JULY 3, 2014

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Meet the 2014 class of the Pillars of West Alabama

By Ken Roberts
City Editor

The 2014 class of the Pillars of West Alabama includes leaders in the arts, academics, business, healthcare and religion.

The award, established in 2004 by the Community Foundation of West Alabama, recognizes people who have made significant contributions to the community.

"In planning the award, the CFWA looked at the definition of a 'Pillar' as someone who is a firm, upright support. The honorees were chosen by the board of directors from a list of community members they felt best exemplify the definition of a 'Pillar of the community," said Glenn Taylor, the foundation's executive director, in a news release.

Seven people were honored June 19 in Tuscaloosa as this year's Pillars.

**Elizabeth (Betty) Manderson Hale**

Hale was born in 1937 in Northport and graduated from Tuscaloosa County High. She was a graduate of the University of Alabama with degrees in biology and English and taught English in the Tuscaloosa school system until the birth of her first child.

She began her civic work in a variety of roles with the Junior Welfare Association. She was a recipient of the Sustainer of the Year Award and was instrumental in the transition from the JWA to the Junior League of Tuscaloosa.

Hale was an elder at First Presbyterian Church, helped organize the DCH Regional Medical Center's annual ball and served as chairwoman for Art for Heart and the United Way.

She served on the boards of the Children's Hands-on Museum, Rise School, the American Heart Association and the Tuscaloosa County Mental Health Association. She served on the advisory boards of the University of Alabama School of Human and Environmental Science and the University of Alabama School of Nursing.

She was a breast cancer survivor who served as chairwoman of the Alabama Breast Cancer Drive.

**Gene "Poodjie" Poole**

Poole was born and raised in Tuscaloosa. After graduating from Livingston University in 1968, he served four years in the U.S. Special Forces Airborne and retired as a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve.

He opened Hudson-Poole Jewelers in April 1985 and served as president of the Alabama Jewelers Association for three years. He has been named the Alabama Retail Association’s Retailer of the Year and The 24 Karat Club of the Southeastern United States’ Jewel of the Year. He was president of the Downtown Merchants Association from 1987 through 1995 and served on the original City Commission, the Downtown Tuscaloosa Authority, the River Front Committee, the Our Great Lake Committee and the Tuscaloosa Convention Bureau.

As president of the Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau from 2000 through 2003, he led Tuscaloosa’s effort to become an “All American City” and was successful with Tuscaloosa/Northport being selected on the first attempt.

Poole was named the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year in 2003 and was the chairman of the chamber in 2005.

In 1985, Poole was one of a group that started CityFest, with the money going to the Children's Hands-on Museum, PARA, the Police Athletic League and the West Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

**Betty Hale**

She died in 2009.

Her husband of 39 years, Dr. Ernest Everett Hale Jr., was named a Pillar of West Alabama in 2013.

**Gene "Poodjie" Poole**

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PILLARS
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many more charitable causes. He served three years as chairman of the Mall Ball, a fundraiser for West Alabama Easter Seals. He is a longtime supporter of many DCH projects including BBQ and Blue Jeans, Lucy Jordan Ball, and the Night on the Green. He now serves as president of the DCH Foundation.

Among the charities Poole has been involved with are Wild Turkey Federation and Ducks Unlimited, small business chair for United Way, capital campaign chair for the DCH Cancer Center, Tuscaloosa Symphony, Hospice of West Alabama, Rise School, Arc of Tuscaloosa and Arts n' Autism. Poole has been a supporter of the Exchange Club, the American Heart Association, YMCA, Sisterhood Temple, Children's Hospital, Tuscaloosa Pet Rescue, Eagles' Wings, Salvation Army, Humane Society, American Cancer Society, Children's Harbor-Camp, Turning Pointe and Project Blessing.

John Amstutz Dorsey

John Dorsey is a relative newcomer to West Alabama, but in his eight years in Greensboro, he has made a significant impact on the community through his work with after-school programs and the development of mental health services in the Black Belt.

Dorsey earned his bachelor of arts degree from Pomona College in California in 1995. He completed his next two degrees simultaneously in 2000: a medical degree and master of business administration.

While completing his residency in psychiatry at the University of California-Davis, Dorsey worked with St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and other community partners to start a free community mental health clinic.

Dorsey moved to West Alabama in 2005. He is the co-medical director of mental health services at Bryan Whitfield Memorial Hospital and serves as a staff psychiatrist at the Hale County Jail and Perry County Corrections.

Dorsey devotes much of his time to Project Horseshoe Farm, a community-based nonprofit organization he helped found in 2007 in Greensboro.

Project Horseshoe Farm provides housing, day activities, volunteer opportunities and outreach programs to seniors and adults with mental illnesses.

The project also works with local schools and other community partners to provide children in fourth through eighth grades with tutoring, mentoring and enrichment programs.

One component of the organization is a yearlong leadership development "fellowship" that, since 2009, has helped to prepare top graduates for community leadership roles in health care and education. Project Horseshoe Farm has recently begun to work with the UAB School of Medicine and the University of Alabama School of Medicine to provide community-based rotations for medical students.

Dorsey was a 2010-11 class member of Leadership Alabama.

Fitzgerald Washington

Fitzgerald Washington was born and raised in Tuscaloosa. As a youngster, he enjoyed basketball, football and baseball.

During middle school, he found a love for music, which led to membership in the high school concert and marching bands. He is a 1979 graduate of Druid High School. After completing a management and supervision degree in 1987 from Shelton State Community College, he has worked in a variety of sales and senior management positions.

He began his career with Buffalo Rock Co. as human resources coordinator. He rose in the ranks to be named marketing and sales director in 1999. He led the company's multicultural marketing initiatives in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. In 2002, he was named the general sales manager of the Tuscaloosa division.

Washington has been in many charitable and civic organizations in West Alabama. He has been a member of the Chamber of Commerce since 2006 and served as the 2013 chairman of the board. He also serves on the Black Warrior Council of the
Members of the 2014 class of the Pillars of West Alabama include, first row, from left, Jack Clarke, Denise Feinstein for Georgine Clarke, and Vernon Swift; second row, from left, Gene Poole and Dr. Robert Witt; and third row, from left, Fitzgerald Washington, Dr. Everett Hale for Betty Hale and Dr. John Dorsey.

Boy Scouts, the DCH Health System's Foundation, the Alabama Beverage Association Board, the BB&T Bank Advisory Board and the Board of Visitors for the UA College of Continuing Studies. He served on the Shelton State Community College board and as the Stillman College UNCF chairman from 2006 to 2008.

Washington was recognized as a notable alumnus of Shelton State Community College and as a Mover and Shaker by Business Alabama Spotlight on Tuscaloosa County in 2013. He was also recognized as the Charles H. Land Member of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce in 2009 and was honored as the 2013 West Alabama Christmas Parade grand marshal. He is a graduate of Leadership Tuscaloosa and was a featured speaker for the Stillman College symposium.

**Georgine Rummage Clarke**

Born in 1940 in Zuni, N.M., Clarke was the daughter of a Navajo-trained silversmith from North Carolina and a teacher from Wisconsin. She enjoyed making jewelry and collecting art.

She met her future husband while both were students at the University of New Mexico. She completed her master's degree in 1963 at Ohio State University. The Clarkees married in 1965, and they settled in Tuscaloosa in 1971.

Soon after their move, Northport celebrated its centennial, the celebration of which led to the first Kentuck Festival of the Arts in 1972. During the next four decades under Clarke's guidance, what began as a street festival of 20 local artists became an internationally known arts and crafts show, drawing more than 30,000 visitors annually to Kentuck Park. Clarke expanded Kentuck's programs well beyond the festival to include a year-round arts center in downtown Northport, featuring gallery space, a gift shop, studio space for artists and outreach and educational programs.

Though she was best known for her role as executive director for Kentuck, Clarke was the driving force behind the craft show at City Stages, a prominent music festival in downtown Birmingham. She was also the director of the Alabama Craft Council, which hosts the Alabama Clay Conference.

In 1994, Clarke left Northport to accept a position as visual arts program manager with the Alabama State Council on the Arts in Montgomery.

She also served on the Museum Association's board and the Folk Art Society of America Advisory Board.

She died in 2012.
Robert E. Witt

Witt is chancellor of the University of Alabama System, Alabama's largest higher education enterprise. With a budget exceeding $5 billion and an annual economic impact of more than $8 billion, the UA System is composed of doctoral research universities in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham and Huntsville as well as the UAB Health System.

Witt served as UA's president from 2003 to 2012.

Under Witt's leadership as president, student enrollment increased more than 50 percent and the university became a national front-runner in the recruitment of National Merit and National Achievement Scholars. More than one out of four entering freshmen arrived on campus with a high school grade point average of 4.0 or higher.

Witt was president of the University of Texas at Arlington from 1995 to 2003. He began his 35-year career in higher education in 1968 when he joined the business school faculty at the University of Texas at Austin, rising through the ranks as department chair and associate dean. In 1985 he was named dean of the UT business school, which was recognized by the Wall Street Journal as one of the top seven public schools of business in the world.

Witt is chairman of the Council of Presidents of Alabama's public colleges and universities. Other leadership activities include the Governor's College & Career Ready Task Force, the American Cast Iron Pipe Co. board of directors, the Alexis de Tocqueville executive committee and the Elizabeth Project Care Board. He is past chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, a past member of the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority board and the Black Warrior Council of the Boy Scouts of America. In 2011 he was inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor, which is composed of 100 living Alabamians elected on the basis of service to the state.

Witt earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Bates College, a master's degree in business administration from the Tuck School at Dartmouth College, and a doctorate from Penn State University.

Vernon Swift

Vernon Swift graduated from high school in West Point, Miss. He received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Stillman College in 1972 and a master's degree in special education from the University of Alabama in 1975. In 1983, he returned to Tuscaloosa. For more than 30 years, he has worked with the Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church.

He was the founder and chairman of the board for the Elizabeth Project Care Inc. This project includes the 100 Boys/100 Men Program, a senior citizens program, a substance abuse prevention program and a child development center.

He serves as the chairman of the board for the Alabama Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Swift has served on the board for the Tuscaloosa Metropolitan YMCA, the American Red Cross, the United Way of West Alabama and the Girl Scouts Board Development Committee. He has served as the president of the Tuscaloosa Ministerial Fellowship for more than 20 years.

Swift has led Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church in many capital projects, most recently the construction of a new 800-seat sanctuary, dedicated on July 19, 2010. Other efforts include the $1.5 million Family Life Center. He also collaborated with the church and Habitat for Humanity to build a home.

He was awarded honorary doctorates from Mary Holmes College in West Point, Miss., in 1983 and from the Birmingham Easonian Bible College in 2010. He twice received the Outstanding Community Leadership Award given by Central High School and was selected the Citizen of the Year by Concerned Citizens in 1985.

UA SYSTEM

UA administrators raking in millions

PAYMENTS: CAROL GARRISON AND MALCOLM PORTERA HAVE COLLECTED MILLIONS SINCE LEAVING THE UA SYSTEM.

Charles J. Dean • cdean@al.com

Former UAB President Carol Z. Garrison has collected more than $1 million since resigning almost two years ago.

Former UA System Chancellor Malcolm Portera retired in April 2012, but continued to draw his salary and bonus payments paid annually to senior level leaders in the system. All total, he was paid about $1.5 million from April 2012 to the end of 2013.

Payments to the two former senior UA system administrators came while tuition for students at the system's three universities continued to increase in an attempt to deal with ever increasing operating costs. Budget cuts to some programs at the schools have also been a reality.

And more may be coming.

What gives?

The payments to Portera and Garrison were made under what is called the system's "executives policy," a policy passed in the late 1990s by the UA System Board of Trustees, which allows qualifying former presidents and chancellors to:

- Take 12-month sabbatical leaves at full pay.
- Return to active faculty after the sabbatical year.
- Receive salary equal to the highest-paid faculty member in the department.

Garrison post-resignation

Garrison certainly has been busy since resigning. University of Alabama System officials provided some examples of her "projects and services":

- Serving as a member of the University Hunts Program Advisory Board.
- Serving as a member or chair of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Substantive Change Committee, the SACS-COC Board of Trustees and the SACS-COC Compliance and Reports Subcommittee.
- Working intensively with UA’s undergraduate Bioethics (co-) and Ethics teams in preparation for regional and national competitions.
- Making presentations to Birmingham and UAB communities as well as participating in several other endeavors.

As for Portera

Portera has a similar list of post-retirement duties:

- He assisted in creating a multi-state consortium to secure a national pilot program to link University-based manufacturing/automotive research centers in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee in support of the supply chain of manufacturers, including BMW, Nissan, Mercedes-Benz, Hyundai, KIA and Honda.
- He served as the representative of the UA System on the leaders group (comprised of Stanford, M.I.T., and Boston University as well as the UA System) assisting the President of South Korea in the implementation of her "Creative Economy" initiative. Portera's numerous presentations in this arena included the Leaders Group Conference in May 2013 at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles and the CREATIVE KOREA 2013 Conference in Seoul in December 2013.
- During 2013 Portera hosted a conference including the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology and the UAB Center for Biophysical Science and Engineering.
Tuition increase reveals administrative flaws

By Nathan James

This year, just as in several past years, the University of Alabama Board of Trustees voted to raise tuition prices. It was a small increase — only 4 percent — but it highlights a growing problem.

The University of Alabama is paid for by Alabamian tax dollars. It purports to educate Alabamians. But at this moment, it’s failing in that department.

More and more, the University is becoming a school for the wealthy elite. And more and more, the University is an institution that prioritizes expansion and profit over the needs of Alabama’s students.

If you want proof, look at the numbers.

Look at the 100 percent increase in tuition prices over the past 10 years. Look at the fact that at a state university, 55 percent of incoming freshmen are out-of-state. Look at the Shelby fountain, which cost $1.8 million and has no purpose other than to attract new recruits.

Improving our university is good. But Alabama is a poor state, and the national economy is still flagging. We need affordable education more than we need new fountains or bigger dorms. If minor improvements to the University make it inaccessible to Alabama’s middle class, then it has failed as an institution.

With that in mind, why is the University becoming so expensive? Blame the Board of Trustees. They’re the ones who approved the Shelby fountain, forthcoming multi-million dollar renovations to the Quad, raising tuition prices and a host of other decisions. They’re also the ones who gave “retreating” UA executives $1.14 million in the 2012-13 school year and who pay the chancellor and the presidents of each UA campus six-figure bonuses each fall, according to public wage data.

Frankly, our administration doesn’t deserve performance bonuses. They’ve enabled crimes of violence and discrimination for decades.

But all of that aside, their worst offense is that they’re sabotaging a vital resource for Alabama. They’re taking our public university and turning it into a money-making venture. They’re becoming rich off performance bonuses, and they’re offering lucrative positions to their friends. They’re plundering an invaluable public institution by making it a corporate enterprise.

This state needs a good public university. In-state education for ordinary Alabamians doesn’t just benefit students, it injects skilled workers into our economy.

But the University’s administrators jeopardize that by driving costs up. They jeopardize it by shifting the cost onto a growing body of out-of-state students. They jeopardize it with inexcusable fiscal irresponsibility. And Alabama will suffer for it.

Nathan James is a senior majoring in public relations.
University administration should be transparent about expenses

By Mark Hammontree

You may have missed it, but once again the Alabama System board of trustees voted to raise tuition and fees at the system's universities. After the latest in these regular tuition increases, the two-semester cost to attend The University of Alabama is $9,828 for an Alabama resident and $24,960 for an out-of-state student.

System administrators said the increase was unavoidable and that the regular inequity in state funding will continue to result in tough decisions about the costs imposed on students.

Which is certainly partially true. The state legislature regularly denies the full budget requested by the UA system, even if the appropriations for 2014 did increase to AL.com. It shouldn't surprise anyone that the Education Trust Fund for our struggling state can hardly keep up with growth occurring on campus in Tuscaloosa. And there's really nothing wrong about small tuition increases for an expanding university.

What is wrong is the misallocation of the money that the UA system does have. What's wrong is that the Board of Trustees places their priorities. What's wrong is the sluggish flow of information about where public money and tuition is going.

The Crimson White reported that the Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations said that the tuition increase resulted from costs that the administration has no control over.

I'm guessing he's not referring to the $1.8 million fountain that debuted outside Shelby Hall last year. Or the new $3 million football weight room.

He's probably not talking about the millions of dollars paid out in bonuses to administrators past and present, according to AL.com. He's almost certainly not talking about Nick Saban's new $8.8 million-a-year salary.

And don't get me wrong. I am fully in favor of paying Saban whatever it takes to keep him here and keep him happy. I understand that the football program brings in more revenue for the school than money expended on it. Just don't tell me that choosing to pay a football coach more than any other public official in the country is an unavoidable cost.

The biggest issue is that the Chancellor Witt and the Board of Trustees want students to just send in their checks and stop asking questions about where the money is being spent.

They don't think they have a duty to tell us about the millions of dollars spent in trademark lawsuits in recent years. They're sick of reporters still asking questions about the hiring of President Bonner's brother for a system position with a $350,000 a year price tag. They don't feel the need to provide any information about the search or lack thereof for a new president when Guy Bailey resigned.

It's the lack of state funding, they tell us as they add a couple hundred more dollars to our bill. It's that f---ing Affordable Care Act making our healthcare benefits costs increase. It's the new classrooms we're building and the excellent faculty we're hiring.

Maybe I'm just paranoid and bitter from my time dealing with the administration as the CW's news editor last year. But excuse me if I'm not very trusting of a system administration less transparent than the dollar bills they want me to send to them.

Mark Hammontree is a junior majoring in secondary education.
Tuition increased by four percent for all UA students

By Andy McWhorter | Production Editor

After the most recent increase, the cost of tuition at The University of Alabama has more than doubled over the last decade. Tuition for all UA students rose by 4 percent after The University of Alabama System Board of Trustees approved an increase in a recent meeting.

The board approved a $188 per semester tuition increase for full-time, in-state undergraduate students, as well as a $500 per semester increase for out-of-state students at The University of Alabama. Tuition at the University will now cost $4,913 per semester for in-state students and $12,475 for out-of-state students. Law School students will also see their tuition increase by $275 per semester for in-state students and $580 for out-of-state students.

The cost of tuition at the University has more than doubled since 2005, when tuition cost $2,432 per semester for in-state students. However, growth in tuition costs has to slow recent years. Tuition rose by about 2.7 percent last year and 3.9 percent this year for in-state students. From 2005 to 2012, tuition grew by an average of 9 percent per year.

Ray Hayes, executive vice chancellor for finance and operations for The University of Alabama System, said the increased cost of tuition was caused by lower-than-expected growth in state funding. Hayes said state funding for the system is

SEE TUITION PAGE 9

System implements tuition increases for fall semester

Tuition from Page 1

projected to grow by about two percent over the next few years, falling short of some expenses.

"We’ve got a lot of expenses, particularly health benefits and those expenses that are growing in excess of 7 percent," he said. "There are just some things that we can’t control."

The allocation for The University of Alabama System in the Education Trust Fund grew by one percent this year, from about $450 million to just over $455 million. According to a report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a non-profit think tank, Alabama has cut nearly 38 percent from spending on higher education since 2008. This translates to a $4,413 decrease in spending per student in the state as a whole.

Hayes said the increased tuition will go towards maintaining the standards of quality students at The University of Alabama expect.

“There are new classrooms planned and additional faculty support, additional support to the students,” he said. “It’s balancing trying to be as efficient and effective as possible and keep our tuition as low as possible, but trying to provide the quality of education students here expect. It’s a balancing act.”

Tuition costs also rose at The University of Alabama at Birmingham by $188 per semester for in-state students and $413 for out-of-state students. Tuition costs at The University of Alabama at Huntsville were decreased because of restructuring in their tuition payment plan. Hayes said The University of Alabama has already made similar changes to their payment plan.

“What UAH is doing is what UA already has,” he said. “If you take 12 hours then that extra hour, [it] is at the same level as the 12 hours, called block tuition. University of Alabama at Huntsville was not doing that. In other words, you’re at 12 hours and if you take a 13th hour it’s an additional payment. So they’re restructuring to be more like The University of Alabama.”
Future of teachers' group is unsteady

AEA loses main funding source, will likely lose members

By Phillip Rawls
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | The future for one of the largest and best financed organizations in the state, the Alabama Education Association, is uncertain now that its main funding source ended.

The group can no longer use payroll deduction to collect dues from its 95,000 members. Spokeswoman Amy Marlowe said most of the teachers, school support workers and administrators who are association members have used payroll deductions but that the organization has been busy getting them to sign up for bank drafts.

The group hasn't released how many have signed up, but Marlowe said, "It's our new way of life."

The payroll deductions for political organizations got prohibited by a state law that Republicans passed just a month after they took control of the Legislature in November 2010. Its enforcement was delayed until this week because of a legal challenge filed by the association.

"The law was absolutely targeted at AEA," Marlowe said.

The sponsor of the law, Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said payroll deductions are almost out of sight and out of mind. With bank drafts, members will see the payment each month on their bank statements and may look more closely at what the teachers association is doing, he said.

"That's the biggest challenge AEA has. They are a liberal organization..."
AEA

Continued From Page 1A

that supports other liberal organizations, and many of their members are not," Marsh said.

Marsh was one of several senators who supported the law and beat AEA-funded opponents in the Republican primary June 3. Association-supported candidates did beat five incumbent House members.

That election showed the financial influence of AEA with payroll deduction. It reported spending nearly $7 million. In contrast, another large and influential group, the Business Council of Alabama, reported spending $1.5 million.

Jess Brown, a political science professor at Athens State University, said the education association doesn’t have the close personal relationship with its members that it had in the past and that the law will cause it to take a hit in membership, although it’s too early to say how many.

"AEA will remain an influential player on Goat Hill, but the old gray mare ain’t what she used to be," said Brown, who has been an AEA member in the past.

Byrdie Larkin, a political science professor at Alabama State University, said ordinary citizens don’t monitor the Alabama Legislature.

She said the Republican-backed law won’t weaken the association if its members believe it is doing a good job monitoring the Legislature and representing members’ views at the Statehouse.

"When they have a strong history like the AEA, I don’t think the Republican Party will be successful," said Larkin, who is a member of the American Federation of Teachers.

When Democrats controlled the Legislature, they passed a law that allowed members of public employees groups to have their dues and contributions to the groups’ political action committees deducted from their paychecks.

The 2010 law sponsored by Marsh ended that for any group that used the deductions for political activity. AEA challenged it in federal court and got a judge to block enforcement of the law until recently.

In a separate case filed in state court, a Shelby County judge ordered school systems to end payroll deductions to any PAC or membership organization unless those organizations certified by Monday that they were in compliance with the law and no longer involved in political activity. Marlowe said AEA couldn’t have done that and still represented its members’ interests.

"We are about the only voice of dissension left in town," she said.

-A supporter of the 2010 law, House Speaker Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn, said payroll deductions gave the association an unfair advantage over other lobbying groups that have to get members to write checks for dues.

"The end of AEA’s payroll deduction is a win for Alabama taxpayers. It is simply unfair that Alabamians were spending their hard-earned tax dollars to help advance any labor union’s political agenda," he said.
GLOBAL TRADE SHOW

A delegation of Alabama business leaders and economic developers looked for new opportunities to expand the state’s biotechnology sector at a global industry trade show held in San Diego.

The group attended the 2014 BIO International Convention, where they participated in meetings with potential prospects, gave presentations and networked with others in the industry.

The state’s representatives included those from biotech companies and research organizations across the state. This year’s conference attracted 1,700 exhibitors and more than 15,000 attendees.

Raising the state’s profile in biosciences is a priority for the Alabama Department of Commerce, said Secretary Greg Canfield.

“We already have pronounced strengths in this field, as well as exceptional research organizations and cutting-edge companies. It’s a natural growth sector for us,” he said in a prepared statement.

In 2012, bioscience industry employment approached 13,000 in Alabama, with 662 businesses and organizations a part of it, according to a Battelle/BIO report.

Since 2003, the state’s bioscience firms have received $94 million in venture capital funding, mostly in health care information technology and software, and medical diagnostics.

*Daun Kort Asok*
Bham contractors score in sports

Birmingham has evolved into a hub for general contractors.

The city boasts some of the largest contractors in the country, by revenue. It is particularly well-represented in the health care construction world, with Modern Healthcare naming Brasfield & Gorrie (No. 2), Robins & Morton (No. 3) and Hoar Construction (No. 9) on its 2014 list of top health care general contractors.

But the area's large construction industry is starting to carve out quite the niche in a new arena: sports.

BL Harbert International was awarded the $68.9 million contract to build the new basketball arena at the University of Mississippi. That follows the contractor's 2010 construction of Auburn's basketball arena.

Brasfield & Gorrie led a team of four general contractors called American Builders in winning the bid to build the Atlanta Braves' new stadium in Cobb County.

"It's interesting that the city of Birmingham is really a hub for major construction," said Dan Price, director of business development at BL Harbert. "We're excited to see Brasfield land that project, and we're excited to see a Birmingham firm get a big piece of that project. Birmingham's kind of a hidden jewel."

Price said BL Harbert had its eye on Ole Miss' project from the start of the fundraising campaign three years ago.

"Anytime a sports project hits the radar screen, you always want to do it because it's fun and your people want to do it," Price said.

While Brasfield & Gorrie had never built a baseball stadium before, the contractor did have experience in building a large sports facility in the Georgia Dome, home of the Atlanta Falcons.

"I think Brasfield had a pretty good resume to get the Atlanta Braves stadium, having been part of the Georgia Dome from years back and some really neat projects," Price said. "And the same thing for us. Our past experience kind of positioned us to feel like we could compete on this one."

Price said BL Harbert has a similar arena project in the crosshairs, and it's looking at a number of other sports-related projects in the Southeast.

Brasfield & Gorrie's construction of the Braves stadium will be complete for opening day 2017, and in a recent interview with the BBJ, COO Jeff Stone said the company has its eye on the $400 million entertainment district associated with the $672 million baseball park.

"Honestly, moving forward, it's going to make these two firms sort of a player in the national sports arena," Price said. "Once you start that experience, you can build and build off of it."

He predicts both firms will target similar projects across the region and the nation -- maybe even in their backyard.

Price said BL Harbert has been approached about the proposed dome/arena in Birmingham.

"Certainly we hope to be involved," Price said. "I would see a project like that offering opportunities to several of the big companies in town. We're certainly going to do everything we can to bring that project to life."
Ni hao, y'all

Alabama benefits as China starts moving manufacturing to U.S.

Paul Wiseman
The Associated Press

 Burdened with Alabama's highest unemployment rate, long abandoned by textile mills and furniture plants, Wilcox County desperately needs jobs.

They're coming, and from a most unlikely place: Henan Province, China, 7,600 miles away.

Henan's Golden Dragon Precise Copper Tube Group opened a plant here last month. It will employ more than 300 in a county known less for job opportunities than for lakes filled with bass, pine forests rich with wild turkey and boar and muddy roads best negotiated in four-wheel-drive trucks.

"Jobs that pay $15 an hour are few and far between," says Dottie Gaston, an official in nearby Thomasville.

What's happening in Pine Hill is starting to happen across America.

After decades of siphoning jobs from the United States, China is creating some. Chinese companies invested a record $14 billion in the United States last year, according to the Rhodium Group research firm. Collectively, they employ more than 70,000 Americans, up from virtually none a decade ago.

See CHINA | 3D
CHINA

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Powerful forces — narrowing wage gaps, tumbling U.S. energy prices, the vagaries of currency markets — are pulling Chinese companies across the Pacific. Mayors and economic development officials have lined up to welcome Chinese investors. Southern states, touting low labor and land costs, have been especially aggressive.

In the case of the Pine Hill plant, tax breaks, some Southern hospitality and a tray of homemade banana pudding helped, too.

"Get off the plane and the mayor is waiting for you," says Hong Kong billionaire Ronnie Chan.

In March, Dothan held a two-day U.S.-China manufacturing symposium, drawing dozens of potential Chinese investors. On sale were T-shirts reading: "Nihao, y'all" — combining the Chinese version of "hello" with a colloquial Southernism.

Chinese executives wandered around during a street festival, experiencing Americana by snapping photos of vintage '60s muscle cars. A Chinese company, in a deal negotiated before the symposium, announced it would bring a 3-D printing operation to Dothan.

Among other Chinese projects in the United States that are creating jobs:

■ In Moraine, Ohio, Chinese glassmaker Fuyao Glass Industry Group Co. is taking over a plant that General Motors abandoned in 2008 and creating at least 800 jobs. The site puts Fuyao within four hours' drive of auto plants in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.

■ In Lancaster County, S.C., Chinese textile manufacturer Keer Group is investing $218 million in a plant to make industrial yarn and will employ 500. South Carolina nudged the deal along with a $4 million grant.

■ In Gregory, Texas, Tianjin Pipe is investing more than $1 billion in a factory that makes pipes for oil and gas drillers. The company expects to begin production late this year or early in 2015. It will have 50 to 70 employees by the end of this year and 400 to 500 by the end of 2017.

The United States and China have long maintained a lopsided relationship: China makes things and America buys them. The U.S. trade deficit in goods with China last year hit a record $318 billion. And for three decades, numerous U.S. manufacturers have moved operations to China.

The flow is at least starting to move the other way. One reason is that in the past decade, the cost of labor, adjusted for productivity gains, has surged 18.7 percent at Chinese factories, compared with just 27 percent in the United States, according to Boston Consulting Group.

In addition, Chinese electricity costs rose 66 percent, more than twice the United States' increase. The start of large-scale U.S. shale gas production has helped contain U.S. electricity costs.

And the value of China's currency has risen more than 30 percent against the U.S. dollar over the past decade. The higheryuan has raised the cost of Chinese goods sold abroad.
Wilcox County also gave the company 100 acres of a 274-acre industrial park it bought for $1.2 million and a break on local property taxes. And Alabama offered to reimburse the company up to $20 million of its costs for building the $100 million factory. It will get the full amount if it ends up hiring 500 people, says George Alford of the Wilcox County Industrial Development Authority.

Local officials assembled all the public agencies and utilities Golden Dragon will have to deal with — from Alabama Power to the Port of Mobile — in one room on one day so company executives could have their questions answered at once.

The message, Day said, was: "If you come here, we'll hold your hand."

A banquet was organized with both traditional Southern fare, such as pink eye purple hull peas, and Chinese dishes from Thomasville's New China Buffet restaurant.

When the visiting Chinese were seen devouring homemade banana pudding, "we took them the whole tray," Day says.

To prepare for future banquets, Thomasville is buying Chinese-style dining tables with built-in turntables.

Still, culture and language can remain a barrier. Local officials hastily replaced a black-and-white banner welcoming Golden Dragon after learning that the colors signified a funeral to the Chinese.

Golden Dragon and the future Dothan 3D join two other Chinese firms in Alabama — Continental Motors in Mobile makes piston engines for aircraft and Shandong Swan USA in Montgomery makes saws for cotton gins.

and, conversely, made U.S. goods more affordable in China.

Those rising costs have cut China's competitive edge. In 2004, manufacturing cost 14 percent less in China than in the United States; that advantage has narrowed to 5 percent. If the trend toward higher wages, energy costs and a higher currency continues, Boston Consulting predicts, U.S. manufacturing will be less expensive than China's by 2018.

Cost isn't the only allure. As Chinese companies build more sophisticated products, they want to work more directly with U.S. customers.

Local officials here in southwestern Alabama went out of their way to lure Golden Dragon, which wanted to build a plant to make copper tubing for air conditioners.

At first, the company considered Thomasville in Clarke County. But Thomasville didn't have any suitable sites after Golden Dragon decided it needed three times as much space as originally sought.

"I was almost in a panic," recalls Thomasville Mayor Sheldon Day.

But Day spotted an industrial park in Wilcox County with plenty of space. Day says he didn't mind the project going to a neighboring county. The plant would employ Thomasville residents, too.

And there was another benefit: Wilcox County — stuck with 15.5 percent unemployment, Alabama's highest — qualified for extra aid. It landed $8 million in state and federal grants to help build an annex road and sewage lines for the project.
Bentley announces Workforce Council

Staff report

Gov. Robert Bentley on Tuesday announced 28 appointees to the Alabama Workforce Council, a group that will examine ways to design education programs that match the needs of businesses.

The council, which will hold its first meeting July 21 in Montgomery, will offer advice to the state school board, the chancellor of the state community college system, the superintendent of the state's education department and the presidents of the state's four-year colleges and universities.

"The Alabama Workforce Council is a world-class representation of many of the state's top business and industry leaders and will be vitally important to building and maintaining high-quality partnerships between industry, education and workforce training institutions," Bentley said in a news release.

Among the Alabama Workforce Council appointees with ties to West Alabama are Fitzgerald Washington of Buffalo Rock Co.; Norman Crow of D.T. Freight Co., who is also a member of the Tuscaloosa city school board; Philip C. Johnston of Mercedes-Benz U.S. International in Vance; and Terry Waters of the Governor's Office of Workforce Development.

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Bentley appointed Zeke Smith, executive vice president of external affairs at Alabama Power, to chair the council.

"It is important there is an open dialogue between industry and education," Smith said. "I am optimistic the council will make a difference helping our educational leaders develop a robust workforce that can step right in and fill the needs of industry and business."

The council is one of the recommendations from the Governor's College and Career Ready Task Force, which was created in 2013.

The governor also released a summary of recommendations from the College and Career Ready Task Force, which the workforce council will be focusing on:
- Streamline and align the state's existing workforce development functions.
- Increase awareness and educate students on available opportunities in various industry sectors.
- Create a statistical feedback loop between industry and education.
- Propose funding opportunities to increase established industry-funded and education budget allocations to be used as scholarship programs for college technical education and dual enrollment programming.
- Enhance public relations and marketing associated with career readiness and skilled craft trades.
- Develop a mechanism that will ensure continuous emphasis on pre-kindergarten through grade school education.
- Provide leadership and recommend standards for increasing membership and expanding operations of the existing 10 Regional Workforce Development Councils.
- Identify and address critical unmet needs such as specialty skills in a specific region of the state.
- Develop a methodology to guide program decisions and gauge the success of students as they enter the workforce.

For a list of members of the Alabama Workforce Council, view this story on www.tuscaloosa news.com.
UA names interim student affairs VP

The University of Alabama has named its student housing director as interim vice president for student affairs.

UA President Judy Bonner announced the appointment of Steven Hood on Monday. Hood will assume the role today.

Hood has served as executive director of housing and residential communities at UA since 2011. He supervised the Community Service Center from August 2012 until December 2013.

Hood came to UA from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He began his career in student affairs as residence life area coordinator at Samford University from 1999-2003. Hood earned a doctorate at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2010, a master's at Troy University in 2000 and a bachelor's at the University of West Alabama in 1995.

He replaces Mark Nelson, who was named dean of the UA College of Communication and Information Sciences in June and is scheduled to begin the new role today.
Grad student lives scholar's dream

UA molecular biologist says his goal is to emulate Nobel laureates he is meeting with this week

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

University of Alabama doctoral student Brandon Hill is living a dream of sorts this week while attending an annual meeting of Nobel Prize winners and graduate students in Germany.

"One of my long-term goals is to win a Nobel Prize," the 29-year-old molecular biology student said.

Hill, whose childhood interest in science crystallized into a career goal in high school, looks forward to the opportunity to listen to presentations and meet with the laureates. He said he's especially interested in gaining insight into their career paths from graduate students to pre-eminent scientists.

He said he also looks forward to exchanging ideas with the fellow graduate students about their work and career plans.

"I was so intrigued and very excited to be nominated," Hill said.

Hill is one of about 600 students from 80 countries selected to attend the meeting from June 29 through Friday in Lindau, Germany. The students are selected through a multistage nomination process.

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The students will have the chance to interact professionally and socially with 37 Nobel Prize winners. The meeting will include lectures by the laureates, discussion sessions, master classes and panel discussions.

The annual program is devoted to physiology or medicine, with an emphasis on areas such as the body's immune system defenses against infection, advances in cancer research and intelligent drug research, according to the organization.

Hill, a fourth-year doctoral student from Jackson, Miss., was nominated by the chair of UA's biological sciences department.

The biology professor supervising Hill's work said he believes he is deserving of the honor.

"He is absolutely wonderful," said Carol Duffy, an associate professor in biology in whose lab Hill works. "He was made to be a scientist. He is steady and calm and has a work ethic that is amazing."

Duffy's is a virology lab working with a strain of the herpes virus. Hill is working on a project to attach nanoparticles to an engineered oncolytic virus, which infects and kills cancer cells. By attaching nanoparticles to the virus, researchers hope to create a better therapeutic and detection process, Duffy said.

Hill became interested in cancer research in college at Jackson State, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in biology.

When he began his doctoral work at UA, Hill said, Duffy suggested a project involving nanotechnology, virology and cancer research.

"It was just so cool," he said.

The project's goal is engineering the nanoparticles and virus for a targeted drug delivery.

He is now working on a paper about his work to get different proteins to attach to the nanoparticles under different physiological conditions.

The research is designed to show how the process works. The other stage is engineering the virus for targeted delivery.

"He's done some pretty innovative work," Duffy said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
People loved Leslie Valenly because of her personality. They use words like "sparky," "charming," "funny" and "caring" to describe her. People followed Valenly because she was a team builder who "told you what to do and made you love doing it." In the words of Dr. Marshall Schreeder, her boss at Huntsville’s Clearview Cancer Institute.

Valenly, who died this month from leukemia, was the public face of organizations all her life. A student hostess for the University of Alabama, she would later be public service director for WHNT-TV, spokesperson for Hospice Family Care and director of communications for Clearview Cancer Institute for the nine years before her death.

Best personality

People in all of those organizations are mourning Valenly along with lifelong friends made growing up in Huntsville and new friends made at each stop along her way. voted best personality years' straight at Grissom High School. Valenly's gifts were visible early.

"Funny, creative, fearless, mischievous, a great laugh and always smiling," friend Candy Burnett said last week. "She always had an idea, was always thinking of something, and she was very impulsive. She could get you into almost anything."

When she arrived at the university in Tuscaloosa, "you could tell what a spark of life she had, what leadership potential," Huntsville mayor Tommy Battle said. While they met at college, they would be friends the rest of her life, and he admired her skills, but Battle never tried to bring her into city government.

"She had a ... ideas"

"I don't think city government would be able to hold her," Battle said. "She had more ideas in a day than I have in a month."

Schreeder, who had successfully treated Valenly earlier for breast cancer, asked Valenly to help his group of doctors build something new in Huntsville, the sprawling, state-of-the-art Clearview Cancer Institute. He did it, "because I knew how good she was."

"She really was important," Schreeder said. "She helped get the word out that we were here. We were known as doctors, and she helped develop us as presence." She also helped Schreeder's team reach out into the community.

Valenly was always doing things and doing things. She helped Clearview form its support group for women with cancer. She formed another cancer support group in Marshall County and always had side projects like raising money for DeKalb County after the 2011 tornadoes and finding and preparing a house for Hurricane Katrina survivors.

Helping her university

Valenly also put her efforts toward helping her university. She worked with Dean Rox of Birmingham, a fellow student host, and other alumni to start the Capstone Leadership Academy. Now in its sixth year, it brings 10th-graders from around the state to Tuscaloosa each year for a program on values, vision and voice.

Mr. said having Valenly involved "meant, and this was automatic, that would be changed with energy, incredibly well-organized and everybody would want to participate. She was just that type of personality.

Valenly didn't get in the middle of thing to make it about her, Battle said, but to make sure it went right and everybody was part of it.

Leukemia diagnosis

Valenly was diagnosed with leukemia in March 2013, and went to Vanderbilt University for a bone-marrow transplant that briefly put her disease into remission. When she arrived, she went through the normal new patient orientation. In that program, new patients met with others who have been in treatment longer to be reassured about their care. "It wasn't long before they started bringing the new patients to Leslie, so she could visit with and encourage them," Joe Valley said.

Joe Valley said his wife was the glue that held their family together. They raised three girls — Leigh (Hayes) Matthews, Megan Hayes and Katie Valenly — and all three spoke at her funeral of "the greatest woman we have and will ever know."

"She had this ability to care for everybody," Joe Valley said. "I can't think of a day she wasn't thinking about somebody else."

Joe Valenly also said, "I called her my 24-hour entertainment center. She was always on."

No one was surprised that, when she knew she was dying, Leslie Valenly turned to planning her last days and her funeral. "Joe, everybody's got a final phase," she told her husband.

'A celebration'

She wanted "a celebration" at the church, Burnett said, and she got one.

"She was funny, too," Burnett said. "Remember her saying once, 'Am I gonna have to hire my own organist?'"

No one was surprised, either, that Valenly's last weeks had "no anger, no bitterness," Burnett said. "She lived life the way she wanted to do it and died on her own terms. It was incredible to witness."

Kay Campbell welcomes your suggestions for Life Stories about people from north Alabama. Do you know someone, recently deceased, who lived an extraordinary life? Please contact Kay at KCampbell@AL.com or 256-532-4320.
UA'S STEM ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACADEMY

Amber Woods, an upcoming junior at Greene County High School, and Jacob Creel, an upcoming senior at Holt High School, present portions of their group's business plan during the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Entrepreneurship Academy at the Bryant Conference Hall on Thursday at the University of Alabama. About 30 students participated in the camp, which is designed to present science, technology, engineering and math in the context of entrepreneurship to students interested in those fields.
Hobby Lobby Is Only the Beginning

By: Paul Horwitz

Tuscaloosa, Ala. — The United States Constitution speaks of the Supreme Court’s jurisdiction over “cases” and “controversies.” But when social controversies do come before the court, its powers are limited. In Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, which concerned the dispute over the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate, the court may have decided the case. The larger controversy, however, won’t be settled so easily.

By a 5-to-4 vote, the court on Monday held that the mandate, which requires employers to provide health insurance coverage for contraception, could not be applied to closely held for-profit corporations with religious objections to some forms of contraception. Religious groups described the mandate as part of a war on religious freedom. Supporters of the mandate countered that a victory for the plaintiffs would allow large corporations, under the cover of religious freedom, not just to impede women’s exercise of their reproductive rights but also to defy civil rights statutes with impunity.

Amid this heated talk, it was easy to lose sight of the fact that this was a statutory case, not a case decided under the First Amendment’s protection of freedom of religion. The statute in question, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, states that the government “shall not substantially burden” the exercise of religion without satisfying a demanding legal test.

It is worth noting that the act was championed by President Bill Clinton and passed in 1993, with near unanimity, by a Democrat-controlled Congress. The act was drafted in response to a controversial 1990 Supreme Court decision that made it easier — far too easy, according to critics of all political stripes — for the government to burden the exercise of religion.

The decision in Hobby Lobby was no shock to anyone familiar with the heavy weight that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act places on religious accommodation. The fate of the case was sealed 21 years ago — not by a slim majority of the court, but by virtually every member of Congress. In a dissenting opinion on Monday, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg argued that the court’s ruling in Hobby Lobby was one of “startling breadth,” but the statute itself is deliberately broad.

So why all the shouting? If the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is clearly written, and the product of a democratic process, what explains the apocalyptic rhetoric surrounding this case? In truth, the sources of the controversy lie outside the issue of the contraceptive mandate itself. And that should be great cause for concern — to both sides of the debate.

The first source of controversy is the collapse of a national consensus on a key element of religious liberty: accommodation. Throughout American history, there has been widespread agreement that in our religiously diverse and widely devout country, it is good for the government to accommodate religious exercise. We have disagreed about particular accommodations (may a Muslim police officer wear a beard, despite police department policy?), and especially about whether religious accommodations should be ordered by judges or crafted by legislators. But we have generally agreed that our nation benefits when we help rather than

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burden those with religious obligations. That consensus seems, quite suddenly, to have evaporated.

A second source of controversy is that many people view the Hobby Lobby case as concerning not just reproductive rights but also, indirectly, rights for gays and lesbians. Advocates for same-sex marriage have long insisted that their own marriages need not threaten anyone else’s, but citizens with religious objections to same-sex marriage wonder whether that is entirely true: Will a small-business owner be sued, for instance, for declining to provide services to a same-sex couple? Conversely, and understandably, gay and lesbian couples wonder why they do not deserve the same protections from discrimination granted to racial and other minorities. For both sides, Hobby Lobby was merely a prelude to this dawning conflict.

The third source of controversy is a change in our views of the marketplace itself. The marketplace was once seen as place to put aside our culture wars and engage in the great American tradition of buying and selling. The shopping mall has even been called the “American agora.” But today the market itself has become a site of cultural conflict. Hobby Lobby is one of many companies that seek to express faith commitments at work as well as at home and that don’t see the workplace as a thing apart from religion. Many companies preach and practice values, religious and otherwise, that are unrelated to market considerations. CVS, for example, recently announced that it would stop selling tobacco products, regardless of how that decision might affect its bottom line.

A country that cannot even agree on the idea of religious accommodation, let alone on what terms, is unlikely to agree on what to do next. A country in which many states cannot manage to pass basic anti-discrimination laws covering sexual orientation is one whose culture wars may be beyond the point of compromise. And a nation whose marketplace itself is viewed, for better or worse, as a place to fight both those battles rather than to escape from them is still less likely to find surcease from struggle.
UAB eye doctors urge people to leave fireworks to 'professionals' to avoid injury, blindness

By: Jesse Chambers

As July 4 approaches, doctors at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Callahan Eye Hospital fear they will once again be treating eye injuries – some of them extremely serious – caused by the use of fireworks.

Those injuries "can run the spectrum from a minor injury right up to loss of vision or the loss of the eye," said Dr. Jay McCollum, an ophthalmologist and director of emergency services at Callahan, in a recent UAB news release.

"I've seen too many injuries related to fireworks, and many of these occur in children and innocent bystanders and result in permanent vision loss," Callahan eye surgeon Dr. Priscilla Fowler said in the release.

In 2013 alone, 11,400 people suffered injuries and eight people died due to the unsafe use of fireworks in the United States, according to new data from the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission.

Hospital officials urge people to stay away from fireworks and instead attend a fireworks show. For example, there is Birmingham's annual Thunder on the Mountain celebration, for which Callahan is the safety sponsor.

"It's better to just leave the fireworks alone and go to a show like Thunder on the Mountain and let the professionals do it," McCollum said. "That's the safest thing."

Dianne Peterson of Vincent found this out the hard way on July 4, 2013, according to the release. Her family members were lighting fireworks in her yard, and she was hit in the eye by one as she stepped out of her back door.

The damage to Petron's left eye was severe, and she was sent to the emergency room at Callahan. She was in surgery until midnight.

Fortunately, she did not lose all vision in the eye. "She is able to wear a contact lens and achieve vision of 20/40, which, given the severity of her injuries, is an excellent result," Fowler said.

There will be no fireworks at Peterson's house this year, she says. "I never dreamed that, when I stepped out the back door that day, something like that would happen," she said.
Fowler and McCollum say that, if you must use fireworks, follow these safety procedures --

--Always have an adult present.

--Never use bottle rockets.

--Never allow young children to play with fireworks, even sparklers. Sparklers can reach 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to melt gold.

--Never try to re-light fireworks that did not explode or ignite the first time.

--Keep a bucket of water or fire extinguisher present in case of fire.

--Light fireworks on a clean, flat surface away from the house or flammable materials.

--Read and follow all manufacturers' warnings and instructions.

--If there are no instructions or product labels, the item may have been made illegally and could be unsafe.

--Light only one item at a time.

--Never throw fireworks at another person.

--Never carry fireworks in your pocket.

--Never shoot fireworks from metal or glass containers.

--Never experiment with or modify fireworks or attempt to make your own.

--In the event of eye injury, do not touch, rub or press on the injured eye; seek immediate care from an ophthalmologist or hospital emergency room.

The Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office also have some tips for the safer use of fireworks.
UAB Medicine nixes annual pay increase

EARLY WARNING: UAB ALERTS WORKERS NOT TO EXPECT INCOME BUMP COME JANUARY.

Mike Oliver  moliver@al.com

There are 13,000 full-time and 3,300 part-time employees at UAB Medicine, which includes the state's largest hospital, UAB Hospital.

Come January, none of them will be getting an annual merit raise.

"We wanted to notify you as early as possible so that you can take this information into account in your own financial planning," according to an letter emailed last week.

The letter, signed by Dr. Selwyn Vickers, dean of the medical school; Dr. Will Fernandez, CEO of UAB Health System; and Dr. James Bonner, president of the health system, cites "significant external economic pressure" in deciding to forgo raises.
UAB
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This pressure affects all three of the system's missions: education, research and clinical care, the letter stated.

Here's how, according to the letter:

- There is less funding for education from the state.
- The National Institutes for Health funding for grants is flat.
- Regulatory burdens continue to grow in an effort to increase transparency and reduce waste in the industry.

On top of that, the letter cites, is a change — under the Affordable Care Act — in the way hospitals are paid by the federal government.

"Soon, we will be paid not on the volume of patients we treat, but on the quality of their care and their level of satisfaction with their experience," the letter states.

For months, UAB has been conducting a sweeping review of operations to find ways to cut expenses, the hospital confirmed in May. UAB Health System chief operating officer Reid Jones said by email that layoffs were not off the table — but there are no plans for them.

Financial pressures around state

The financial pressures hitting UAB are being felt at virtually all of the nearly 100 hospitals across the state.

Baptist Health System in early May confirmed it had laid off 23 people in a reorganization across four hospitals and its headquarters.

Rural hospitals are especially vulnerable, officials say. Previously on AL.com, Glenn Sisk, CEO of Coosa Valley Medical Center, said the three biggest factors stressing hospital budgets in Alabama are no Medicaid expansion, $220 billion in Medicare cuts to hospital services and Alabama's low wage index, which helps determine Medicare reimbursement rates.

The Medicare cuts came from the ACA as a way to pay for expansion of health care coverage in the country. Part of that plan was to expand Medicaid to lower- and middle-income citizens who are uninsured. But at least 21 states, including Alabama, have declined the government's offer to fund that expansion.

Said Jones: "Alabama Medicaid has been historically underfunded to meet the needs of the state, and those challenges continue."

It's not all bad news


The holiday additions, according to the letter, are "to allow our faculty and staff more time to spend with family and friends."

Currently, before the additions, regular full-time employees received eight designated holidays and three personal holidays. Hospital employees receive 11 personal holidays.
Birmingham’s ‘battleship’ captain
HOW FERNIANY LEADS THE STATE’S LARGEST EMPLOYER

As one of the leaders of the largest employer in the state, University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System CEO Will Ferniani compares running the operation to controlling a battleship.

"Moving a large institution like this is like moving an aircraft carrier or battleship. You've got to start early and work very hard at it because it can't turn very quick," he said.

But Ferniani arrived at UAB well-equipped for the task, with previous stops at academic medical centers.

Since assuming the CEO role in 2008, Ferniani has led the hospital to be ranked in the top 10 nationally and the hospital has earned consistent recognition as one of the best in the country under his guidance.

On the best advice he's ever received: My uncle taught me early on that no one is indispensable within the organization. Also, people do what you inspect, not what you expect.

On the biggest lesson he's learned as CEO: When you whisper, it's a megaphone to everybody. You have to be very deliberate with what you say.

On his favorite parts of work: Improving anything. If we do something that makes it better for our patients, I get a lot of self gratification out of that. Same with if we do something that makes working here better. I like to leave anything I touch better than when I touched it.

On the least favorite part of work: Critical conversations. You have to have them but that doesn't mean you have to like them.

On his management style: I'm here to provide the resources necessary for people to do their jobs. What's really important is that by resources I don't just mean financial resources, but information and transparency. Everyone here is an adult and they need to be treated like an adult and what we need to provide them with every bit of information on what's going on so people can operate and make the right decisions for the organization.

On the proudest moment of his career: I've never been asked that question before, but being appointed CEO of UAB Health System by far. I got my master's and doctorate here. I was here in the early 80s, and it's just a great institution.

On future goals: Our goal is to be the preferred academic medical center of the 21st century. Making progress toward that goal is very important. Making sure this institution and all the people involved with it are ready for the world that's coming, the world of value-based purchasing, of less payment and the reduction of fee-for-service medicine more toward at-risk, population health. The medical system in Alabama is dependent on UAB, because we're a major safety-net hospital for patients in need and we do things that no other hospital in Alabama does and when you're in a hospital in rural Alabama without the resources to properly take care of somebody, we're the main referral point.

On leading the state's largest employer: I don't think about it. I think about getting my job done. I do believe, as a leader, I try to stay involved on a local and national level, and I think it's very important that UAB stay involved in the national and international conversation on health care.

On the biggest issue facing the health care industry: The whole health care system in America spends so much of our gross national product that it is making us noncompetitive, and we need to find ways to reduce the cost of health care while keeping it as the best health care system in the world.

On Medicaid expansion: The governor has concerns, and I understand those, but I do believe we are already paying the taxes to fund this and our reimbursements are going to go down with the current method anyway, called disproportionate share. Without the expansion many, many hospitals in Alabama will be in severe trouble.

On how to continue UAB's success: UAB is unique among all the hospital in that we have three missions: patient care, research and education. Those three missions are totally interrelated, so for us to continue to be a top hospital, we have to have a vibrant research mission, education mission and clinical mission. Through our strategic plan, we’ve developed strategies to continue to improve such as growing our primary care base and increasing research funding.

Alan Alexander conducted this interview. Reach him at aalexander@bjsjournals.com.
UAB student sues after being evicted from dorms over incident involving toy gun

By: Evan Belanger

A University of Alabama at Birmingham freshman is claiming his civil rights were violated and his character defamed when he was evicted from his dormitory over an incident involving a non-firing toy gun.

The suit claims university officials embellished and fabricated evidence to bolster their case, failed to follow their own policies and denied the student due process on the basis of his gender, among other claims.

Court records show Shelby County resident Jonathan Parker filed a lawsuit last month against the school's board of trustees and nine university officials, including two student members of a conduct-review committee, over an Oct. 16 incident that resulted in him being banned from all UAB dormitories.

"UAB staff charged this student with conduct that does not violate UAB policy. The same staff then fabricated evidence to manipulate the student conduct review committee. Their conduct was intentional and outrageous," said Parker's attorney French McMillan of Sewell & Sewell LLC in Jasper.

That suit alleges Parker was carrying a red-tipped, non-firing toy pistol that he uses to practice self-defense disarmament maneuvers when he knocked on the door of two female students in his dorm to invite them to dinner.

The legal complaint gives few details about the exchange other than that only one of the female students was in her dorm room at the time, that she asked about the gun, he removed it from its case and showed it to her, told her it wasn't real and that she declined to go to dinner.

The suit claims she later sent Parker a text stating she was sorry she "freaked out" and that he had made her feel "uncomfortable."

Following that incident, which happened at approximately 5:45 p.m., the suit alleges, the two female students received another knock on their door sometime between 10 and 10:30 p.m., causing them to notify their resident adviser who called UAB police.

While the female students refused to open the door for the two males who knocked, the suit alleges they mistakenly reported the visitors were Parker and his roommate due to the peephole of their handicapped-accessible room being too low to see their faces.

At the time of the second incident though, UAB records show Parker had been off campus for nearly two hours, the suit claims.
The complaint says a police report was filed stating that Parker had a gun and attempted to push himself into the female students' room. The female student chose not to press charges.

UAB's Resident Life Handbook forbids students from possessing any device that shoots a projectile, including BB guns, but it does not specifically ban non-firing weapons.

As a result of the incident, the suit states that Parker's dorm room was "unlawfully" searched and he was not permitted to enter the building when he returned the next morning.

Even with an escort, he was refused the opportunity to retrieve his homework or his epi-pen, which he has due to a peanut allergy.

The suit charges UAB with breach of contract for failing to notify Parker's parents before they ejected him from the dormitory and states that he was forced to spend "substantial funds" to find new housing to finish out the school year.

The suit also accuses Director of Student Engagement Emily Feinstein and Assistant Director of Student Engagement Debbie Morgette, both of whom were assigned to investigate the incident, of libel for embellishing and fabricating student testimony against Parker.

Specifically, it says Morgette included in a report on the incident testimony from Parker's roommate saying Parker would show the two female students torture videos and say he was trained to perform the acts.

But Parker's roommate secretly made a recording of his interview with Morgette, and that recording contains no such statement, according the suit.

The suit also says the report prepared by Morgette attributes to Parker's roommate a statement that he carried the toy gun to the female students' room "to scare them" when his actual response on tape was that he did not know the reason.

The suit further claims that Morgette falsely claimed Parker had removed the red tip from the gun, which designates it as a toy, and that she presented a black-and-white photo of the toy gun to school's Non-Academic Conduct Committee to disguise the fact that the cap was still in place.

As a result of the embellished and false evidence, the suit claims, the conduct committee found that Parker did present to the female student what she perceived to be a weapon -- though it ruled he did not attempt to forcibly enter her room, nor did he knock on her door between 10 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

The committee placed Parker on probation, ordered him not to contact the two female students, barred him from entering all UAB dorms, ordered him to write a written apology to the female student involved in the incident, ordered him to interview a UAB police officer and write a paper on it, as well as attend an ethics and decision-making workshop.

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At the time of lawsuit's filing, a hold on Parker's account had not been lifted, meaning he cannot register for fall 2014 classes.

The suit further alleges the committee unfairly placed the burden of proof on Parker to prove his innocence rather than on the university to prove his guilt and that the committee improperly allowed Morgette to serve as both investigator and prosecutor.

It also claims that the committee ignored the fact that no evidence was given that Parker ever possessed a weapon as defined by university policy and that the investigating officer testified she did not feel the female student was in any danger and that the student may have "overreacted."

The suit seeks monetary damages as well as a reversal of the committee's ruling.

Among other charges, it alleges UAB violated federal statute prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.

It alleges the school has created an environment in which any male student accused of misconduct is assured to be found guilty and that Parker was deprived a fair hearing as a result of "UAB's history of mishandling sexual assault allegations."

UAB officials declined to comment on the matter, saying they do not discuss pending legal issues. Requests for comment from individual defendants were not immediately successful.

The university has not yet responded to a freedom-of-information request seeking a copy of the police incident report. According to the lawsuit, that report described the discovery of an "air rifle" in addition to the toy gun in Parker's room.

However, that issue did not not come up in any of the hearings or charges against Parker. UAB declined to comment on that issue when asked specifically about it.

The lawsuit was filed in Jefferson County Circuit Court, but UAB filed Monday to remove the case to federal court where defendants statistically fair better.

McMillan said they had not yet decided whether they will oppose the removal to federal court.
Attorneys for UAH professor push to overturn conviction

Lee Roop | lroop@al.com

Attorneys for a former University of Alabama in Huntsville professor convicted of killing his wife and dumping her body in the Tennessee River are asking a Morgan County circuit court to void his conviction or at least order a hearing on his petition for a new trial they say “has been pending for nearly three years.”

Andrew Pakhomov was sentenced to 45 years in prison. He can’t seek parole until 2024.

Attorney David Gespass of Birmingham is representing Pakhomov on the Rule 32 petition alleging Pakhomov’s constitutional rights were violated during his 2009 trial in Decatur. Gespass is the third attorney to represent the former professor. Pakhomov was represented by Huntsville attorneys Robert Tuten at trial and Bruce Gardner in an unsuccessful pass through Alabama’s criminal appeals courts.

Found guilty in 2006

A jury found Pakhomov guilty of strangling his wife, Yelena Zakin, in 2006 and dumping her body in the Tennessee River, where it was ultimately found. Pakhomov maintained his innocence throughout a trial that hinged almost entirely on circumstantial evidence, and he collapsed in front of the judge when his bail was revoked and he was ordered to jail. “I did not kill my wife,” he told reporters in the courtroom afterward.

Gespass cited several grounds for vacating the conviction in the original petition filed in July 2011. They include assertions that Pakhomov was denied access to Tuten’s files to prepare his appeal, prospective jury questioning and closing arguments were not recorded, and the state allegedly presented false and misleading evidence.

Gespass’s June 30 motion just wants a ruling on the petition. “Either grant the petition and the relief sought, vacating the conviction, or schedule an evidentiary hearing forthwith,” it asks.

“I don’t know if there’s a statutory requirement” that the court rule on a Rule 32 petition in a set time, Gespass said, “but the Canon of Judicial Ethics says judges should rule in a timely fashion.”

Gespass said a factor in the delay could be the defeat of original trial judge Sherrie Paler. Paler was defeated in 2012 by Circuit Judge Jennifer Howell.

“Both have had it a year and a half,” Gespass said of the petition.
Fred Ordway, technical adviser for '2001: A Space Odyssey', von Braun associate dies at Huntsville home

By: Paul Huggins

Fred Ordway III, key technical consultant for the sci-fi masterpiece "2001: A Space Odyssey" a former NASA scientist for Saturn V rocket died Tuesday at his home on Monte Sano.

The 87-year-old Harvard graduate had an unquenchable thirst for learning about the universe and excelled as an educator, researcher, consultant and author. A close friend, however, said she will remember Ordway more for how he lived day to day and less about his lifetime accomplishments. Jennifer Crozier, executive director of the U.S. Space and Rocket Center Foundation and director of museum exhibits, said in simplest terms, Ordway was the epitome of what a gentleman should be.

"It's hard to say, but just a true gentleman, very genteel, always happy, always has a smile on his face," she said. "I think he just had a love for people and a love for life in general. He was genuinely grateful for being blessed with such a wonderful life. He always said he was the luckiest person in the world. He was lucky in love, lucky in family and lucky in his career."

One of those lucky moments came in January 1965, as Ordway explained in a book, "2001: A Space Odyssey in Retrospect." He was in New York to meet with publishers for a book he and a colleague, Harry H.K. Lange, had written and illustrated about future life in space. He learned that his friend, Arthur Clarke, a British science writer, was in town and so requested they meet. During their discussion about the space program and Wernher von Braun, they learned each was developing story themes in common.

Clarke happened to be working with Stanley Kubrick on a screenplay for Space Odyssey, which was based on Clarke's earlier work, "The Sentinel." Ordway and Lange's book "Intelligence in the Universe", co-authored by Roger A. MacGowan of the Army Computation Center in Huntsville was essentially the same concept: man facing the immensity of the universe and that life may exist out among the stars.

They showed Clarke their artwork and talked more before adjourning for other engagements. Before leaving the club, Ordway got an unexpected call. It was Kubrick, whom Clarke had notified immediately after his meeting with Ordway and Lange.

"From then, well into summer, we would spend some 80 percent of our time on preproduction activities and the rest back at our Huntsville base," Ordway wrote in Retrospect. "For me, that 80
percent involved a considerable amount of travel to industrial, governmental, and academic institutions in many parts of the United States."

Popular Science still calls the movie the best science fiction film of all time, and it's also credited as one of the most influential productions of the Hollywood era.

Crozier said Ordway was working with her on developing a new museum exhibit about Space Odyssey and its role in modern technology. He brought her all manner of files, pop culture collectibles and a treasure of photographs made during the filming.

Ordway developed his in-depth knowledge of rockets and space travel with a career that started in the 1950s working with guided missiles. From 1960-64 he was Chief of Space Information Systems at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center. He would later hold various positions, including special assistant to the first director for the Department of Energy. He taught at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, which would award him an honoring doctorate degree. He also authored other books including "Visions of Spaceflight: Images from the Ordway Collection," "The Rocket Team: From the V-2 to the Saturn Moon Rocket," and (with Wernher von Braun) "History of Rocketry and Space Travel."

Space Odyssey's enduring popularity amazed Ordway, Crozier said, and though he had other significant professional accomplishments, he spent most of his free time the past 20 years giving talks about the film to fans.

Ed Buckbee, the first director of the Space & Rocket Center, said Ordway was "an icon of space flight history" and credited his urgings with helping the U.S. Space & Rocket Center have the greatest collection of space flight archives in the world.

"Many institutions such as the National Air and Space Museum, National Space Society, U.S. Space & Rocket Center and a number of other organizations sought his advice and consult regarding space flight history," he said. "He was the one person I looked to for advice on the history of the Wernher von Braun team.

From the early 1950's, Ordway became a behind the scenes adviser to von Braun regarding von Braun's writings, speeches and public appearances, and they co-authored many publications, he said.

"He never failed to remind me, 'We must collect and preserve this history for future generations," Buckbee said. "Fred left his mark on our space flight generation. He will be missed by us all."
UAH cyber security expert to speak at Huntsville technology luncheon

By: Paul Gattis

A cyber security expert at the University of Alabama in Huntsville will address the Huntsville branch of an international technology group at a luncheon next week.

Ray Vaughn, vice president for research at UAH, will speak on "Industrial Control Systems Insecurity" while addressing the Rocket City Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association.

Luncheon check-in begins at 11 a.m. on Tuesday at the Holiday Inn Research Park at Madison Square Mall.

Today is the final day for registration at RocketCityAFCEA.org.

According to its website, AFCEA International, established in 1946, is a non-profit membership association serving the military, government, industry, and academia as an ethical forum for advancing professional knowledge and relationships in the fields of communications, IT, intelligence and global security.

Since arriving in 2013 at UAH -- a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education -- Vaughn has been working to establish full scholarships to study cyber security that are expected to be funded by the National Science Foundation's Scholarship for Service program, the school said.

While at Mississippi State, in 1997 Dr. Vaughn founded and directed the Critical Infrastructure Protection Center there. The center was supported by the Department of Homeland Security as an outreach effort to operators of the nation's critical infrastructure. The center supported training activities and research, which is primarily focused in the area of industrial control system security.
What's the sociological impact of our collective World Cup viewing -- and mourning?

By: Mark McCarter

The gatherings in front of an office television or sneaking out early to a bar or massive parties to watch Team USA in the World Cup have ended, waiting to be resuscitated in four years.

Our collective national mourning today isn't merely with the loss of the game to Belgium that eliminated the U.S.

It's the loss of unity and special connection. At least according to Dr. Richard Simon, a sociology professor at UAH.

"The reason why people like sports is because sports are a solidary ritual. Not in playing the sports but in going to the game," Simon said.

"A ritual is something when you have more than one person interacting with one another. People entrain their bodies together and entrain their motions together. It makes them feel like they're a part of something bigger, something greater that connects them to the collective. It's like when you go to baseball game and see the wave. It's part of this bodily entrainment."

As Simon notes, people may paint their faces to attend games in public, but "people don't do that when they're alone. They do this to be a part of this collective event that charges people up."

Simon said that "being at rock concerts are the same way."

When that collective is the large community of an entire nation, it's only understandable that there is even more interest in this "solidarity ritual."

It's not unhealthy to become involved, Simon believes, and having a distraction is part of the process.

"But it's the ritual that is the most important part of sports," he said.

However, Simon said, "it's not just about sports. It's a manifestation of a more general phenomenon, which is that social life is made up of these rituals, of doing these bodily things in the presence of others to make an emotional connection to them and feel connected the larger group."
Monday at 10: Researchers try to explain Tennessee Valley tornado behavior

By: Jake Reed

Huntsville, Ala.- It doesn’t take a lot to be reminded of just how violent tornadoes have been in the Tennessee Valley in recent years. Whether you are driving around and cross multiple tornado paths where the scars are still visible, or you hear someone mention “April 27th” or “March 2nd” immediately the flashbacks begin.

The tornadoes of April 27, 2011 devastated dozens of communities in our state and the death toll statewide is more than 250. More recently, residents of Madison and Limestone Counties may remember a long-track tornado that was on the ground more than 30 miles on March 2, 2012.

The amount and destruction of Tennessee Valley tornadoes in the last five years have both been record-breaking. With such a large number of tornado events to come through, researchers are now hoping to find answers.

Tony Lyza, a researcher and graduate student with the University of Alabama in Huntsville, is studying tornado behaviors, patterns, and trends in the Tennessee Valley. “If we had to pick areas it would be Sand and Lookout Mountains and the Wills Valley in between. [We are also studying] the ridge line along the east side of Huntsville: Monte Sano, Huntsville Mountain, and Green Mountain. [Also,] Lawrence County where you have that sharp ridge line south of Moulton and Mt. Hope,” said Lyza.

Despite being in the very early stages, Lyza has already identified four distinct behaviors tornadoes seem to follow.

Monday, July 7 at 10:00 p.m., in a WHNT News 19 special investigation, we dig deeper to understand why tornadoes are especially violent in parts of the Tennessee Valley. We also talk with the researcher about things he says he’s never seen before, when studying tornadoes. Also, the impact he hopes his studies will have on the warning and forecasting process.

Don’t miss this WHNT News 19 special investigation Monday at 10:00 p.m. We’ll also post it on WHNT.com afterwards.
Stillman makes interim leader its president

Millet aims to take college from ‘excellence to eminence’

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The interim leader of Stillman College since the fall has been named the sixth president of the small private college in west Tuscaloosa.

President Peter Millet, joined by trustees, was introduced Thursday in Birthright Hall on Stillman’s campus. Millet replaces Ernest McNeal, who resigned late last year. His presidency officially begins July 1, according to Associate Vice President Daryka Reeves.

“I am greatly honored and humbled to be given the honor to serve as the sixth president,” Millet said to a gathering of students, staff and local officials.

Millet’s first public comments as president were optimistic about the future.

“This institution is poised to move from excellence to eminence,” he said.

Millet highlighted a new bridge program launched this summer to help newly enrolled students transition from high school to college and an agreement with the Alabama Community College System signed earlier this year to allow associate-degree graduates to be automatically admitted to the historically black institution to complete bachelor’s degrees. Millet also noted efforts to become a Yellow Ribbon School, which allows veterans under the Post-9/11 GI Bill to attend private schools and graduate programs on scholarships from participating

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institutions and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Everything we are going to do is going to keep students at the forefront," Millet said.

The new president also promised an inclusive atmosphere for faculty, staff, students and community partners.

Millet also reiterated a desire to see more interaction between the campus and the surrounding community.

"We really want to open up the campus to the community," he said. "I have very high expectations that Stillman will play a greater role in service to the community."

Trustee Evelyn Gunn, who led the search committee, said the college is in the process of putting in place a transition team for the new administration.

The presidential search committee included Gunn and fellow trustees Betty Brown-Williamson, Judge Eljah D. Clark, Dennis O. Driver, George LeMaistre Jr., Charles M. Stillman and Susan Warner; alumna Melissa Davis; Department of Fine Arts Chair LuVada A. Harrison; assistant professor Kimberly White-Glenn; Student Government Association President Rio Jackson; and community member Charles R. Nash, vice chancellor for academic and student affairs for the University of Alabama System.

Information about other candidates in the search was not immediately available Thursday.

The committee began its search this spring. McNealey, who was placed on leave Sept. 5, 2013, resigned in December.

Millet previously served as provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Peter Millet speaks to the media and staff of Stillman College as he is recognized as the school's sixth president during a news conference held at Birthright Hall on Thursday. Millet's term will begin Tuesday.
Calif. court dismisses ASU suit over audit

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | A California court has dismissed a lawsuit filed by Alabama State University against the auditing firm that’s reviewing the school’s finances.

An attorney for Forensic Strategic Solutions said Friday that Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Richard Fruin threw out the case by ruling that he doesn’t have jurisdiction to hear the dispute.

“It is unfortunate that both parties had to spend substantial time and resources disputing this matter,” attorney Jeff Windham said in a statement.

Alabama State’s attorney, former U.S. District Judge U.W. Clemon, said the university has not decided whether to appeal the ruling in California or refile the case in Alabama.

Alabama State sued Forensic Strategic Solutions of Birmingham last fall during the company’s investigation of school finances.

Gov. Robert Bentley hired the firm to review the university amid claims of possible fraud, and a preliminary report pointed to possible conflict of interests.

School officials have consistently denied any wrongdoing at Alabama State.

The Montgomery university filed suit in California claiming the company has business dealings there and the university has lots of alumni there.

Since Forensic Strategic Solutions issued its preliminary report, Moody’s Investors Service has twice downgraded Alabama State’s bond ratings, labeling its financial outlook as a negative.

Also, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits colleges in the South, has issued the university a warning for failing to comply with accrediting standards.
Committee votes to increase tuition

Paul Gattis agoattis@al.com

Students at Alabama A&M University will likely see an increase in required tuition and fees by 6 percent for the 2014-2015 academic year.

The business and finance committee of the university's board of trustees approved the increase during committee meeting Thursday. The proposal will go before the full board on Friday for final approval.

The committee also approved $143 million operating budget for the university for the 2015 fiscal year. That budget also includes a one-time $400 bonus for employees.

Alabama A&M President Andrew Hugine said he reluctantly recommended the tuition increase and that it only came about following the university's budgeting process that reflected the need for the tuition bump. Alabama A&M was the only public university in Alabama last year not to raise tuition.

The tuition and fees increase is expected to produce $2.8 million in additional revenue, according to Clayton Gibson, interim director of business and finance.

Newly appointed trustee Neal Morrison said the board needs to make it a priority to fight for increased state funding to diminish the need for future tuition hikes. Alabama A&M received $31 million in state funding for the 2015 fiscal year.

Morrison said it was "an injustice that needs to be corrected and corrected soon."

The difference in funding between similar-sized institutions classified as Historical Black Colleges and Universities is not a new issue. Rep. Jim Patterson, R-Meridianville, was rebuffed in 2013 in an effort to give more balance to the funding between the schools. Alabama State received $43.2 million more in state funding last year.

Tuition for in-state undergraduate students is increasing $510 for the 2014-2015 academic year to $7,500. While the overall computation of the increase in required tuition and fees is 6 percent, the tuition increase is a 7 percent increase. Mandatory fees, parking and housing fees did not increase. Board fees increased 3 percent.

Morrison said raising tuition "weighs heavy on my heart" and encouraged Hugine to slash the trustees' budget in the future if it would ease the financial burden on students.

"You will never offend me if you cut the whole damn thing," Morrison said.

Hugine responded that all cuts would be made that could be made — Gibson repeatedly joked that his business and finance budget was cut — but most of the $1.8 million budget for executive offices and the trustees went to required fees and memberships for the board as well as training.
Auburn trustees re-elect board president

AUBURN | Auburn University’s board of trustees elected businessman Jimmy Rane as its president pro tempore.

The vote on Friday gives Rane a second term in the position, according to the Opelika-Auburn News. Rane is the chief executive officer of Great Southern Wood Preserving in Abbeville and has served on the board since 1999.

Charles McCrary was nominated as vice president pro tempore. McCrary recently retired as chief executive at Alabama Power Co.
Pain felt by all fans in Lutzenkirchen tragedy

Alabama and Auburn fans are at one another’s throats 365 days a year. Pain for one group of fans usually means joy for the other. For the most part, it’s one of college football’s most mean-spirited rivalries.

This week is one rare time that the Alabama-Auburn rivalry doesn’t live up to its reputation. Philip Lutzenkirchen broke the hearts of Alabama fans everywhere when he caught the winning touchdown pass in the 2010 Alabama-Auburn game in Bryant-Denny Stadium. And the celebratory end zone touchdown dance that came to be known as the “Lutzie” felt like salt in their wounds.

But this week, their hearts go out to Auburn fans and the family of the standout tight end who died Sunday at age 23 in a tragic automobile accident. Even bitter rivals recognize a player that epitomizes the best of college football.

Lutzenkirchen was a fine football player who was key to Auburn’s surprising run to greatness during a perfect season, capped off by a national championship. He conducted himself with class and showed true sportsmanship on the field. The game would be considerably more enjoyable if more players were like him.

But Lutzenkirchen wasn’t just a great player who demonstrated what a student-athlete should be. He was a fine young man off the field, and his loss will be felt by all of the people around him. The loss of a young man in his prime with so much left to live for and so much to contribute to the world is a tragedy that causes all of us to pause and realize how fragile and fleeting life can be and how quickly our plans, hopes and dreams can be put asunder.

A little more than three years ago, Auburn fans set aside their differences with their rival when they came to Tuscaloosa’s aid and mourned its losses following the April 2011 tornadoes. Alabama fans now join them in mourning the loss of a great player and a fine young man.
Kim Jacob
named
top female
athlete

Combined reports

LOS ANGELES | A stunned Kim Jacob was all smiles Monday night as she was presented the Honda Cup as the Collegiate Women Sports Awards Athlete of the Year in Los Angeles during the awards telecast broadcast live by CBS Sports Network.

Jacob, the 2014 NCAA All-Around Champion and the Honda Award winner for gymnastics, was one of 12 women from 12 different sports under consideration for the accolade that honors the best collegiate NCAA Division I female athlete in the nation over the past academic year.

The winner of Alabama's ninth Honda Award, Jacob is the first Crimson Tide student-athlete to finish among the top-three finalists and first to win the Honda Cup.

"I am stunned," Jacob said after accepting the award. "I never

SEE JACOB | 5C
thought this was possible, but if there is a lesson in this, it's to always dare to dream big."

A champion in the gym, the classroom and in the community, Jacob led Alabama to four consecutive top-four national finishes, including back-to-back NCAA Championships in 2011 and 2012. The 2014 Capital One/Cosida Academic All-American of the Year for the at-large team, Jacob is also a two-time member of the Southeastern Conference Community Service Team.

"Kim is the epitome of what we look for in a student-athlete," UA head coach Sarah Patterson said. "She is selfless, giving and has the biggest heart. I am so excited and pleased that she earned this honor which truly represents the best of the best of collegiate athletics."

An 11-time All-American, she earned four first-team honors in 2014, the most of any gymnast at the national championships. She also led Alabama to SEC titles in 2011 and 2014.

"I am so proud to be a part of the University of Alabama's championship legacy and tradition of excellence," Jacob said. "I want to thank my family, my coaches and especially my teammates, whose support, love and constant encouragement provided the platform for all the success that I enjoyed."

Kim Jacob
HIGH TIDE

Alabama boasts another national title team, four SEC championships

Staff reports

The University of Alabama athletic department continued its impressive showing both in conference and on the national stage during the 2013-14 school year, adding a national championship and four Southeastern Conference titles to the trophy case.

It was the fifth consecutive year the Crimson Tide captured at least one national championship.

The Crimson Tide men's golf team repeated as NCAA and SEC champions, becoming just the third team to repeat as national champions in nearly 30 years. UA set a school record with nine wins in 2013-14 and set an NCAA record with an 11-tournament win streak that stretched from 2013 to 2014.

The softball team played for a national championship for the second time in program history, finishing runner-up to Florida, while capturing its fifth regular season SEC title and the fourth in the last five years.

Alabama gymnastics won its eighth conference title and advanced to the NCAA Super Six for the eighth straight season.

It was a historical season for the women's tennis team, winning the SEC regular season crown with a 12-1 record and concluding the season with a No. 6 ranking. Also, Maya Jansen and Erin Routliffe captured the NCAA doubles title.

The football team held the No. 1 ranking for much of the season and played in its fifth BCS bowl game in the last six seasons.
Ozzie Newsome to be inducted into High School Hall of Fame

Combined report

BOSTON | Ozzie Newsome has never considered himself a trailblazer. Instead, he said the many accomplishments in his storied football career “were just the next steps I was taking. I looked at each stage as my next goal.”

Newsome is one of five outstanding former high school athletes being inducted into the 32nd class of the National High School Hall of Fame tonight.

He spoke at Tuesday’s press conference of a sports career that began at Colbert County High School, continued collegiately with the University of Alabama and in the National Football League with the Cleveland Browns. He is now the general manager/vice president of the Baltimore Ravens.

“My time in high school provided the foundation for the rest of my life,” he said.

“The teachers, coaches and people who worked so hard to provide for us the opportunity to play on Friday nights had an incredible influence on all our lives.

“I have experienced a lot of moments in my life, but nothing like my three years at Colbert County High School. My friends are friends for life.”

Joining the legendary Newsome in this year’s class are pro basketball star Alonzo Mourning, "Penny" Hardaway of Memphis; Casey Blake, a four-sport star at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; and Suzy Powell, a basketball and track and field star at Thomas Downey High School in Modesto, Calif., who competed in three Olympic Games.

Newsome, who played three sports (football, baseball and basketball) at Colbert County, is the third athlete from Alabama to be selected for induction into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame and 11th person overall. Former Green Bay Packer great Bart Starr of Montgomery was inducted in 1989 and former Heisman Trophy winner and Pat Sullivan of Birmingham was inducted in 2012.