton

Music by Sean Worrell and friends and narrator John Nodar will lead the monthly series saluting significant figures in jazz at 6:30

p.m. at Gulf City Lodge, 601 State St. Members/ \$8; nonmembers/ \$12; students & active military/ \$7 (includes a light jambalaya dinner; cash bar). Contact: 251-459-2298. www.mojojazz.org.

August 27

Mobile Municipal Election

Polls will open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. To find a polling place, which may be different than state and county voting centers, go to http://www.cityofmobile.org/election/votingcenters.php.

Season Kickoff: Greater Mobile Bay Area Choral Society

Open to all interested singers high school age and older, the Greater Mobile Bay Area Choral Society, which has three to five concerts annually. A meet and greet with potluck supper followed by open auditions and short rehearsal will be 6:30 p.m. at Government Street Presbyterian Church, 300 Government S. Regular rehearsals will begin Sept. 3 and be every Tuesday from 7 - 9 p.m. Contact: 251-434-9325 or tmaddox@gspcmobile.com.

2013 Forum Alabama with Gov. Bentley

The Mobile Chamber of Commerce will host Gov. Robert Bentley for the 2013 Forum Alabama from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. He will share his perspective with the Mobile business community on the 2013 legislative session and other business topics. Breakfast tickets are \$25 for members, \$30 for potential members, \$250 for a member table of ten, or \$300 for a potential member table of 10. Tickets: http://bit.ly/14DXDG8.

August 28

Workshop: Pre-K Studio

Pre-K Studio, for ages 3 - 5, will be at 11 a.m. at Centre for the Living Arts, CLA Classroom, 301 Conti St. Free. Contact: 251-208-5658 (Brennan Gibson). www.centreforthelivingarts.com.

Film: "King: A filmed Record ... Montgomery to Memphis"

The Crescent Theater, 208 Dauphin St., will show the Academy Award nominated film "King: A filmed Record ... Montgomery to Memphis" at 6 p.m. Contact: 251-438-2005. www.crescenttheater.com.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEEK PREVIEW

August 29th - September 4th

August 29

Greater Mobile Arts Awards

Presentation of annual awards recognizing six individuals and organizations for long-term contributions to the arts followed by reception will be at 7 p.m. at Saenger Theatre, 1927 Room (6 S Joachim St). Free. For further information about the awards and the nomination process: www.mobilearts.org/awards.php. Contact: 251-432-9796. www.mobilearts.org.

Thursdays at the Museum

Free admission and access to all galleries and special programs from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Drive. Free. Contact: 251-208-5200. www.mobilemuseumofart.com.

August 30

Film: "I'm So Excited"

The Crescent Theater, 208 Dauphin St., will begin showing "I'm So Excited." A technical failure has endangered the lives of the people

on board Peninsula Flight 2549. The pilots are striving, along with their colleagues in the Control Center, to find a solution. The flight attendants and the chief steward are atypical, baroque characters who, in the face of danger, try to forget their own personal problems and devote themselves body and soul to the task of making the flight as enjoyable as possible for the passengers, while they wait for a solution.

Nate Currin at the Pavilion

Singer songwriter Nate Currin will be at The Pavilion at COTA (Church of the Apostles -7159 McIntyre St., Fairhope) at 7 p.m. Feel free to bring non-alcoholic drinks and snacks. Chairs provided, but you're welcome to bring lawn chairs. \$10. Contact: 251-751-2935.

Saenger Nite Live

Saenger Nite Live brings musicians, dancers, skits, cheer and drum teams and more to the Saenger Theater at 7 p.m. Contact: www.saengernitelive.com.

August 31

Workshop: Kids Studio

Kids Studio, for ages 6 - 12, will be at 11 a.m. at the Centre for the Living Arts, CLA Classroom, 301 Conti St. Free. Contact: 251-208-5658 (Brennan Gibson). www.centreforthelivingarts.com.

Steadypace 5K and Fun Run

Steadypace 5K and Fun Run will be at Lyons Park with registration starting at 7:30 a.m. and 5k and fun run at 10:30 a.m. Contact: Margaret Olive-251-401-8039 or molive@bellsouth.net.

Mobile Mystery Dinner: Lipstick, Lies, and Alibis

You are cordially invited to the "Life" celebration of Madame Vanderbilt. The Madame is the oldest and dearest friend of the host, Mr. Ari Verderci. As you join the MMD players for a night of food, fun, and entertainment they will celebrate this, err, "saintly" woman and all her accomplishments! Advanced reservations are required by calling 251-479-3212. \$59.00 per person includes a tour of the museum, meal, unlimited wine bar and play. The evening begins at 7:00 p.m. and will take place at the Mobile Carnival Museum. Contact: www.mobilemysterydinners.com.

September 1

Open Studio

Artists at work and complimentary mimosas from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cathedral Square Gallery, 612 Dauphin St. Contact: 251-694-0278 or lhall699@aol.com. <http://cathedralsquaregallery.blogspot.com>.

September 2

Moonlight Chasse' Ballroom Dance Society

The first and third Monday of each

month features live music, dancing, a cash bar, and dance lessons from 7 to 10 p.m. at Fitzpen Place, 11247 U.S. Highway 31, Spanish Fort. Students with college I.D. \$5. Public/\$10. Members/\$7. No partner necessary. Facebook: Moonlight Chasse Ballroom Dance Society. Contact: Cassie Fishbein at 251-377-4069 or cassief13@aol.com.

September 3

On Display: Art of Theatre Costume

Three exhibitions — one highlighting the work and process of the Theatre USA Costume Shop faculty and students; one featuring illustrations by 10 area artists for the one hundred stories in Boccaccio's The Decameron, in observance of the 700th anniversary of the author's birth; and one of works in glass by Rachel Wright — will be on display at Mobile Arts Council, 318 Dauphin St. Free. It will be up through noon, Fri, Sep 27. Mon - Fri, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Contact: 251-432-9796. www.mobilearts.org.

Argentine Tango and Salsa Lessons

Tango and Salsa lessons will be at Southern Edge Dance Studio, 251 Greeno Road, Fairhope, with Salsa starting at 7:15 p.m. (Salsa Lessons begin May 7, 2013) and Tango lessons at 8:30 p.m. No partner required. Every Tuesday,

except third Tuesday, dancing at Holiday Inn Downtown, Skyview Lounge, 7:00 p.m. Southern Edge Dance Studio, 251 Greeno Road, Fairhope. Facebook: Argentine Tango by the Bay. Contact: Cassie Fishbein at 251-377-4069 or Cassief13@aol.com.

Flutist Andra Bohnet

Andra Bohnet will give a faculty recital at 7:30 p.m. at the University of South Alabama, Laidlaw Recital Hall, 5751 USA Drive S. General/ \$8; USA faculty, staff & students, youths under 18 and senior citizens/ \$5 (cash or check only) Contact: 251-460-6136. www.southalabama.edu/music.

September 4

Workshop: Pre-K Studio

Pre-K Studio, for ages 3 - 5, will be at 11 a.m. at Centre for the Living Arts, CLA Classroom, 301 Conti St. Free. Contact: 251-208-5658 (Brennan Gibson). www.centreforthelivingarts.com.

Brown Bag in Bienville

Lunchtime series featuring local and regional artists playing a mix of blues, pop and jazz will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Bienville Square (bounded by Dauphin, Conception, St Francis and St Joseph streets). Free. Contact: 251-208-1550. www.ncsmobile.org.

ONGOING EVENTS

Shared Expressions 2013

The exhibition by The Bay Area Art Partners will be at the Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Drive, through Sept. 1. Tue, Wed, Fri - Sun, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Members/ free; nonmembers: adults/ \$10; students/ \$6); Thu, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. (free). Contact: 251-208-5200. www.mobilemuseumofart.com.

Auditions: Gloria Dei Chorale

Singer-friendly auditions for all voice parts for Gloria Dei Chorale will be through Sept. 16. Call for an appointment. Rehearsals are Mondays, 6:45 - 9 p.m. The Christmas concert is Dec. 7, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Mobile. Contact: 251-533-9810. www.gloriadeichorale.org.

Summer Splash and Look Up Mobile!

Featuring all gallery artists and Look Up Mobile! books on sale at the Kangal Gallery in the SAIL LOFT, 58 N. Royal St. The exhibit will run through Sept. 19. Tue - Fri, 10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Sat, 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Contact: 251-434-0330. www.kangalgallery.com

"The Last Reef"

The IMAX film "The Last Reef" will be shown at the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center, JL Bedsole IMAX Theater, 65 Government St., through Sept. 29. From Tue - Sat, at 10 a.m., noon, 1, 3 and 4 p.m.; and Sun, 1 and 3 p.m. Members: 19+/\$6.75; 13 - 18 & 60+/\$5.75; 2 - 12/ \$5.25; nonmembers; 19+/\$8.75; 13 - 18 & 60+/\$7.25; 2 - 12/ \$6.50. Combo

tickets, which include exhibits, with film available. Contact: 251-208-6873. www.exploreum.com.

Helen Keller Art Show

An annual traveling exhibition of art by students with visual and/or hearing impairments in Alabama public, private, home and residential schools will be on display at the University of South Alabama, Library, First Floor Gallery through Sept. 30. For Library hours: www.southalabama.edu/univlib/info/hours.html. Contact: 251-460-7021. www.southalabama.edu/librarygalleries.

On Display: The Silent Cities of Peru

Archaeological photography by Fernando La Rosa will be on display at Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Drive, through Oct. 27. Tue, Wed, Fri - Sun, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Members/ free; nonmembers: adults/ \$10; students/ \$6); Thu, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. (free). Contact: 251-208-5200. www.mobilemuseumofart.com.

On Display: And If, Between The Two

Walden Braille paintings by Ken Kotara will be on display at the Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Drive, through Nov. 3. Tue, Wed, Fri - Sun, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Members/ free; nonmembers: adults/ \$10; students/ \$6) and Thu, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. (free). Contact: 251-208-5200. www.mobilemuseumofart.com.

Futures Project

An exhibition that examines future possibilities for the Gulf Coast, which features work by emerging and established visual artists of

international stature — 2X4, Candy Chang, Dawn DeDeaux, Tom Leaser, Xavier de Richemont and Kenny Scharf — at Space 301, 301 Conti St., through Jan. 31. Futures Project will also include nine months of extensive educational and public programming, community resources and the development of an Art Park. Contact: 215-208-5671. www.centreforthelivingarts.com.

Survivors of Suicide

S.O.S. (Survivors of Suicide) Support Group, meets every 2nd and 4th Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in Wesley Hall at Fairhope United Methodist Church in Fairhope, Alabama. This is a New Adult Group for family members of loved ones lost to the tragedy of suicide. Whether it has been 1 month or 25 years, you are welcome. Contact: 251-455-6453 or jlbarber5@bellsouth.net.

The Ultimate Country Dance Experience

Southern Country, 711 Shelton Beach Road, Saraland, will have Kick'n Cardio Dance Class every Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. and dance lessons Friday and Saturday night from 7 to 8 p.m. Contact: 251-709-6780.

Sunset Yoga on the Bluff

Every second and fourth Friday of the month is Sunset Yoga on the Bluff overlooking the bay during sunset, which is around 6-7 p.m. Bring your own mat and a friend. Beginner friendly classes. The event raises money for The Haven. Fairhope. Contact: 251-379-4493. ThriveFairhope.com.

Pay what you can yoga

The Kula Yoga Community leads

yoga classes for every body at six locations in Mobile and Daphne. For the schedule, go to www.kulayogacommunity.org.

Moonlight Chasse' Ballroom Dance Society

The first and third Monday of each month features live music, dancing, a cash bar, and dance lessons from 7 to 10 p.m. at Fitzpen Place, 11247 U.S. Highway 31, Spanish Fort. Students with college I.D. \$5. Public/\$10. Members/\$7. No partner necessary. Facebook: Moonlight Chasse Ballroom Dance Society. Contact: Cassie Fishbein at 251-377-4069 or cassief13@aol.com.

On-Going Argentine Tango and Salsa Lessons

Tango and Salsa lessons will be at Southern Edge Dance Studio, 251 Greeno Road, Fairhope, with Salsa starting at 7:15 p.m. (Salsa Lessons begin May 7, 2013) and Tango lessons at 8:30 p.m. No partner required. Every Tuesday, except third Tuesday, dancing at Holiday Inn Downtown, Skyview Lounge, 7:00 p.m. Southern Edge Dance Studio, 251 Greeno Road, Fairhope. Facebook: Argentine Tango by the Bay. Contact: Cassie Fishbein at 251-377-4069 or Cassief13@aol.com.

Meeting: Eastern Shore Camera Club

Providing members, from beginners to professionals, with educational and skill building opportunities in the art of photography; open to anyone interested. Second Thur., 6:30 p.m. Faulkner State Community College, Centennial Building (School St and Fairhope Ave., Fairhope) Contact: 251-401-0008. www.

escamera.org.

Workshop: Sumi-e Studio

Shibui Chapter of the Sumi-e Society of America will meet (usually) the first and third Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Mobile Garden Club House, 4850 Zeigler Blvd. First two classes are free and then each class is \$2 with membership in the Chapter, which is \$10 annually. For supplies, notify Mary Rodning. Contact: (251) 649-8586 or mary@maryrodning.com (Mary Rodning). www.sumiesociety.org.

First Friday Artwalk Exhibit openings with guest artists, refreshments and live entertainment at a variety of venues; map of participating venues, including specialty shops and restaurants, available at the Eastern Shore Art Center, 401 Oak St., from 6 - 8 p.m. in downtown Fairhope. Contact: 251-928-2228. www.esartcenter.com.

LoDa Artwalk

Exhibitions with receptions and entertainment in a variety of downtown galleries and other venues on the second Friday from 6-9 p.m. in the LoDa Arts District (Lower Dauphin Street). Contact: (251) 208-7443. www.ncsmobile.org.

Tour: Space 301

Tours of the Main Gallery and Fabrication Hall will be Wed. and Sat., 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Centre for the Living Arts/Space 301, 301 Conti St. Free with admission. Contact: 251-208-5671. www.centreforthelivingarts.com.

Community rallies behind stray dog and her pups

BY GREENBERRY TAYLOR, Contributing Writer

They say it takes a village to raise a child. “Annie Oakleigh” has Cheryl Shifflet, and the help of an entire city.

Cheryl Shifflet had heard her neighbors and other residents of the Oakleigh Garden District talk about Annie. They saw the black mouth cur/hound mix roaming the neighborhood late at night, as most stray animals do. Being the animal lover she is, Cheryl waited up one night and followed Annie as she made her rounds.

Eventually, she followed Annie home and pulled into the driveway with her headlights off. Annie crawled underneath an old shed she was using for shelter and settled in. You could barely see her, or her seven puppies.

“I started to leave food for her every night,” Shifflet said. “I would come back during the day and do the same. She wasn’t very friendly, but I was persistent. I always had mace and a stick, just in case. You never know what an animal may have been through.”

“I stuck to my routine,” she added.

As Cheryl continued to bring food, she started to sit in a lawn chair and just chill around Annie, always at a safe distance, but maintaining a presence. Over the course of the 4-5 weeks she spent with Annie, the mother of seven began to trust Cheryl, enough so that she allowed her to move her and her puppies into the Shifflet household.

When Cheryl saw how active the puppies were becoming she knew it was time to move them. Having knowledge of animal behavior techniques, she put a kennel on the property a few days prior so Annie could get used to it. After about three days Annie went in the kennel and let Cheryl shut the cage. Then, she moved the puppies into a separate kennel and hauled them both back to her house. But one puppy didn’t make it.

“One of the puppies wouldn’t come out from underneath the shed, so I let Annie out to go get it,” Cheryl said. “But she brought out the dead puppy and showed it to me. That’s when things changed for Annie and I. We were connected.”

Throughout the course of this saga Cheryl posted updates to Facebook. The word slowly spread and the number of supporters increased steadily. But, no one could have guessed, not even Shifflet, the amount of support a few puppy pictures would bring.

“I posted a picture of the puppies and my friend Sally Trufant (owner of B&B Pet Stop) made a comment that she would give a \$25 gift card to B&B to each person who adopts one of Annie’s puppies,” Shifflet said. “After that it spread like wildfire.”

Businesses started offering incentives to people who adopt one of Annie’s puppies and Annie herself. Callaghan’s Irish Social Club, where Shifflet works as a bartender and server, is offering a Callaghan’s dog collar and yappy hour dog bowl for each pup. Heroes Sports Bar and Grille/Royal Scam is offering a \$15 gift card for each puppy adopter and \$25 for Annie. Local

artist Tom Andrews is giving an 8x10 or 5x7 matted picture from his current stock to each adopter. Blankenship Hardware is giving a \$10 gift card to each puppy and \$40 for Annie. There are just too many to name, honestly.

“Cheryl’s efforts with this stray mama and her pups was inspiring,” David Rasp, owner and operator of both Heroes and Royal Scam, said. “When I saw the need to support this effort, the idea to offer an incentive to adopt these pups just came about naturally.”

“The amount of support from the community has been amazing,” Shifflet said. “People are pulling for Annie. Strangers are pulling for her.”

Perhaps the most significant donation came from Dr. Jeni Knizley, though.

Knizley, who is a veterinarian with South Alabama Spay and Neuter, is offering to spay/neuter each pup and Annie free of charge once adopted. Both Knizley and Cheryl believe spay/



Photo/Dan Anderson

Cheryl Shifflet rescued “Annie Oakleigh” (above) and her pups. All of the pups have been adopted, except ZhuZhu (left) and Annie. Many local businesses have offered incentives for those adopting them.



Photo/Cheryl Shifflet

neutering plays a huge

role in preventing situ-

ations like Annie’s from happening and something the public should be aware of.

“If people would spay and neuter their own pets it would drastically decrease the number of stray animals on the streets and in the shelters,” Knizley said. “It would help eliminate euthanasia, too.”

As Mobile businesses continue to offer their support, individuals are also offering their own kind of support – emotional.

“Cheryl didn’t take the easy route,” Trufant said. “She could have, but she wanted to set an example that if she could do it, as a citizen, than others can as well. I am very proud of her and what she is doing.”

Knizley echoed Trufant in commending Cheryl’s persis-

tence and said this story wouldn’t have the same response if she might have just taken them to animal rescue. “I’m thrilled she took it to this level,” Knizley said. “This rally is because of Cheryl.”

Raising these pups has been both physically and emotionally taxing on Cheryl, but she has been able to push on thanks to her community.

“All of the support has driven me,” Cheryl said. “So many people have pitched in, whether it’s been food, money, services or just moral support.”

When all is said and done, Cheryl really just wants each pup and their mom to find loving and caring homes.

At press time, all but one of Annie’s pups, currently named Zhu Zhu, had been adopted, and Annie is still in need of a forever home. If you are interested in adopting her or her pup, please email Cheryl at cherylshifflet@yahoo.com.

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A LOADED QUESTION

LAGNIAPPE

Who do you think is going to be elected as Mobile's mayor and what percentage will they win by?

Asked @ Government Plaza



"Sam Jones by 65 percent," Brendan Stanley



"I think Sam Jones is going to win and have 75 percent," said Brittany Stanley.



"I think Sandy Stimpson is going to win because of what he's done for the minorities. Also, in a year in business outside the mayor's office, Sam Jones hasn't come here once," said Jeanine Carlton (right), owner of Bama Brickhouse Dogs.

"I think Sam Jones is going to win by more than 50 percent. I think he's been doing a good job," said Nevada Robinson (left), owner of Bama Brickhouse Dogs.

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26TH ANNUAL ALABAMA COASTAL CLEANUP

SEPTEMBER 21, 2013
SATURDAY AT 8:00 A.M.

ALTHOUGH MARINE DEBRIS IS TRASH FOUND IN THE WATER OR ALONG THE SHORELINE, IT OFTEN BEGINS ITS JOURNEY AT AN INLAND SOURCE SUCH AS AN OVERTURNED TRASH CAN OR LITTER TOSSED FROM A CAR. THIS TRASH THEN WASHES INTO WATERWAYS DURING STORMS. THIS EYESORE CAN POSE A REAL THREAT TO BOTH MARINE WILDLIFE AND HUMANS. PARTICIPATION IN THE ALABAMA COASTAL CLEANUP PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION. THIS EFFORT INVOLVES A LEGION OF VOLUNTEERS LED BY THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES (ADCNR) COASTAL SECTION AND THE ALABAMA PEOPLE AGAINST A LITTERED STATE (PALS) AND IS PART OF THE LARGER INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP ENVISIONED AND LED BY

THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY. VOLUNTEERS OVER THE PAST TWO DOZEN YEARS HAVE REMOVED ALL KINDS OF UNUSUAL DEBRIS FROM SHORELINES THROUGHOUT MOBILE AND BALDWIN COUNTIES. ITEMS HAVE INCLUDED ENOUGH RUINED FURNITURE, HOME APPLIANCES, COMPUTERS AND LAPTOPS TO COMPLETELY EQUIP A HOUSE OR OFFICE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Angela Underwood ADCNR, (251) 928-9792,
Angela.Underwood@dcnr.alabama.gov
Spencer Ryan AL PALS, (334) 263-7737, spencer@alpals.org

What: 26th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup
When: Saturday, September 21, 2013...8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Where: 26 locations around Mobile and Baldwin
go to: www.alcoastalcleanup.com
to find a zone nearest you

COASTAL CLEANUP PARTICIPATION SAFETY TIPS
Here are a few safety tips to help "Get the Trash out of the Splash!"

- Drink plenty of fluids!
- Bring sunscreen, a hat and wear comfortable shoes.
- An adult should supervise children at all times.
- Be careful near sand dunes and other fragile ecosystems.
- Please do not attempt to remove dangerous or heavy items yourself. Mark the location and report back to the Zone Captain.

Libra: UnbornSoulz will dominate your waking hours

BY DR. ZODIAC, Astrology Guy

Virgo (8/23-9/22) — College football is here and you're about to turn into the monster version of yourself that comes out when chicken wings, pizza, beer and trash talk flow. You don't so much insult people, but you do eat so much food and drink so much alcohol that you invariably end up puking or peeing in your friends' homes. Possible "game day celebration banning" might be coming from some of your friends who have recently renovated parts of their homes. Look, you can apologize 1,000 more times for the great plate glass window break of 2005, but people still remember.

Libra (9/23-10/22) — A most terrible fate will fall upon you near the election. For a solid three days a song will be stuck in your head, but it won't be just any song. Oh no, it will be 3UnbornSoulz's hit song, "Where We From," a rap about voting for Sam Jones. Like something from "The Manchurian Candidate," it will control you. Soon you will say, "Sam Jones is our man. Sam Jones is our man. Sam who? Sam Jones. Sam who? Sam Jones." Even though you can't get your head around the lyric, "Bringing down taxes. Cuttin gas prices" it will somehow make sense. And you will soon want to rent rather than own.

Scorpio (10/23-11/21) — It is time to celebrate! Kids are back in school and that means a few things for you. First, you can go outside your home without pants on after eight a.m. and before three p.m. Second, when you are outside without pants on, you can drink and yell at people passing by. When you did that with school kids out, you would get several visits from the police about harassing children. Lastly, you can go out, refill your belly wine container, which looks like a beer belly with a straw, and not be bothered by judging mothers or sticky children.

Sagittarius (11/22-12/21) — Karma is alive and well. After making fun of someone for having the stomach virus going around Mobile, you'll learn how fun it is to laugh when you can't hold down anything ... even water. Since karma has to repay fully, you will of course get sick on the weekend and then be better when it's time for work on Monday morning. As you stare into your reflection in the toilet water, take a hard look at yourself and ask if a joke is worth a weekend of hell.

Capricorn (12/22-1/19) — After watching a particularly emotional episode of "Fresh Prince of Bel Air" (you know the one where Will asks why his dad didn't want him), you'll feel extra sensitive. That's why when you go out and hear Everclear's "Father of Mine" and you will begin to uncontrollably cry. Yes it is weird to hear that song in 2013, but perhaps the person had the radio tuned to a specific station. Your friends will of course take this to mean you've really got a problem and try to talk you down. Learn your lesson and stop watching moving '90s TV before going out.

Aquarius (1/20-2/18) — You will do the nearly impossible task of riding down a night of drinking by waking up drunk, then slowly hydrating yourself and therefore not having a hangover. It's incredibly hard to do this, but once in a blue moon you'll actually be able to do avoid a massive hangover. People have likened this to finishing a bottle of liquor and whatever

mixer at the same time. Tread lightly though. People have gone through the no hangover experience and come out the other side with a false sense of invincibility.

Pisces (2/19-3/20) — Do it. Go ahead and do it. You know you've been thinking about getting or at least renting a pressure washer. The stars have determined pressure washing everything from sidewalks to decks and from walls to brick will be incredibly, extremely satisfying on every level. While there are people who charge for pressure washing services, you'll soon start to pressure wash people's houses, sidewalks, etc. in secret. The instant gratification will be extremely addicting. Be sure you don't blow all the grout from between your bricks though. It happens.

Aries (3/21- 4/19) — Lately you're feeling like you're "Too Busy To Be One Mobile." The political rhetoric is getting to you and you're not sure how much more you can take. If you get one more phone call or hear one more political ad, you might just go into a bunker and pray there is no runoff in any election. While politics might not be your thing, the free concerts and food sure are. That's why you're seriously considering Doris Brown for mayor since she'll give out free ice cream to senior citizens on Wednesdays. While you might not make the cut, you can always find a senior citizen to get you some delicious ice cream.

Taurus (4/20-5/20) — Your significant other is hinting that they want a dog and you know what comes next — either marriage or a baby. Worried by the next step, you'll suggest getting a goldfish or a beta fish. Your boo will not be satisfied with this request, so you'll find the worst behaved dog you can and hope the pup will be able to quash the wedding bell/baby fever your love has got going on.

Gemini (5/21-6/21) — The skies have opened and poured out blessings upon your house. You're not sure how, but some way you've started to receive more TV channels for the same price. How did this happen? No one may ever know because you're not going to ask your service provider and possibly ruin a good thing. Now the second a higher bill comes in, you'll call up and claim ignorance. Loose lips sink ships and ruins good TV watching.

Cancer (6/22-7-22) — Things will get really awkward when you stick your foot in your mouth big time. The worst part is you didn't even say anything really bad, but you said it in front of the person's family member. Everybody knows you can't say anything but wonderful things about someone in front of family. You'll spend the next few days looking over your shoulder to make sure you don't get shanked.

Leo (7/23-8/22) — You'll be recently turned on to a new prison show and, wow, will it terrify you even more of prison. You'll accidentally jaywalk in front of a police officer and break into tears. While sobbing on the asphalt, the officer will actually think you might be a tad crazy. You, of course, cannot explain yourself due to the hysterical crying so you might end up in holding. After you calm down and realize holding isn't that bad, you'll tattoo a teardrop under your eye. You always knew you were hard.

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Fish plates and weenies wind down the political season

STYLE MOBILE MAGNIFIED

BY BOOZIE BEER NUES, Social Butterfly, boozie@lagniappemobile.com

Well, guys, we've almost made it through the dog days of summer, although with all this rain, it seems like they are more like the sog days of summer. OK, I admit that was corny. Anyway, I think there is some sort of election coming up, you may have heard a little something about it. And of course, the Tide, Tigers and Jags are finally about to get back on the field, which means it's time to switch from vodka to bourbon and start making Game Day dips. Woot Woot! I thought this day would never come.

But before I start nippin' (on the bourbon) and dippin', we have some gossip to get off our plate.

Holy shot!

It seems a couple of weekends ago, mayoral candidate Sandy Stimpson made the rounds, campaigning at several of the Port City's favorite watering holes. We hear he spoke briefly on the stage at the Alabama Music Box during a voter registration drive and even took a shot. My spies said it appeared to be in the dark liquor family.

The next night Stimpson and his wife Jean were spotted at Callaghan's Irish Social Club in the OGD (with about a million other folks) watching a hot band out of Birmingham, St. Paul and the Broken Bones. When asked about the shot, Stimpson smiled and said someone ordered it for him and he thought he was shooting water.

Fishplate-gate

Aug. 17 saw battling political rallies from incumbent Sam Jones and challenger Sandy Stimpson.

While Sandy's rally inside the Fairgrounds drew far more than Sam's rally, something was missing from the challenger's event — fish plates. Of course Jones and supporters have alleged Stimpson has been trying to buy votes with fish plates and blues musicians.

Stimpson served up hot dogs, snow cones and more to the 400 or so people in attendance to see The Red Field Band, the Prichard Preparatory Choir and Tucka. My spies didn't see Tucka's performance to see if he performed any of the his versions of "The Obama Shuffle," "Moanin'" or "Love On The Dance Floor."

At Jones' rally in Municipal Park, there was not only Saucy Q barbecue, but also FISH PLATES!

Not to be out done on the entertainment. Jones had 3Unborn-Soulz who sang "Where We From," which is a rap song dedicated to Jones' accomplishments like lowering taxes and bringing down gas prices. It should be noted my spies did not fact check the song's lyrics for accuracy.

Sign-gate

It seems Lagniappe's web story last week about some recurrent political sign stealing on Navco Road got one reader's dander up enough that he pulled out his Jr. Detective badge (and camera phone) to solve the crime. If you didn't see the story, a woman was video taped repeatedly trespassing on Jessie Eldridge's property, stealing his Sandy Stimpson signs and replacing them with Sam Jones signs.

"I had lunch at Mellow Mushroom at the loop today, and when I left the parking lot I turned right onto Airport (headed west). Soon thereafter, an older lady pulled out ahead of me and I noticed the intense amount of love shown for Mayor Jones on her rear bumper in the form of about 10 bumper stickers. However, I had viewed the video (the previous) evening, as I am mutual friends with some people on Facebook that were apparently directly affected by the sign stealing. So, I did what all Americans do these days and broke out the ol' iPhone (people should really know better)! Snapped a couple of photos, and in the mean time, I could see the lady fidgeting and looking in her rear view mirror. At one point she got her flip phone out and held it high enough between the seats so that I could see her with it, like she was calling someone. In the second pic, you can see her armed raised (this was when she was messing with her phone)," our vigilante spy said.

He followed the Lincoln — which appears to exactly match the car in the video — getting a few clear shots of the license and the agitated driver.

"I didn't follow her any longer, but nevertheless, she acted very paranoid and 'sketchy,' for lack of a better word. Gotta say, I think that's your lady," the spy said.

There are cameras everywhere these days folks. Keep that in mind.

If you can't stand the heat, get to a Night Kitchen

The cat's out of the bag. Last Boozie, we teased an exciting new event and finally we can give a few more details. A group of leaders in the arts community, including our own Kevin Lee, the Rumor Union's elizabet elliot, playwright Tom Perez and filmmaker Gideon Kennedy, have set out to bring all generations of artists together to showcase their works and strengthen the arts community with lively discussion, performances and food.

These "Night Kitchens" as they are called are an homage to salons Eugene Walter used to host at Termite Hall, and the Kitchens are even being held there.

All of the attendees had effusive praise for the inaugural event.

The oh-so-exclusive guest list included, in addition to the organizers, Tom Mason, Charlie Smoke, who were both guests of Eugene's events, Executive Director at Mobile Museum of Art Deborah Velders, poet and writer Janet Nodar, Lunatix owner

Courtney Matthews, artist Rachel Wright, graphic artist Johnny Gwin, performer Ms. Venus, artist and musician Adam Taylor, performance artist Lillian McKinney, artist Colleen Comer and comedian/poet Alfred Ward.

My spy had the following report:

There was tons of food with the centerpiece being incredible gumbo elizabet eliot made in homage to Kennedy's film about Eugene's gumbo recipes and the gatherings at Termite Hall.

The guests started off with Angela Trigg (niece of the sisters who hosted Eugene Walter's events back in the day) giving them a tour of Termite Hall, a house on Dauphin near Fulton.

"It was like stepping into a history exhibit," one guest commented.

Kevin Lee read one of his Lagniappe columns that had garnered him a Mobile Press Club award.

Rachel Wright brought some of her glasswork, exquisite stuff that has a personal connection since she implemented her father's cremains into the work.

Adam Taylor had a video installation.

Janet Nodar read a couple of poems, one about the Christmas Day tornado that was really good.

Alfred Ward is a young comedian who writes spoken word pieces as well and the one he gave was really emotional. Elizabeth elliot did a spoken word piece she had completely memorized and for which she seemed to almost go into a trance when she performed.

Tom Perez performed a scene from his upcoming play "When the Saints Go Marching in at Cockroach Hall."

Deborah Velders talked about her experiences in moving to Mobile and what she envisions for the Mobile Museum of Art. Johnny Gwin, who came in costume as Griffith's Service Station's (AKA "Society Shell's") Preston Griffith, gave a rather heartfelt speech about a new personal project he was working on.

Though Venus didn't perform, the group presented her with a bouquet of white flowers for agreeing to come and play hostess.

Eventually, when it came time to call things to an end, Lee, who had dressed as Allen Ginsberg read what they called their "closing prayer"... which was the footnote from Ginsberg's "Howl."

Tentatively, the next one will be late October and the theme will be "rebirth" (in allusion to the pagan holiday of Samhain upon which Halloween was built).

The word of mouth on this is so great, I'm sure many locals are anxiously awaiting their invites to the next gathering.

Well kids, that's all I got for this issue. Remember to vote and just remember whether rain or shine, dramatic or scandalous, or some plain ol' fish plate lovin', I will be there. Ciao!

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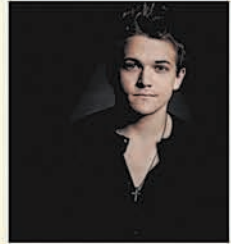
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