SPECIAL SECTION:

COVERAGE OF CALLED BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Interim UA chancellor named

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

University of Alabama System Trustee Finis St. John IV will serve as the interim chancellor of the three-campus system beginning Aug. 1.

St. John, who chairs the board’s Athletics Committee and has previously served as president pro tempore, on Monday was selected by his fellow trustees as the interim successor to Chancellor Ray Hayes. The post will be unpaid according to the system.

Hayes announced in June that he will step down as chancellor at the end of July. Hayes will take August off and return in September as chancellor emeritus working on projects including behavioral health and health care initiatives.

St. John, an attorney in Gullman who represents the 4th Congressional District on the board, was nominated by Trustee Karen Brooks. Brooks said historically board members have served in interim roles in past leadership transitions. St. John, who will take a leave of absence from his law practice, was the only nominee on Monday.

“The common thread in these transitions has been tapping into the strength of our board to find the right interim leadership,” Brooks said.

Trustees Joe Exy and John England praised St. John’s credentials for the role and his willingness to take a leave of absence from his law practice to be the interim chancellor.

“I really appreciate the willingness of (St. John) to take this on,” England said. “He wants the right things for this system and this system’s campuses.”

There is no current timeline for when a search for a permanent replacement would begin, said system spokes-woman Kelly Reinhardt.

The board’s search should begin Aug. 1

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INTERIM

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include national, local and internal candidates, England said, after noting the last two chancellors were internal selections.

Hayes announced he planned to step down during the board of trustees’ regular June meeting. He cited the sound positions of the system and its three campuses and a personal passion for behavioral health work as factors in his decision.

Hayes was appointed chancellor in 2016, following the recommendation of his predecessor Robert Witt, who led the system from 2012 until his retirement. Witt announced his retirement in 2015 and spent a transitional year helping prepare Hayes for the role before returning to teaching.

Before becoming chancellor, Hayes served as executive vice chancellor since 2013. He was hired in 2006 as the vice chancellor for financial affairs overseeing the system’s budgeting process, investments, capital plan and other financial affairs.

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‘It’s a great honor’

St. John named interim chancellor of UA System

DAVID PALMER
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Finis E. St. John IV, a veteran member of the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama System, will become interim Chancellor of the three-campus UA System effective August 1. He will succeed C. Ray Hayes, who announced his plans in June to transition his responsibilities to a System-wide behavioral health initiative and other administrative priorities.

A member of one of Alabama’s oldest and most established law firms, St. John will take an unpaid leave of absence from St. John & St. John, LLC in Cullman and will serve without compensation in the interim System position.

His wife and law partner, Gwynn, has been with the firm for more than a quarter century, will continue to practice law in Cullman.

“It’s a great honor to be asked to serve in this capacity,” St. John said. “The chancellor is kind of the CEO of the system. Our entities in the system have good

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A GREAT HONOR: Cullman's St. John selected interim chancellor of University of Alabama college system

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leadership and are in good shape."

St. John said no major problems are facing the trustees at this time, but because of the size and complexity of University System there are always issues to address as well as policies and operations to assess.

"I've worked with our trustees a long time," St. John said. "I will do my best to leave the position of chancellor in good condition. There is no time table for filling the position at this time."

Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby issued a statement Monday afternoon describing St. John as "one of the most influential people" in Alabama. "Fess St. John is ideally positioned to lead the UA System as Interim Chancellor, advancing its mission and bringing higher education and health care to a new level," Sen. Shelby said. "I am thrilled that Fess has been selected for this role and look forward to witnessing the tremendous impact he will have in every area of The University of Alabama System."

Ron Pierce, former president of the University of Alabama Alumni Chapter of Cullman County, praised the selection of St. John as chancellor.

"I could never say enough to describe the good things Fess St. John has done and does on behalf of the University System," Pierce said. "He's the right person for the job. He'll go right in and do a great job. He's been on the board for many years and has a history of working hard."

The Interim Chancellor's appointment was among several items considered today in a called meeting of the UA System Board. Calling St. John's academic and professional credentials impeccable, Trustee Joe Espy also cited his leadership in helping manage more than 450 significant capital projects well in excess of $3 billion, and his valuable role on the UAB Health System Board, which has been crucial to the turnaround in rankings and research funding at UAB.

"The fact that Fess St. John is willing to serve as our Interim Chancellor without compensation is a tremendous public service," Espy said. "We are extremely grateful that he is willing to step in and take on these complex administrative duties at a critical time for our campuses and the UAB Health System. As the state's single largest employer and a proven leader in building Alabama's economy, our System will be able to maintain our positive momentum without missing a beat."

UA System Chancellor Emeritus Dr. Robert Witt strongly endorsed the decision. "Fess St. John is the perfect choice for Interim Chancellor," said Witt. "He and I have worked side-by-side since I arrived in 2003, and the impact of his leadership is measured by strong academic programs on our campuses, the physical growth of facilities and student resources, and the global reputation of the UAB Health System. We are extremely fortunate to have him in this new role."

Originally elected to the Board in 2002, St. John was President pro tem from 2008-2011, during a period of exponential growth for the campuses and the UAB Health System. He has chaired numerous standing committees and played a key role in recruiting senior campus leadership, including UAH President Robert Altenkirch.

St. John, who will continue to serve as a Trustee, currently serves on the five-member Executive Committee, the Physical Properties Committee and the UAB Health System Board Liaison Committee.

He chairs the Athletics Committee and co-chairs the Legal Affairs Committee. St. John has been a member of the UAB Health System Board of Directors since 2008 and serves on both the UAB Athletic Foundation and the Crimson Tide Foundation Board.

A cum laude graduate of The University of Alabama in 1978, he was inducted to Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron Delta Kappa and Jasons. He received his law degree in 1982 from The University of Virginia School of Law and was chair of the Moot Court Board. Five generations of family members have served the state of Alabama in public service roles, and his late mother Juliet St. John was the first woman attorney in Cullman.

Fess St. John is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, which is comprised of the best of the trial bar from the United States and Canada. Fellowship in the College is an invitation only. He is also a Fellow of the American Board of Trial Advocates and has been recognized as an Alabama Super Lawyer since 2007. He is the long-time chairman of the board of First Community Bank of Cullman.

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UA System taps longtime trustee for interim chancellor role

By: Ty West

Longtime University of Alabama System Trustee Finis “Fess” St. John IV has been selected to become interim chancellor of the system as it searches for a successor to Ray Hayes.

The board voted to name St. John to the interim post during a board meeting via conference call on Monday. St. John will begin the interim role on Aug. 1. As we previously reported, Hayes is stepping down from the role to focus on the mental and emotional health of students at the system’s three campuses.

St. John, a lifelong resident of Cullman and an attorney at St. John & St John LLC, has served on the board since 2002 and served three terms as president pro tempore.

He is a 1978 graduate of the University of Alabama.

During his tenure on the UA System Board, St. John has chaired numerous standing committees and played a key role in the recruitment of senior campus leadership. He currently serves on the five-member Executive Committee, as well as the Physical Properties Committee and the UAB Health System Board Liaison Committee.

He chairs the Athletics Committee and co-chairs the Legal Affairs Committee. He has been a member of the UAB Health System Board of Directors since 2008, and serves on the UAB Athletic Foundation and the Crimson Tide Foundation Board.

The UA System Board of Trustees oversees the University of Alabama, UAB and UAH.
University of Alabama System chooses new interim chancellor Finis E. St. John

By: Staff

The University of Alabama System has chosen an interim chancellor to replace the retiring of current chancellor Jay Hayes at the end of the month.

Finis E. “Fess” St. John, IV, who currently serves on the UA system’s Board of Trustees, will succeed Hayes on August 1.

St. John will take an unpaid leave of absence from St. John & St. John law firm in Cullman and will serve as interim chancellor without compensation.

“The fact that Fess St. John is willing to serve as our Interim Chancellor without compensation is a tremendous public service,” Board Trustee Joe Epsy said in a statement.

“We are extremely grateful that he is willing to step in and take on these complex administrative duties at a crucial time for our campuses and the UAB Health System,” Epsy continued, in part.

St. John graduated cum laude from Alabama in 1978, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron Delta Kappa and Jasons. He went on to receive a law degree from the University of Virginia.
Metal detectors will be a hassle, but necessary

No one knows where the next mass shooting will happen. That’s part of what makes these increasingly common events so frightening. They can take place anywhere at any time. Of course, the same is true of terrorist events.

So it wasn’t surprising this week when the University of Alabama System board of trustees approved a nearly $1 million purchase of 180 walk-through metal detectors for use at athletic events. Certainly, Alabama athletic events are high-profile, most with live national television coverage. Throw in the fact that they are taking place on an open college campus and there is potential for a nightmare scenario that no one in their right mind wants to see play out.

The metal detectors are by no means a foolproof system, but then neither is a heavy police presence. But both combined can work to minimize the exposure to catastrophe.

Alabama’s first home football game is Sept. 8. It will be a 2:30 p.m. game, meaning it is likely to be as hot as hell’s pepper patch when the game kicks off. Chances are a whole lot of folks lining up to enter the stadium that day will have attempted to stay hydrated with beverages that tend to do the opposite. Many of them are going to have to get used to waiting in line to get inside the stadium so that they can wait in line to use the restroom.

The next week is a 6 p.m. kickoff against Ole Miss. That’s the opening game of the Southeastern Conference schedule. We have three predictions for that game: Alabama will win, convincingly. The crowds gathering to enter the stadium will be frustrated at the process and, on the whole, more inebriated than the week before. And the metal detectors will be as hot a topic of conversation as quarterback play in the immediate aftermath.

If you were fortunate enough to attend the National Championship Game at the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta this past January, you are fully aware of how the metal detectors can be an issue.

Though people are likely to complain and there might be hiccups in how the metal detectors are utilized in the initial going, it does appear that those problems are a necessary evil in our world today. According to a report by Campus Safety Magazine — yes there’s a magazine dedicated just to that topic — the National Center for Education Statistics recorded a sharp rise in the utilization of metal detectors at public high schools between 2010 and the 2013-2014 school year and at college sporting events. The magazine’s report on the increased use of metal detectors stressed the need for training for the staff who will be manning them.

Last football season, it was the hassle of clear plastic bags instead of handbags.

We’ll complain while we wait to get in like everyone else. That said, we’re glad that the university is being proactive rather than reactive. We’d much rather complain about a hassle than complain that the university didn’t do enough to prevent a tragedy before it happened.
UA approves purchase of metal detectors

University of Alabama facilities staff assemble a metal detector in front of Bryant-Denny Stadium on Monday. The walk-through detectors will be used at home football games beginning this fall. [STAFF PHOTO/ED ENOCH]

Equipment will be in place for all home football games

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The University of Alabama System board of trustees on Monday approved the purchase of metal detectors for the

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Online

See a video of Assistant Vice President of Public Safety Ralph Clayton discussing the purchase of 180 walk-through metal detectors for use at UA athletic events at www.tuscaloosanews.com.

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athletics department to be installed outside Bryant-Denny Stadium this fall during home football games.

The board approved the purchase of 180 walk-through metal detectors and related equipment from low bidder CEIA USA, Ltd of Twinsburg, Ohio, for $382,400. The purchase is being funded with athletics funds.

The detectors were part of an agenda that also included the purchase of additional property in Tuscaloosa for a planned railroad overpass bridge on the south side of the UA campus and a 20-year lease between the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority for use of a planned stadium at the BJCC complex for the Blazers’ home football games beginning in 2023.

The metal detectors will be deployed at every gate of the football stadium and potentially other large athletic events, Assistant Vice President of Public Safety Ralph Clayton said.

“It goes without saying that safety at our venues is of the utmost importance, and these security enhancements will help to ensure that our fans, student-athletes, coaches and personnel can enjoy their game-day experience in a safe environment,” Athletics Director Greg Byrne said in a statement released by the university.

Last fall, the university tested walk-through metal detectors at the stadium during the home game against Mercer University. Based on the positive feedback, Clayton said the university began exploring the purchase of metal detectors.

At its spring meetings, the Southeastern Conference announced it had decided that metal detectors would be utilized at SEC football stadiums and other events as determined by each campus by 2020. In 2016, UA implemented clear-bag policy for football games at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

“This is just part of a comprehensive security plan,” Clayton said, noting the clear bag policy and a prohibition against firearms and other weapons in the stadium.

Clayton said the university purchased 180 detectors to ensure lines moved quickly with wait times of three to five minutes. The plan for the fall is to use 164 at the entry gates and 16 for additional follow-up screenings when visitors set off the detectors more than once, he said. The follow-up screenings at the secondary detectors will help prevent delays at the gates, Clayton said. The gates will open two and a half hours before kickoff.

Visitors with prohibited items will have to put the items in their cars or dispose of them before entering, Clayton said.

On Monday, the trustees also approved the purchase of properties at 210 15th St. S., 1408 Second Ave. in Tuscaloosa from NK Properties for $1,145 million. The sites totaling about 1.8 acres at the intersection of Second Avenue and 15th Street are part of the railroad overpass bridge project that would connect Second Avenue on campus with Lancaster Road/Second Avenue south of campus by constructing a span over the Kansas City Southern and Norfolk Southern railroads.

The 15th Street site is home to PPG Points. PPG will be able to remain in operation for the duration of its lease, which expires in 2021, according to the agenda packet. The Second Avenue lot has two commercial buildings and is the former site of the Tuscaloosa Music and is currently vacant.

The purchase of the properties will provide lease revenue and control of the future gateway to campus created by the overpass, UA Vice President of Financial Affairs Matt Fajack said.

The $414.7 million overpass project would provide another connector between Paul W. Bryant Drive and 15th Street, serving as an alternative southern route to train delays.

The bridge will be a three-lane roadway with bike lanes and sidewalks.

Second Avenue would be extended through part of the parking lot east of Coleman Coliseum. Traffic signal would be added on Second Avenue in front of the coliseum to manage traffic flow. The project would try to minimize the loss of parking by adding space under the overpass bridge on the campus side.

UAB

The lease with the BJCC authority approved by the board will commence Aug. 1, 2021. The rent for the first 10 years would be $300,000 per year.

As part of the agreement, UAB will host six to 10 home games and other football-related events. Any postseason games UAB hosts or the Conference USA championship will be at the stadium.

The football program will have 20 complimentary practice days each year on any day another event is not already scheduled and exclusive use of the UAB locker room at the complex.

The BJCC will operate and maintain the complex.

In June, the board approved a memorandum outlining the terms of the proposed 20-year lease including rent, concessions and ticket revenue sharing, facility operations and marketing.

The proposed open-air stadium with fixed seating of 45,000 and the capability to expand to almost 55,000 is part of a $300 million master plan for the convention center complex in Birmingham that also includes a Legacy Arena makeover and an outside piazza renovation. The project also has commitments from the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County. The new stadium will replace Legion Field as UAB’s football home. The lease will help the authority secure financing for the project, Vice President of Finance and Administration Allen Bolton said.

UAB will have input in the design of the stadium as part of the agreement, Bolton said.

The BJCC complex is about 1.5 miles north of campus. The planned facility is more appropriately sized for the UAB football audience and a bit closer to campus, Bolton said.

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UA athletics to buy metal detectors

Equipment was tested at one 2017 home football game

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The University of Alabama System board of trustees is scheduled to meet to consider an agenda including a proposal to buy metal detectors for the UA athletics department and an update on the plans to find a successor for Chancellor Ray Hayes, who plans to step down at the end of the month.

The board is scheduled to meet by phone at 12:45 p.m. on Monday.

The agenda does not indicate how many metal detectors will be purchased for the athletics department. The university declined to release details ahead of consideration by the trustees.

Last fall, the university tested pass-through metal detectors at Bryant-Denny Stadium during the home game with Mercer University. At its spring meetings, the Southeastern Conference announced it had decided metal detectors would be utilized at SEC football stadiums and other events as determined by each campus by 2020. In 2016, UA implemented clear-bag policy for football games.

Hayes announced in June he will step down as chancellor at the end of July. Hayes will take August off and return in September as chancellor emeritus working on projects including behavioral health and health care initiatives.

The board is scheduled to discuss plans for system leadership following Hayes’ change of roles.

Hayes made the announcement during the University of Alabama System board of trustees’ regular June meeting.

DETECTORS

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He cited the sound positions of the system and its three campuses and a personal passion for behavioral health work as factors in his decision.

The board is also set to consider a lease between the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority for use of a planned stadium at the BJCC complex for home football games. In June, the board approved a memorandum outlining the terms of the proposed 20-year lease including rent, concession and ticket revenue sharing, facility operations and marketing.

The lease, as outlined in June, would commence Aug. 1, 2021. The rent for the first 10 years would be $25,000 per regular-season game, $15,000 per postseason game at the stadium, and $10,000 for the spring practice game.

The trustees will also consider a proposal from UA to purchase additional real estate for its railroad overpass bridge project that would connect Second Avenue on campus with Lancaster Road/Second Avenue south of campus by constructing a span over the Kansas City Southern and Norfolk Southern railroads.

The $14.7 million overpass project would provide another connector between Paul W. Bryant Drive and 15th Street, serving as an alternative southern route free of train delays.

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ARTICLES OF INTEREST
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WASHINGTON

Industry, legislators oppose car tariffs

Doug Jones working on bill with GOP’s Alexander

William Thornton  wthornton@al.com

As a procession of auto industry groups lined up to oppose President Donald Trump’s proposed tariffs Thursday in Washington, a bipartisan effort was underway in Congress to halt the tariffs that they say will threaten, not protect, American jobs.

Alabama Sen. Doug Jones, a Democrat, said this week that he and Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, a Republican, are working to craft a “solution” to proposed tariffs on imported automobiles and parts.

“We hope to introduce that proposal as early as next week, after consulting with our automotive manufacturers and working with our colleagues to grow bipartisan support for this legislation,” Jones said in remarks on the Senate floor in Washington.

“I realize that folks affected by these proposed tariffs are looking for a silver bullet to stop them dead in their tracks. Right now, the only silver bullet in this case is for the president to change his mind and recognize how many jobs are at risk because of these proposed tariffs. Until that happens, we’re going to fight to protect what our states and our workers have earned,” he said.

Jones’ comments Wednesday occurred as segments of the auto industry prepared to converge on the nation’s capital to lobby against the proposed tariffs. The Commerce Department on Thursday began two days of hearings on the tariff issue.

In May, Trump directed the Commerce Department to begin an investigation into whether imported vehicles and auto parts constitute a national security threat. The
Tariffs: Fees could cost state 4,000 auto jobs, governor says

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administration is reportedly considering a 20 to 25 percent tariff on imported vehicles.

Along with representatives of Alabama's auto industry — Mercedes, Honda and Hyundai already build cars in Alabama, and Mazda and Toyota are building a plant in Huntsville — Jones, Sen. Richard Shelby and Gov. Kay Ivey, among others, have made comments opposing the tariffs. Ivey, in a letter to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, said Alabama’s auto industry could lose up to 4,000 jobs as a result.

With midterm elections looming, members of Trump's own Republican party are pleading with him to avoid duties on cars. In a letter released Wednesday, 149 lawmakers from both parties urged the administration to drop the car probe, arguing that imports don't pose a security risk.

Jones said he was old enough to remember when Alabama didn't produce anything of significance on the assembly line. He said he didn't think that the state was now the nation's third-leading auto exporter.

"Now let me be clear — while the United States faces any number of threats from adversaries on any number of fronts, foreign automobiles and auto parts are not a threat to our national security," he said. "But you know what is a threat? A 25 percent tax on the price of these imported goods."

Auto industry figures say the proposed tariffs would adversely affect American automakers because many models produced domestically use imported parts, which they say would drive up the cost for consumers. Tariffs would also inspire retaliatory tariffs in other countries, further impacting American exports, critics contend.

Among the activities slated for later this week in the capital, more than 30 vehicles built in the U.S. by international automakers were to motorcade past the Capitol and to the Department of Commerce Thursday. One of them was a Mercedes’ GLE, made at Mercedes' Vance plant.

Seven auto trade groups are participating in two days of events coinciding with the hearings, and have paid for advertisements in publications, including The Wall Street Journal.

The ad comes as an open letter to Trump, thanking him for his support of the industry, but urging another strategy to protect U.S. jobs.

"While we understand that you are working to achieve a level playing field for trade to create more jobs, raising tariffs is the wrong approach," the ad states.

As the hearings opened Thursday, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross sought to dispel the notion that the Trump administration has made up its mind. His department received nearly 2,300 written submissions from industry groups, unions, foreign governments and individuals commenting on the investigation.

"It's clearly too early now to say if this investigation will ultimately result in a Section 232 recommendation on national security grounds, as we did earlier with steel and aluminum," Ross said. "But President Trump does understand how indispensable the U.S. automobile industry is."

Judging from the list of speakers, the administration will find little if any support for the idea that foreign cars undermine America's ability to defend itself.

That's a stark contrast from the U.S. investigation into steel and aluminum imports earlier this year.

In that case, American steel producers and steelworker unions lobbied for tariffs, giving Trump political cover to slap duties eventually on foreign shipments.

"This one is much more of an uphill climb for the administration," said Edward Alden, a senior fellow and trade expert at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington.

"We're starting to see the damage from the steel and aluminum tariffs and the various retaliations. The impact of this action is so much larger than those that the opposition is going to be far better mobilized and far stronger."

Bloomberg contributed to this report.
Air show profitable for Alabama aerospace

William Thornton  wthornton@al.com

Alabama Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield said Alabama will "absolutely" see a project announcement in the near future following the Farnborough International Air Show this week.

Canfield, along with Gov. Kay Ivey and delegations from Huntsville and Mobile, among others, spent several days in the United Kingdom this week for the air show, while a series of announcements showed Alabama's aerospace and aviation industries are continuing to grow.

Carpenter Technology on Monday announced it will add a $52 million Emerging Technology Center to its Limestone County facility. The project will create 60 jobs over the next five years, and will focus on additive manufacturing technology, or 3-D printing, as well as soft magnetics and meltless titanium powder.

Then BAE Systems, the third-largest defense contractor in the world, announced plans for a $45.5 million expansion in Huntsville, including a new manufacturing and office facility in Cummings Research Park.

On Tuesday, Airbus and JetBlue founder David Neeleman announced that Airbus will build 60 A220 jets in Alabama for a new startup airline.

That's a lot of activity in a few days, continuing a hot streak of economic development announcements Alabama has seen this year.

Canfield said the Farnborough experience was fruitful on several fronts — commercial aviation and aerospace, and the resurgent segments of the industries focused on space.

"There is a lot of activity going on in space exploration right now, and Alabama is positioned to play an expanding role in that regard," Canfield said. "This has been a great opportunity to make some deeper contacts in space-focused industry and to meet with companies in the aerospace and aviation sectors that are very interested in growing new technologies and learning how to bring those technologies to production scale."
Analyzing the race for governor

Since I had to go to press with my column before the results of Tuesday's runoffs were known, I'll share some thoughts and analysis from the gubernatorial primaries on June 5.

First, Kay Ivey and Walt Maddox won their parties' nominations very impressively. Gov. Ivey used the mantle of incumbency to win a decisive victory in the Republican primary with 56 percent of the vote against three opponents who were thought to be viable and well-financed. Her campaign was brilliantly run. Her television ads were excellent.

The mastermind of her campaign was Brent Buchanan. He is now the master of political campaigns in Alabama. His polling arm, Cygnal, is the most accurate on the scene. He uses his polling adroitly to design brilliant ads. Buchanan runs many campaigns out of state. He only ran two in Alabama — Ivey's gubernatorial contest and Gerald Dial's race for agriculture commissioner.

In fact, Buchanan came up with the best ad of the campaign season. The jingle ad for Dial was spectacular.

Maddox's waltz to victory over five opponents without a runoff in the Democratic primary was also quite impressive. It became apparent in the closing days that he was going to win without a runoff. He ran the table on all of the important endorsements, including the Alabama Democratic Conference and the New South Coalition, but more importantly he won the endorsement of young Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin and the use of his organization. This was a recipe for a big win.

Maddox is the best candidate that the Democrats have fielded for governor in two decades. He is young, vibrant, and has a proven track record as chief executive/mayor of one of Alabama's largest and most important cities, Tuscaloosa.

Alabama, however, is still a very red state. All 29 of our statewide elected offices are held by Republicans. Ivey is not only the Republican nominee, she is the sitting Republican governor who can continue to cut ribbons and claim credit for every industrial announcement as well as the outstanding national economy and job growth. She will refuse to debate or go unscripted. In addition, as the incumbent she can raise substantial campaign funds.

On June 5, twice as many votes were cast in the GOP primary than in the Democratic primary. There were 340,000 votes cast for Ivey, while only 284,000 votes were cast for all of the Democratic gubernatorial candidates combined. That means 174,000 more people voted for Ivey than for Maddox.

I would handicap this race 56 to 44 in favor of Ivey going into the fall. The only
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way that Maddox can win is for Ivey to falter. Her handlers should keep her close to home and limit her appearances. They should continue to not discuss the issues that face the state or take any positions or offer any plans for the state’s woes. Under no circumstances should they allow her to debate. The young articulate mayor would eat her lunch.

Maddox, if not elected, will live to run another day. The divide between the two political parties is narrowing in the state. Younger voters are trending Democratic, even in the Heart of Dixie.

Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle ran a very successful get acquainted race for governor in the Republican primary. He will be the favorite in 2022. You could see a Walt Maddox vs. Tommy Battle contest in four years. Battle built name recognition and got 25 percent of the vote against a popular incumbent governor, and he goes back to being mayor of Alabama’s most prosperous and fastest growing city. If you think Huntsville has prospered over the last decade, you ain’t seen nothing yet. It could very easily be the boom town of America in the next five to 10 years.

Maddox’s city of Tuscaloosa is growing right behind Huntsville. Quite frankly, Battle and Maddox have much better jobs as mayors of Huntsville and Tuscaloosa than if they were governor of Alabama.

Steve Flowers served 16 years in the Alabama Legislature. Readers can email him at www.steveflowers.us.
Shipt delivers jobs and hope

Company's commitment could be game-changer city has been craving

Roy S. Johnson
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I'd like to believe this is the one.

It's not likely that one moment, one event, one decision can eradicate generations of ill will, distrust, finger-pointing, back-stabbing and blast-blaming.

Of young people fleeing the city as fast as they can fold up their diplomas and book a flight on their smartphones.

Of outsiders all but laughing out loud when offered a job requiring them to move to Birmingham.

Of outlying municipalities building a virtual wall separating us from them.

Of too many young people believing they have no future here, or anywhere.

I'd like to think, though, this is the one that changes all that. Or at least most of it.

That's a lot to put on Shipt.

On Wednesday, though, Shipt's chief executive, Bill Smith, called it like a game-winning eight-ball billiards shot.

In revealing that Shipt, six months after it was acquired by Minnesota-based Target for $550 million, was keeping its headquarters in Birmingham rather than shipping the 300 or so folks who now work downtown to Minneapolis or Silicon Valley, and committing to create 881 new jobs over the next few years, Smith said the company

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JOHNSON
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could be a "great magnet to bring new talent to the area."
(Some of the new jobs were already on the company’s
website, Smith said.)

He called it a "catalytic event" for our burgeoning, still-
trying-to-be tech culture, an event Smith hopes impacts Bir-
mingham and his surrounding region similarly to the deci-
sion by Mercedes-Benz 21 years ago to build cars in Alabama,
igniting the state’s now-thriving auto industry.

The event was in the making almost from the moment
Smith sold his idea to Target about six months ago. It was
quietly led by Robert Crutchfield, executive director of
Innovate Birmingham. He corralled, cajoled and made
it clear to leaders statewide that if they weren’t proactive
about keeping Shipt, it would almost certainly depart, leav-
ing an economic void that just might have been impossible to
fill.

That it worked was significant enough to bring Gov. Kay
Ivey to town.

She didn’t come three weeks ago when Amazon
announced its $325 million investment in Bessemer with up to
1,500 hundred jobs.

She didn’t come, either, on Monday when DC BLOX
announced its potential $785 million investment in Titus-
ville.

No, it took Shipt to get the governor to Birmingham —
which is just one of the reasons why I’m trying to believe this
is the one.

Why I’m expecting it to do more than lure talent to the
region to buy homes, shop and make it harder for me to find
a table at my favorite local spots.

I’m expecting Shipt to be, in this predominantly Afri-
can-American city, a beacon to the youth in our schools and
an inspiration to our myriad unemployed and under-
employed neighbors who have for too long remained discon-
ected from Birmingham’s rise.

That those 881 new jobs at least somewhat reflect the
diversity of our city will be vital, and closely watched.

(Smith said Shipt does not have a senior-level executive in
charge of diversity. “That’s something we should look into
doing,” he said.)

The city is investing $1.762 million with Shipt over the
next three years to support the new jobs.

Jefferson County might (and should) pitch in an addi-
tional $700,000.

The money won’t just defray the company’s cost of recruit-
ing talent to Birmingham, but also support lower-wage
employees who want to develop new skills that will allow
them to rise at the company.

It will also be used to hire locally, specifically graduates
of Innovate Birmingham’s fast-track IT training program,
most of whom are previously underemployed local resi-
dents.

“A lot of folks will acquire new skills and contribute to
Shipt,” says Josh Carpenter, director of the city’s depart-
ment of innovation and economic opportunity. “Some will
be energized and create their own thing. That’s the type of
virtuous cycle we hope to build.”

Especially if we believe this is the one.

The Shipt
announcement

WHAT HAPPENED?

Shipt, a Birmingham-based $550 million tech firm, for-
mally announced Thursday its plans to dramatically expand
its Alabama operations, announcing it planned to hire 881
new Birmingham-based workers.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey, Birmingham Mayor Randall
Woodfin, along with a handful of city councilors, Jefferson
County Commissioners and representatives of business and
development groups gathered for the formal announcement
at Shipt headquarters in Birmingham, and to celebrate the
fact that a major emerging tech firm chose to remain in the
Magic City rather than relocate to established tech hubs in
California, or in Minneapolis, where the Target corporate
headquarters is located.

Target acquired Shipt last year for $550 million. The Bir-
mingham-based firm pioneered an online order-based gro-
cery delivery service that has expanded to more than 160
U.S. markets.

Shipt CEO Bill Smith said he got the idea for Shipt while
shopping for groceries with his family in the Birmingham
area.

FROM THE GOVERNOR

“We are thrilled to have you here for this announcement,”
Ivey said Thursday, addressing Smith. “You could have taken
this headquarters anywhere in the United States, but you
chose to do it right here in Birmingham, Alabama. On behalf
of all Alabamians, thank you.”

“Shipt has been highly successful in their modern
approach toward the application of technology and their
business. Their ability to adapt quickly in the constantly
evolving needs of society is something we can all take from
and all benefit from. We must continue to invest in for-
ward-thinking companies.”

SHOW ME THE MONEY

The 881 new jobs are in addition to the more than 300 peo-
ple already working at Shipt headquarters in Birmingham,
and will pay an average salary of more than $48,000.

A fact sheet distributed Thursday said the state incentives
package could be worth more than $16 million over 10 years,
and that state incentives were tied to milestones in the project.

The Birmingham City Council voted Tuesday to approve
an incentives package worth up to $1.76 million to keep Shipt
in Birmingham, and Jefferson County is expected to discuss
an incentives package that could reach $720,000.

The Alabama Department of Commerce estimates the
economic impact of the expansion over 20 years will be $1.1
billion in total payroll from permanent jobs, and $100.5 mil-
nion in new state revenue.

The Birmingham News
Sunday, July 15, 2018
How DC BLOX chose Bham for massive tech campus

Birmingham's former Trinity Steel site is coming back to life as a high-tech campus.

Atlanta-based DC BLOX plans to transform the 27-acre site, which formerly housed Ingalils Iron Works and Trinity Steel, into a technology and innovation campus that will be home to data center facilities and related office space.

Over the next 10 years, the project has the potential to represent a $785 million investment, which would make it one of the largest economic development projects in recent Birmingham history, based on total capital investment.

The first phase, built by Birmingham's Brassfield & Gorrie, will be 31,000 square feet. The project could ultimately scale to more than 200,000 square feet.

Data centers aren't traditionally operations with huge employee counts. Initial employment is expected to be more than 20 direct hires by DC BLOX - a total that doesn't include hires by tenants at the data centers and their IT workers.

But the project is expected to have a significant impact on the local technology infrastructure and create the possibility of partnerships with both large entities and entrepreneurial ventures in the Magic City and across the state.

But how did the project end up in the Magic City?

Jeff Uphues, CEO of DC BLOX, said Birmingham and the Trinity site specifically were logical choices for a number of reasons.

The company, which focuses on underserved markets, has been scouting sites in the Magic City for some time. One reason was the lack of existing similar facilities.

"It was the largest market in the U.S. we were able to find that did not have a tier-3, multi-tenant purpose-built data center," Uphues said.

After recognizing that, he said there were a number of attractive pieces in place that made Birmingham a good fit.

For one, Birmingham sits on a key fiber corridor that stretches from Dallas to Atlanta. There's also a growing infrastructure of fiber connectivity in the state that is a necessity for a data center.

On the energy front, he said Alabama Power Co. had the necessary capacity and rates to make the project viable.

In the Magic City, Uphues said DC BLOX also found willing partners and a community it wants to join.

"What gave us the end determination on Birmingham was the qualitative analysis," Uphues said. "After dozens of visits, dinners, visits with prospective customers, we learned the heart of Birmingham. You have a vibrant city with an emerging growth story that we wanted to be a part of. That's why we are investing heavily and opportunistically."

After circling in on Birmingham, Uphues said the Trinity site - which has been the target of potential redevelopments over the years - had its own unique benefits, including a compelling history, flat geography and an attractive location.

"It was much bigger than what we normally look at. We saw this great view of downtown. We knew this was the site that, with the right facility, could help spur the innovation of the city and the region and the state if we were able to make it work," he said. "I really believed that with the right amount of collaboration, this site with our facilities can impact tomorrow's technology leaders."

In addition to close proximity to fiber infrastructure, it's located near downtown Birmingham, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Innovation Depot. Uphues said those factors made the site an attractive one as it seeks to fully develop the property.

"We can build a data center anywhere, but (we're) building with a higher purpose of creating a campus," he said.

The company's plans speak to its feelings about Birmingham's potential.

Uphues said the site will be created as the Atlanta-based company's Alabama headquarters.

"I can say quite confidently this will likely be the largest data center we build," Uphues said, noting the maximum capacity in its Huntsville facility is 47,300 square feet. "We are invested and have created the Birmingham center as our Alabama headquarters."

-Ty West, Tyler Pitchen
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Shipt eyes big growth, possibly hundreds of new Bham jobs

One of Birmingham's most notable business success stories has even bigger plans in the Magic City.

Shipt Inc. may add up to 881 jobs in the area - a total that would significantly expand the tech-driven delivery service's presence in Birmingham. The jobs would pay an average of $50,000 per year.

While an official announcement was expected on July 12 after press time, documents from the city of Birmingham showed Shipt could add the positions as part of an incentive agreement with the city to maintain and grow the company's headquarters in Birmingham.

Shipt was acquired by Target Corp. in late 2017 in a $550 million deal that put a greater spotlight on Birmingham's technology and entrepreneurial world.

In the past, similar acquisitions have resulted in the Magic City losing a significant number of jobs and company headquarters.

But in an Innovation Week event hosted by Alabama Power Co., Target Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer Minosk Pak said the company is committed to the Magic City.

"We are committed to Shipt, and we are committed to Birmingham. We know this is home, and we know this great company has come out of home," Pak said.

Shipt CFO Bill Smith said his company has been able to grow its retailer base significantly since its acquisition by Target - in part because of the deal giving Shipt a huge anchor retailer with a national reach.

While Smith declined to offer further details about the company's specific Birmingham plans ahead of the July 12 announcement, he said during the event that the fact Shipt was founded in Birmingham played a key role in the company's success and culture.

And recent public notices show local governments are willing to invest to ensure Birmingham remains the company's home.

A group of local and state officials and economic development professionals teamed up to craft incentives designed to both keep Shipt in town and to create a framework to attract and retain other successful startup companies.

The incentive package for Shipt includes a heavy focus on training and workforce development - with a number of components that will prioritize hiring and upskilling local workers.

The city of Birmingham has approved $1.762 million in incentives through its new Talent Acceleration, Talent Investment and Talent Optimization programs.

It also approved the sale of the parking deck at the John Hand Building, where Shipt is headquartered, for $1 million.

Officials said that move was an important piece of the deal because it will give the company control over parking rights at its headquarters as it adds employees.

Pending finalization of the deal, the state of Alabama was prepared to provide a jobs credit valued at nearly $14.5 million over 10 years, an investment credit valued at $1.5 million over 10 years and AIDT services and support valued at $604,960. Those incentives are tied to achievements of project milestones.

Jefferson County was scheduled to vote on an incentive agreement totaling $720,000 at its meeting on July 12. Local officials have said they are hopeful the Shipt incentive package can create a roadmap to help the area recruit scalable startups that produce high-paying jobs for all local residents.

From the city's standpoint, Director of the Office of Innovation and Economic Opportunity Josh Carpenter said the incentive package for Shipt amounts to an investment in people.

"If you invest in land, it depreciates. If you invest in property, it may lose value over time. But if you invest in people, there's a multiplier effect that lasts for a long time," Carpenter said.

He said the new talent programs represent a multi-pronged approach that should pay dividends when recruiting modern technology companies.

The talent acceleration program, for example, will give lower-skilled workers an opportunity to gain a foothold in training programs or bootcamps to allow them to move up the employment ladder. It will provide a pool of funding that can be used by Shipt employees to accelerate skill development.

The talent investment program will provide funding for the company to recruit high-demand and hard-to-recruit occupations.

The Talent Optimization Program will create incentive dollars to encourage hiring local talent through programs like Innovate Birmingham and to also upskill employees to become mid-level managers, among other uses. It will help customize training programs at local educational institutions, as well.

- Ty West and Tyler Patchen
Six honored by UA business school

Staff report

The founder of Sister Schubert's Homemade Rolls and the frontman of the country music band Alabama are among the 2018 inductees to the University of Alabama Culverhouse College of Business' Alabama Business Hall of Fame.

The following people will be honored in a Nov. 15 celebration at the Hyatt-Regency Birmingham -- The Wynfrey Hotel:
- Patricia “Sister Schubert” Barnes of Andalusia
- Alabama vocalist Randy Owen of Fort Payne
- Jeffrey Bayer of Birmingham
- Don James of Birmingham
- Charles McCrary of Birmingham
- James Pursell of Fayetteville
- John Rhoads of Birmingham, who will be posthumously honored

Barnes founded her bread company in her home kitchen using her grandmother's yeast-roll recipe. She transformed the business into a national brand that produces more than 9 million rolls per day with distribution in each state in the country as well as abroad. She attended Troy University, Auburn University and UA.

Bayer, a UA alumnus, is the president and CEO of Bayer Properties LLC, headquartered in Birmingham, which specializes in developing, leasing, managing and marketing mixed-use real estate properties nationwide. Bayer is a national commercial real estate leader with a mixed-use asset portfolio of about 10 million square feet.

James served in various executive roles at Vulcan Materials Co. including chairman and CEO from 1992 until his retirement in 2015. The company grew to be one of the largest public corporations in Alabama. James is a graduate of UA and the University of Virginia School of Law.

McCrary, an alumnus of Auburn University, served as president and CEO of Alabama Power Co. In addition to his roles at Alabama Power, he served as vice president for Birmingham-based Southern Nuclear, president of Southern Co. Generation, chief production officer of Southern Co. and president of Southern Power.

Owen, a Jacksonville State University alumnus, has been the front man and lead vocalist of Alabama, the most successful and award-winning band in country music history with more than 80 million records sold. The band has received more than 250 industry awards and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006. Owen was also inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame and received

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HONORS

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the Ellis Island Award for his charity work with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Pursell's business career started when he joined Parker Fertilizer in 1959. In 1964, the Auburn University alumnus became president of the company and began to redirect the company toward the development and marketing of specialty fertilizer products.

In 1997, he relocated the company headquarters to the family farm, and he established Pursell Farms in Fayetteville, which has since transitioned into one of Alabama's premier resorts, spanning 3,500 acres.

Rhoads, a UA alumnus, was well-known for applying his technical skills in helping Alabama entrepreneurs launch their businesses as a partner at the accounting firm Ernst & Ernst.

Rhoads was a longtime executive committee member of the Jefferson County chapter of the University of Alabama National Alumni Association. He was also council chairman of the State Society for the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants.

The Hall of Fame was founded in 1973 by the college's Board of Visitors to honor individuals in business who have brought lasting fame to the state of Alabama. Candidates must be retired for a minimum of three years or be 65 years of age or older if they are still active in their careers.

The Hall of Fame gallery is located in Biggood Hall and houses memorabilia related to the lives and careers of inductees.
Learning the discipline of dance

American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive held in Tuscaloosa

Staff report

More than 100 young dancers from around the country are finishing up the American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive this week in Tuscaloosa.

The four-week program for dancers between the ages of 11 and 17 includes classes, workshops and group rehearsals led by top teachers. The curriculum includes a wide variety of disciplines, with an emphasis on classical ballet technique. Jazz, modern, Pilates and dance health are just a few of the classes designed to develop the participants into well-rounded dancers.

Participants are selected for the summer intensive through a nationwide audition tour.

The program will conclude Friday with showcase performances by the dancers in the concert hall at the Moody Music Building, 810 Second Ave. Showtimes are at noon and 1:30 p.m. Tickets are $10 and available at www.ua.tix.com. For more information, call the UA Department of Theatre and Dance at 348-5283.

The American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive came to Tuscaloosa in 1997. ABT chose the University of Alabama to host the first summer intensive to be held outside New York.

Founded in 1940, the ABT has been the home of many of the world's top dancers, including Mikhail Baryshnikov, Misty Copeland, Natalia Makarova and Cynthia Gregory.

Aspiring dancers work at the University of Alabama Friday, July 13, 2018 as they take part in the American Ballet Theatre’s dance workshops.

Online

For more photos and video from the American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive, visit www.tuscaloosanews.com.
Triumphing in the nonprofit world

THE IMPACT OF BROOKE BOWLES’ NONPROFIT IS GROWING ACROSS THE STATE

When Brooke Bowles studied psychology at Auburn in the late '90s, she didn’t originally plan to get a career working with people with disabilities. But a professor helped her get a job right out of college at UAB working with mothers who had toddlers with disabilities.

It was while she was at UAB in 2007 that she started Triumph with 16 participants. Now, the nonprofit serves hundreds of clients and recently launched a plan to spread its influence across the state.

To spearhead growth, Bowles recently moved from the executive director position to a new role where she will focus on traveling across the state and building the nonprofit’s reach. Bowles and her team provide people with disabilities the tools and strategies they need to achieve their goals — whether their goals are to get a job, live on their own, or have meaningful relationships with their peers.

Since last year, Triumph has also been working with teenagers so people can take advantage of their services at an earlier age. Their summer program partners with schools and helps connect students with jobs. For most of them, it’s their first-ever paycheck. It gives them experience to add on a resume, and Triumph can help them get a permanent job later.

“Mom has this saying... that there are people who are born on third base, and that we have to look at that,” Bowles said. “And I've always had this heart for the people that have never gotten the chance to get out of the dugout."

How was Triumph founded? I had come full circle back to UAB. That was my first job in '96, and then did a long stint at Glenwood and was back at UAB in 2007 and was working for this little clinic that served 16 adults with disabilities. It was a drop-in clinic, and UAB decided to shut down that clinic in the summer of 2007. Well, that was going to leave these 16 individuals without support. There were only three of us who worked at the clinic. I decided to start Triumph just to help the 16 individuals. On Aug. 1, 2007, we marched from the UAB clinic to a little, rented 11-foot-by-6-foot office. It was probably about a mile walk off Highland Avenue, and carried a sign: Triumph. It was really important for the 16 individuals to visualize that this is the new place I go. This is where I go for support. That memory will always stick out as one of my favorites.

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever received? My mentor, the first professional who ever believed in me, when I was 22 years old — he overhired me. He hired me for a job that I was not qualified to do. But he really believed in me and gave me the benefit of the doubt. ... These guys are treated like they are younger than they are. Just really believe in another person. Give the benefit of the doubt.

What’s been your greatest career challenge? Passion alone is wonderful in starting a business, but it’s not necessarily
enough to start and maintain a strong business. So, always keeping a check on how much I don’t know I’d say is something that I just have to continuously remind myself. That I have so much more to learn. That I have not gotten this figured out.

What do you love most about your job? Every day is different. I love the success stories. That’s great, to hear about this amazing work that Sarah’s doing with these kids or when someone gets a job, or someone moves out in their own apartment.

What’s it like hearing the sad stories? I actually really thrive on hearing some of the sad stories as well. When people come in our door and they have experienced just a life of failure. One failure after another. So discouraged. They’ve experienced failure at school and in their friendships. They’ve not been accepted, or they’ve been bullied. Or, they’ve been fired from one job after another because the employer or the job was not right for them. They’re having difficulties with their relationships with their families. They’re just so beaten down. That is what I think really keeps me driven. Certainly as much, if not more, than the success stories.

What’s your favorite success story? There was a young man who came to our office a few years ago with his parents, and they were literally straight off a farm in Pell City. So the parents tended the farm, and the gentleman had autism. The parents said, “Gosh, we really aren’t sure what to do. Farming is not his future. He loves computers, software and programming.” And so we talked to the gentleman for a while and he spoke this computer language that the coaches and I certainly did not understand. I had this good friend who owns a large software development company here in town. I called him up and said, “Hey, could you spend some time, just a little bit of time, with this young man and see if he knows his stuff?” They were so impressed with him that they offered him an internship at the company. No one who works there doesn’t have a college degree. So this gentleman tried college, but due to anxiety wasn’t able to complete college. During his internship, he built some kind of software program that they were able to launch and hired him in a full-time position. Now he owns his own house in an over-the-mountain community here, lives by himself. He doesn’t need us at all anymore. ... His future is bright. So, that’s the kind of unlocking that I think we can do when people come to us and say, “We don’t know what to do here.”

Intern Ingrid Schnader conducted this interview. Reach her at ischnader@bizjournals.com.
Proposal for interstellar mapping probe awarded $496 million grant by NASA

By: Diana LaChance

A team of astrophysicists that includes Dr. Gary Zank, chair of the Department of Space Science and the director of the Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), has been awarded $496 million by NASA’s Solar Terrestrial Probes (STP) Program to fund the Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP) mission concept. In keeping with the priorities outlined in the National Research Council’s “Decadal Strategy for Solar and Space Physics,” the mission will seek to advance critical scientific objectives of understanding our home in the galaxy, contribute to the fundamental understanding of the Sun-Earth system, and produce secondary observations critical to space-weather related societal needs.

“It was a lot of work to put this together – only two or three other groups submitted a proposal,” says Dr. Zank. “Ours provided a more coherent link, per the call, in looking at the energization of plasma close to the Earth, in the distant heliosphere, and in the interstellar medium, and in providing a better picture of how all of these vastly separated regions are connected. By measuring both phenomena that originate locally and those that originate in extremely distant regions, from which it may take neutral particles to propagate for five or ten years prior to the measurements being made, we will be able to couple local and distant heliophysics, in a way that has never been done before.”

Along with Dr. Zank, the IMAP team comprises principal investigator Dr. David J. McComas of Princeton University, as well as numerous leading space scientists from both the U.S. and abroad. The mission is both a continuation and an expansion of earlier heliospheric mapping efforts made by the Interstellar Boundary Explorer (IBEX) mission and the Advanced Composition Explorer, as well as measurements gathered by the Cassini INCA instrument and Voyager I and II. In particular, it seeks to further explore a previously unpredicted phenomenon discovered by IBEX: a narrow ribbon of energetic neutral atom (ENA) emissions coming from the outer heliosphere whose evolution suggests that the heliosphere’s galactic interaction is more dynamical than anticipated.

Unlike those other missions, however, IMAP combines 10 state-of-the-art measurement capabilities intended to produce new observations of ENAs from the heliospheric boundary region over an extended energy range and with enhanced sensitivity, and spatial and energy resolution. “We’ll make significant advances in that area over previous instrumentation,” says Dr. Zank, estimating that IMAP will show a 100-fold improvement over IBEX’s capabilities. The mission will also be able to produce high-sensitivity observations of other interstellar matter that traverses the heliosphere into the inner solar system, as well as other measurements required to monitor the solar wind, which then shapes the dynamics and structure of the outer heliosheath.

“This is the one place in the universe that we can make detailed measurements of a local star – our sun – to discover how it behaves and interacts with the interstellar medium,” he says. “There’s no way in the next thousand years that we can study anywhere else like this in situ – a telescope can only give a very limited sense of the interaction of a star with its local interstellar medium, and one that is often attenuated by the interstellar medium between the telescope and the star.”
The spacecraft that will carry IMAP is set to launch in 2024, but this initial phase is dedicated to designing and beginning to build the instruments. As the team’s theory lead, Dr. Zank has been heavily involved in and has led much of the coordination of the underlying science that the instruments will explore. “You start with the big science goals and then you continue down to how a specific instrument or set of instruments will answer those science questions,” he says. The team will then continue to develop the mission science as launch approaches, ensuring that all of NASA’s key decision points are passed successfully for the mission. “It is incumbent upon us to make the right measurements to determine answers to the primary questions to be answered by IMAP,” he says. “After all, why else would you put almost $500 million into a mission?”

A member of the National Academy of Sciences and a recipient of the International Space Science Institute’s 2017 Johannes Geiss Fellowship, Dr. Zank is the principal investigator on an initiative to develop new predictive plasma-surface interaction technologies for the nation’s aerospace, manufacturing, energy, environment, and agricultural sectors. Entitled “Connecting the Plasma Universe to Plasma Technology in Alabama: The Science and Technology of Low-Temperature Plasma,” the project is funded by a $20 million, five-year grant from the National Science Foundation’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research.
Mentorship, funding, and research opportunities help increase minority participation in STEM

By: Taralyn Caudle

The Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and named for late former congressman and civil rights attorney Louis Stokes, strives to increase both the quality and the quantity of underrepresented students pursuing degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. In addition to financial support, LSAMP students receive tutoring, mentoring, career counseling, and summer internship opportunities, as well as sponsored travel to professional conferences.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) joined the Alabama LSAMP in 1992, under the leadership of the late Dr. Adriel D. Johnson Sr., former associate professor of biological sciences at UAH. He encouraged students to pursue not only undergraduate but also graduate degrees in STEM – something that Dr. Emanuel Waddell, associate dean of the College of Science, has continued to do since taking over in 2010. Since that time, he has strategically leveraged both funding and campus partnerships to support LSAMP activities. But there’s no question in Dr. Waddell’s mind about the program’s most important element: mentoring.

“"The most important part is the mentoring component, the guidance component, in terms of encouraging LSAMP students to do undergraduate research, encouraging them to participate in intern opportunities and research opportunities off campus in the summer, encouraging them to pursue graduate study, and encouraging them – ideally – to become members of the professoriate,” he says. That mentoring starts before LSAMP students even begin their first semester at UAH. During a two-week summer bridge program, accepted first-time, full-time freshmen get an advanced introduction to campus life, while also working on math skills and assigned reading from Dr. Waddell. The mentoring continues during the academic year with monthly meetings in which Dr. Waddell and the students discuss everything from study skills and scientific presentations to career goals and financial planning.

Yet another essential form of mentoring involves the Adriel D. Johnson Sr. Fellows, students from the Minority Graduate Student Association who serve as mentors for LSAMP students. In conjunction with a dedicated budget line, Dr. Waddell has implemented a cost-sharing approach that enables graduate students to receive financial support from their respective departments as graduate teaching or research assistants. By identifying underrepresented students to serve in these roles, individual departments can help ensure a commitment to minority graduate student diversity on campus. “You have to have some skin in the game, because if you’re investing money in that student, then you believe that student is going to succeed,” he says. “And you’re invested to make sure that student succeeds because you’re using some of your money to make it happen.”

LSAMP scholars – high-performing students whom Dr. Waddell often recruits at the recommendation of previous scholars – receive financial support ranging from $250 to $2,000 toward tuition costs. And while he admits those numbers aren’t as high as other LSAMP programs in the country, the UAH philosophy is to take on as many qualified students as possible to help increase the odds of adding to that professoriate pool. “The payoff,” he says, “is

See next page
often on the backend.” Through another NSF-funded program, Bridge to the Doctorate, eligible LSAMP scholars can receive two years of funding to pursue a master’s degree in STEM. The funding package includes a tuition waiver, health insurance, and an annual stipend of up to $32,000.

Research opportunities are also an integral part of LSAMP, which Dr. Waddell ensures through cross-collaboration with other campus programs. For example, he requires that LSAMP students apply for UAH’s Research or Creative Experience for Undergraduates (RCEU) summer program and pays for any accepted LSAMP students to participate. “I work with RCEU to increase the diversity of that program and that allows them to leverage their dollars to attract more students who don’t fit into those racial categories,” he says. “It’s a win-win for everybody, because the literature states that, once students start doing research, they’re more likely to remain on your campus. It also increases the chance that they’ll pursue a graduate degree, and if they pursue a graduate degree, maybe there’s a chance they can come back down the road as a faculty member.”

When asked about the future of LSAMP, Dr. Waddell says he is focused on two things: growth, in terms of both numbers and diversity reflecting national demographic trends, and institutionalization. He’s already on track with the former, partnering with the summer Research and Engineering Apprenticeship Program, which is sponsored by the Army Engineering Outreach Program to support high school students who’ve expressed an interest in STEM. As for the latter, Dr. Waddell has several items on his wish list, from increasing industry investment to streamlining and formalizing the application process for LSAMP’s various partnerships.

“Quite a few of these students end up working in Research Park across the street,” he says, “so it’s an accessible task, something industry could get involved in.” His vision also includes an institutionalized mentoring program. Currently, he and Rosemary Robinson, coordinator for diversity initiatives in UAH’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, handle the bulk of the mentoring. But he would eventually like to see a full-time, committed staff member or even faculty members from other departments take part in guiding LSAMP students. “People of color, women, people with disabilities, people who identify with that group – everyone has a vested interest in seeing someone who doesn’t look like them become successful,” he says.
Judge’s ruling favors UWA, charter school

Sumter County school board sought to block use of building

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

A judge has denied the Sumter County Board of Education’s request to prevent the University of West Alabama from allowing its affiliated charter school to use space in the former Livingston High School building when it opens in August.

Clarke County Circuit Court Judge Gaines C. McCorquodale denied the school board’s request on Friday for a preliminary injunction to prevent the charter school’s use of the building while the court considers its lawsuit seeking a permanent injunction. McCorquodale’s decision came after a hearing on the preliminary injunction on Thursday.

The Sumter County Board of Education filed a lawsuit in May to prevent the UWA-affiliated charter school from using space in the building, which is now home to the UWA’s college of education, when it opens next month, arguing the plans violate the terms of a 2011 sales agreement.

The charter school, created under a 2015 law passed by the Alabama Legislature, plans to open in the former high school building, now named Lyon Hall, with pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. While the charter school plans to start at Lyon Hall, the long-term plan is for a standalone building, which will likely be built on the northwestern side of the UWA campus.

McCorquodale also agreed to dismiss the count of fraud alleged against the defendants in the complaint based on the agreement among the parties. The board had alleged the university and its leadership fraudulently misrepresented their intentions during the 2011 sale.

The defendants include UWA and its current board of

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RULING

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trustees, the members or
the board and university
leadership at the time of
the building’s sale, and
the charter school and
members of the charter
school board.

The school board
alleges the charter’s use
of the former high school
building will adversely
affect enrollment and
funding for the public
system.

The school board’s
complaint is based on a
covenant in a 2011 sales
agreement for the high
school that prohibited
the building’s use for a
school that was not under
the supervision of the
county school board. The
agreement also included
a covenant that prohib-
ited UWA from moving
its campus school to the
property. The university
bought the old building on
the west side of campus
for $4 million in 2011.

The lawsuit alleges
UWA is in breach
of the 2011 agree-
ment by allowing the
university-affiliated
charter school to use the
building when it opens.

In its reply to the com-
plaint, UWA and the
other defendants argued
while the sales contract
may have included stip-
ulations about the use
of the building, the deed
recorded no such cov-
enants and the school
board failed to meet the
criteria for a preliminary
injunction.

The defendants argue
the request for the injunc-
tion is a futile gesture that
would not benefit the
school board and would
actively harm the charter
school and other defen-
dants weeks before the
new school is set to open.

McCordale assigned the
case after the Sumter
County Circuit Court requested the
chief justice of the Al-
abama Supreme Court
assign a new judge.
UA women golfers represent Team USA

No slowing down for a summer break for University of Alabama golfers Kristen Gillman and Lauren Stephenson since UA's heartbreaking loss in the NCAA Championship final match to Arizona May 23.

Both represented Team USA for the second time this summer, following on from their resounding success in the Curtis Cup, with an equally dominating performance in the Arnold Palmer Cup last week.

The United States retained the Arnold Palmer Cup with a one-sided day in last Sunday's singles matches, claiming 18 of 24 possible points to defeat the International team, 38.5-21.5, at the Evian Resort Golf Club in Evian-les-Bains, France.

Gillman capped a weekend that saw her finish 3-1 in her matches with a 4&3 singles win over Wenyung Keh (New Zealand/Washington), while Stephenson dropped a 1-up decision to Albane Valenzuela (Switzerland/Stanford) to finish the matches at 2-1-1. Tide men's golfer Davis Riley, who finished 2-2 on the weekend, fell, 3&2, to Auburn's Jovan Rebula (South Africa), who recently won the British Amateur Championship and will be playing in this week's 147th Open Championship at Carnoustie Golf Links.

Playing for the

See THOMPSON, C2
International team, Alabama women's golf signee Jiwon Jeon (South Korea/Daytona State) dropped a 7&5 decision to the United States' Andrea Lee (Stanford) and finished the tournament at 1-2-1.

UA's women's golf assistant coach Susan Rosenstiel was an assistant coach for Team USA.

With the victory, the United States is now 12-9-1 in Palmer Cup competition. The victory is also the first for the visiting team in the Palmer Cup since the United States defeated Team Europe in 2010 in Portrush, Northern Ireland and marks the first time the Cup has been retained by either side since the U.S. won in 2011.

Oh, and by the way, Gillman also played in the U.S. Women's Open at Shoal Creek, finishing T-27, as part of her summer of golf.

**The Open Championship**

Talking of the Open Championship, locals in this week's field at Carnoustie, long considered the toughest test on the rota, include former UA superstar Justin Thomas; Patton Kizzire, who grew up in Tuscaloosa and played for Auburn; fellow Auburn alumni Jason Dufner; Bubba Watson, who played two years for Faulkner State; Danny Willett and Matt Wallace, both of whom played for Jacksonville State; UAB's former standout Paul Dunne; former Open champion Stewart Cink, who grew up in Florence; and Auburn's Rebula.

**Bentley claims Women's State Amateur**

Congrats to Cammie Bentley (formerly Gray) for her victory in the 86th Women's State Amateur Championship played on the historic West Course at The Country Club of Birmingham last week.

After one round of stroke play qualifying, Bentley, who is from Northport and played for UA from 2014-17, won four matches to claim the title, including a 2&1 win in Friday afternoon's final over Samford golfer Mary Kate Horton of Birmingham.

This marks Bentley's fifth state title. She won the same championship in 2013, along with the 2012, '13 and '17 Women's Stroke Play Championships.

*Ian Thompson has been writing about golf in Alabama for over 25 years. His weekly “Mr. Golf” column concentrates on golfers, golf events and people associated with the sport of interest to the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham areas. Reach him with story ideas at thompsonstoresoff@gmail.com*
ALABAMA BASKETBALL
Tide gets big commitment

Juwon Gary, a 6-foot-5 forward from Columbia, S.C., has told local media at the Peach Jam in Augusta, Ga., that he has committed to sign with the University of Alabama in November. The commitment was first reported by The State newspaper in Columbia.

Gary chose Alabama over the hometown University of South Carolina, even though former Gamecock players and other supporters had campaigned on social media to keep him at home in recent weeks. He joins forward Diante Smith, who committed to Alabama on July 4, in this year's recruiting class. The Crimson Tide is continuing to recruit several players, including in-state stars Kira Lewis of Hazel Green and Trendon Watford of Mountain Brook. Gary is rated a top 100 player by most scouting services and has a No. 67 national ranking from 247Sports.

"It felt like home," Gary said of Alabama in an interview with 247Sports. He also cited the presence of Tevin Mack, a native of South Carolina who is currently on the Alabama roster, as a contributing factor.
‘Win the team’

As defending national champions start the season, Nick Saban says QB battle comes down to one thing

Joseph Goodman  jgoodman@al.com

Win the team.
That’s the way Nick Saban put it.
Not win the quarterback job.
Not win the competition.
Win the team.

That’s how Alabama’s coach phrased the business end of the biggest story in college football this offseason. Who’s it going to be, Jalen Hurts or Tua Tagovailoa? Saban doesn’t know yet. The team has yet to be won.

"Tua basically missed spring practice due to an injury; Jalen had a good spring," Saban said.

"Both guys had great summers, and we’re just going to have to see who wins the team in fall camp. So, we’ll see."

Win the team.

Saban repeated the phrase twice more for emphasis.

"It all will be determined by what the players do the rest of the summer and how they win the team," Saban said. "What they do in fall camp, and I’m not making any predetermined decisions about that. So, they need to continue to compete like every other person at every other position is competing.

"And I love both guys. They’re both really good competitors. They’re really good people. They’re really good leaders. They both make great contributions to our team. They’re both very well liked. So, somebody has got to win the team, and however these guys can help the team, I hope they’re both committed to staying and doing it."

It doesn’t sound like Saban is interested in splitting time at the most important position on the field.

That never works, right? How does the old coaching adage go? If you have Tua quarterbacks, then you actually don’t have any.

Or something like that.

Tua won the national championship against Georgia in overtime last season with one of the greatest plays in the history of college football. If that’s not enough to win the team, then what is?

Jalen led Alabama to back-to-back national championship games. What left does he have to prove? What left can he prove?

The knock on Jalen was that he could never go out and win a game. And then he scored the would-be winning

Has Alabama coach Nick Saban ever faced such a difficult decision in his career? Yeah, halftime of the national championship in 2018.

SEE GOODMAN, B6

See Next Page
Goodman

FROM B1
touchdown against Clemson in the 2017
national championship before Alabama’s
defense couldn’t stop the Tigers on the final
drive.

Has Saban ever faced such a difficult deci-
sion in his career? Yeah, halftime of the
national championship in 2013.

There is an assumption that it’s Tua’s
team to lose when fall camp begins on
Aug. 2 — that Hurts is just an insurance pol-
icy at this point. Did Saban seem too dis-
missive of Jalen on Wednesday when asked
if he would be on the team plane to Orlando,
Florida, for the season opener against Lou-
isville?

“I have no idea,” Saban said. “I expect
him to be there. I think it’s our job to give
both players a very fair opportunity to have
a chance to win the job at their position. ...
We’ll create a role for one or both of those
guys on our team, and they’ll all have to
make a decision based on what that outcome
is as to what their future is at Alabama.”

Every sound bite and sentence will be
analyzed and dissected between now and
the beginning of the season.

“We certainly want every player to stay at
the University of Alabama and graduate,”
Saban said. “Jalen has a great opportunity
to do that in December, so we are hopeful he
will stay there and graduates regardless of
his circumstances as a player. But that’s not
to minimize his chances of being a starter or
making a great contribution to our team in
some way even if he isn’t the starter.”

Even if he doesn’t win the team.

If nothing else, that turn of phrase speaks
to how important this decision is for Saban
and new offensive coordinator Mike Locks-
ley. Running backs don’t win the team. The
linebacker position doesn’t carry that weight
of responsibility.

“More than one player can play the run-
ning-back positions,” Alabama senior run-
ning back Damien Harris said. “Quarter-
back is one-dimensional.”

In the modern age of college football,
quarterbacks win the team or they transfer.
It happens everywhere now, and it’s about
to happen a lot more. The NCAA’s new rules
on transferring and redshirting grants
quarterbacks even more flexibility to move
from one school to another to develop their
careers.

The new transfer rule allows players to
go wherever they want as long as they sit
out a season. Before, teams could block
certain schools.

The new redshirt rule allows players
to participate in four games before burn-
ing a year of eligibility. Could Tua leave
Alabama if he lost the quarterback job in
Week 3? In theory, yes. In reality, Tua has
a younger brother who plays quarterback
and is already committed to Alabama.

Depending on your perspective, that fur-
ther complicates things or makes Saban’s
decision that much easier.

Have you seen the amazing video series
on AL.com by Laura Goldman and Laur-
en Sisler? If you haven’t, then check it out
before the season. If you’ve watched it, then
you know Tua brought three prominent
teammates — Alabama running back Najee
Harris and offensive linemen Alex Leather-
erwood and Joshua Casher — to Hawaii in
May to experience life on the island.

That’s how you win the most valuable
friend award. As for winning the team, the
competition begins now.

Joseph Goodman is a columnist for Ala-
bama Media Group. He’s on Twitter @Joe-
GoodmanJR.
QB controversy a delicate dance for Tide coach

Michael Casagrande  mcasagrande@al.com

Walking the blue carpet at SEC Media Days took Nick Saban through a canyon of traveling Alabama fanaticism. Among those standing at the velvet rope was a gentleman in a crimson jersey — No. 13 on front and back with TAGOVALOA stitched on the back.

Neither quarterback made the trip to Atlanta, but the position battle loomed over this annual showdown between Alabama’s coach and his friends in the media.

Jalen Hurts? Tua Tagovailoa? Is there even a leader, never mind a secret winner?

It’s like chess. How many different angles can a question find the side door into the thought process that’ll shape Alabama’s 2018 season?

And the dance began with a customary preemptive strike.

Saban harped on “the quarterback controversy you’d love to create, that you’ve already created, that you will continue to create.”

His blanket answer, the warning continued, would be consistent.

“I’m going to say: We’ll see,” Saban promised. “So don’t get mad at me.”

What followed was a few hours in the gauntlet for Saban and the three Crimson Tide player reps — Damien Harris, Ross Pierschbacher and Anfernee Jennings. Most interview sessions were conducted behind closed doors with the television networks who pay the conference big money.

Twenty minutes in room crammed with television cameras came and went without a single quarterback question.

“We’d rather have two guys than none,” Saban said before taking questions.

Down in the main room that’s televised live on the SEC Network, three inquiries followed the opening statement.

How much will past performance factor in and was Tagovailoa’s spring practice injury hurt his chances?

“I think it all will be determined,” Saban said.

SEE TIDE, B5

Tide: No closer to an answer at quarterback

FROM B1

said before noting they still have to compete.

What about that new redshirt rule that allows a player to retain a year of eligibility even if he plays in four games? Could that impact the formula?

Nope, was the short version.

Perhaps the most interesting moment came when Saban was asked about the next few weeks for Hurts.

Does he expect the junior to be on the team when the Tide travels to Orlando, Florida, for the opener against Louisville?

“Well, I have no idea,” Saban said in the headline answer of the day. “I expect him to be there. I think it’s our job to give both players a very fair opportunity to have a chance to win the team at their position. I think that one of the two guys — obviously, both are capable.”

The traditional window for offseason transfers is all but closed, anyway. And it would require a year sidelined anyway since the junior wouldn’t qualify for grad transfer status until December at the earliest.

Offensive lineman Ross Pierschbacher said it feels like he’s dodging these quarterback questions every year. And that’s about right. Since AJ McCarron finished his third straight year as starter in 2013, the only season with a settled competition in July was last season when Hurts entered his sophomore season. The answers players gave were well rehearsed, thanks to the practice they get with them.

“It’s expected,” Pierschbacher said. “The whole offseason has been like that. I go back home and people ask me that, too, and I’m a thousand miles away from here.”

Harris, a senior running back, estimated he has been asked it “about a million times” and said he doesn’t mind.

“I get to support my teammates and talk about how great they are,” he said after some playful banter with a certain local reporter on how many times they’ve asked him that question.

Harris said you wouldn’t believe there was a competition between the two watching them train. “The way they’ve handled this entire situation has been very respectable,” Harris said.

Marcus Spears isn’t the average media member stalking insight on the situation. Once a star player on Saban’s LSU teams now with ESPN and the SEC Network, he took his swing at the topic with perspecte. Live on the “Paul Finebaum Show,” Spears noted the difference between choosing between two inexperienced candidates and those two who’ve proven themselves to varying degrees. How much does that matter?

“Both guys have done enough to prove their mettle,” Saban said.

He continued by noting quarterback was the “distribution center of the ball.”

“It’s not about making plays at quarterback,” Saban said. “Some guys think that playing quarterback is, ‘I have to make the play.’ Other guys that play quarterback say, ‘Everybody else has to make the play, I just have to put them in the position and help them do it.’ That’s important to the development of the team, and that’s what I mean by how does somebody win our team.”

Ultimately, nobody stepped on a major landmine to set Saban off. SEC Media Days isn’t typically the venue for Saban to cut a highlight-reel rant.

“We’re really no closer to an answer Wednesday evening than we were when Saban walked the blue carpet a few hours earlier. Certain answers could be read to mean this or that, but the dog never caught the car Wednesday in Atlanta.

Michael Casagrande is an Alabama beat writer for the Alabama Media Group. Follow him on Twitter @ByCasagrande or on Facebook.
Nick Saban says he will know more about Crimson Tide team when fall camp starts

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

ATLANTA - No questions had been asked of Nick Saban, but the Alabama football coach was prepared with an answer.

"You can describe our team as, we have a uniform in Alabama," he said Wednesday in his opening statement at SEC Media Days at the College Football Hall of Fame. "It doesn't change much, it doesn't reveal anything, and it's kind of who we are. So that's a lot about where our team is right now."

There's still time for those questions with 45 days until the season opener against Louisville in Orlando. There are pieces Saban feels good about, citing the returning talent at offensive line and running back as strengths.

But the defense must replace almost the entire secondary as well as key players at defensive line and linebacker. The special teams will feature a new kicker and new punter.

"It's not been determined how that's all going to work out for us," Saban said.

That's to say nothing of the six new assistant coaches, or the new offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator and special teams coordinator. Saban's triptych "faith, trust and confidence" phrase wasn't used once. That will have to come later in the season.

Saban did say he is confident in Mike Locksley's ability as an offensive coordinator, and liked the teamwork between co-defensive coordinators Tosh Lupoi and Pete Golding. The early returns from the new assistant coaches on the recruiting trail have been impressive. Spring practice with the new coaching staff was encouraging.

"I am really pleased with the transition, how the players have sort of responded from relationship standpoint with all of those coaches, how those coaches have done a very good job of buying into the things that we want to do and how we want to do them," Saban said. "The new energy and enthusiasm and ideas that they brought to the organization I think are going to be a long-term positive."

Other questions, particularly those about the quarterbacks, brought terser answers.

The coach hit the high points as well, mentioning a school-record 12 draft picks this spring. Saban made use of his time to mention APR scores, graduation rates, first-round draft picks and other measurements of player development.

But that also brings a question of its own. With 10 defensive players signing NFL contracts, there are spots that will need to be filled when practice begins Aug. 3. The next stage in development is about to begin.

"A lot of the questions that you're going to ask me about these young players and how they develop, they are all things that are yet to be determined," Saban said. "They're still going to be determined in the future in terms of how they develop over the rest of the summer, how they do in fall camp, and when they develop the maturity to go out and play winning football for us."

Reach Ben Jones at ben@tidesports.com or 205-722-0196.
Six Months Later, Georgia Is Just Trying to Move On

ATLANTA (AP) — Even six months later, there was no way for Kirby Smart to dodge the question.

Georgia's football coach just knew he'd be asked if he has recovered from the Bulldogs' loss to Alabama in the national championship game.

"Everybody wants to ask that question," Smart said Tuesday at the Southeastern Conference's annual preseason media gathering.

"It's not like I have nightmares about it, no," Smart added.

Georgia enjoyed memorable highlights in Smart's second season as head coach, including the Bulldogs' first SEC championship since 2005, a win at Notre Dame and a national semifinals victory over Oklahoma in the Rose Bowl.

The Bulldogs lost their chance for their first national championship since 1980 when Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa completed a dramatic 41-yard touchdown pass to De'Vonta Smith in overtime.

It was a crushing disappointment, but Smart said it shouldn't overshadow the season's other accomplishments.

"I think we grow from it," Smart said. "I think the entire season is a learning experience. It was a confidence builder for a lot of guys on our team."

The Bulldogs must replace such 2017 leaders as tailbacks Nick Chubb and Sony Michel and linebacker Roquan Smith. Even so, there are expectations for another big season.

The senior defensive end Jonathan Ledbetter said that it was important for players to understand that another championship run must be earned.

"It's a little different and I will say it's a little dangerous," Ledbetter said. "That thought of complacency starts to come in there. We kind of have to push it out if we hear, 'Oh yeah, they're going to win it this year.'"

Added Ledbetter: "You've got to take it one game at a time. If you start looking at the future or the past, you've messed up."

As the defending SEC champion, Georgia expects to get every opponent's top effort.

"We know everyone is going to circle us on their schedule, but that doesn't change our mentality," said cornerback J.R. Reed. He added: "We know everyone is going to be gunning for us, but we can't change. We have to keep the same mentality."

Georgia returns 13 starters, including eight on offense. The sophomore quarterback Jake Fromm has new competition from the freshman Josh Fields, one of the biggest names in Smart's top-rated 2018 signing class.

"The momentum we created from last season has been tremendous across the board," Smart said.

A loss in the national title game followed an SEC crown.

"It's just a lot of things we can't control but we have the confidence we can put ourselves in a position," Smart said.

Usually a team would struggle to replace a pair of senior tailbacks selected in the N.F.L. draft. Instead, the Bulldogs are still deep at the position, now led by D'Andre Swift. Georgia also returns Elijah Holyfield and Brian Herrien. Two freshmen, Zamir White and James Cook, will join the depth chart, although White's status is uncertain as he was held out this spring while recovering from a knee injury he sustained in his senior year of high school.

Georgia should be deep at wide receiver, especially if Demetris Robertson is granted a waiver for immediate eligibility following his transfer from California.

"That's out of my department and that will be in the N.C.A.A.'s hands," Smart said when asked about the possibility Robertson could be ruled eligible this year.

Terry Godwin, Mecole Hardman and Riley Ridley are Fromm's top returning targets.

Georgia hopes a balanced offense can take the lead while the defense rebuilds.

"We know how we did it last year," Reed said. "We want to do it even better because we didn't get to finish the result."
College Debt Isn’t Shrinking. It’s Likely Shifting to Parents.

By TARA SIEGEL BERNARD and KARL RUSSELL

It’s a sign of the times: A new game show, “Paid Off,” debuted on Tuesday offering winners not dream vacations or new cars, but a pile of cash to help lessen the crushing weight of their student debt.

The reach of America’s student loan problem — total debt is now about 1.4 trillion — is vast. Millions of people are in default, and many young people are graduating into adulthood facing payments that limit their ability to buy homes and to start families of their own. Some employers have even begun dangling student loan repayment benefits as a perk to potential workers.

A new analysis of federal loan data indicates that the average student’s debt load is plateauing, and perhaps even declining slightly, at least when adjusted for inflation.

That should be welcome news, except that it comes with a major asterisk: College has not become more affordable, but more students seeking bachelor’s degrees, especially at higher-cost colleges, have borrowed as much as they can under the federal loan program.

As a result, the analysis suggests, many parents are going deeper into debt to pay for their children’s education.

Continued on Page B3

A Shifting Burden
The average student’s debt load is leveling off, a new analysis of federal loan data show. That’s not true for many parents.

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Parent Loan Debt</th>
<th>Average Student Debt</th>
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Figures are adjusted for inflation

Source: Mark Kantrowitz (SavingForCollege.com)

Spreading the Financial Pain
The overall percentage of parents borrowing alongside their children has dropped slightly, but those who are borrowing are taking on significantly more debt.

Sign of a Widening Gap
The data also indicates that more students are choosing public colleges over private ones simply for financial reasons.

Number of those graduating with a bachelor’s degree with debt

Source: Mark Kantrowitz (SavingForCollege.com)

See next page
For students receiving bachelor's degrees, the average debt load at graduation was $30,301 in 2015-16, about the same as estimates for the previous three years, according to the analysis, which is based on data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. The federal Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics conducts the study every four years. Mark Kantrowitz, the publisher and vice president of research at SavingForCollege.com, ran the numbers. He believes the explanation for the flattening is that many students simply cannot borrow any more money through the federal loan program.

More than 40 percent of students in the 2015-16 school year reached the limit of $31,000 for dependent students, up from 39 percent in 2011-12. But some students — those whose parents cannot get federal parental loans, called PLUS loans — have a higher cap on how much they can borrow. (They can borrow up to $57,500, the same limit used for independent students.)

The percentage of all students taking advantage of the higher maximum loan amounts rose to 7.4 percent of those receiving bachelor's degrees in 2015-16, up from 5.8 percent in 2011-12 and 3.3 percent in 2007-08, according to Mr. Kantrowitz's analysis.

In that time, parents' average debt load at graduation for federal PLUS loans rose 14 percent, or $4,090, to $33,291 in 2015-16 from 2011-12.

"Parents are a pressure-relief valve for when students hit the Stafford loan limits," Mr. Kantrowitz said, referring to the federal loan program.

Among PLUS loan borrowers in 2015-16, roughly two-thirds were taking loans on behalf of students pursuing bachelor's degrees who had reached their loan limit in their senior year, Mr. Kantrowitz said.

In a further wrinkle, although parental debt loads have risen significantly, the number of parents taking out federal PLUS loans declined by about 10 percent from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

"It may be that we are in an economic recovery and as the stock market improves, fewer parents are borrowing and don't need to borrow," Mr. Kantrowitz said. "But those who borrow need to borrow more because the cost of college continues to rise," he said, adding they were also picking up the slack for children who were unable to take out more federal loans.

The data also shows more students opting for lower-cost public colleges. That seems like a practical move. But, Mr. Kantrowitz said, it suggests that families are feeling financially squeezed.

"Parents are realizing they just can't afford that more expensive college," he said. "The shift from private to public is of concern mainly because it is a sign of financial pressure, a kind of canary in the coal mine."

More problematic is separate data that shows low- and middle-income students enrolling in associate degree and certificate programs instead of bachelor's degree programs. That, Mr. Kantrowitz said, is "of greater concern because students who could benefit from a bachelor's degree are scaling back their educational attainment for no reason other than college affordability."