May 15, 2014

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
May 9, 2014 – May 15, 2014

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MOBILE: ALABAMA COMPANIES WILL LEAD FINAL PHASES OF THE AIRBUS A320 ASSEMBLY LINE CONSTRUCTION.

The $100 million Airbus A320 final assembly line under construction at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley is closer to its 2015 production start. Hour Program Management announced the general contractors for the two remaining packages late last week. (Source: Hour Program Management)

Rob T. Baggett Inc., with offices in Mobile and Theodore, is one of two Alabama-based construction companies awarded the final general contractor packages by Hour Program Management for the Airbus A320 final assembly line under construction in Mobile.

"We are very excited to be joining the Airbus team in the completion of this historic project. As a local contractor, we are proud of the fact that we will play a role in this project that we feel will have a huge economic impact on our home Mobile, the state of Alabama and the Gulf Coast region," said Beau Baggett, vice president of Rob T. Baggett.

Birmingham-based B.L. Harbert International was awarded the second outstanding contract, and Thompson Engineering of Mobile was selected for quality assurance material testing for three ramps packages.

"Now that we've awarded these last contracts, we continue to be pleased and proud that all of the general contractors and the majority of their subcontractors are Alabama-based," said Mike Laster, president of Birmingham-based HPM. "Out of the more than 75 contracts issued — valued in excess of $500 million — 94 have been awarded to Alabama-based companies.

Airbus currently building its first A320 assembly line in U.S., off at Mobile Aeroplex, is expected to figure prominently in the company's ability to efficiently fill the mounting backlog for the popular single-aisle aircraft. The $100 million facility is slated to open in 2015, deliver its first Mobile-assembled aircraft the following year and employ about 1,000 people when it reaches full annual production of 40 to 50 aircraft by 2020.

Specifically, B.L. Harbert will be responsible for the facility center, the final production line hangar, the gaging canopy and entrance and infrastructure for the site, including runways.

Meanwhile, Rob T. Baggett will construct the main spookehead hangar and the main gate and renovate an existing building to become the Mobile Aeroplex, while Thompson Engineering will be charged with assuring that the actual construction and materials used are in compliance with the design documents for each contract.

"B.L. Harbert is honored to have been selected by Airbus and HPM to construct two major portions of the FAL project. We are excited to be part of building the new Airbus facility with the many new jobs it will bring and the long-term economic impact it will have in the Mobile area and across our great State of Alabama," said Gary W. Savage, president of B.L. Harbert's U.S. Carvajal, said.

Thompson Engineering President President John Baker said his company is "honored to continue to be a part of such a significant development right here in Mobile.

"Our selection for multiple roles on this project is a true testament to the quality of our employees and our organization," Baker said.

MAIDEN FLIGHT NEARS

Want a closer look at the single-aisle aircraft that will be produced at the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley facility beginning next summer? Airbus’ "new engine option" jetliner program remains on track to make its maiden flight later this year, with final assembly of the first A320neo advancing rapidly in Toulouse, France.

Assembly of the original A320neo began in March with the join-up of its forward and aft fuselage sections, followed by the riveting of major aircraft structures produced at Airbus sites across Europe, including the wings (Toulouse, United Kingdom); vertical tailplane (Stade, Germany); horizontal tailplane (Getafe, Spain); engine pylons (St. Eloi, France) and outer and inner flaps (Bremen, Germany).

During recent activity, the main flight-test instrumentation equipment also was installed. Meanwhile, the first A320neo jetliner’s PW1000G-JM engines are being prepared at Pratt & Whitney’s manufacturing facilities in the United States and will be delivered to Roswell in the coming months.

Kelli Daggs

Airbus "new engine option" jetliner program remains on track to make its maiden flight later this year, with final assembly of the first A320neo advancing rapidly in Toulouse, France. (Courtesy/Airbus)
NEW TVA OWNER?

POWER SHIFT: AGENCY CUTTING JOBS, TALKING WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ABOUT NEW OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE.

Brian Lawson • blawson@al.com

The Tennessee Valley Authority is in discussions with the federal government about its future, including the possibility of an ownership change that could include state or regional control, TVA CEO Bill Johnson said.

The Obama administration's budget for the last fiscal year discussed the possibility of removing TVA — which is self-funded — as a government agency, possibly selling it. Johnson said talks are ongoing and federal officials now appear interested in retaining a public power company model for TVA, but possibly not as a federal agency.

Johnson didn't provide much more detail but said the interest seemed to be in TVA's ownership structure turning to a "state, regional, local public power model."

Pension problems

The utility also announced 750 employees have taken a buyout, as part of TVA's efforts to cut $500 million from its operations budget by 2015. Johnson said 1,000 open positions will not be filled and there will be some job cuts later this year, but the extent of the cuts was not described.

Johnson also said he and the TVA board are concerned about a "significant underfunding situation" related to TVA's pension system. Johnson said the shortfall is about $4 billion and he is concerned about the long-term cost of the pension plan. He said there are ongoing discussions with TVA retirement system officials about ways to "make it easier" to fund the pension plan.

TVA reported its net income for the first six months of fiscal 2014 was $228 million, up from a net loss of $191 million the previous year. Revenue was about level, Johnson said, with TVA reporting revenue of $5.3 billion for the first six months of fiscal 2014.

Power sales to local distributors, like Huntsville Utilities, were up 8 percent, largely due to the cold winter weather, in the first six months of the fiscal year.
Livingston manufacturer is honored

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Prystup Packaging Products Inc., Livingston, was named Alabama’s 2014 Medium-Sized Manufacturer of the Year on Wednesday by the Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama Technology Network.

It was one of four state manufacturers honored at the organizations’ joint luncheon and awards ceremony in Montgomery.

Prystup Packaging has plants in Livingston and Demopolis and plans to open a third 90,000-square-foot plant this summer.

The privately owned company produces paperboard folding cartons and related packaging and advertising items for customers in the snack foods, dry goods, health and beauty aids industries.

The company operates four production lines in 220,000 square feet of buildings.

The business was founded by J. Leslie Prystup in 1980. He remains the company’s CEO and has worked in the packaging industry for more than 60 years. The company now has three generations of family members working in the business.

Erin McGahey, J. Leslie Prystup’s granddaughter and the company’s supplier diversity manager, said she and the company’s employees were thrilled when they learned of the award.

“It is such an honor. It is such a prestigious award,” she said. “It recognizes our production team and our management teams and the work they do.”

McGahey said her grandparents were considering retiring in 1980 when they saw an opportunity to start the company in Livingston. They rallied about 20 family members and close friends and started Prystup Packaging in June of that year.

During the next 34 years the company grew and today has about 150 employees and about $30 million in annual sales.

When asked what has led to the company’s success, she replied: “We are committed to our customers, our employees and our community.”

Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. of Gadsden, with 1,500 employees, was named the state’s 2014 Large Manufacturer of the Year, while Back Forty Beer Co. of Gadsden was named the state’s 2014 Small Manufacturer of the Year. Airbus, which is building a plant in Mobile, was named the 2014 Emerging Manufacturer of the Year.

The annual awards are based on manufacturers’ leadership, performance, profitability and workforce relations. An independent panel of judges chose the winners.
UA law school chooses dean

Officials appoint Mark Brandon of Vanderbilt

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

A Vanderbilt law professor has been named the next dean of the University of Alabama School of Law.

UA on Tuesday announced Mark E. Brandon, a professor of law at Vanderbilt University, as the next law school dean.

"The law school is a terrific place. To be dean of the law school is a huge challenge and probably the high point of my career," Brandon said.

Brandon's appointment is effective July 1, according to UA. The school has been led by interim dean William Brewbaker, the William Alfred Rose Professor of Law at UA, since the retirement of Dean Emeritus Ken Randall in July 2013.

"Dr. Brandon has gained a wealth of experience from many of the top universities in our nation, and we're pleased to welcome him back to lead the University of Alabama School of Law," said interim Provost Joe Benson in a statement released by the university. "He has a remarkable vision and outstanding leadership qualities honed over his 30-plus years of service.

See next page
LAW

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We look forward to the new heights our law school faculty, staff and students will attain with his guidance."

Brandon praised the talent of the school's students and faculty, adding that they were among the strengths he hoped to build upon. Brandon also said he planned to continue to reinforce ties with UA's alumni and the state bar, while also forging new strategic partnerships.

"I want to continue to develop Alabama as a place where it's known serious scholarship goes on," he said.

Brandon said the posting also holds an appeal because of his affection for UA and Alabama, the state where he grew up and the university where he earned his law degree.

Brandon, who was born in Georgia but grew up in Birmingham, earned an undergraduate degree in history from the University of Montevallo and a law degree from the UA in 1978. He also received a master of arts in political science from the University of Michigan in 1986 and a doctorate in politics from Princeton University in 1992.

At Vanderbilt, Brandon, a constitutional law expert, also held a secondary appointment in the department of political science. He also previously served on the political science faculties at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Michigan.

Brandon also served as an assistant attorney general for Alabama from 1978-1980, a staff attorney and consumer unit coordinator for Legal Services Corp. and has worked with private firms in Alabama and Michigan.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Historian gives update on plans for Bryce Hospital

Artifacts will be preserved, housed in museum on grounds

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Plans for a museum to be located in the historic Bryce Hospital, bought by the University of Alabama in 2010, are still being developed, according to a historian with the Bryce Hospital Historic Committee.

While there are no specific plans in place yet, the museum planned for the main building could potentially include medical and surgical equipment used at the facility, photographs and furniture from prominent superintendents and other important figures in the hospital's history, according to hospital historian Steve Davis.

Davis, who is employed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health, made the comments during an hourlong presentation at the Jemison-Van de Graaff Mansion in Tuscaloosa on Thursday night during the Sundown Lecture Series, a monthly event sponsored by the Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society.

In addition to artifacts from Bryce, the museum could potentially include photographs and other materials from other historic state facilities closed in recent years, such as the nearby Partlow Developmental Center and Searcy Hospital in Mount Vernon.

Davis noted Searcy was also the site of an Army arsenal and barracks before and after the Civil War and at one point served as the location used to house Apache

See Bryce | 3B
prisoners, including Geronimo. Davis said he had collected artifacts from Searcy's pre-hospital history and brought them to Tuscaloosa.

The audience Thursday asked questions ranging from which buildings on the hospital grounds would be preserved to how many patients the hospital housed at its peak — 5,299 in its heyday, according to Davis.

"Anytime we have a lecture about what is happening at Bryce Hospital, people come out," said Lucy Murphy, events coordinator for the society.

Davis gave a history of the hospital before moving to a discussion of plans for the museum and the ongoing discussion of what buildings will be saved on the grounds located on the east side of the UA campus.

"The bones of this building are good," Davis said, repeating a frequent assessment of the main hospital building.

Davis said the main building and dome will be preserved as part of the purchase agreement with the university, though there is still an ongoing discussion by UA of which other structures will be retained.

"We will wait to see what happens," Davis said.

Davis said he also hopes to see an agreement with the university for perpetual care of the hospital's cemeteries and preservation of its records.

UA purchased the Bryce property from the state in 2010, paying nearly $77 million for the 168 acres on the northeast side of campus and agreeing to pay an additional $10 million for environmental cleanup and historic preservation.

UA's campus master plan proposes using the grounds for new academic and residential buildings, roads and recreational facilities, while preserving the green space of the sprawling main lawn.

The University of Alabama System board of trustees approved the scope and preliminary budget for a 109,017-square-foot, $60 million performing arts center in April. The new facility will connect to the historic main Bryce Hospital building via a new lobby and require the demolition of the north wing of the main hospital.

Some of the old buildings and outlying structures north of the historic hospital will be demolished to make way for a planned network of roads that will bisect the grounds, connecting the eastern part of campus to Jack Warner Parkway.

The university also plans to demolish the obelisks at the main gate on Campus Drive, though the gateway has been recreated at the new hospital. The Department of Mental Health seals and Bryce Hospital signs have already been removed from the gateway.

Davis noted the university will build a fence around the graves of Peter and Ellen Bryce on the main lawn.

The Department of Mental Health is hoping to complete the turnover of the facilities on the historic grounds by mid-June.

The department is making a phased move to the 268,000-square-foot new Bryce Hospital. The state will continue to lease the Mary Starke Harper Geriatric Psychiatry Center from the university.
MILLION-DOLLAR MAN

WHAT IS HE WORTH?

2013 EARNINGS REPORT: ALABAMA COACH NICK SABAN'S CASH FLOW BROKEN DOWN; GUS MALZAHN'S REPORT NOT FILED ON TIME.

Kent Faulk; kfaulk@al.com

Beyond the nearly $6 million annual salary Nick Saban received last year to coach football at the University of Alabama, he earned hundreds of thousands of dollars from a variety of sources, according to the coach's most recent state ethics form.

Public employees whose base salary is greater than $75,000 are required to file the form with the Alabama Ethics Commission. Employees are asked to provide information about their families and any outside income from consulting or professional services in about three dozen types of industries — including alcohol, insurance, government and banking.

Saban's 2013 Statement of Economic Interests form was filed April 29 (one day before the deadline).

WHERE DID SABAN GET HIS MONEY LAST YEAR?

$6 million
University of Alabama coaching salary

$150,000 to $250,000
Sidelines Inc., a company related to the "authorship of books/publication with respect to Nick Saban," according to Alabama secretary of state records

$50,000 to $150,000
Interest and dividends from brokerage accounts and checking accounts

More than $250,000
Rental income and other services from "Various Entities."

More than $5,000
From banks for professional services or consulting.

Between $1,000 and $10,000
Fee for serving as a director of Capstone Bank.

BUT HE OWED MONEY, TOO

More than $250,000
Debt to three banks

THERE'S MORE

Businesses or subsidiaries in which Saban, his wife or dependents had 5 percent or more stock in, or which they served as an officer, director, trustee or consultant and received income of $1,000 or more:

Central Facilities LLC; Beltway & Associates Limited Partnership; Kentworth LLC; LTI Hasselet LLC; TLS LLC; Sidelines Inc.; 2550 Associates LLC; Shoreline Sanctuary LLC; Yorkshire Townes LLC; Blitzmore LLC; and First Down LLC.

His Most Recent Public Venture?

A partnership with another Louisiana man regarding a new Mercedes-Benz dealership in Tuscaloosa. Late last year, the Mercedes dealership in Hoover filed a lawsuit to block the opening of this new dealership, claiming it would be in its franchise area. According to court records, the Blitzmore LLC business Saban listed was subordinated for records in that lawsuit.

BUT WHAT ABOUT GUS MALZAHN?

Auburn University football coach Gus Malzahn did not file a statement by the April 30 deadline.

"Contact has been made and we have been told the filing will be done," Booch Lee, chief of the Finance and Administrative Division of the Alabama Ethics Commission, stated in an email.
Ex-player comes back to graduate

Andre Royal finishes degree after he left for NFL in '90s

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

Since the end of his career in the National Football League, Andre Royal has spent years working with youth, trying to be a mentor and a role model.

One of his strongest messages was to stay in school, but the former Tuscaloosa County High School and University of Alabama football standout always had a fear: that they would find out that he never graduated from UA.

Royal, 41, doesn't have to worry about that anymore. After three long semesters back in school, he completed work on his degree. See Graduate 11A

Andre Royal graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in criminal justice on May 2. He is a graduate of Tuscaloosa County High School and played football at the University of Alabama as well as in the NFL.
GRADUATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

in criminology, with a minor in sociology, and last weekend graduated almost two decades after he left for the NFL.

"I work with so many kids in camps and coaching little league football and high school football. I preach it a lot," he said. "Every time I said it to a kid, that was in my head. I hope one of these kids doesn't ask me, 'Coach Royal, do you have your degree?' That's not a fear anymore."

"This is something I wanted to do, I made a promise to myself that I was going to finish my degree."

That Royal earned his degree after being out of the classroom for so long was even more remarkable considering the fact that he almost didn't make it into UA for academic reasons, and that he was not only dismissed by former Alabama head coach Gene Stallings.

"When I came to my senior year in high school, when guys were signing (scholarships), I didn't have my ACT (entrance exam score) or my 2.0 GPA (grade-point average), but I ended up making it, he said.

He was part of Alabama's 1991 freshman class, and he won a national championship in his sophomore season, but trouble plagued him. He was suspended from the football team four times. He got in fights. He broke team rules.

"I got in trouble a lot," he said. "I wouldn't turn down a fight. There was a point in time when I didn't even like myself. I didn't trust myself. I didn't trust my times when I wouldn't go out because I was afraid I was going to get in trouble and screw up again.

"That's a terrible feeling to have when you don't trust yourself." After his final suspension, which caused him to miss the 1993 Southeastern Conference Championship and the Gator Bowl, Stallings showed Royal the meaning of tough love. The coach laid out a regimen of academic and behavioral standards that the player would have to meet to return to the team.

Royal bucked down and made it.

"It was my final straw that gave me a new lease on life," Royal said. "I made it tough that I had to stay focused on what I had to achieve. It was a great thing.

"Coach Stallings was a mentor of mine. If you're somebody who's been through something bad about Coach Stallings, you've got a problem with me. With the problems I had there, he believed in me."

Royal never participated in spring practice during his collegiate career; twice sitting out and another time with a knee injury.

"It hurt me," he said. "I was never able to develop correctly. When the fall started, you found yourself last at your position. Coming into my senior year, I was ninth string bottom. I had a Sam Linebacker, teaching kids who were in front of me.

Royal's talent got him back on the field, and after his senior season he tried out with the NFL's Cleveland Browns. When the Browns cut him, he signed a free-agent contract with the Carolina Panthers, an expansion team readying to play its first season in 1995.

Royal shined, particularly on special teams, and after three years he signed a $5.08 million contract with the New Orleans Saints, but his relationship with the team got off to a bad start and further deteriorated. The night before signing the big contract with the Saints, he was arrested after an incident at a French Quarter strip club.

"The incident in New Orleans is one of the things I'm least proud of," he said. "Actually, I got out of jail and signed a contract without letting them know. Even to this day I don't like myself for that decision that I made."

He was involved in a training camp happening incident that resulted in a lawsuit by a rookie player against Royal, the Saints and other players (the team settled the lawsuit). Royal was dismissed and got into a publicly publicized public shaming match with New Orleans coach Mike Ditka. The Saints traded him to the Indianapolis Colts before he was the season. He signed a lucrative four-year deal, but only played two more seasons before retiring after five years in the league. He estimates he made $25.8 and $3 million in his career.

While his playing career was tumultuous, something else was at work inside Royal. Despite all the bad decisions, underneath it all the bad behavior, was a drive to make it. He was driven to do what it took to become eligible out of high school when his grades and entrance exam score were lacking, and to persevere through Stallings' lay-down-the-law mandate after his final suspension.

That drive got him to the NFL and, all these years later, to graduation day.

He moved back to Charlotte, where he had purchased a home during his days with the Panthers, and worked with kids. He worked as a fundraiser and was named to the board of directors of a few charitable organizations.

Royal matured, and settled down.

"I got older and started making better decisions in life," he said. "I made a couple of bad decisions here and there, but I'm proud of the person I am today and I like myself," he said.

When his daughter, Tierra, graduated from high school, he got to thinking about that degree he never got.

"I always wanted to go back to school, but the timing wasn't right. It was such a difficult time in my life with the Carolina Panthers," he said.

"I took a course or two at no cost to me getting a scholarship at the University of Alabama and we won the national championship, and making it in the NFL.

"A lot of times when kids leave the NFL it's hard for them to find something that compares to the NFL or playing college football, and getting my degree was that."

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidewaternews.com or at 205-722-0244.

Monday, May 12, 2014

THE TIDE
UA, firm settle suit involving pattern

Trustees had said houndstooth was Bryant's trademark

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit by the University of Alabama System board of trustees and its president pro tem against a Georgia-based company over use of the houndstooth pattern after the parties reached a settlement.

In an order filed Monday, U.S. District Court Judge R. David Proctor dismissed the case, noting the parties had reached a settlement. Details of the settlement were unavailable Monday. The attorney for Houndstooth Mafia Enterprises was unavailable for comment Monday. Officials with UA did not provide comments by press time.

Proctor's order said the court will retain jurisdiction over the matter to enforce the settlement.

The lawsuit filed in September 2013 was based on a dispute over whether Board of Trustees President pro tem Paul Bryant Jr. and UA

SEE PATTERN | 7A

The lawsuit asked the court to instruct Houndstooth Mafia not to use the pattern in its merchandise and to recall and destroy any materials infringing on the patents held by UA.

UA also sought compensatory and punitive damages and attorney fees.

In their response to the lawsuit, Pitts and Blackburn asked the court to dismiss UA's complaint and affirm a 2013 opinion by the U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board in the company's favor.

The board ruled the logo was dissimilar enough from the UA's trademarks, and that it was unlikely to be confused with them.

The board found the use of the pattern by UA alone was not distinct enough to support the claims it was a distinctive mark for the university. The board also rejected arguments that the use of the pattern was exclusively associated with trademarks related to the university and coach Bryant.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
A PLAN FOR CARE

COOPER GREEN: JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVES DEALS WITH AREA HOSPITALS ON INDIGENT CARE.

After being downsized, Cooper Green Mercy Hospital became solely an urgent care center with primary and specialty care clinics. (File)

Barnett Wright  bwright@al.com

The cloud that long draped over Jefferson County after the closure of the inpatient care unit and emergency room at Cooper Green Mercy Hospital appears to have lifted — although some officials caution that work remains.

The Jefferson County Commission on Tuesday unanimously approved agreements with four Birmingham-area hospitals to provide care for former Cooper Green Mercy Hospital patients.

The agreements cover inpatient, specialty and emergency services with Baptist Health System, University of Alabama at Birmingham, UAB West and St. Vincent's Health System.

"This is a huge hurdle we have crossed," Commissioner Sandra Little Brown said. "My main concern is having the best care for our indigent patients. Having those contracts in place ... is great for patients and great for their families."

Commission President David Carrington and commissioners Jimmie Stephens and Joe Knight voted in August 2012 to end the inpatient care and close the emergency room at the former county-owned hospital for the poor.

It took five months to officially close the inpatient care and emergency room, and in January 2013, Cooper Green Mercy Hospital became solely an urgent care center with primary and specialty care clinics.

See next page
"There are many more issues that need to be addressed for care of the patients at Cooper Green. These contracts mainly address when they have to be hospitalized, but the outpatient system ... many things need to be done there."

Will Ferniani
CEO of UAB Health System

right direction, but said a lot of work remains.

"There are many more issues that need to be addressed for care of the patients at Cooper Green," said Will Ferniani, CEO of UAB Health System. "These contracts mainly address when they have to be hospitalized, but the outpatient system ... many things need to be done there."

Ferniani and others said the county still needs to reduce the wait time for patients; attract more primary care doctors; establish a better process for when patients are referred and contract with other primary care providers such as Christ Health Center in Woodlawn.

Ross Mitchell, a vice president at Baptist Health System, said, "We remain committed to working with the county on a long-term solution to ensure patients are receiving care and health care providers are appropriately reimbursed."

**What's next?**

Petelos said the next move is to hire a permanent director at Cooper Green Mercy Health Services. Last week, court-appointed receiver Ronald Sims selected personnel board veteran Roger McCullough as interim director. "We will be working with the interim director who is in place now, we will continue to meet with our partners, continue to meet with UAB trying to help us recruit more primary doctors to get our wait time down," Petelos said.

The UAB contract runs through Sept. 30; Baptist Health through 2015; and St. Vincent through 2016. The contract for UAB is in the amount of $7 million; St. Vincent's $2 million; and Baptist Health System $2 million.
WHAT IS THAT SMELL?

MICE ANXIETY: LAB ANIMALS GET STRESSED OUT BY MALE RESEARCHERS IN THE LAB, UAB PROFESSOR SAYS.

Jesse Chambers  jchambers@al.com

Sorry, guys.

Lab mice and rats are seriously stressed out by male researchers. Female researchers, meanwhile, have no ill effects.

This from an article published last month in the Journal Nature Methods by UAB psychology professor Robert Sorge, who found lab animals can smell the higher amounts of testosterone-based chemicals secreted by men.

These chemicals alert them that there are male animals nearby, causing a spike in their stress levels.

In the presence of a male scent, rats and mice experienced stress comparable to what they would feel swimming for three minutes or being restrained in a tube for 15 minutes.

In the presence of a female scent, the rodents' stress levels remained steady.

Increased stress in lab animals can create a problem with lab results, according to Sorge, because it makes the animals less sensitive to pain and less likely to react naturally to procedures involving learning and performance.

The results of this study could have a big impact on research, given that rats and mice comprise more than 95 percent of all lab animals.

"Our findings suggest that one major reason for lack of replication of animal studies is the gender of the experimenter," Sorge said in recent UAB news release. "It's a factor that's not currently stated in the methods sections of published papers, but it should be considered based on what we've discovered."

Sorge had several co-authors. He conducted his study along with researchers at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and in his lab at the UAB Department of Psychology.

"Our findings suggest that one major reason for lack of replication of animal studies is the gender of the experimenter."

UAB psychology professor Robert Sorge
DODGEBALL

The venerable game of dodgeball, played for generations in school gymnasiums, isn't just for kids anymore.

The School of Health Professions will host its first "Dodging for Degrees Dodgeball Tournament" at the UAB Campus Recreation Center, 1501 University Blvd., on June 14 at 9 a.m.

The tournament, which is open to the public, will serve as a fundraiser for the SHP Junior Board Scholarship Fund. The cost per team member is only $10, and that includes a commemorative T-shirt.

Each team must have at least six players; at least two must be female. Teams may have a seventh player as an alternate.

The scholarships from the Junior Board are for SHP students that are close to graduation and can be used for such expenses as conference fees, organization fees and examination or board fees.

The deadline to register is Friday, May 16.

To register, go to www.uab.edu/shpboard.

For more information, contact Stewart at 205-996-5530 or melody22@uab.edu.

Jesse Chambers
UAH Students Create Drone Airship To Make Longer Drone Flight Possible

By: David Kumbroch

Huntsville, Ala.—Weighed down in an upstairs corner of a machine shop at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, you might just find the next big thing in aviation.

A drone sits on an old student desk nearby, not used to taking a back seat, but it’s just a passenger for this lazy-swaying airship. It looks like a blimp, maybe twenty feet long.

You see, drones have a serious shortcoming.

UAH Associate Professor Brian Landrum explains, “Power is a very big problem right now.”

The airship, imagined and invented by UAH students, solves that problem, giving drones a much longer range.

Landrum says, “It’s slow, but it can go the long distances. It can be hovering almost like a gas station, if you will, where the vehicles can go do a mission, collect some data, come back, recharge, and go out again.”

Students tested the airship, they even successfully docked the drone to charge it.

Pulling off a maneuver like this, it’s not just cool, it breaks the mold for what drones can do.

“There’s public safety applications,” notes Landrum, “There’s this kind of agricultural sensing application.”

One of the big hopes for the team is that farmers could use an airship like this to deploy drones and survey land.

It might also change the game for shipping.

Landrum adds the drone trend certainly seems like the wave of the future, “It really will revolutionize package delivery. There’s people delivering medicine in Europe with these.”

Companies like Amazon could potentially deploy larger airships carrying multiple drones with packages.

Plenty of industries could do well to adopt systems like these.

Not bad for a senior project for engineering students. Not bad for anyone.
First look: Hybrid coworking space VIBE preparing for soft launch in downtown Huntsville

By: Lucy Berry

Several weeks of sweat and tears will pay off this weekend when downtown Huntsville’s first coworking space for business professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs launches with a soft opening.

Vertically Integrated Business Ecosystem (VIBE), an initiative of BizTech and Downtown Huntsville Inc., is located in a former boudoir and glamour photography studio on 125 North Side Square. The 1,500-square-foot shared working space will open its doors to the public at 9 a.m. Saturday.

VIBE, which is sponsored by the University of Alabama in Huntsville’s College of Business Administration, calls itself the Rocket City’s No. 1 “destination for working outside the office and thinking outside the box.”

Jonathan Pease, director of marketing and community relations for BizTech, is in charge of VIBE and said the building is “sort of a hybrid” between a coworking space, Internet café and relaxed, lounge-style atmosphere.

“Huntsville is a very unique market,” he said. “... We don’t want to limit people to feel like they’ve got to join a membership or work around classes being held here. Right now, we want them to just come in, grab a cup of coffee and do that all day long if they want to.”

Coworking is a growing workplace trend that has evolved in recent years as technology has allowed more people to work remotely or from home. Such spaces often involve a combination of shared desks and open space to promote collaborative relationships among people who may not work for the same company.

The space, which Pease said is still in "beta form," will provide an exclusive coffee roast by Highbrow Cold Brew Coffee, super-fast Wi-Fi and a wireless color laser printer that guests can use from their smartphone, iPad or iPhone. Apple and high-definition televisions will also be available at VIBE.

The starting rate at VIBE will be $6 per hour, but day, week and monthly costs have yet to be determined. The space will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and 1-6 p.m. Sunday.

Pease said the hours of operation may change in the coming weeks.

"We've gotten very strong feedback and excitement from all different crowds," he said. "We're really excited about everybody getting in here and taking advantage of this space. This is a unique opportunity for us to all find out for ourselves what this space is really going to be."
Pease and registered yoga instructor/tech entrepreneur Amanda Dorsett will host regular networking events at VIBE to give entrepreneurs, small business owners and creative professionals an opportunity to meet and collaborate. Dorsett was responsible for VIBE's interior design concept and execution, Pease said.

UAH has donated $17,000 toward the effort in exchange for 10 memberships and after-hours access to hold events at the sleek downtown space.

VIBE, which is a one-man operation at this time, has relied heavily on volunteers to make the coworking space a reality. Pease said volunteers are still needed before Saturday's grand opening to help with last-minute cleanup. Pease is also searching for a local company to sponsor VIBE's board room, which will be built out with a table and chairs, projector and screen.

The first 30 people to visit VIBE on Saturday will receive one free hour during their next visit.
UAH senior lands paid internship with NASCAR

It looks like this summer may be a bit of “Days of Thunder” for Jessica Sisk, a senior mechanical engineering student at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), now that she has landed a paid internship with NASCAR.

“I have been searching for a NASCAR internship since I began my college career,” Sisk says. “I found this one while I was locking through the employment tab on the NASCAR website. I applied through the NASCAR Diversity Summer Internship Program on the NASCAR website. If it weren't for the good Lord above and my friends and family supporting me, I would not be in the position to even qualify for this job.”
Rubio Now Cool to Climate-change Legislation

By: Jack Kenny

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) has taken a clear stand against claims of man-made climate change and calls for cap and trade and other measures to curb carbon emissions, long targeted as a major cause of global warming. The likely contender for his party's presidential nomination in 2016 is now cool toward his previous approach to the subject when he was speaker of the Florida House of Representatives in 2009, just one year before his election to the U.S. Senate and the status he has since enjoyed as a rising star of the Grand Old Party.

"I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it," Rubio said in an interview that aired Sunday on ABC's This Week. Responding to questions about the National Climate Assessment issued from the White House last week with dire warnings about present and near-future consequences of global warming, Rubio added: "I do not believe that the laws that they propose we pass will do anything about it. Except it will destroy our economy."

Such unequivocal statements do not leave the senator much "wiggle room" if he should choose to alter that position during a presidential campaign or in a Rubio administration, should he win the top prize. But while there has been no net increase in the Earth's temperature for nearly 18 years, Rubio's former interest in climate-change legislation appeared to cool in little more than a year when he was in the state legislature. Huffington Post reported: As the leader of the Florida House in 2008, Rubio helped pass a law directing the state Department of Environmental Protection to develop a carbon emissions capping system. He has since distanced himself from that vote, arguing that he never supported cap and trade, only the idea that the state should look into such a system. And when the system ultimately did not pass, he cheered its failure.

The "HuffPost" piece provides a link to a December 10, 2009 article in the Tampa Bay Times with the headline: "Rubio now assails cap-and-trade plan, though he backed earlier legislation." Rubio highlighted the issue in his senate campaign against Charlie Crist, a fellow Republican and the Florida governor at the time.

"U.S. Senate candidate Marco Rubio is hammering rival Charlie Crist's 'cap-and-trade scheme,' though he voted for a bill backed by the governor requiring state officials to devise such a plan," the paper reported. Rubio said at the time that his position hadn't changed on cap and trade, a program of emission caps that allows companies to buy and sell unused portions of their respective quotas. The law's requirement that the plan gain the approval of the Republican-led legislature guaranteed the bill would not become law, he said. Environmentalists who lobbied for the bill were not buying that explanation, calling Rubio "disingenuous" or worse.

"Rubio is a total flip-flopper," Gerald Karnas, Florida director of the Environmental Defense Fund, said at the time. "Under his leadership, progressive energy legislation passed the House."

Crist later dropped out of the Republican primary and ran for Senate as an independent, finishing a distant second to Rubio, a Tea Party favorite, in the November 2010 election. Democrat

See next page
Kendrick Meek came in third. But Rubio's evolution on environmental and energy legislation has apparently undergone several mutations. In 2007, he penned an opinion piece in the Miami Herald citing a study that claimed emission caps would increase utility bills to consumers by an estimated 25 percent to 50 percent. Rubio advocated instead tax incentives for energy-efficient companies and investments in ethanol and other biofuels.

Government "investment" in ethanol is a policy favored neither by environmentalists nor advocates of a free-market economy. The federal mandate for ethanol production has been widely criticized for both increasing corn crops on acreage previously set aside, and for diverting crop production to fuel, thereby increasing the cost of food.

Rubio's current stand on climate change and cap and trade runs counter to pronouncements trumpeted daily in the major media about the disaster that looms from uncapped carbon emissions. Indeed, Miami and Tampa are two of the cities most threatened by rising tides and increased flooding from the Earth's warming, according to the latest National Climate Assessment. But not all of the nation's scientists subscribe to the doomsday scenario, as Newsmax.com reported over the weekend. Dr. Judith Curry of the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology said the report "effectively implies that there is no climate change other than what is caused by humans, and that extreme weather events are equivalent to climate change." More misleading than the report itself, she said, is "the spin being put on this by the Obama administration."

"There is no fingerprint of human-caused versus naturally-caused climate change," insists Dr. Roy Spencer, principal research scientist at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Weather Channel co-founder John Coleman called the report a "litany of doom," and a "total distortion of the data and an agenda-driven, destructive episode of bad science gone berserk." Mark Morano, who offered a roundup of reactions to the global-warming report on his Climate Depot website, disparaged reports of global warming as the cause of extreme weather conditions. "By every measure," Morano said, "so-called extreme weather is showing no trend or declining trends on 50-100-year timescales. Droughts, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes are not increasing due to man-made global warming."

"Why does the report now call 'global warming' a new name, so-called 'climate disruption'?": Morano asks. "Simple answer: Due to earth's failure to warm — no global warming for nearly 18 years — another name was necessary to attempt to gin up fear."

"Our climate is always changing," Rubio said in his This Week interview. The senator's position on the issue appears to undergo frequent changes as well. His current stand should play well with Republican primary voters, who will likely take it as a sign that a President Rubio would be flatly opposed to caps on carbon emissions and other climate-related legislation that would be damaging to the economy. But voters with long memories may recall that President Richard Nixon was similarly opposed to wage and price controls — until he imposed them in a bogus attempt to rein in inflation.

By at least some accounts, the Earth does a better job of adapting to climate change than politicians do when adapting to changes in opinion polls.
What does UAH climate expert Roy Spencer think of latest government climate change report?

By: Paul Gattis

Roy Spencer, a climate research professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, has put together some thoughts on the federal government's third National Climate Assessment.

Suffice to say, he wasn't impressed.

Well known for his skeptical views on the impact of humans on climate change – go to http://blog.al.com/breaking/2014/02/uah_climate_expert_roy_spencer.html for some sharp-worded comments earlier this year -- Spencer took the 840-page report's 12 major findings and offered his views point by point.

His comments can be found on his personal blog, which is not affiliated with UAH.

Here is "bottom line" from Spencer's blog:

"Follow the money, folks. This glitzy, 840-page report took a lot of your tax dollars to generate, and involved only those 'experts' who are willing to play the game. It is difficult to answer in its entirety because government has billions of dollars to invest in this, while most of us who try to bring some sanity to the issue must do it in our spare time, because we aren't paid to do it. It is nowhere near balanced regarding science, costs-versus-benefits, or implied policy outcomes.

"Like the previous two National Assessment reports, it takes global climate models which cannot even hindcast what has happened before, which over-forecast global average warming, which are known to have essentially zero skill for regional (e.g. U.S.) predictions, and uses them anyway to instill fear into the masses, so that we might be led to safety by politicians."

Meanwhile, comments on the climate change report from John Christy, Alabama's climatologist and director of the Earth System Science Center at UAH, can be found http://blog.al.com/wire/2014/05/what_does_climate_report_hold.html and some thoughts from earlier this year published in The Wall Street Journal can be found http://blog.al.com/breaking/2014/02/2_uah_professors_take_national.html.
Private donor to buy $1M residence for USA president

Sally Pearsall Ericson • sericson@al.com

With the help of a private donor, the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees has agreed to purchase and renovate a presidential residence for slightly more than $1 million.

The house is at 28 Oakland Ave., off Old Shell Road and about a mile from the campus. USA's new president, Tony G. Waldrop, and his wife, Julee Briscoe Waldrop, will live there, but the home will also be used for university functions.

The private donor has agreed to purchase the house for $1,040,000, and also to pay for necessary renovations, John W. Smith, special assistant to the president, told the board of trustees executive committee during its meeting last week.

After the purchase is finalized, the university will receive the title to the home. The renovations include refinishing the hardwood floors, updating the kitchen and adding a handicapped-accessible bathroom.

The purchase means that there is no need for the university to include a housing allowance in Waldrop's compensation package, said Steve Furr, chair pro tempore of the board.

"This is essentially costing us nothing, and it's a good investment for the university," Furr said.

A subcommittee of the board of trustees conducted the housing search, said board member Jim Yance. The committee considered several homes in the Spring Hill area.

Because the presidential residence will be used for university functions, the Waldrops will not have to pay taxes on the home, Yance said.

The current owners, Steve and Lulu Crawford, will move out in early June, and university officials hope to have renovations completed in August, he said.

"It's very presidential-looking," Yance said.

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The University of South Alabama Board of Trustees has approved the purchase of this home at 28 Oakland Ave. in Spring Hill to be used as a presidential residence. (Sally Pearsall Ericson@al.com)
BUSINESS COMPETITION

NEW VENTURES

Samford University students were awarded cash prizes for business plan ideas during the recent Regions New Venture Challenge.

The Open Division winner and recipient of $7,500 was Josh Kendrick and QuickWork LLC. It is a business that uses software to streamline the process of reporting and repairing facility maintenance problems.

The second-place winner, which received $5,000, was Work of Worth. It aims to sell yarn produced from recycled saris in India to retailers and manufacturers in the U.S.

Release Rowing, a nonprofit rowing club geared toward individuals with visual impairments, finished third and received $2,500.

The winner of the BUSA 100 Division, for freshmen, was Destination Station, a nonprofit youth recreational center that offers after-school care. It won $2,500.

Second place, and $1,500, went to Recycle and Return, a recyclable waste transportation and management company.

The third place finisher, awarded $1,000, was Cereally?, a self-serve cereal bar concept.

Dawn Kent Asok
Shelton interviews four finalists

Alabama Community College System aims to name new president by June

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The chancellor of the Alabama Community College System hopes to have a new president for Shelton State Community College by mid-June. Chancellor Mark Heinrich, who was president at Shelton before leaving to lead the system in 2012, interviewed four finalists as part of a series of public forums on the main campus Tuesday. Heinrich said he will make a recommendation to the Alabama Board of Education and hopes to have a new president approved by next month.

The four interviewed Tuesday were Paul P. Gasparro, vice president for student success initiatives for the Cuyahoga Community College District in Ohio; Walter D. Givhan of Dayton, Ohio, who most recently served as the vice commander of the Air Force’s Air University in Montgomery; Andrea Scott Mayfield, vice president for the Scooba, Miss., campus of East Mississippi Community College; and Valerie A. Townsend Richardson, vice president of Gadsden State Community College supervising student services and institutional advancement.

Steve Rook, vice president for academic and student affairs at Rich Mountain Community College in Mena, Ark., was also named among the original five finalists but withdrew his name from consideration before Tuesday, according to Heinrich.

The four answered a range of questions during individual interviews with Heinrich and separate sessions based on questions previously submitted by employees. The two sessions went on simultaneously.

SHELTON
Continued from Page 1B

Tuesday, with the candidates cycling between the two separate forums.

Heinrich said the candidates each saw the same array of questions, which were tailored to Shelton State.

In one scenario, Heinrich asked candidates to respond to a situation involving a board of education member who requested and received an unauthorized release of information about a young relative in the student body.

The questions by Heinrich were meant to explore how the candidates might navigate problems Shelton’s president could encounter on a daily basis.

Heinrich said the sessions Tuesday would be the only public events for the finalists, though recordings of all of the interviews would be available through links on the college’s website.

The system plans to offer a Web portal from Tuesday to Sunday for confidential feedback from employees, according to Heinrich’s original announcement of the finalists.

Heinrich suspended searches for new presidents

Chancellor Mark Heinrich said the candidates each saw the same array of questions.

at Shelton State and Southern Union State Community College in April 2013 to review the system’s presidential search policies. The Shelton State search resumed earlier this year.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Interim Shelton president leaving

Joan Davis to head community college in La.

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Shelton State Community College interim President Joan Davis has been named the next chancellor of Delgado Community College in Louisiana. Davis was recommended by the system’s president and approved by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System Board of Supervisors on Wednesday, according to the announcement by the system. She was one of three finalists for the position.

“Joan Davis is a proven leader who has worked at the system level and institution level for many years,” said system President Monty Sullivan in a released statement. “She brings a very unique combination of skills and experiences having served as a system president, college president, attorney and educational and workforce development professional. Her background and experience will be invaluable in leading Delgado Community College at this critical moment, as the college continues to work to meet the needs of our community.”

SEE DAVIS | 3B
needs of the Greater New Orleans region."

Delgado is Louisiana's largest community college, with seven locations serving a 10-parish region in the southeast region of the state, according to the announcement.

Davis has led Shelton state since June 2013. Under two-year system guidelines as an interim president, she was ineligible to apply for the permanent president's position at Shelton State.

In her next role beyond interim president, Davis said she was looking for a challenge and a chance to give back. She saw those opportunities in the chancellorship of the Louisiana community college.

"Delgado reminded me a lot of Shelton," she said.

Both institutions are in communities ravaged by severe storms and both strike a balance between workforce development and preparing students to transfer to four-year institutions.

"I just though it would be a great place to go," she said.

The Alabama Community College System hopes to name a new Shelton State president by next month. System Chancellor Mark Heinrich was on campus Tuesday conducting public interviews with finalists.

Davis anticipates she will assume the chancellorship at Delgado in early July, though a specific start date has yet to be set, she said. Davis also said the official date of her departure from Shelton State is not set, noting the ongoing search.

"I'm hoping to turn over the keys to the new president," she said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Conference USA athletic directors vote to bring postseason basketball tournament to Birmingham

By: Drew Champlin

UAB and the city of Birmingham will host the 2015 Conference USA Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament.

Conference USA announced the move around 12:30 p.m. UAB put in a bid to host along with Louisiana Tech (in Bossier City, La.), Southern Miss (on campus and in Biloxi) and UTEP. The tournament will be held from March 11-14, 2015.

The Conference USA Board of Directors will vote to approve the tournament location in Dallas on June 9.

Logistically, Birmingham held a strong arrangement for travel. Charlotte, Louisiana Tech, Southern Miss, Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky can make the trip in six hours or less. Several others have nonstop flights.

"My comments to the athletic directors as a summary of our presentation was the positiveness of the city of Birmingham, the experience of hosting events, location of Birmingham and the access to our airport," UAB athletic director Brian Mackin said. "Add in facilities and the fact that geographically, six of our Conference USA teams (including UAB) would be able to drive to our event and our fans would come, which would increase the student-athlete experience."

The men's tournament will be played at BJCC Arena. The women will play theirs at Bartow Arena until the semifinal round and from there, all games will be played at BJCC Arena. The Conference USA Tournament headquarters will be at the Westin Birmingham and the Sheraton Birmingham will also play a major role.

UAB and the city also showcased the Greater Birmingham Entertainment District in the presentation.

"This is a massive step for our program," UAB men's basketball coach Jerod Haase said. "To be honest, I think it's good for Conference USA with the history UAB has of hosting tournaments (last in 1999).

"I know the city will welcome the teams and do a great job. It's a huge step for us and we're excited for our program to be able to host the Conference USA Tournament."

See next page
Mackin said that senior associate athletic director Shannon James Ealy along with Matt Beard of the Weston/Sheraton and David Galbaugh from the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau assisted in the presentation to athletic directors.

"We are very excited to be able to showcase our basketball teams in Birmingham, they will be tremendous hosts," Conference USA commissioner Britton Banowsky said. "We also were excited to learn about the great opportunities our other communities represent, each did a great job with the proposals and we have wonderful options for 2016 and beyond."
C-USA to bring basketball tourneys to Birmingham

Drew Champlin  dchamplin@al.com

UAB and the city of Birmingham were named hosts of 2015 Conference USA men's and women's basketball tournaments, the league announced this week.

UAB put in a bid to host along with Louisiana Tech (in Bossier City, La.), Southern Miss (on campus and in Biloxi) and UTEP. The tournament is scheduled for March 11-14.

The Conference USA board of directors on June 9 is expected to officially approve the site selection, in what is considered a formality.

Birmingham's location made it an attractive host. Charlotte, Louisiana Tech, Southern Miss, Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky can make the trip in six hours or less. Several others can fly to the city nonstop.

"My comments to the athletic directors as a summary of our presentation was the positiveness of the city of Birmingham, the experience of hosting events, location of Birmingham and the access to our airport," UAB athletics director Brian Mackin said. "And in facilities and the fact that geographically, six of our Conference USA teams (including UAB) would be able to drive to our event and our fans would come, which would increase the student-athlete experience."

The men's tournament will be played at BJCC Arena. The women will start at Bartow Arena and move to the BJCC Arena for the semifinals and the final.

Conference USA tournament headquarters will be at the Westin Birmingham, and the Sheraton Birmingham also is expected play a key role.

UAB and the city also showcased the burgeoning Uptown entertainment district in the presentation.

"This is a massive step for our program," UAB men's basketball coach Jerod Haase said, "To be honest, I think it's good for Conference USA with the history UAB has of hosting tournaments (last in 1999).

"I know the city will welcome the teams and do a great job. It's a huge step for us and we're excited for our program to be able to host the Conference USA tournament."

Mackin said that senior associate athletics director Shannon, James Ealy, along with Matt Beard of the Westin/Sheraton and David Galbaugh from the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau, assisted in the presentation to Conference USA athletics directors.
Rough road ahead

Tide gets No. 2 seed, tough draw for regional

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

The University of Alabama softball team was awarded the No. 2 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament when the field of 64 was released Sunday night, but the Crimson Tide may have gotten the toughest draw in the nation.

The Tuscaloosa Regional, scheduled for Friday through Sunday at Rhoads Stadium, features a four-team field that might be softball's Group of Death, with three ranked teams—No. 5 Alabama, No. 22 South Alabama and No. 23 South Carolina Upstate—and three pitchers ranked in the top six nationally in earned run average.

Alabama's regional is the only one with three ranked teams. "This might be one of the toughest home regionals we've ever had," UA coach Patrick Murphy said. "I know every game is going to be very competitive. I mean, it will be scratch, claw, fight your way out of it."

South Carolina Upstate (45-7) is ranked No. 1 nationally in pitching with a 1.18 team ERA. Freshman Lexi Shubert, rates sixth with a 1.05 ERA and Anna Miller leads the nation in strikeouts per seven innings with an average of 12 per full-game outing, based on NCAA...
The Cougars have their own ace in sophomore lefty Haley Chambers, who carries a 1.82 ERA and averages more than one strikeout per inning. “We’re kind of used to the good pitching,” Murphy said. “The SEC Tournament really helps us with that, and playing Missouri the weekend before and Georgia the weekend before (that), so I don’t think we’re going to be intimidated by any means.”

Alabama (43-11) has a proven ace in two-time Southeastern Conference pitcher of the year Jaclyn Traina, who carries a 2.03 ERA, with support from freshman Sydney Littlejohn, who has a 1.75 ERA.

Should Alabama survive the regional, it would host a best-of-three super regional round against 15th-seeded Missouri if the Tigers hold off Nebraska, Kansas and Bradley in the Columbia, Mo., Regional.

An Alabama-Missouri matchup would have added drama after UA won two of three games at Missouri two weekends ago to close out the regular season, drawing the ire of Mizzou coach Ehren Earleywine and some of his players for a dog pile celebration after Alabama clinched the outright SEC championship.

Murphy wants his team to focus on the regional, not the possible super regional matchup. “Let’s not go there,” he said.

Said senior infielder Kaila Hunt, “Obviously we don’t think about Missouri at all. We have to focus on who’s in our regional. The three teams that are coming here are good teams, like South Alabama is a great team that you cannot overlook at all.”

“We have to focus on these three teams that are going to be in our regional, because it doesn’t matter if we’re going to potentially play Missouri if we don’t get out of our regional.”

Alabama’s opponent at the Women’s College World Series, should the seeds hold, would be seventh-seeded defending national champion Oklahoma. Alabama defeated the Sooners to win the national championship two years ago.

Murphy didn’t voice any objection having such a tough draw while being seeded second.

“It’s happened in a good way for us before, so I just think you’re in it this long, for 16 straight years, and some years it’s going to work out for you and some years it’s going to be really tough,” he said.

Alabama has a team 2.15 ERA, 30th-best in the nation, and plays in the SEC, considered the top softball conference in the nation after getting 11 teams into the NCAA Tournament. South Alabama plays in the Sun Belt and South Carolina Upstate plays in the Atlantic Sun.

The Crimson Tide tied for tops in the SEC in hitting, ranking 16th in the nation with a .321 team batting average, and was 18th in scoring going into the weekend at 6.33 runs per game. USC Upstate’s .333 team batting average ranked 12th and its 6.35 runs per game ranked 17th.

Reach Tommy Deas at tommytidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
Crimson Tide sports teams boast above average APR scores

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

The grades are in and once again the University of Alabama athletic department turned in above average marks.

All varsity sports sponsored by UA, a total of 21 programs, finished in excellent standing in the latest Academic Progress Rate released by the NCAA on Wednesday. The scores, covering a four-year period from 2008-09 through 2012-13, measure the eligibility, retention and graduation of student-athletes competing on every Division I sports team while also serving as a predictor of graduation success.

Seventeen programs scored above the national average, including three programs (men's and women's tennis and women's tennis), which posted perfect scores of 1,000.

Football scored a 975. The program posted a 978 in 2013 and a 970 in 2012.

“Our continued success in terms of our APR scores, coupled with the tremendous success we’ve enjoyed athletically over the four years that this report encompasses, shows that we are excelling at the highest level in all areas of our mission,” Alabama director of athletics Bill Battle said.

Most of the credit can be traced to the success of Jon Dever’s department in his role as the associate athletic director for student services.

“Our APR scores continue to be very positive,” Dever said. “…all 21 teams were at least 30 points above the 930 mark, including 14 teams that scored 980 or better. We also saw 16 of our teams equal or improve their four-year averages from a year ago. All told, nine of our teams bettered the national average for their sport by 10 points or more and five, football, men’s basketball, men’s and women’s golf and women’s tennis, bettered the national average by 15 points or more.”

Reach Aaron Suttles at aaron@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0229.
Seahawks pick Norwood; McCarron to Cincinnati

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

It was a dramatic final day of the National Football League Draft.

AJ McCarron had a day of anxious waiting and Kevin Norwood joined the champs. All in all, five former University of Alabama football players were drafted Saturday afternoon in rounds four through seven, bringing the Crimson Tide’s three-day total to eight, the second most in the draft behind LSU’s nine.

Norwood, McCarron, Ed Stinson, Vinnie Sunseri and Jeoffrey Pagan joined C.J. Mosley and Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, who were drafted in the first round, and Cyrus Kouandjio, who was selected in the second round.

The pre-draft process proved fruitful for Norwood, a team captain at Alabama his senior season, as the 6-foot-5, 198-pound wide receiver shot up many teams’ draft boards. When the reigning Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks turned in their pick in the fourth round, Norwood heard his name called.

Norwood was selected with the 23rd pick of the fourth round, the 123rd overall pick.

“The defending Super Bowl champs … wow. It’s amazing,” Norwood told The Seattle Times. “I’m very excited to get the opportunity to play with them, and also help them win another one.”

“My heart just dropped, and when coach (Pete) Carroll came on the phone, I was ecstatic. Words can’t describe the feeling that I have right now.”

Seattle scout Jim Nagy told The Seattle Times that Norwood’s knack for making the big play factored into the organization’s decision.

Quarterback AJ McCarron slipped down the draft board, but was selected Saturday by the Cincinnati Bengals in the fifth round.

EIGHT TO THE NFL

Eight former University of Alabama players were selected in the NFL Draft, which concluded Saturday. They were:

Round 1
C.J. Mosley, linebacker, Baltimore Ravens
Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, safety, Green Bay Packers

Round 2
Cyrus Kouandjio, offensive lineman, Buffalo Bills

Round 3
None

Round 4
Kevin Norwood, wide receiver, Seattle Seahawks

Round 5
Ed Stinson, defensive end, St. Louis Cardinals
AJ McCarron, quarterback, Cincinnati Bengals
Vinnie Sunseri, safety, New Orleans Saints

Round 6
Jeoffrey Pagan, defensive end, Houston Texans

Round 7
None

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DRAFT

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"Really for our team, what stood out the most is he is very clutch," Nagy said. "The kid always shows up. Really dependable. His contested catch stuff is unbelievable."

Defensive end Ed Stinson was the next Alabama player off the board, selected in the fifth round by the Arizona Cardinals with the 160th overall pick.

"When healthy, he's a starting defensive end in the NFL," NFL Network analyst Mike Mayock said.

One of the day's biggest storylines featured McCarron's wait.

As the quarterback continued his fall in the draft, reports surfaced that NFL teams had concerns about McCarron's attitude.

NFL Network reporter Ian Rapoport reported that some teams were "rubbed the wrong way" by McCarron's "cocky" attitude. Rapoport also said some teams were concerned with how many of McCarron's teammates actually liked him and expressed some concern over his reality show with his fiancé Katherine Webb.

When McCarron slipped out of the fourth round, coverage of McCarron's fall intensified, as did the reports of his attitude.

Late in the fifth round, McCarron's wait finally ended when the Cincinnati Bengals chose him with the 154th pick. McCarron was selected to be Bengals starter Andy Dalton's backup. Dalton was a Pro Bowl quarterback in 2011.

"It's not about when you get picked. It's all about where you go and what you make of it when you get there," McCarron told The Cincinnati Enquirer. "I respect Andy. I watch him a ton. I think he's one of the best in the league. Excited to learn under those guys.

"I've always been doubted in some way. But I am putting myself to the side right now. I want to know my teammates."

McCarron said he's not sure where the report of his "cocky" attitude initiated.

"The thing about this whole process is, somebody can come out with something, and somebody runs with it and it's just like wildfire spreading," McCarron told reporters. "I think it's a little crazy. I was voted captain three years in a row by my teammates. I felt like I was respected at all times."

"I just need to figure out what's the best way I can do to be the best teammate for us in the future. Be a part of the Bengals organization and help us in whatever way I can. I'm just excited and very humble about this whole opportunity."

Sunseri followed in the fifth round, selected by the New Orleans Saints with the 167th pick, and the Houston Texans with the 177th pick drafted Pagani in the sixth round.

Cody Mandell (Dallas Cowboys), Deton Belue (Miami Dolphins) and John Fulton (Philadelphia Eagles) signed priority free-agent contracts following the draft.

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Getting the most out of college

WASHINGTON

A new study of more than 30,000 college graduates by Gallup and Purdue University has found that it matters more what you experience while at college than the type of institution you attend.

I know it’s rude, but can I say I told you so? I’ve spent a lot of time on this topic. And still many people aren’t receiving the message. I’m concerned that too many families are burying themselves and their kids in student-loan debt, believing that such a choice is necessary to achieve financial well-being.

Gallup and Purdue provide more than anecdotal evidence about the relationship between the college experience and college graduates’ lives. They’ve created an index that measures success among college graduates. The study found that a nurturing environment matters more than a brand name. The report says not enough colleges understand this message.

When it comes to workplace engagement and your well-being, the type of school you attend — be it public or private, small or large, selective or less selective — matters less than some of you may think.

Gallup and Purdue define workplace well-being as “deeply involved in, enthusiastic about and committed” to your work.

“For example, if graduates recalled having a professor who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning and encouraged them to pursue their dreams, their odds of being engaged at work more than doubled, as did their odds of thriving in all aspects of their well-being,” the study found.

Then there was this result. “The amount of student loans that graduates take out to pay for their undergraduate degree is related to their well-being in every element,” the report said.

“The higher the loan amount, the worse the well-being.”

In its report, Gallup and Purdue posed the following questions as the bottom line in selecting a school. When deciding between an Ivy League, public university or a small private college, what should a student consider to help make the decision? When an employer is evaluating two recent graduates from different backgrounds and institutions, which educational background should distinguish one applicant over the other? And why?

“The data presented in this report suggest, however, that the answers lie in thinking about things that are more lasting than selectivity of an institution or any of the traditional measures of college,” Gallup and Purdue say. “Instead, the answers may lie in what students are doing in college and how they are experiencing it. Those elements — more than any others — have a profound relationship to a person’s life and career.”

People often write to say I shouldn’t discourage students from applying to Ivy League or other selective schools. They argue that such schools have become better at meeting the financial needs of students without loans, particularly for low- and middle-income and minority students. But they misread what I say.

I encourage students to apply to any college they want, including elite schools. However, I follow that advice up with this. When you realize you don’t have enough saved and/or you won’t receive enough financial assistance to attend an expensive university without going deeply in debt, choose a more affordable college.

It may be too late for students who have already committed to going to a pricey school and have incurred a lot of debt. But I’m hoping with this new research that rising high school seniors — and their parents — will stop stressing and overstretching themselves financially.