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1st 'Watchman' chapter previewed

Highly anticipated details of latest Lee novel released

By Hillel Italie
The Associated Press

NEW YORK | We know this much so far about Harper Lee's new book: Atticus Finch is 72 and suffering from rheumatoid arthritis; Scout is a grown woman who has a suitor most anxious to marry her. And Scout's older brother, Jem, apparently has died.

"Go Set a Watchman" begins with Scout, otherwise known as Jean Louise Finch, returning by train to Lee's legendary Maycomb, Ala., on one of several annual visits she makes from New York, where she is greeted by young Henry Clinton. The first chapter ran in Friday's editions of The Wall Street Journal and The Guardian.

"Go Set a Watchman," the most unexpected second novel in memory, is coming out Tuesday. It takes place in the 1950s, 20 years after the setting for "To Kill a Mockingbird," Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning book.

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U.S. publisher HarperCollins has said that pre-orders for “Go Set a Watchman” are the highest in company history and bookstores worldwide are planning events to celebrate the book's release.

Anticipation and apprehension have surrounded news of “Watchman” since it was announced in February. The surprise and ecstasy of a new work from Lee have been shadowed by suspicions the book doesn’t measure up to “Mockingbird” and was approved without the 89-year-old author’s full awareness.

Lee has poor hearing and vision and resides in an assisted living facility in her hometown of Monroeville. But her lawyer Tonja Carter; literary agent Andrew Nurnberg; and publisher have insisted she is delighted the book is coming out. State officials, responding to at least one complaint of possible elder abuse, determined she was alert and capable of deciding on the release of “Watchman.”

“To Kill a Mockingbird,” published in 1960, is set in the 1930s in the fictional town of Maycomb and introduced Atticus Finch, Scout, Boo Radley and other beloved literary characters. The book was adapted into an Oscar-winning movie starring Gregory Peck as Atticus and has become standard reading in schools and other reading programs, with worldwide sales topping 40 million copies.

In the years that followed “Mockingbird,” Lee struggled to write a second book and eventually determined that the one novel could stand on its own, apparently never considering “Watchman” a possible successor. She has not spoken to the media in decades and her absence from any promotion for “Watchman” marks a rare time that such a high-profile work is being released without the participation of a living author.

Much of Friday's excerpt touches upon the landscape and history of the Maycomb region and the banter between Clinton and Scout, who playfully resists his marriage proposals. He is known as one of Maycomb’s finest men, a World War II veteran and law student who has long been close to the Finches, assists Atticus in his law practice and regards Atticus as a father figure. Clinton, in turn, is a surrogate son to Atticus. The excerpt refers to the day Jean Louise’s brother and heir apparent at the law practice, presumably Jem, “dropped dead in his tracks,” forcing Atticus to find another successor.

According to HarperCollins, Carter came upon the “Watchman” manuscript at a “secure location where it had been affixed to an original typescript of ‘To Kill a Mockingbird.’” The new book, which Harper has said did not undergo any new revisions, is set in Maycomb during a time when the civil rights movement was taking hold in Lee’s home state. The Supreme Court had ruled unanimously in 1954 that segregated schools were unconstitutional, and the arrest of Rosa Parks in 1955 led to the yearlong Montgomery bus boycott.
Bentley: Time to pass a budget

Governor rebukes gambling legislation as answer to crisis

CHARLES J. DEAN
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Gov. Robert Bentley called on state legislators to solve the state's budget crisis when they convene for a special session Monday, but said gambling legislation is not the answer.

"Legislators have only one job. And that job is to pass budgets," Bentley said at a news conference this morning in Montgomery.

Bentley unveiled more specifics about his plan, which altogether includes an increase in a variety of taxes totaling about $320 million.

Under Bentley's plan — which still has some elements to be worked out — smokers would pay more to inhale. Asked how much more for cigarette smokers, Bentley said 35 cents more a pack.

Larger businesses would end up paying more in increases in business privilege taxes. Bentley said small businesses would see little change.

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Leading lawmakers want BP money to pay off debt. 18

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Leaders want to use part of BP oil settlement for state budget

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In a move that might amount to a “pick your poison” option, the governor is proposing either a tax hike on soft drinks — he said probably not bottled water or juice — or eliminating the ability of Alabama taxpayers to deduct what they pay in social security taxes or FICA taxes on their state income taxes.

That plan will mean an increase of no more than $276 per year for the highest wage earners, and only if you itemize, Bentley said. Those who file standard deductions, and retirees, are not affected, Bentley added.

The governor is asking lawmakers to make structural changes to how the General Fund operates, primarily by un-earmarking sources of money currently targeted for certain needs. Bentley wants to put those back into the General Fund to meet broader budget needs.

Bentley said he and legislative leaders have agreed to use about half of a $2.3 billion settlement with BP Oil to pay back long-term debt in the General Fund. Those payments will be made over 18 years.

Bentley called the tax hikes “fair minimal taxes” and are moves that he said Alabamians support over harsh cuts to vital state services such as to the number of state troopers on roads, the shutdown of state parks and cuts to health care for senior citizens and children.

Bentley said the ability of Alabamians to work two jobs will make it harder for them to find time to itemize their deductions. He also said the state’s aging population, including retirees, means that many Alabamians are no longer filing state taxes.

In June lawmakers passed a General Fund budget that would have spent $200 million less on vital state services. Bentley vetoed the budget calling it unworkable.

In his formal session proclaim, Bentley explicitly excludes any gaming legislation, and will require a two-thirds vote to take up any legislation not included in his call.

While lawmakers will be in Montgomery Monday, legislative leaders like Marsh have said they expect to break after Monday for three weeks to study Bentley’s proposals.
Elimination of FICA deduction biggest part of Bentley's $302 million tax package

By Mike Carson

Ending a state income tax deduction for Social Security taxes paid is the biggest component in Gov. Robert Bentley's plan to raise $302 million for the state General Fund.

Acting Finance Director Bill Newton explained the governor's proposals to budget committees today on an abbreviated first day of the special session.

The House of Representatives and Senate adjourned less than a half-hour after the session began by proclamation of the governor at 4 p.m.

Lawmakers will return on Aug. 3.

Their task is to pass a budget for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

House and Senate leaders said they would use the next three weeks to try to find a way to close a projected shortfall of $200 million or more.

Bentley vetoed the budget passed by the Legislature in June.

It would have spent $1.6 billion from the General Fund, a cut of $200 million from this year. Officials said it would have resulted in slashed state services and employee layoffs.

Newton said Bentley is now proposing a budget that would spend $1.9 billion from the General Fund.

Elimination of the state income tax deduction for the Social Security tax would raise an estimated $182 million of the $300 million in new revenue.

Employees generally pay 6.2 percent of their income to Social Security.

In Alabama, taxpayers who itemize their deductions can deduct that from their taxable state income.

The governor said ending the deduction would cause taxpayers to pay, at the most, $276 more in income taxes.

The governor included in his proclamation calling the special session an alternative to the elimination of the FICA deduction -- a tax on soft drinks.

Newton said the proposal would be 5 cents per 12 ounces. It would also raise an estimated $182 million, Newton said.

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Newton said the governor did not plan to have a bill for the soft drink tax. But including it in the governor's call means that it could pass with a majority vote.

Legislation on subjects excluded from the call requires a two-thirds vote.

Bentley also proposed:

-- Increasing the cigarette tax by 25 cents a pack, increasing the tax on other tobacco products proportionately, and adding a new tax for vapor tobacco products, e-cigarettes, raising an estimated $70 million a year.

-- Raising the maximum business privilege tax from $15,000 to $25,000 and exempting businesses with net worth of less than $10,000 from paying the $100 minimum privilege tax. Newton said 90 percent of businesses pay the minimum. The changes would raise an estimated $38 million a year, Newton said.

-- Repealing a provision that allows employees who claim they will have no taxable income to be exempt from having state income tax withheld from their paychecks. That would raise an estimated $12 million a year.

The governor's proposed budget would provide $26 million to fund criminal justice reforms passed by the Legislature this year to reduce prison crowding.

The governor's budget would also provide:

-- A $60 million increase in General Fund money to the Alabama Medicaid Agency, which would allow for reforms approved by the Legislature two years ago to be implemented.

The reform plan is to change Medicaid to a program of managed care provided by regional care organizations.

-- A $6 million increase for capital needs for state prisons.

-- $5 million for domestic violence reforms.

The governor is proposing a $50 million bond issue to build a lodge and make improvements at Gulf State Park. A bill to that failed during the regular session.
Gov. Bentley tells Congress pre-K investment, community corrections keys to prison reform

By Casey Toner

Gov. Robert Bentley testified before Congress on Tuesday morning, speaking about Alabama's prison reform plan.

More than $125 million will be spent on Alabama's correctional system in the next five years in an attempt to alleviate overcrowding, Bentley said.

By increasing community corrections, creating a new felony designation for minor crimes and drug crimes, and expanding mental health and substance abuse programs, the state may reduce its prison population by about 4,200 inmates over five years.

Somewhat surprisingly, Bentley also told the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform that he opposes the state law that keeps anyone convicted of a crime of moral turpitude from voting. In Alabama and 11 other states ex-felons forfeit the right to vote – Alabama's prison reform package does not change this law.

"If someone has been corrected, they should be able to live free in society, that is my personal opinion," Bentley said, responding to a question from South Carolina House Rep. Mick Mulvaney.

Pre-K solution?

Another avenue to reduce the inmate population is through education, Bentley said. He testified that under his leadership the state has invested an extra $10 million every year in pre-K education. Combined with federal grants, the money will give every Alabama child the opportunity to attend pre-K classes, he said.

"This will change their lives," Bentley said. "We put a special emphasis on that, 10 years from now, 15 years from now it's going to make a difference."

Bentley testified alongside Gov. Jack Markell of Delaware. Alabama State Rep. Mike Jones (R-Andalusia) came with Bentley, but Alabama Sen. Cam Ward (R-Alabaster) was unable to make it to the hearing.

Bentley told the committee that the state prison facilities were at "195 percent over designed capacity and costs were rising dramatically."

"I inherited this," Bentley said. "This obviously was not of my doing."

Big problems
Forty percent of Alabama prisoners are locked up for parole and probation violations, Bentley said. Community corrections programs existed in only 45 of 67 counties and that Alabama needed to increase parole officers, mental health services and substance abuse programs, he said.

"It costs so much to incarcerate these individuals," said Bentley during lengthy question and answer session. "We have to try to get these people out, functioning normally."

In May, Bentley signed the prison reform bill into law. It is set to take effect Jan. 30 if the money is available.

Responding to a question from South Carolina House Rep. Mick Mulvaney, Bentley said there was no political blowback from the reform legislation.

"The first step was recognizing that our criminal justice system needed reform," said Bentley in his formal comments. "A cursory glance provided ample evidence of the problems facing the state and the need for action. Our state prison facilities were operating at 195 percent over design capacity and costs were rising dramatically."
Harper Lee 'chortled' over 'Watchman' reviews, Wayne Flynt says

By Kelly Kazek

[This article may contain spoilers. If you do not wish to know details about the plot of "Go Set a Watchman," you may want to come back to this story after you've read the book.]

On Monday, the day before the release of her second book, 89-year-old Nelle Harper Lee was in her element. "She chortled," said Wayne Flynt, Lee's friend and professor emeritus at Auburn University.

Flynt, who was in Monroeville for the release of Lee's much-anticipated "Go Set a Watchman," said he went to Lee's assisted living home and showed her several articles, including the review on the front page of The New York Times, a rare position for literature.

"The argument did she want this to be published has been answered pretty overwhelmingly," Flynt said.

The next question is: Will the publicity, much of it negative, cause Lee to have regrets. But Flynt feels Lee chose to release the book now for a reason. He said she did not follow the regular path to writing success, which would typically include dozens of rejections and magazine articles before a novel would be published. Instead, for more than 50 years, she had what amounted to a one-hit wonder.

"Basically, she felt she was living in the shadow of Truman Capote and his success," he said. "She's insecure. I don't think she believed in herself."

Nelle can 'take care of herself'

Monroeville native Claudia Swift isn't worried about how "Miss Nelle" will handle the negative publicity. "She can take care of herself," she said with a dismissive wave, reflecting the attitude of many who know her that Nelle Harper Lee is a tough old bird.

Swift, dressed Tuesday morning as Miss Stephanie from "To Kill a Mockingbird" as part of the day's festivities, is more concerned about Lee's surviving family, specifically Dr. Edwin Lee, Lee's nephew and a local dentist. Edwin's father and Nelle's younger brother, also named Edwin Lee, died when he was 30 years old. His son is Swift's dentist. "He is the dearest, kindest, nicest man ever," Swift said. Recently, he has suffered the loss of his wife and health problems and Swift is hoping he will be able to handle the swirl of publicity, including the labeling of the beloved character Atticus Finch, inspired by Lee's father, A.C. Lee, as a racist.

"It's infuriating," Swift said. "It's history. He's not a racist. He's a separatist. There's a big difference. In 1935, he wanted to make sure his client got a fair and just trial. But this is the 1950s (in the "Watchman" timeline) and times have changed. Now, there's a very real possibility
of the two societies mingling and he's not sure how he feels about that. It threw him for a loop. But he does come around at the end. It's important for people to realize that."

Another shock for many fans is the fact that Scout's brother Jem has died in "Watchman."

"People are upset about Jem being killed off but that's what happened in real life. Her (Lee's) brother died early," Swift said, referring to Edwin Lee. Harper Lee's brother and mother, Frances Finch Lee, died only weeks apart in 1951, giving a glimpse into her mindset when she would return to Monroeville for visits after moving to New York. It was a changed world for her, and not only inside her family. The idyllic young writer now understood the rumblings of change in society and viewed her family and hometown through more enlightened eyes.

Flynt said people should remember that when comparing "Mockingbird" and "Watchman."

"'Mockingbird' is black and white," he said. "It's seen through a child's morality." In "Watchman," he says, Atticus "is a man caught in Monroeville, Ala., practicing law, not in 1932 when all blacks know their place and stay in it, but in the 1950s...In that world, Atticus Finch has to make a choice."

Robert Champion, a retired Monroeville police detective dressed on Tuesday as the character Boo Radley from "Mockingbird," is grateful for the book, despite the publicity.

"The financial impact on Monroeville is tremendous," he said, breaking from character to give his thoughts on "Watchman."

"I haven't even read the first chapter but I hope people don't start to compare the two books. I hope they let it ('Watchman') stand on its own and realize people, even fictional book people, change."
20 finalists named for 2015 Alabama Innovation Awards to be honored in September

By Lucy Berry

Twenty finalists from across the state are up for the 2015 Alabama Innovation Awards presented by the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama.

The annual awards honor companies and individuals dedicated to creating jobs, innovation and addressing a local or global need. Winners will be recognized Sept. 2 at the fifth-annual Alabama Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference in Birmingham.

The 2015 judges are BL Harbert International CEO Billy Harbert, China Doll Rice & Dixie Lily President Harris Morrissette, YWCA of Central Alabama CEO Yolanda Sullivan, Southern Research CEO and President Art Tipton and Liberty Bank Executive Vice President Neill S. Wright.

This year's finalists are:

**Corporate Innovator of the Year, large company (50+ employees)**

- Integrated Medical Systems International, Inc., Birmingham
- Atlas RFID Solutions, Birmingham
- Digium, Inc., Huntsville
- Emerson Network Power, Huntsville

**Corporate Innovator of the Year, small company (1-50 employees)**

- Emergency CallWorks, Inc., Birmingham
- Diamond Fortress Technologies, Birmingham
- Hospicelink, Birmingham
- CDS-John Blue Co., Huntsville
- Kailos Genetics, Inc., Huntsville
- Time Domain, Huntsville

**Outstanding Achievement in Innovative Manufacturing**

- To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co., Fitzpatrick
• CDI Electronics, Huntsville

• iCubate, Inc., Huntsville

**Outstanding Public-Private Partnership for Innovation**

• Project HERO and related small businesses created, Greensboro

• iCubate, Inc. & HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, Huntsville

• City of Montgomery & Infinitus Energy, Montgomery

**Lifetime Achievement in Innovation**

• Rowland Kanner, Arab, vice president of technology, Atrion Medical Products

• Gary York, Birmingham, product marketing advisor Emergency Callworks

• Ashok Singhal, Huntsville, principal founder and chairman, CFD Research Corp. (CFDRC)

• Jim Busby, Mobile, president and COO, Centralite
Alabama standout, Super Bowl champ dies at 69 in Miss.

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

Former University of Alabama quarterback and Oakland Raiders great Kenny Stabler died at the age of 69 on Wednesday in Gulfport, Miss., as a result of complications associated with colon cancer, his family confirmed in a statement released through UA on Thursday.

"He passed peacefully surrounded by the people he loved most, including his three daughters and longtime partner, as some of his favorite songs played in the background, such as Lynyrd Skynyrd’s 'Sweet Home Alabama' and Van Morrison’s 'Leaves Falling Down,'” according to the statement.

Stabler was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer in February, according to the family.

Stabler is remembered as a hard-charging, left-handed quarterback with a knack for running the football. His game-winning touchdown against Auburn in the 1967 Iron Bowl, known as the "Run in the Mud," is legendary among Crimson Tide fans.

A native of Foley, where he played for Foley High School, Stabler played three seasons for Alabama (1965-67) for legendary coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. After college, he had a successful 15-year NFL career after being selected in the second round of the NFL Draft by the Oakland Raiders. He won a Super Bowl ring with the Raiders in 1977 and was a four-time Pro-Bowler. He also played with the Houston Oilers and...
STABLER

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New Orleans Saints at the end of his playing career. UA Director of Athletics Bill Battle wrapped up his collegiate career just prior to Stabler's arrival in Tuscaloosa. Battle said Stabler had a way of making anyone feel at ease.

"While there have been many outstanding players in our great football history at Alabama, I think it's safe to say that few -- if any -- connected with our fans in the way that Kenny did," Battle said in a statement. "He's one of the few quarterbacks to win a national title in college and a Super Bowl in the pros in a career that ranks among the best of anyone to play the game.

"He was an Alabama man through and through. The thoughts and prayers of all of us in the Alabama family are with Kenny, his family, and all who knew and loved him."

UA coach Nick Saban was around Stabler for one season while Stabler served as the color commentator for Alabama radio broadcasts.

"I have had the chance to be around some of the best to ever play college and pro football, and Kenny may have been one of the greatest competitors to ever play the game," Saban said.

It was in that radio work in which many younger Alabama fans remember Stabler. In that role he brought an Alabama flare to each game. Before becoming a broadcast color analyst with the UA football radio network, Stabler worked on television for CBS, TBS and TNT in various roles.

Chris Stewart, play-by-play announcer for UA men's basketball and a sideline reporter for football, worked with Stabler and admired him for years.

"He had a style, no doubt, but it was really just Kenny being Kenny," Stewart said. "The amazing thing to witness was watching him watching a game. The way he could see things unfold, oftentimes before the quarterback saw it."

"The times I got to work with him at Alabama, traveling with him was like being with a rock star. People you'd consider to be celebrities were so excited to be around him. One time he interviewed Jeff Gordon, the NASCAR driver, and before Gordon said anything he said, 'It's such a honor to talk to you, Snake. I feel like a little kid again.' Celebrity after celebrity, they were just fans when they were in his presence."

That personality and ability to make everyone feel comfortable helped him on the football field, too.

Ray Perkins played with Stabler and later coached at UA and in the NFL. He said Stabler was a fun-loving guy most of all.

"You're not going to find anyone who played with, alongside or behind him that doesn't have anything positive to say about Kenny Stabler," Perkins said. "Most of all he loved the game of football, and is one of the best football players of all time. He has to go down as one of the best quarterbacks."

"I'm just sorry he hasn't been inducted into Canton at the Pro Football Hall of Fame." Jackie Sherill, who also played with Stabler, said the first thing he thinks of when he remembers Stabler is his nickname, "Snake."

"That goes back to describing his running ability, like a snake." Sherill said. "He was that live-life-to-the-fullest guy and had a lot of fun. Kenny had the ability to make people laugh, he could make people comfortable around him." Steve Bowman, a letterman at fullback at Alabama from 1963-65, remembers Stabler's sheer athletic ability.

"The thing that pops in my head is his prowess in sports, how good he was, what a good teammate he was," Bowman said. "You have to be a good leader if you're going to be a good quarterback, and Kenny just had a way of connecting with people. I know he received a lot of press for the things he did off the field, but believe me there wasn't a guy in that locker room that wouldn't lay it all on the line for Kenny Stabler."

He is survived by his three daughters — Kendra Stabler Moyes (husband, Scott), Alex (husband, Hunter Adams) and Marissa — as well as grandchildren Jack and Justin Moyes, sister Carolyn Bishop, nephew Scott Bishop, and great nephew and niece Tyler and Payton Bishop. He is preceded in death by his father, Leroy Stabler, and mother, Sally Stabler.

Funeral arrangements are pending. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the XOXO Stabler Foundation to support research of colon cancer and sports-related head trauma. More information will be available on Ken Stabler's Facebook fan page and through the XOXO Stabler Foundation.

Reach Aaron Suttles at aaron @tidesports.com or at 205-722-0229.
We will not, in our time, see another like Kenny Stabler

Like many young people of my generation in Alabama, I'd heard of Kenny Stabler as far back as I can remember hearing of anyone who wasn't family. University of Alabama quarterbacks were famous, even then, and Stabler came along during a golden era, the next in a line that included Pat Trammell and Steve Sloan and the prodigious Joe Namath.

What's more, Stabler stayed in the public eye well after his Alabama career, thanks to his NFL exploits with the Oilers and the Saints, but especially with the Oakland Raiders.

That team, that franchise, had a swagger in those days that is almost impossible to explain to casual fans of the woebegone outfit that the Raiders have been in recent years. Not everyone loved those Raider teams, but you had to respect them — and fear them. Just as another Alabama product, Bart Starr, had personified the spit-and-polish precision of Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers — and Namath had been the perfect mixture of brash and gifted for the New York Jets — so Stabler was the model for those Raiders: tough, raucous and fiercely competitive.

Years later, I got to know Stabler fairly well during his days as Alabama's radio color man. He had mellowed by then, although with Kenny, "mellowed" was a highly relative term. He was unfailingly friendly, quick with a story (never the same one twice, given his unlimited supply) and gracious to everyone who stopped by to visit. This was true even though, in those days, he was often the biggest celebrity in the press box.

He loved that radio role, and he loved Alabama, and if he wasn't technically perfect, occasionally missing a player's name by a syllable or two, no one minded. Crimson Tide fans returned Stabler's love, and if he wasn't technically perfect, occasionally missing a player's name by a syllable or two, no one minded. Crimson Tide fans returned Stabler's love, tenfold. When he eventually had to leave the broadcast crew, he ached deeply. It wasn't the loss of the fame or recognition.

Kenny Stabler never lost that, not until his final day, and never could have lost it. But he missed the Saturdays, I think, and being, even in an extended sense, a part of a team. I also think how much he would have enjoyed broadcasting Alabama football's recent epic run of success, because he never lost his love of winning, either.

In retrospect, it's hard to think of any player that generations of Alabama fans loved more. There was the talent, of course. (Shame on the Pro Football Hall of Fame for not including him on that basis alone, let alone his Super Bowl success.) But there was also that personality, that smile and wisk that were a part of the legend. He'd played for Bear Bryant, and Coach Bryant had disciplined him and taught him life lessons and loved him — but never quite tamed him.

He shared a tough Gulf Coast upbringing that thousands and thousands of Alabama fans identified with. He symbolized a region and a lifestyle like a Jimmy Buffett, not one who played guitar (which is good) but actually played football (which, in this state, is even better.)

Along the way, and it doesn't get mentioned as often as the legend does, he was the doting and supportive father of three accomplished daughters, something that he loved to talk about more than any Super Bowl he'd ever played in.

The nickname "Snake" defined an elusive, darting playing style. It became linked inextricably with a good-time, hard-living persona. But beyond the Snake, Kenny Stabler wasn't cold-blooded or venomous, but warm and gentle. He squeezed every bit he could out of his journey through life, but he shared the fun. It's good that so many people watched him play, and got to know him — because we will not, in our times, see another one like him.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Kenny Stabler was a legend of the gridiron

If you spend enough time down on the Alabama coast you’ll eventually hear one. Most of the longtime residents down in Baldwin County have their own personal Kenny Stabler story. And whether they’re true or not, they’re usually in character for the Gulf Coast legend. Those tales are now a finite commodity with his death last week.

Some say it’s Stabler that gave the northern Gulf Coast the fabled moniker “Redneck Riviera.” It summed up the laid-back, rambunctious, mischievousness of the region that produced the larger-than-life football anti-hero.

In the 1970s, Stabler, with his scraggly beard and long hair protruding from his helmet, wasn’t just a quarterback. He was a cultural icon. He was no longer the clean-cut, baby-faced product of Coach Paul W. “Bear” Bryant’s spit-and-polished Crimson Tide machine.

Of course Stabler had his rounds with the hard-bitten disciplinarian coach at Alabama. Teammate Dennis Homan noted that he had to shepherd Stabler daily to make sure he attended classes. Bryant kicked him off the team before his senior year.

When Stabler asked for a second chance, Bryant agreed. Maybe the coach, who had more than a passing acquaintance with whiskey, cards and unfiltered cigarettes, had a soft spot for guys who weren’t exactly choirboys. But, he started the senior off at the bottom of the depth chart and made him work his way to the top.
Stabler wasn't Bama's first rebel. "Broadway" Joe Namath had filled the role with a fur coat and flair. You got the feeling Stabler did it with a straight razor tucked into a pair of cowboy boots worn down at the heels.

The NFL had its Roger Staubachs and Archie Mannings, upstanding men who toed the line and served as role models. But it also had Stabler grinning from beneath that silver helmet with its wicked eye-patch logo. That grin said, "Yeah, I stayed out all night but I just crammed the ball down your throat on a two-minute drill to beat you."

John Madden, his coach at the Oakland Raiders, said there was no better quarterback ever with the game on the line. Legend has it that Stabler once disarmed his father, a troubled war veteran, who was threatening his family with a shotgun. Perhaps as, author Keith Dunnavant noted in his book, "The Missing Ring," once you've looked down the barrel of a 12 gauge the consequences of losing a football game don't appear so dire.

Those who knew him say that what you saw with Stabler was what you got. And, as far as we know, Stabler never offered any apologies for who he was or the life he lived in his glory days.

There are those who say he isn't in the Pro Football Hall of Fame because of that. If so, we find that a bit hypocritical. If the NFL didn't ban him from playing because of his lifestyle, it shouldn't keep him out of the Hall of Fame.

The Hall should be about gridiron greatness and Stabler gave us that aplenty.
Tribute for Tom Zeiler, UA professor, to be held Sunday

By Mark Hughes Cobb
Staff Writer

Tom Zeiler played a number of roles around the community. To some, he was an erudite professor of aerospace engineering and mechanics at the University of Alabama. To those who'd catch him after dark in a gregarious mood, he'd be the long-haired, bearded fellow who'd regale you speaking Old English, or holding court, in either feigned or felt high dudgeon, as a self-professed curmudgeon.

He was also a connoisseur of music who not only showed at open-mic nights to play, but to support other musicians. So following his unexpected death June 29, friends have mourned how they hope he would have wanted: in song, laying into pieces he loved, especially those by British master Richard Thompson.

A video on Youtube shows Zeiler at Egan's, ripping into Thompson’s “I Feel So Good.” It's a song about a man balancing the vigor of action within limitations, digging how doing bad can feel so good:

“They made me pay for the things I've done/Now it's my turn to have all the fun/Well I feel so good, I'm gonna break somebody's heart tonight.”

Soapy Jones, a singer and actor, saw her friend just the day before he passed. Like others, she admits Zeiler could be difficult at times, but notes he also had a softer side, often brought out by music.

“My favorite memory of me and Tom is a recent one,” she said, “last day of Ham Ham Jam Jam (a three-day Ham Bagby music festival) in May of this year, only 10 of us in the bar, give or take. Ham breaks into (one his Bagby’s songs), Tom and I start singing to each other. “It’s a little thing ... but he smiled that smile. The one he only had when he was talking about his children or singing. It was a special thing.”

Sunday night, friends and fellow musicians are encouraged to gather for “Remembering Tom In Song Open-Mic,” at Druid City Brewing Co. The Druid City Brewing Co. will whip up barbecue, and attendees are encouraged to bring not just guitars and songs but side dishes.

“A percentage of Druid City Brewing Co.’s sales for that night will be donated a charity of Zeiler’s family’s choice.
A settlement between BP and the government represents a "positive" for Alabama, a professor at the University of Alabama School of Law said.

If there is any criticism about the tentative agreement, it should be directed toward state officials who somehow got $1 billion directed to the General Fund," said Monte Caroline, who has commented about the BP settlement to multiple news organizations since it was announced July 2.

"That should be a cause of concern," Caroline said about the $1 billion that will be funneled into the General Fund by saying money from a natural disaster on the Gulf Coast should not be used to "fix a man-made "disaster" in Montgomery.

Gov. Robert Bentley has said that the amount coming into the General Fund will not resolve the state's budget crisis. The state must have its budget balanced by Oct. 1, U.S. District Judge Carl Barbier has yet to approve the settlement.

It's unclear how much the state General Fund might get up front, though a payment schedule indicates the fund sum could be $204 million. The state is facing an approximately $250 million deficit starting next fiscal year.

"Some of the concerns should be with our own government officials at the state level," Caroline said. "Why is that $1 billion going to the General Fund?"

General Fund

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange, in an op-ed piece Friday, said the money going into the General Fund starts in 2016 — after this year's fiscal year starts — and the money replaces funds that should have been in the General Fund since Nov. 1.

He disputes that south Alabama is getting short-changed in the process, even though officials in Mobile and Baldwin counties have said they were disappointed about the money going into the General Fund for the Deepwater Horizon oil leak. The money going into the General Fund is a "disaster" in Montgomery, Strange, in an op-ed piece Friday, said.

"No one benefits at all when it's in a vacuum, and we are still trying to figure out exactly what it means for the coastal counties have said they were disappointed about the money going into the General Fund for the Deepwater Horizon oil leak.

The city of Pelham will receive $106,760 to resolve any claims. Meanwhile. The city of Pelham will receive $106,760 to resolve any claims.

"Also, if the state General Fund doesn't know what it means for the coastal counties, they will be +1.59 billion worth of projects. And the agreement ended what could have been a lengthy civil procedure.

She and Strange both cited the civil case resulting from the Exxon Valdez spill. The case remained tied up in the courts for 26 years.

"I am glad we're settling it, so it's not in litigation," Faulkner Mayor Jim Keast said. "No one benefits at all when it's in litigation."

Caroline agrees.

"I was not surprised it settled," she said. "That's the nature of civil litigation. If you want to try cases and see them to a verdict... you won't see that a whole lot. The vast majority of civil cases settle."

The overall $18.7 billion settlement included $5.5 million in Clean Water Act penalties that went to each of the Gulf Coast states affected by the oil spill. The $559 million to the AGCRC is included in that amount.

Caroline said the Clean Water Act penalties were capped at more than $1.7 billion, meaning there was much more money that could've been recovered through litigation.

Then again, further litigation could've gone badly.

"Also, you have to consider there would have been appeals likely," she said. "There is a strong likelihood that had BP appealed, it could've been tied up for years in court."

Confidentiality agreement

Meanwhile, Gulf Coast officials have been critical over the confidentiality agreement approved in the settlement that is preventing much disclosure on how much money is being awarded and where it's going.

"It would appear to have happened in a vacuum, and we are still trying to figure out exactly what it means for the coastal communities in terms of Clean Water Act penalty funding," Mobile County Commissioner Connie Hudson said.

Bingiway said a $1 million award to the city of Pelham for the $1 million disappears for the federal attorney's fees paid to Gable's Law Firm, as well as up to $1,000 for the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the firm.

Kelsey Stein and Martin J. Reed

The Bingham News
Sunday, July 12, 2015

GULF OIL SPILL

Professor: Deal good for Alabama
UA signs research deal with Japanese electronics maker

By: Ed Enoch

Japanese electronics manufacturer TDK Corp. and the University of Alabama have signed a research agreement focused on the next generation of new magnetic materials that could lead to technology breakthroughs in electronics.

The agreement between TDK and UA's Center for Materials for Information Technology (MINT) builds on an existing relationship between the two, according to Carl Pinkert, UA vice president of research and economic development.

"This takes that relationship to a much higher level," Pinkert said.

He said he also hopes the new agreement, which formally begins Sept. 1, will lead to future development of ideas and collaborative opportunities.

"This is just the start; that is something I am extremely enthusiastic about," Pinkert said.

The research agreement will focus on the development of alternative materials to rare-earth elements in magnets and soft magnet metals in high-frequency devices that allow for reductions of size, weight and cost of components.

"This collaboration between TDK and UA should help to better overcome the challenges in new magnetic materials development," said Kyung-Ku Choi, general manager of TDK's Material Development Center, in comments released by UA. "TDK believes that strong inroads have been made and pose timely opportunities in the development of both high frequency soft magnetic material and rare-earth free magnets through our collaborative efforts."

Choi recently signed the agreement with Pinkert in Japan, according to the announcement by UA.

MINT, which conducts research on materials for data and energy storage as well as other applications of new materials and technologies, offers researchers from TDK the opportunity to receive training at the center while also networking, Pinkert said.

"Both ends will be sharing capabilities and technologies. They have real world experience that I think will be beneficial in our collaborations," Pinkert said.

The company, which will also provide financial resources to help underwrite some of the work, has experience with taking innovations and discoveries from a basic level to commercialization. The chance for students to tap into the real world experience is a boon for students, Pinkert said.

"That is the sort of thing that is a valued-added opportunity for our students," Pinkert said.
The university is working on options to allow students to intern with the company at its U.S. and international facilities, Pinkert said.

Work on the agreement began near the end of 2014, though Pinkert said conversations about the possibility of an agreement likely have been ongoing on for a few years.
Bonner Voyage: Bonner discusses legacy before leaving president’s office

By Peyton Shepard

The past three years have been a whirlwind for Judy Bonner.

The President’s Suite in the Rose Administration Building has seen its fair share of comings and goings since 2012, when then-President Robert E. Witt left the position to move into his current role as chancellor of The University of Alabama System. As the search for a new president ensued, Bonner’s role as executive vice president and provost, a position she had held since 2006, was augmented when she was named as interim president.

Guy Bailey was tapped as Witt’s permanent replacement, only to leave the position two months later, citing his wife’s declining health as the reason for his departure. Another search was believed to have started, but the candidate who received the appointment was already close at hand – Bonner was appointed and unanimously approved by the UA System Board of Trustees on November 1, 2012, only 24 hours after Bailey left the position.

Bonner said the appointment was entirely unanticipated when Witt approached her about the job.

“My first question was, ‘Is this another interim appointment?’” she said of her conversation with Witt. “He indicated there had been a national search and they [the Board of Trustees] had had the opportunity to observe my performance as the interim president, and they felt like that they were ready to move forward with an appointment.”

Even though she served as interim president during both searches, Bonner said she never considered herself as a contender for the position.

“I wanted to focus on doing a good job as interim, and I did not want to spend that time being concerned about being the next president,” she said. “I simply wanted to do a good job and then return to my role as provost.”

The appointment came with concerns about the lack of outside input regarding Bonner’s selection as Bailey’s replacement, specifically involving the decision not to consult the Faculty Senate, which The Crimson White reported throughout the month following the appointment. In a Nov. 16, 2012 interview with The Crimson White, Witt said he believed a search as exhaustive as the one that ended with Bailey’s selection was not necessitated by the situation.

“It was my belief that the likelihood, that what the faculty, staff and students were looking for, had materially changed in four months approached zero,” Witt said in the interview. “With that extensive input being only four months old, I did not see the need to put the campus through another extensive search.”

Bonner said she believes her working relationship with the Faculty Senate during her tenure has served to quell any concerns they might have had with her appointment, and that any objections didn’t stem from her selection so much as the brevity of the process.

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"I don’t think that they were as concerned about me as they were about the process and about the suddenness and about the shock, really, that Dr. Bailey was no longer going to be president,” she said.

The transition from interim to permanent president, Bonner said, was an easy one, and that her knowledge of the University, both following her employment as a faculty member and before, heavily contributed to that ease.

"On top of having been in the provost office since 2003, I had been at The University of Alabama since 1981,” she said. “And I hate to say this, but I actually entered The University of Alabama as a freshman 50 years ago this fall, so I knew a tremendous amount about what was going on at The University of Alabama.”

Bonner received both her undergraduate and masters degrees at the University, and said it has been an honor to serve the University she loves.

“I think most people’s allegiance is to their undergraduate institution, and I came back to the University as a faculty member and department chair,” she said. “During the next 34 or so years, I had lots of opportunities to go elsewhere with promotions and I never once seriously considered the opportunities, because this is where I wanted to make a difference."

“I never looked twice at some of the other opportunities that came my way.”

Bonner’s appointment marked the first time in The University of Alabama’s 184-year history that a woman would serve as president. She said that facet of her selection did not occur to her immediately following her appointment, but its importance has become increasingly apparent.

“One of the first questions I was asked was, ‘How does it feel to be the first woman president?’ And I think my response was I really had not thought about that. It’s exciting to be the president of such a great university,” she said. “As time has gone on, I have realized how important having a woman as a president is to our students, to our faculty, to our alumni, and I really appreciate so much more now the importance of that historic moment.”

Bonner’s historic selection came in tandem with the 40th anniversary of Title IX, a federal law that prohibits gendered discrimination that has played a role in women’s athletics.

“That very year, our gymnastics team, our softball team and our women’s golf team won national championships, and I took a tremendous amount of pride to see those women achieve on such a high level,” Bonner said. “They are extraordinary student athletes. They excel in the classroom, and they excel in the competition with their sport, so it was kind of neat to see it all come together at the same time.”

**Successes and Controversies**

Coming into the office, Bonner said she wished to extend upon the University’s recent successes and that she felt it was important to maintain the momentum. One of those successes was the emphasis on recruitment of what Bonner said are the best and brightest students and faculty. As
for her individual contributions as president, she said she has found success in her goal to ensure that Alabama’s campus is an inclusive and welcoming place.

“It has been extremely important to me to find ways for students to connect to the campus, so that they have the same kind of experience that our alumni had when they attended the university and it had 12,000, 15,000 or 18,000 students,” she said. “We have worked very hard to bring on new initiatives that bring on new opportunities for populations or subpopulations of the student body to connect.”

An opportunity to address the topic of connection and inclusion came in Bonner’s first fall semester as president when the issues regarding the segregation of UA sororities were brought to light September 2013. The CW reported on this phenomenon in “The Final Barrier,” bringing national attention to the UA Greek organization and prompted response from the administration.

“As provost, I was not involved in the Greek system,” Bonner said. “As provost, I was more focused on what was going on in the colleges, so that August was my first opportunity as president to go through recruitment and I actually thought that things were going extremely well. I actually thought that it was going to be a different outcome. But when it was the outcome that it was, it was very clear that we needed to act, and we very quickly took decisive steps in order to get people around the table and to figure out what we needed to do in order to empower the students to do what they were ready to do and what they wanted to do.”

Earlier that September, Bonner was confronted with another controversy - the allegations of voter fraud by UA students in the Tuscaloosa City Board of Education elections, reported by campus news outlet WVUA. Ten students were alleged to have registered in single-family homes, and allegations of incentivizing sorority members in exchange for their votes in support of candidates Cason Kirby and Lee Garrison, both of whom are UA alumni.

Many called for the University to intervene, but Bonner said it would have only complicated matters for the administration to conduct an investigation of their own, as it would have impeded city officials from doing their job.

“I probably should let other people be the judge as to whether it was appropriately handled from the University’s viewpoint,” she said. “But from my perspective it was not our responsibility to investigate it, and if we had gotten in the middle of the investigation, I think we would have been called off.”

Moving on

As Bonner prepares to vacate her position, she leaves behind her contributions to the University, both those that she saw to completion and those still in development. One of the things she said she has dedicated a lot of her focus to but would have liked to have done more for was the raising of scholarship money.

“A priority for me was really to focus on raising scholarship money,” she said. “During the time I was president… we were able to raise over $100,000,000 in cash pledges and expectancies for
scholarships... I would have liked to have raised even more, because I think it is critical that we have a large scholarship endowment in order to help defray the cost of college for our students.”

Bonner will also leave behind a variety of projects undertaken during her tenure, such as the development of the Peter Bryce campus, additions to the Moody Music Building and the construction on Sewell-Thomas Stadium, all projects she had a hand in planning, she said.

“There’s so much more that we’ve worked so hard on, and it would have been great to have seen those to fruition,” she said. “But I’ll have the opportunity to because I’ll still be a part of the life of the University, just in a very different role.”

Upon her departure from the president’s office, Bonner will take a year’s sabbatical, which she said she looks forward to.

“It will be an opportunity to decompress, and to think about what’s next in my life,” she said. “For the last 34 years, my priority has been what do I need to do for The University of Alabama? Now for the first time... I’ll be able to think about the next chapter in my life and how I’m going to spend my time.”

Although she anticipates the ease of life outside of the office, Bonner said she will miss being able to make a difference in the lives of students, but plans to continue to look for other ways to do so. Bonner said she prides herself on being “the students’ president,” and has a high level of pride in the affection students have shown her – including her infamous nickname among the student body, JBo.

“When I would go down on the field at football games and I would hear the student section start saying, ‘JBo, JBo,’ it was always with a tremendous amount of pride,” she said.

When reflecting on her favorite moments as president, she said one thing sticks out: graduation.

“I love graduation,” she said. “Students have worked so hard to get there, families are so proud of what their students have accomplished... People said, I don’t see how you could stand there, but as long as there’s students walking across the stage, I could stand there and shake their hands. It was fun for students to want to do a quick selfie, to do a quick hug...”

“The May graduation, one student said, ‘Can I do a hug?’ and I said of course, and the next thing I knew, he was twirling me around. Someone posted that, and it said ‘JBo is swept off her feet!’ But I do love graduation.”

Bonner’s fondness for graduation extends into what she would like to see for the University as it moves forward, which is a continued emphasis on excellence and promoting student success, she said.

“I define success as helping students to achieve their academic goals,” she said. “I don’t want to see any student leave here without accomplishing the goal that the student came here with.”

When asked if she had any advice to impart to her successor, Stuart Bell, as he comes into the position, she very quickly responded.

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“Take some vitamins. It’s a 24/7,” she said, laughing a little before going on. “You do have lots of balls in the air at the same time, and I find that exhilarating and I’m sure he will find that exhilarating as well. But I am confident that the best days for The University of Alabama lie ahead, and I’m confident that President Bell and his team will do an extraordinary job of continuing to move The University of Alabama forward.”

Bonner’s last day before her sabbatical, and her last day of the whirlwind that has been her three years of presidency, was July 14. Bell formally takes the position today. Bonner’s final message to the student body as president: take advantage of the opportunities The University of Alabama presents.

“There is a wealth of opportunities here for our students,” she said. “You will get out of your experience as much as you put into it. And take advantage of every opportunity.”
New UA president spends first day meeting students

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

New University of Alabama President Stuart Bell has spent his first days on the job meeting with students, faculty and local officials, beginning his presidency with assurances he would be accessible.

"Certainly, first and foremost, I want to be out there and accessible to our faculty and staff," Bell said Wednesday.

Bell used part of his first official day as president to visit the Fresh Food Co., which was crowded with a lunchtime rush of incoming freshman on campus for orientation. Bell, shadowed as students passed through the line, greeted the freshmen with a smile.

"I think you all have a lot of new opportunities," he told them. "I think you all have a lot of new freedom." Bell praised the university's food service, and added that it would continue under his administration.

"It's not going to go away," he said. "We're going to fix it and make it better." Bell also praised the campus's diversity, and said it would continue to be a priority during his presidency.

"We're going to work hard to make sure that diversity is in all aspects of our university," he said.

Bell's first day was filled with meetings and events, including a press conference and a tour of the university's facilities. He met with students, faculty and staff, and said he was impressed with the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

"I think this is a great place to be," he said. "I think this is a great place to learn." Bell said he was looking forward to working with the university's leadership and faculty to make sure that the university continues to be a leader in higher education.

"I think we have a lot of work to do," he said. "But I think we're on the right track."
by photographers from the university and local media, shook hands with students in the dining hall, as well as posing for photos. Bell said he was using the beginning of this time on campus to connect with students and their aspirations while at Alabama.

"The reason I want to be part of the university is I love young people, and I love the ability to help them aspire and achieve their dreams," Bell said.

On Wednesday, Bell reiterated commitments that UA would remain a student-centered institution as well as a resource, both locally and statewide, for research and economic development. A student-centered world view and emphasis on research were among the priorities sought by the search committee that nominated Bell and among his initial talking points during his appointment by the UA board of trustees last month.

"My concern is to make sure we are doing everything we can to provide the environment on our campus that is going to help us succeed in our mission to help our students succeed," Bell said.

Bell's first official day was Wednesday, but he has spent the first days of the week meeting with members of the UA and Tuscaloosa communities. Bell's meetings included talks with his predecessor, former UA President Judy Bonner, and Tuscaloosa
Mayor Walt Maddox.

Bell said his message was that the university under his leadership would continue to build on UA's momentum of the last decade and its existing relationships.

"You certainly accomplish an awful lot working with external groups, but the message I want to send is we are not perfect... There is probably some things we need to be doing better, certainly from UA's perspective," Bell said. "We are going to continue to build on the great relationships we have already established but also make sure we are hand-in-glove in terms of our communication to make sure we are addressing the challenges we have in the future."

Pending review and approval by the UA board of trustees' compensation committee, Bell will make $625,000 annually in base pay and be eligible for a $105,000 per year as a goals-based performance incentive, according to the offer letter from UA Chancellor Robert Witt.

As president, Bell, like his predecessors, will be required to live at UA's president's mansion. The offer also includes a $12,000 per year automobile allowance.

With Bell on campus, UA will resume the search for a permanent provost, which was put on hold by Bonner to allow her replacement to participate in the process. The search will restart soon, Bell said. The interim provost is Kevin Whitaker.

*Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.*
After Innovation Depot: Why Birmingham needs another landing spot for entrepreneurs

By Alan Alexander

Atlas RFID is the largest company at Innovation Depot and one of Birmingham’s fastest growing companies. But the tech company’s size and rapid growth has it facing a common challenge for young Birmingham companies: finding its next office space after the Depot.

Robert Fuqua, CEO of Atlas RFID, said he’s been mulling a move for about a year, but options within Birmingham’s Entrepreneurial District are very limited.

“We’re going to be on an island,” he said. “Any company that leaves (the Depot) is forced to go outside of this area, and that removes a lot of activity.”

As more companies graduate from Innovation Depot – and as the incubator grows – it’s a challenge becoming more and more common in Birmingham. Innovation Depot houses more than 100 startups within its sprawling 140,000-square-foot facility. Those companies accounted for 700 jobs and a $1.3 billion economic impact last year. But in recent years, the incubator’s roster of young companies has been growing at a faster rate than the companies that have been able to move out, or graduate.

The growth has been great for the local tech scene, but it’s created challenges for entrepreneurs like Fuqua, who are often seeking space with an environment like Innovation Depot, where dozens of companies intermingle and share ideas in a comfortable, informal setting every day.

Many believe Birmingham needs an Innovation Depot 2.0 – an entrepreneur-centric landing spot for Depot graduates that no longer need the guidance of an incubator, but crave the culture they found at the Depot.

Ideally, that facility could be located near the Depot in the city’s Entrepreneurial District, which isn’t currently home to an abundance of high-quality, affordable office space for young companies.

It’s an idea that has already caught on in other metros, but Birmingham could be years away from taking the step unless a private developer takes the lead.

But experts say the need is there, and that a business accelerator could anchor a stronger Entrepreneurial District that would boost Birmingham’s tech sector while providing more resources for the city’s biggest businesses.

Growth breeds need

Innovation Depot started in 2007 through a partnership between the city and the University of Alabama at Birmingham when the city’s entrepreneurial center and UAB’s Office for the Advancement of Developing Industries combined to form the incubator.

The partnership then bought a former retail center from Sears and the project quickly took off.

“When I first saw the construction site for Innovation Depot, I couldn’t get my head around it. I was amazed and couldn’t understand where all of the companies were going to come from, but in an incredibly short amount of time, the offices were full,” said Kathy Nugent, executive director of the Bill L. Harbert Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at UAB.

Since that time, the Depot has earned national acclaim and become the epicenter of Birmingham’s growing tech scene – providing a launching pad and proving ground for several promising companies.

Mobile app development firm MotionMobs left the Depot in 2012 and moved into a 10,000-square-foot space in the Blackwell Building on First Avenue. The company recently expanded that office by 2,600 square feet to make room for new hires.

Taylor Peake Wyatt, co-founder of MotionMobs, said a facility with the same entrepreneurial atmosphere of the Depot would be a huge asset for startups that have grown past the incubation phase and that need reliable, modern office space.

“The need is definitely there. When we started looking for office space outside of Innovation Depot, not only was there not an option like an Innovation Depot 2.0, but there wasn’t an affordable option where we needed 1,500 square feet.”

Wyatt said a handful of companies come to mind that would serve as valuable anchors for an Innovation Depot 2.0, including Atlas RFID.

“I feel like Innovation Depot has done well, and they rightfully get a lot of attention and praise for what they do, but I also think that now that they’ve done so well and they’ve created companies that have done well, a few companies have grown to the point where they would have a lot of value as anchors to a next-stage facil-

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ity," she said.

Fuqua said he would be willing to be a part of any sort of project that builds out the city’s entrepreneurial center.

“There’s only about two blocks and train tracks separating the Depot from the Parkside District, if that space could get filled in and connect the two districts, then it becomes a thriving commercial district,” Fuqua said.

A nearby model

When it comes to an example for a next-stage facility, Birmingham only has to look to its eastern neighbor.

In 2013, entrepreneur David Cummings invested $20 million into a six-story, 103,000-square-foot building in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta and redeveloped it into a business accelerator for the region’s entrepreneurs called Atlanta Tech Village.

The layout of the facility is similar to the Depot, Cummings said, in that it fosters creativity and access to businesses.

“I wanted to create a building with a density of entrepreneurs where they could bump into each other, share ideas, build a rapport with investors, and easily host panel discussions,” he said. “Entrepreneurs are typically good at one or two things, so having that collaboration makes it more likely to share ideas and increase interaction on a lot of projects.”

Atlanta Tech Village was designed with the unique needs of early stage companies in mind. Cummings said traditional commercial real estate properties that call for five- or 10-year leases aren’t conducive for fast-growing startups.

“The problem with a five-year lease is that by halfway through the lease, you could have 50 employees or 100. You just don’t know how fast you’re going to grow to make that commitment,” Cummings said. “Also, the style of office space isn’t generally fun or creative, and you want it to look modern as a startup company.”

Cummings said his investment has seen immediate returns not just in the entrepreneurial community, but also with big business.

“We have received a lot of civic and community support from businesses because they recognize the importance of a strong entrepreneurial industry,” he said. “Just like in Atlanta, Birmingham’s next-stage landing spot for startups might have to come from private investors.”

The Depot’s future

Innovation Depot is in the middle of rolling out multiple initiatives to help build Birmingham’s entrepreneurial culture, so planning for another facility isn’t the incubator’s radar for now.

In fact, Innovation Depot CEO Devon Laney said a project like that couldspread the Depot too thin.

“We are working on three areas of support: resources, flexibility and culture,” Laney said. “I’m very protective of those features because they are hard to get right. You can lose that feel very quickly and suddenly you’re just another office building. I think a lot of incubators fail because they are focused on too many things at once rather than developing the core identity.”

Rather than building out a new building, Laney said he would be interested in partnering with a developer on the planning stages for the entrepreneurial district. If those plans called for a new business accelerator, the Depot could come in and help manage different programs in an advisory role.

Although Laney said he doesn’t see that happening any time soon, he doesn’t discount the benefits a stronger entrepreneurial district could have, especially with forging more business relationships with the city’s corporate community.

“We’ve done a good job of bringing resources here on a case-by-case basis, but we can do a better job in making sure the broader community understands the companies that are here,” he said. “I think building out this district will help connect this area to the financial district that’s only a few blocks away.”

In the meantime, Laney said the incubator will focus on building its identity and helping the startups currently housed there access the resources they need to continue growing.

“We hope that by looking at other best practices around the country, we can combine that with our current best practice of being an incubator for us to continue growing the ecosystem. I’d love to have an Innovation Depot 2.0 in five to 10 years if there’s enough demand for it. Hopefully it’s a natural progression.”
UAB paid Sard Verbinnen Co., a New York-based public relations firm, nearly $200,000 for its work in shaping the decision to disband football, according to documents obtained by AL.com.

The UAB Educational Foundation paid Sard Verbinnen $192,819.93 for helping UAB put together its public relations strategy for announcing the decision to disband football. The majority of those payments came after UAB president Ray Watts announced the decision to kill football Dec. 2. The university paid Sard Verbinnen $63,291.30 on Dec. 19 and $72,997.36 on Jan. 27, its last recorded payment to the firm, according to the documents.

The school’s first payment to Sard Verbinnen was July 16 for $25,000, more than four months before the school says it made its decision to disband football.

AL.com previously reported on Sard Verbinnen preparing documents for UAB to make its football decision back in September 2014. The documents showed UAB initially picked two dates for the possible announcement — Sept. 17 and Sept. 30 — though Sard Verbinnen warned the university that its football players may react poorly and the school would be unable to field a team after a mid-season announcement.

The company keeps a low profile — it has never responded to AL.com requests for comments — but is known for working with Wall Street firms and companies in crisis. It has previously worked with heavyweights such as Goldman Sachs, Twitter and Dell, helping “influence a major news event without leaving fingerprints,” according to a 2013 Bloomberg article.

“If you are going to be in a PR knife fight, they are the team you want,” Scott Thompson, chief executive officer of Dollar Thrifty, told Bloomberg.

Sard Verbinnen has also previously worked with Protective Life Corporation, whose chairman, president and chief executive officer is UA Board of Trustee John Johns.
UAB to open state's first mental health clinic for LGBTQ patients

By Ryan Phillips

UAB will soon facilitate Alabama's first mental health care facility for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender patients.

The mental health clinic – which will be the first of its kind in the state – will operate out of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, according to a report from AL.com.

The clinic will open on Monday, July 20.

The National Alliance for Mental Illness has reported that members of the LGBTQ community are three times more likely to suffer from major depression and anxiety than their heterosexual counterparts.

A statement from UAB said many members of the LGBTQ community are less likely to seek professional help when grappling with marginalization or stigmatization.

The clinic will also provide education to medical practitioners at UAB and around Alabama.
Hastening the Dawn of Hybrid Rocket Engines

By UAH

Hybrid rocket fuel research being done by a University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) mechanical engineering doctoral student could hasten the day when a simpler, safer, more economical rocket engine propels space missions.

At UAH's Johnson Propulsion Center, Matthew Hitt has experimented with varying solid fuel grain sizes to see how they burn at different combustion chamber pressures and oxidizer flow rates in an effort to improve the performance of hybrid engines.

"This is another step in making hybrids -- which are a safer alternative to either solid or liquid engines -- more practical for actual application," he says.

Advised by Dr. Robert Frederick, director of UAH's Propulsion Research Center, Hitt attended the 2015 Combustion Summer School at Princeton University and has submitted a paper on his work to the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics 2015 Propulsion and Energy Forum, set for July 27-29 in Orlando, Fla.

Improving the efficiency has to do with improving the fuel regression rate -- a scientific way of saying you get the solid fuel to burn faster so it recedes back from the flame front at a faster rate.

"By increasing the fuel regression rate -- which can lead to simpler designs -- you are leaving less unburned fuel, so you are not carrying all this dead weight," Hitt says.

Not having to carry fuel that won't end up getting burned could reduce the weight of the rocket, allow for use of a smaller engine for the same flight result, or allow for a larger payload due to the weight savings.

Perfecting hybrid engines has been intriguing to rocket scientists globally because of the tantalizing benefits a hybrid engine offers over both conventional solid rocket engines and over liquid fuel/liquid oxidizer engines.

Rather than having a valuable human or satellite payload sitting atop two premixed solid propellants that could explode if accidentally ignited, in a hybrid engine one propellant is a solid and the other is a liquid.

"You're not sitting on a bomb," says Hitt. Having half the combustion equation as a solid beats a liquid/liquid combination in weight and cost savings, because half of the valves and associated equipment needed to pressurize and control liquids are eliminated. And unlike a solid fuel engine, a hybrid can be throttled and shut down.
But the axial injection end-burning hybrid design Hitt used for his experiments is a bit different than conventional hybrids.

In the engine Hitt is working with, "the oxidizer is injected through a porous solid fuel source, and the combustion occurs on the end of that fuel."

Visualize granules of fuel in a tube that have oxygen passed through them from one end while they burn on the other. By controlling the oxygen flow, the engine can be throttled or stopped.

"For a typical hybrid, you have your solid fuel, and your oxygen is injected into combustion ports in the fuel," he says. Efficiency is a problem, though. "Conventional hybrids have a low regression rate, so you have to have numerous ports with complicated fuel grain geometries to get the fuel flow rate up." Complicated fuel geometries are expensive to produce.

Hitt's work can be seen as something of a tiebreaker in the world of axial injection end-burning hybrids. Separate Chinese and Japanese research teams reached conflicting findings over whether the design increased fuel regression rates.

"My results say that this design does increase the regression rate. What I'm using is polyethylene as the solid fuel and gaseous oxygen as the oxidizer," Hitt says.

"In a conventional hybrid, the rate at which the oxidizer is injected does change the regression rate of the fuel. In this one, the regression rate is a result of the chamber pressure, which is not how hybrids typically work but is how solid engines work," Hitt says. "The axial hybrid has a higher fuel regression rate, and that means you can have less complicated geometries in the fuel grains."
UAH to host workshop this week on educating future cyber warriors

By Lucy Berry

North Alabama school systems interested in educating future "cyber warriors" are invited to an event this week at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

The workshop, to be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon Thursday in UAH's Charger Union Theater, will feature presentations on cybersecurity trends, starting a cybersecurity program and a school system's experience with one, training, mentoring, and grant and funding opportunities.

The event is being organized by Alabama Board of Education Regional Representative Mary Scott Hunter and Cyber Huntsville.

For information on the conference, contact Hilary Gould with The Schools Foundation at hilary@theschoolsfoundation.org.
UAH students install solar panel to school golf cart

By Shevaun Bryan

A University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) golf cart will never need to be plugged in again. Some young minds outfitted it with solar panels so it gets natural — and free — energy to power it.

Wednesday afternoon on the UAH campus, a team of students and some staff retro-fitted a cart, led by grad student Ivy Elrod.

The event also celebrates the launch of UAH's student chapter of the Association of Energy Engineers.

With help from the Alabama Center for Sustainable Energy, the golf cart is the only one being outfitted — for now. The team hopes it will become a moving billboard as it moves students and staff across campus to promote the accessibility and convenience of solar power.
Camp helps students affected by desegregation order make successful transition to Huntsville Junior High

By David Kumbroch

Starting a new school. That’s a tough process a lot of us remember for ourselves, and a whole new group of kids will go through it this fall after Huntsville City Schools changed up district lines to get out from under a federal desegregation order.

But a group of community organizations look to make it easier.

The YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama, Huntsville City Schools and UAH all got together to create a retreat for students of the newly rebranded Huntsville Junior High.

A group of Huntsville City Schools students gathered at Camp Cha-La-Kee in Marshall County the last week of June, brought together by different organizations. The goal — to tackle some of the issues created by the Huntsville City Schools plan to get out from under a federal desegregation order.

Summer is camp season, and all is as it should be at Camp Cha-La-Kee.

June tags in July as kids navigate past the halfway point of their summer. They’re not thinking about school yet, despite what brought them to camp.

“It’s a leadership camp for kids entering Huntsville Junior High,” Jerry Courtney, Heart of the Valley YMCA president, said.

“We’ve had a change in our zone lines, picking up some students from different schools,” Huntsville Junior High Principal Stephanie Wieseman said.

“There was a lot of work to be done as the city schools began to implement the desegregation plan,” Courtney said.

The group piles into the camp hall on their last day to enjoy some of the memories they made. Come fall, this group of about 30 kids will have to report to Huntsville Junior High, a lot of them for the first time.

Many come from Westlawn Middle, their lives dramatically shifted by a hard-fought legal agreement created in federal court. But kids will always care more about lunch rooms than court rooms. They’ve got enough to worry about.
“I think all of us can relate to the fact that the transition between elementary school to middle school or junior high, that’s a complex time,” Courtney said.

Patrick Wynn, President of the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama said, “it’s all new to them.” Wynn works with a lot of the kids who will move from Westlawn. He says most of what he hears has to do with who knows who, with concerns about making friends out of classmates.

Though even those pure desires can be complicated by issues that feel a thousand miles away from this camp.

“I have heard some kids say, ‘they don’t want us over there.’ and I think that comes because the kids watch the news. They pay attention to some of the things that adults are saying,” Wynn said.

So that’s why the YMCA, The Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and Huntsville City Schools have all worked in unison and pulled a small group of students together to address kid concerns outside the confines of adult anxiety.

“It’s the Y at its best. It’s the Boys and Girls Club at its best. It’s the university at its best. It’s the school system at its best,” Courtney said.

All that — to see kids at their best.
This week’s computer glitches should educate us all about cyber security concerns

By Mark McCarter

A coincidence? A conspiracy? Bugs in the system, some merry pranksters or a nefarious foreign power?

Or, as "The Atlantic" pointed out, as has twice before happened, squirrels nibbling away at an electrical grid to bring down America's financial nerve-center?

Wednesday might as well have been declared National Error Message Day.

The New York Stock Exchange conked out for three hours. United Airlines might as well have been running a stagecoach service. The Wall Street Journal website crashed.

Just one of those peculiar days ... or a precursor to that hyped-up Cyber Pearl Harbor that hides there like a boogieman under the bed?

"(Cyber threats are) real. It's not talk," said Mary Scott Hunter, a member of the Alabama State Board of Education, representing District 8, whose "day job" with Intuitive Research and Technology Company and experience in the military make her acutely aware of the threat.

It was mere coincidence, but a fortuitous bit of one, that Thursday brought a seminar at UAH entitled "How to Start a Cyber Program in Your School System." Some 50 educational leaders were in attendance, most of their faces buried into smart-phone screens before the event began, obediently tapping in the hashtag #CyberinSchool.

A number of groups combined to host the event, which was designed to help educators in the region share ideas on cyber programs and prepare their students for roles in that world.

"A skill-shortage (in cyber security experts) is the biggest threat," said Dr. Rodney Robertson from Auburn's Huntsville Research Center.

For many of us, cyber security has only a few levels. We worry that somebody's going to hijack our credit card numbers. We worry some sabotage will strike the airlines and our four-hour layover in Atlanta will turn into 14 hours. We worry that some James Bond villain is sitting in a Far East lair with his index finger hovering over the "Enter" key and we're all screwed.

It's deeper, broader and much more serious. Hunter and other educational leaders see the value in being ever-more proactive against the threat and the importance in making it an integral part of the educational process.

That, you can probably sell in Huntsville. Good luck, says the cynic, selling it in Montgomery.

See next page
Nonetheless, the educational system can help grow a significant counter-weapon against cyber attacks. It must start early.

Kindergarteners of different generation were finger-painting and still reveling in Dr. Seuss. These days, they have Facebook passwords. They must be taught about security and safety.

In elementary school, there is the new buzz-phrase, "cyber citizenship." It's the "thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not post somebody else's embarrassing photos, thou shalt not hack" part of connectivity.

By middle school and high school, there should be involvement in extracurricular – Huntsville City Schools students spoke on their Cyber Patriot competition – and aggressive training within the STEM parameters.

Our schools' goals are increasingly to have students career-ready and college-ready. Cyber training is part of that, whether high school graduates can evolve in the field through military service or on a college campus. A place like, for instance, UAH, which is one of only three schools in the state and 40 nationwide involved in a cyber security scholarship that includes internships, a generous stipend and employment opportunities.

"In the future, we will fight some of our battles in cyberspace," Hunter said.

It's a nice thought to wish that this generation of cyber security experts could render an ensuing generation of experts unnecessary, the way Netflix killed video rental stores. But the reality is, our next warriors will fight different battles, and our educational system must help equip them.
How a UAH student's research could help hybrid rockets get off the ground

By Josh Barrett

Most people with a casual interest in rockets know the difference between solid rockets and liquid rockets, but there's a third kind: hybrids.

Solid boosters use a sort of space-age gunpowder - they're premixed, you light them, and they explode - fast off the ground and quick-burning. The Space Shuttle, and NASA's next mega-rocket, the Space Launch System, used them - they are the huge white towers on either side of the fuel tank.

Liquid engines fueled the mighty Saturn V, complicated valves mix a cryogenic liquid propellant (like hydrogen, kerosene or methane) in a combustion chamber with a liquid oxidizer (oxygen), and they ignite, explode and create thrust.

Hybrids use elements of both - a liquid oxidizer is run through a solid fuel, mixed and ignited. They try to be the best of both worlds.

"That's the idea, is with hybrids you want to balance the two and get benefits from both," said Matthew Hitt, a doctoral student at the University of Alabama in Huntsville who is researching hybrid fuels. "The main argument in favor of hybrids is increased safety."

The problem with solids is that once lit, something is going up. Liquids are complex pieces of machinery with many tubes, tanks and valves - especially with two liquids.

Hybrids, on the other hand, can be turned off but only have one set of tanks, tubes and valves. But their main problem: they burn slower than traditional solids and their internal structure is very complex.

"With the complications, you end up with a lot of unburned fuel at the end of the day, so you have this extra dead weight that you're carrying around," Hitt said.

A mantra of rocket engineers is "Every pound saved on the ground is a pound that goes to space," so you can see why carrying unburned fuel is an issue.

But Hitt is looking into a new hybrid design. The hybrid engines of today will shoot the liquid oxidizer through channels in the solid fuel, burning from the inside of the channels out.

Hitt is studying the "regression rate," or, how fast the fuel burns, of a new design - one that sends the oxidizer through a porous chunk of fuel, and burns as it exits the bottom, so the solid fuel burns from the bottom up.

From his studies, Hitt thinks that this can make hybrid engines cheaper and less complex, and also more practical because all of the fuel is burned off.

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"I would say that the biggest takeaway from my research is, it's a step, that there is potential in this and it's worth looking into," Hitt said.

Hitt wrote a paper on his findings and submitted it to the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics 2015 Propulsion and Energy Forum, which will take place from July 27-29 in Orlando, Florida.
Recent glitches should educate us about cyberthreats

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Cyber security on teachers' camp curriculum

By WAFF Staff

Huntsville-area high school teachers are students this week during a cyber security camp at UAH.

The educators are learning how to bring cybersecurity lessons to their classrooms.

Organizers say the camp will help teachers prepare their students for the jobs of the future.

"There's a tremendous need for workers in this field. So we wanna get kids interested at younger and younger ages in going into the cyber security field," said UAH spokesperson Jim Steele. "And obviously teaching them in grade school and high school and middle school is one way to get their interest early on."

The 40-hour camp is free to educators and will wrap up on Friday.
10 things to learn from Alabama's world championship rocketry team

By Leada Gore

Alabama is no stranger to national championships. But international championships? For rocketry? An award earned by a group of students from a small North Alabama school?

That's something special.

I got the chance recently to sit down with the members of the Russellville High School Rocketry Team. In June, the group captured first place honors at the International Rocketry Challenge at the 2015 Paris Air Show. They earned the right to represent the U.S. at the show by winning the national title earlier in the year. The team's members are: Cristian Ruiz, Niles Butts, Andrew Heath, Katie Burns, Evan Swinney, Cady Studdard, and Chelsea Suddith.

Here are 10 things I learned from this exceptional bunch:

U.S. win was a surprise

The group thought they had a good rocket going into the national contest. In that contest, the top 101 scores go to Washington, D.C. and the group was thrilled when it learned they came out on top.

"I was blown away," said Joseph Cole, a 7-8th grade made teacher who worked with the team. "We thought a reasonable expectation was to be in the top 10 at nationals. Then we won nationals. Before then, I never dreamed we would make it to internationals."

The group was more than ready for Paris

The win at Paris was no fluke. The group had worked for a year to design, build and launch its rocket with the goal of reaching an altitude of exactly 800 feet within a 46- to 48-second flight window. The rocket was required to separate into two sections during the flight, with the main section returning to ground with its payload - including a raw egg - intact.

Scores were determined by how close the rockets approached the required height and time and a cracked egg meant disqualification. The Russellville team achieved a winning flight score of 49.53 with an altitude of 824 feet and won first place in the presentation contest - all without any broken eggs.

Each team member oversaw an element of the project from projection to payload, similar to how NASA operates a space launch.

Never underestimate the power of a good teacher

Several of the team members said the guidance of a teacher brought them to the rocketry team.
"Seven years ago, I had a science teacher and the school had started a robotics class and he signed me up for it," team captain Andrew Heath said. "I quickly fell in love with it."

Or childhood experimentation

Niles Butts traced his love of rocketry back to his childhood.

"My brother and I were always shooting off rockets," he said. "I've always just liked them."

The team learned a lot about rocketry. They learned plenty of other things, too

None of the team members had ever been out of the country. None had a passport. That didn't slow them down, though.

Team members said the magnitude of their win didn't really hit them until they got back to the U.S. from Paris. Now, in a town full of championship sports team, it was the Rocketry Team that was featured at Russellville's Fourth of July celebration, where they were presented a demonstration. They've also been honored with an official proclamation from the Russellville City Council.

"I felt like a celebrity," Cady Studdard said.

Other than rocketry, there were a couple of things that stood out in Paris

"All of the buildings were so nice," Cristian Ruiz said. "There was not a single one that was rundown." The group also enjoyed the food ("even their McDonald's was nice," one said.) They did miss sweet tea, though.

How much does it cost to go to the air show in Paris? If you're this team, not a cent.

It's an expensive proposition to take a group of students to Paris and it would have been almost impossible except for this: the cost of the trip was covered by Raytheon Corp.

"Everything we needed was taken care of," advisor Joseph Cole said.

Girls don't like engineering, right?

Wrong. Team member Chelsea Suddith, who is going to be a junior next year, said it never occurred to her that some people might think it was unusual for a girl to be a member of a rocketry team.

"I never thought about it until someone asked me that when we won," she said. "Before that, I didn't think anything about a girl doing something like this."

Team member Katelyn Burns agreed.
"Nothing about this made me think that girls couldn't do it, too," she said.

They are already talking repeat

There are seven members to the championship rocketry team. Only one of those – Evan Swinney – has graduated. All are coming back next year and want to repeat as champions, a feat that's almost unheard of. Swinney isn't leaving rocketry behind even though he won't be on the team.

"I'm going to UAH to study computer engineering but I like aerospace, too," he said.

He's not the only one – every member of the rocketry team said they planned to go to college to study in an aerospace, technology or science education field.

Hope for the future

You hear a lot these days about how the next generation won't be capable of running this country. Maybe so. But meeting these kids, and seeing what they are capable of, certainly gives you hope for the future.
NSA holding cybersecurity seminars for area teachers

By Travis Leder

The National Security Agency (NSA) is giving local teachers a crash course in cybersecurity.

The GenCyber Cybersecurity Camp is a week-long effort to teach these secondary educators about cyber topics through instruction and hands-on lab exercises. The NSA wants to improve outreach to both students and teachers through these programs nationwide, and National Information Assurance Education and Training Program (NIETP) chief Lynne Clark says education is a critical component toward protecting the country.

"Our ultimate goal is to produce people who are well-versed in cybersecurity who can help protect the nation," says Clark, who is in Huntsville for this week’s event, hosted at UAH.

Local outreach is an important goal for several UAH administrators, including vice president for research and economic development Ray Vaughn.

"The Huntsville community is particularly sensitive to that because of Redstone Arsenal, NASA and a lot of science and engineering work that's done here," says Vaughn, who hopes to expand the program in future years to include more area school systems. This year's camp included participants from the Madison City, Madison County and Huntsville City School Systems.
Alabama teacher among 10 nationally to serve on Common Core panel

By Paul Huggins

Stephanie Hyatt, an AP English lead teacher at Lee High School in Huntsville, has been selected as one of 10 teachers in the nation for a national educator engagement panel.

Hyatt was to leave today to join the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington, D.C., where the discussion will focus on exceptional ideas to make sure that all students in public education are prepared for college, careers and life.

The council will meet with state superintendents in November and share a white paper and other support materials on what they "need to know from a teacher's classroom perspective on how Common Core is working and how we can make it work better," Hyatt said.

The council will begin a pilot program to provide feedback, guidance and support to state education agencies on engagement strategies for College and Career Readiness Implementation issues.

"When teachers are engaged and teachers are excited about what they're teaching, students are getting the best education possible," Hyatt said.

It's an honor to be selected for the national panel, Hyatt said, and and looks forward to sharing best practices and learning about strategies from her peers, five of which are former national teachers of the year. Among the things she most excited about, is that Alabama gets a seat at the national table.

"I'd love for them to see what we're doing because we're doing some fantastic things in this state," she said.

Hyatt has been described as "one of Alabama's best 'Laying The Foundation' trainers and AP instructors" by A+ College Ready, and the UAH distinguished her with its Alumni of Achievement Award last year.

State Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice serves as Alabama's representative with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The organization provides leadership, advocacy and technical assistance on major educational issues.

The council is facilitating the National Educator Panel project in collaboration with the National Network of State Teachers of the Year organization. The pilot panel will serve until December 31. It will meet at least one additional time during the year, along with participating in council meetings and webinars to represent educator perspectives.
South Alabama to explore on-campus stadium

Students excited, but would like to know who picks up the tab

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South Alabama will soon launch a "preliminary exploration" of a possible on-campus football stadium, the school has announced.

"Construction of a football stadium is an extremely complex undertaking that requires significant due diligence on the part of the University leadership, and we are at the very beginning of a process that will examine all the issues we must consider before a decision can be made," said USA President Tony Waldrop in a news release.

The Jaguars launched their football program in 2009, joining the NCAA's FBS in 2012. They have played all their home games at Ladd-Peebles Stadium, which is owned by the city of Mobile and is about seven miles from the USA campus.

"The University of South Alabama is at the very beginning of its analysis of the possibility of constructing an on-campus football stadium for our football team, and I applaud our leadership for committing to a thoughtful and measured approach," Jones said.

Students typically have two questions on their minds when asked about the school they attend: "What's the deal with parking?" and "When will they build a stadium?" A small group of USA students, administrators and others will look at the logistics, the timing and, of course, the money.

The money has always been a sticking point for students, who have suffered from state funding cuts since 2008, which have caused increases in tuition every year since then.

Some are looking at a larger picture, in tune with the growth plan of the campus in recent years.

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Site locations limited

Stadium

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"I would definitely take my family to an on-campus stadium, especially to experience the game day atmosphere. Hopefully the right decisions will be made, for a better fan experience," sports fan John Vella told AL.com.

Jeff Wilson attended USA during the football program’s inception and lauded the exploratory community as a step forward.

"It encourages student involvement, enhances on-campus activity, and can be a selling point for recruits," he said of an on-campus stadium. "Eventually, South will have an on-campus stadium. When it finally happens, the football program will take another step forward, and the school will continue its growth."

Some students and alumni, however, are still very concerned about the potential financial cost.

"If it’s a situation where students are expected to take the bulk of the financial hit of this construction, I say ‘nay’," student Ticarius Stokes said. "Personally, I think too much money has been spent by raising student tuition that doesn’t help to better education," he said.

Few sites suitable

If officials lay down groundwork for a stadium, there are only a few sites that could house the facility.

Three locations have made the rounds as possibilities in recent years. An AL.com report addressed each of them last year:

- **Between the Mitchell Center and Stanky Field:** would require relocation of the track, soccer fields and softball fields, much of which have been upgraded.
- **The Intramural fields:** Leading to the current football practice field and the football field house, this site may include some logistical challenges for existing fields.
- **The land behind the football practice fields and field house:** Owned by the university, this spot would not require the repositioning of fields, but road improvements would be needed to provide efficient access.

No university official has commented on the record about any of the options.

**Ideas of cost**

Comparable institutions have stadiums that offer a seating capacity of approximately 30,000:

- The University of North Texas holds 30,000 and cost $80 million.
- The University of Central Florida’s stadium holds in excess of 40,000 people and cost $55 million.
- Florida Atlantic University’s stadium holds 30,000 and cost $70 million.

Of course, at the preliminary stage, there has been no estimate released of what a stadium would cost at USA.

There is one thing to note: Many football stadiums are built with the help of private donors. Expect donors to be a part of the mix if plans do go forward.

"We do not want to have a stadium at the expense of what's really important, and that's the education of our students," Waldrop told AL.com last year.
Meet the new boss

Sankey discusses goals for the league

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

HOOVER | The new commissioner of the Southeastern Conference didn’t quote Winston Churchill or reference Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press Monday in his first address at SEC Media Days, the way his predecessor, Mike Slive, often did.

Instead, Greg Sankey quoted Bob Dylan: “The times,” he said, “they are a-changin’.”

He also dropped references to the movie “Finding Nemo” and the search engine Google.

Meet the new boss, not quite the same as the old boss.

Longtime commissioner Slive is gone, but won’t be forgotten. Sankey announced that each league school will designate a game in September to publicize prostate cancer awareness in honor of Slive, who has been undergoing treatment for the disease.

Sankey, who was promoted in June, noted that Florida won the college softball national title and LSU won the men’s golf championship right after he took over as head of the conference.

“I had about 72 hours where I was right on the mark for my goal,” Sankey said.

SEE SANKEY | 4C
SANKEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

Winning will continue to be an expectation in the SEC.

"As champions, we aspire to win every championship," the commissioner said. "That's OK. ... I can assure you we haven't given up and our expectations are for great success."

Sankey talked of SEC triumphs and the changing landscape of collegiate athletics. He outlined goals built around three keywords: scholars, champions, leaders.

Sankey was adamant that he wants to make sure the league never has to vacate a championship due to NCAA sanctions or academic issues.

He also talked at length about the SEC Network and its impact on the league's profile over the last 11 months since its launch, and about putting together a group to study athlete-conduct issues and how they are handled from school to school in hopes of creating more universal and consistent guidelines.

In short, Sankey wants to build on the legacy Slive left when he retired.

"We have made great strides forward as a conference," the commissioner said, "and we cannot afford to take one step back."

Sankey said it is the student-athletes, not the league office, that matter.

"I am the commissioner of the SEC," Sankey said in closing, "but they are the SEC."
We are not used to seeing this version of Jim McElwain

Every year, on a couple of occasions, the media members who cover University of Alabama football get a chance to visit with the team's offensive and defensive coordinators, interviews that are usually fresh and fun. Both the current coordinators, Lane Kiffin on offense and Kirby Smart on defense, were excellent in their press conferences last year.

Jim McElwain was the same way. The UA press corps always looked forward to talking to McElwain during his years in Tuscaloosa, sure they would get a couple of funny anecdotes and an off-the-cuff chuckle or two interspersed with information about how the backup tight ends were looking.

It was a different Jim McElwain at the podium during the opening session of SEC Media Days on Monday. McElwain was still smiling and cordial, but the new head coach at Florida also seemed determined to play things close to the vest. He used the SEC-approved catchwords that will dominate the next four days — he is "excited" and looks forward to the "challenge" with his new team, which has "worked hard."

But there was only the slightest hint of the old McElwain insouciance.

That doesn't mean McElwain doesn't still march to the beat of a different drummer. There were still no socks to accompany the head coaching-appropriate suit. He ranked about spending a week this summer in the backcountry of his native Montana, bathing in mountain lakes because there was no shower available.

There are several reasons why he might have been a bit subdued on Monday. First, he's had three years as a head coach at Colorado State and one of the many lessons he learned there was you act differently in the big office. In those coordinator press conferences at Alabama, he could always deflect a difficult question with "you'd better ask Coach," meaning Nick Saban, of course.

Those days are over. Another factor is that the big interview room at the Hyatt Regency is hardly conducive to chummy chatter, not with 400 (mostly unrecognizable) media members. Most important of all, McElwain probably wants to win a few games before sounding like he is anything other than serious.

Some Florida media members see some of his policies — UF freshmen are now off-limits to the media, for
instance — as stemming directly from Saban.

"There's nobody better to be like, right?" McElwain responded.

Admitting that, the analogy seems stretched. Saban can be testy, but he is almost always forthcoming. McElwain, in his first year with a very big job ahead, is having to balance being positive — something the Florida program needed — with creating expectations that will be hard to fulfill. McElwain inherited an uncertain situation at quarterback (welcome to the SEC) and alarming thinness on the offensive line, where UF ended the spring with six healthy bodies. Freshman and transfers have boosted that number up to a more tenable 16 now — but, again, that's freshmen and transfers.

Every program in modern-day college football has its ups and downs, whether it is Alabama or USC, Notre Dame or Oklahoma. The question is whether a coach — or a series of coaches — can turn the "down" around quickly. What Florida wants to avoid is a long stretch of semi-relevancy. See Nebraska for an example, or Miami. There are more resources at Florida than at those schools, but a positive turnaround will at least take a couple of years. At that point, say at the 2018 Media Days, it will be interesting to see if McElwain has the same demeanor.
SEC plans
to stick
with eight
officials

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

HOOVER | The eight-person officiating crew is a good thing, and it's here to stay, SEC Coordinator of Football Officials Steve Shaw said Tuesday morning during the opening of Day 2 of Media Days.

The eighth official allows the crew to call a better game, Shaw said, alluding to how the game has changed since 1986 when crews went from six to seven officials. The conference experimented with the eight-person crew in 2014 with one game each week officiated by an eight-person team.

Shaw used video examples of holding and 12 men on the field to illustrate how an eighth official helps a crew chief call a more consistent game.

"The game has dramatically changed, and the eighth official is an innovation that will really help us officiate," Shaw said.

An experiment new for the upcoming season is an independent medical observer who will sit in the replay booth as a back-up to review plays and observe signs for head or neck trauma during game.

"When they observe that, when a player demonstrates symptoms that they're trained to recognize, and the snap becomes imminent, the team's not going to get him out of the game, the officials, the player's not going to self-identify, then

See Rules | 5C
RULES
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C.

they will communicate to the replay official, 'Hey, we need to get No. 12 for the offense out of the game,'" Shaw said.

Rule changes for 2015 include: overbuilt facemasks are not allowed (the weight of the helmet can contribute to pulling a player's head down), illegal equipment will result in a player leaving the game until the equipment is corrected and the kicking team blocking before the ball has traveled 10 yards on an onside kick is now reviewable.

Shaw said points of emphasis for 2015 will remain much the same with pace of play leading the way. Others include: targeting and dangerous contact fouls (down 10.5 percent year over year from 2013 to 2014), sideline management and control and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls.
Nick Saban says Alabama must re-establish its identity and play more physically

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

HOOVER | Has Alabama gotten away from its identity as the bully?
Traditionally known primarily for its pro-style, run-the-ball first offense, Alabama ran no-huddle tempo last season, and the results, while overwhelmingly positive for the offensive statistics, resulted in an unintended and unwanted byproduct.

Nick Saban thinks his offensive pace contributed to his team not being as bullying as it once was on offense, and, maybe even wore his defense out towards the end of the season.

The defense, which still completed the season ranked near the top 10 nationally in total defense, allowed a bevy of yards and points in two of its last three games.

Auburn exposed the Crimson Tide secondary for 456 passing yards (630 total yards) and 44 points before Ohio State solved the defense for 537 yards and 42 yards in a season-ending loss for UA.

To correct the problem, Saban wants his team to again be the bully, not the bullied.

“It’s going to be a challenge for our team to re-establish the identity that we would like to play with,” Saban said. “We want to be more physical, tougher on the line of scrimmage, be relentless in the way that we compete so that we’re never affected by what happens in a game, that we can keep playing at a high level on a consistent basis.”

Under first-year offensive coordinator Lane Kiffin, the 2014 UA offense took off with Amari Cooper finishing as a finalist for the Heisman Trophy and Blake Sims setting school records.

The offensive compiled 6,783 total yards, averaged 6.7 yards per play and ran 1,018 plays. On the flip side, the defense was on the field for 945 plays or 67.5 plays per game.

See Identity | 3C
For comparison, the Alabama defense played 174 less snaps in 2014, which equates to about two to three additional games. "... if we're going to be a no huddle team like we were last year, I think we have to manage the season better with our team, because I think at the end of the season last year, we ran out of gas a little bit," Saban said. "We played more plays, ... a couple, three more games. And our players showed it. So we're going to have to do a better job of keeping our team where they need to be so that we can finish strong."

With the absence of Cooper, Sims and running back T.J. Yeldon and with an offensive line that has the makings of a mauling run-blocking unit, the offense could operate differently this year. Cam Robinson returns to start his second season at left tackle, Ross Pierschbacher and Bradley Bozeman took the majority of spring repetitions at left and right guard, respectively, Ryan Kelly begins his third year as a starter at center and Dominick Jackson is slotted at right tackle.

That doesn't mean Alabama won't throw the ball down the field. Kiffin's made his mark as a play caller gifted for finding, creating and exploiting mismatches, and with a Swiss Army Knife-style running back in Kenyan Drake in the arsenal, the offense won't be one-dimensional. "I really pride myself on being versatile," Drake said. "I have the ability to play running back, to play receiver, be in the backfield, or line up outside. I try to give coaches the ability to put myself in a position to really help my team out in any way I can. "Coach Kiffin... He's a mastermind of play calling and puts his players in the best position to be successful so with that I would want to make sure that I can be trustworthy so he can put me in the best position for our team."
Sweet Briar's Activists Turn to the Sober Work of Governing

By JACK STRIPLING

IN THE COMING MONTHS, the new governing board of Sweet Briar College can expect a crash course in post-revolutionary affairs. A peaceful transfer of power was expected last week at the financially struggling women's college north of Lynchburg, Va. A phalanx of activists, who managed to help keep the college open with a shrewd mix of litigation and social-media organizing, have been installed as members of Sweet Briar's newly constituted Board of Directors.

In a wholesale leadership transition, the board has been purged of its previous members, who had decided in March to close Sweet Briar. James F. Jones Jr., the college's president, has also stepped aside, making way for the appointment of Phillip C. Stone, a former president of Bridgewater College, in Virginia.

Several of the new board members were affiliated with Saving Sweet Briar Inc., a nonprofit group that helped to stave off the college's closure with legal challenges and a broad-based fund-raising effort. The college's new directors must now trade the passionate work of protest for the more sober task of governing, and it is a transition they say they welcome.

"There were very smart, purposeful people involved in this from the beginning, thinking about how to run the college," said Teresa Pike Tomlinson, a Sweet Briar alumna who has been named to the board. "This is not a dog who has caught a car. These are people who know how to drive cars."

Ms. Tomlinson, who is mayor of Columbus, Ga., joins an eclectic mix of new directors, who include a battle-tested college president, a Washington lobbyist, a financial consultant, the executive vice president of a conservationist organization, and a couple of professors, among others.

Under a legal agreement approved last month, the plaintiffs in three lawsuits challenging Sweet Briar's closure were authorized to nominate the new board members. The settlement allowed for a few of the incumbent directors to stay on, but they resigned their posts. It was the previous board's opinion that Sweet Briar was on an unsustainable financial trajectory, and directors described the decision to close as heart wrenching.

But critics of that decision, who will populate the reconstituted board, say their predecessors underestimated the college's resilience. "This was a failure of faith," Ms. Tomlinson said. "They got locked into a decision-making process where they could not see any possibilities going forward."

Under the settlement agreement, Saving Sweet Briar is charged with moving $12 million of pledged donations into college coffers over the next couple of months. The college will then be authorized by Virginia's attorney general to draw $16 million from Sweet Briar's $84-million endowment.

Formerly outside observers, Sweet Briar's new directors will soon have access to all of the college's internal financial information. It will be a truth test of their prevailing assumption, which has been that their predecessors relied on false projections about the college's potential and too easily surrendered as a result. But Ms. Tomlinson, a lawyer who specialized in corporate-corruption cases, said, "We need people to go in and do the deep dive and make sure there aren't any more surprises."

IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES

News that Sweet Briar will open this fall has been met with jubilation, but the college's monthslong existential crisis sent the institution into disarray. Many professors and staff members, who were told they would lose their jobs, have found employment elsewhere. Students, who are more than ever the lifeblood of this tuition-dependent institution, have made other plans. Indeed, many of the very people upon whom the college would rely to rebuild have dispersed.

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These are the sorts of challenges that Gen. Charles C. Krulak, an incoming board member, seems to relish.

General Krulak, a retired commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps and former member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, became president of Birmingham-Southern College in 2011.

When he arrived, the college's bonds had been downgraded to junk status and its future seemed uncertain. But General Krulak, who stepped down in June, is widely credited with turning things around.

When he read about Sweet Briar's struggles, General Krulak volunteered his consulting services to the Saving Sweet Briar group. The college's challenges, he told the group, were similar to those he had encountered at Birmingham-Southern, which also drew heavily on its endowment to offset enrollment declines. The difference, he said, was that Sweet Briar's debts were not as severe as Birmingham-Southern's and its assets were greater.

“What really got me was the idea that a school that has the history of Sweet Briar ... would go down without even a fight at all,” he said. “In looking at their situation I believed that they had the ability, if given the time, to turn it around.”

As upbeat as the new board seems to be, there is no denying the challenges for Sweet Briar. The college is scrambling to persuade students to come back and bracing for a dive in enrollment.

“The real concern is the incoming class,” General Krulak said. “If that's real, real small, which it's probably going to be, then you're going to have that going through the stomach of the snake for the next four years.”

A more immediate concern, however, is the state of flux and uncertainty in which Sweet Briar now finds itself. The skeleton crew of remaining employees, who had been charged with winding down the college, now awaits orders from the new administration. In the meantime, people say they feel in limbo.

“It's totally bizarre,” said Georgene M. Vairo, a new board member and a law professor at Loyola Law School, in Los Angeles. Absent a new president and board to provide direction, “nobody in the old administration thinks they are able to order a sandwich, but that's going to change.”

From the beginning, those working with Saving Sweet Briar have tried to focus on what might happen “when we get the keys back,” Ms. Vairo said. But getting the college up and running will take some improvisation, she said.

“This is a lot of flying by the seat of our pants,” Ms. Vairo said. “But it's worked so far.”
U. of Washington Wants a President Who Will Stick Around, for a Change

By JACK STRIPLING

B y this night of February 3, 2015, the Seattle skyline had turned to gray. The email inbox of William S. Ayer, chairman of the University of Washington Board of Regents, had started to pile up with the frustrations of the Husky faithful. Earlier that day, Mr. Ayer had released a statement announcing that

LEADERSHIP

Michael E. Young, the university's president of less than four years, was leaving for Texas A&M University at College Station. Mr. Young talked about big opportunities at Texas A&M, a respected research university, but this seemed like a lateral move at best. To many people in Seattle, the move looked like a move up. The president was poised to earn at least $1.9 million in his first year at College Station, more than twice what he had made at Washington.

Mr. Young's resignation felt like another slap in the face for the university, which had lost its previous president, Mark A. Emmert, to a high-paying gig at the top of the NCAA. At 5:18 p.m., Howard P. Behar, a past chairman of the University of Washington Foundations and former president of Starbucks, let his disappointment be known.

"Young just pises me off," Mr. Behar wrote to Mr. Ayer. "We have had two hired guns in a row ... neither one cared about the U of W ... just about themselves."

The fatigue with leadership turnover is palpable at the University of Washington. Professors, alumni, and local business leaders say they have simply had enough of what seems to be today's typical college president, whom they view as overly opportunistic, increasingly corporate-minded, etc., and downright greedy.

Their concerns echo disenchanted elsewhere with higher education administration. But at Washington, Mr. Young's unexpected exit has provoked difficult questions about how the university, engaged in yet another presidential search, can best identify a leader of uncommon commitment and loyalty.

The past decade has been particularly disruptive to the university, says James N. Gregory, past chairman of the Faculty Senate. Ever since President C. Randels retired, a "whale of a job," since 2003, "the university has been in search of experts to shake things up and start programs - which may or may not be championed by the next leader."

Many college presidents view higher education "as a chessboard," says Mr. Gregory, a history professor. "They are going to move around and get more prestige and more money. So their personal strategy is at odds with what universities really need."

THE CEO

The criterion one hears is Washington is not so much about Michael Young in particular. But he is a proxy for a burgeoning model of higher-education executive, one that bears little resemblance to the college president of yesteryear.

At Washington, Mr. Young saw himself as a businessman running a $6.5-billion enterprise. It is not a job, he says, that necessarily ingratiates a person to the community.

"You're viewed as the CEO," he says. "Who hires the CEO? Name one company where the CEO is viewed as the father figure and a hero."

But Mr. Young, who is 65, rejects the charge that he, like a stereotypical corporate executive, has hopped from job to job in pursuit of a even-bigger payday. His first presidency, at the University of Utah, paid less than he had made as dean of George Washington University's law school, he says. His annual salary at Texas A&M, while generous, pale by comparison to the $8 million to $7 million he says he has turned down in the legal profession.

"If it were about money, neither A&M nor UW would be anywhere on the radar screen," Mr. Young says. "The notion somehow - that I'm moving for more money, compared to the real alternatives that were out there for me, is just silly. You can't follow any career and say I'm anything other than a story of economic downward mobility."

Mr. Young says he left Washington because he was frustrated with the Legislature's disinvestment in the university and wasirting by Texas A&M's trajectory in important areas of research, including water, energy, and food security.

UNCOMFORTABLE FIT

When the University of Washington started courting Mr. Young, he seemed to be a dream candidate for the presidency.

"They became fairly enamored with Michael," recalls R. William (Bill) Funkh, a search consultant to the university. "Frankly, we had other sitting presidents in the pool, and it came down to a small group, and they felt most comfortable with him."

But the story of Mr. Young's tenure at Washington is a textbook illustration of the complexities of presidential fit. Finding a qualified university leader, Washington's recent history suggests, may be considerably easier than identifying a person at home in the culture of an institution or than adjusting to one who is not.

Mr. Young acknowledges that he was slow to adjust to Seattle, and decisions in his personal life raised questions about his judgment. He anticipated, for example, that his divorce from his wife of 38 years and his relationship with a Utah undergraduate, albeit one in her late 20s, might be an issue.

"I told the search consultant that he needed to poll the board, and if a divorced president was a problem, that was fine," Mr. Young says.

"They came back with a lot of reassurances: 'No, no, no, it wasn't a problem.'

But for some people it was. Shortly after his arrival in Washington, Mr. Young married his fiancée, Marci Denker, president of the presidential home. Picture of the university's new leader embracing a woman 22 years his junior circulated online.

"People say, 'Don't talk about personal stuff,' but everybody knew a lot about the personal stuff," says Kayle Y. Tasty, chairwoman of the presidential-search committee.

Mr. Tasty, who is sitting on Washington's board of trustees, says the president's new marriage "was an issue that people were focusing on a lot."

Email from a campus official: "We have had two hired guns in a row ... neither one cared about the U of W ... just about themselves."

Rather than totally embrace them -- "Here's our president and his wife -- there was always a little bit of discomfort." At the same time, Mr. Young sent signals suggesting that he was not enamored with Washington. He says he tried to quietly size up the university with a "listening tour," but he wound up pegged as overly skeptical. People thought the president was "not all in" with the job.

"Of course he's not," Mr. Young responds. "You didn't hire him to be all in. You hired him to take the university to the next level. And if he's all in and completely drinks the Kool-Aid, you've got the wrong guy."

Mr. Young acknowledges early tensions with the governing board.

There were disagreements, he says without elaboration, about how he should approach "the public dimension of the job."

"I still think I was right. They still think they were right," Mr. Young says. "God bless us both."

Mr. Ayer, the board chairman, declined a request for an interview.

Less than two years into Mr. Young's presidency. in 2013, the regents commissioned an independent consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of his performance.

An evaluation of that kind, often called a 360, remains atypical but not unprecedented in higher education. It is rare, however, to have such a review so early on. The timing was regarded by some people at the university with "discomfort and even suspicion of the board's in-
tions," according to a report by Sheila Delaney Duke, an executive coach who conducted the assessment.

The report, which The Chronicle obtained through a public-records request, illustrates the extent to which Mr. Young's perceived status as an outsider contributed to his rough start.

"Almost every respondent mentioned 'cultural' misses and mistakes of varying degrees and impact during the early days in his role," Ms. Duke wrote.

The president, she continued, "occasionally feels like 'other' (meaning not from the UW or the Pacific Northwest)."

The report described Mr. Young's depart-ure as "meeting expectations." One respondent recommended a course of action for the president: "Open yourself up to falling in love with this place."

THE INSIDER

One reason Mr. Young's departure was particularly hard to swallow was that his predecessor, Mr. Emmert, had also surprised people when he resigned, in 2010. Mr. Emmert, who made much of his Washington roots when he was hired, was less than a year into a five-year contract extension when he announced his intention to leave for the NCAA's top post. He served for six years in Washington.

There are not great data on the average length of presidential tenures at major research institutions, but eight years is generally considered a good run. The University of Washington, however, had a history of longtime presidents — in the postwar era. two of them served for 16 years each — which may help to explain the impatience with latter-day presidential fickleness.

Feeling burned by outsiders, a university might look inward for future leaders. But that approach, too, is fraught.

Anytime a strong internal candidate emerges, as has happened in Washington, there is a risk that qualified external contenders will remove themselves from consideration. Going through a presidential search is exhaustive, and few people want to endure the process or risk compromising their current positions if the result appears predetermined.

Washington's board has promised to conduct an "inclusive and deliberate" search this time, but there is a broad perception that the scales are tipped in favor of Ana Mari Cauce, who was named interim president after Mr. Young resigned.

Ms. Cauce is the ultimate insider. She joined the faculty in 1986 as an assistant professor of psychology, and went on to serve as department chair, dean, and chief academic officer.

Last month professors and students petitioned the regents to conduct a search for a president more transparent than those that ended in the hiring of the two most recent presidents. A review of university records, however, shows considerable back-channel discussions about how the search should be handled and even how it should end.

Jodi Green, a member of the search committee, made her top choice for the job known the day after Mr. Young announced his intention to resign.

"It's time for a president who cares about this institution and who will spend their career helping make it the best it can be," Ms. Green, chair of the university's foundation, wrote in an email to Mr. Ayer. "I would advocate for Ana Mari becoming the next president. Not just the interim."

The 29-member Presidential Search Advisory Committee is to recommend finalists to the Board of Regents by November 30.

There is significant support for Ms. Cauce's candidacy, which has emotional appeal at an institution soured by fleeting leadership. But Washington's recent history demonstrates that the choice of president is just one piece of a complex retention puzzle.

David Giuliani, an entrepreneur in Seattle who has licensed inventions from the university, says that the institutional frustration is understandable, but that it's time for a bit of soul-searching.

"It's what all executives should ask themselves when something doesn't go right: What could we have done? Rather than, What's wrong with him for having left?" says Mr. Giuliani, a co-founder of the Washington Business Alliance.

"Let's start with a little self-ownership here. People usually don't leave for money. They leave for other reasons."