ARTICLES OF INTEREST
JULY 20, 2018 – JULY 27, 2018

FOR SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES, SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBERS:

NEWS ABOUT

TRUSTEE/SYSTEM INFO 2
STATE ISSUES 5
UA CAMPUS ISSUES 17
UAB CAMPUS ISSUES 29
UAH CAMPUS ISSUES 32
OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES 37
SPORTS 42
NATIONAL NEWS 60
Barbara Bankhead Oliver

Barbara Bankhead Oliver died peacefully on July 18, 2018. She was born November 6, 1927, in Jasper, Alabama, the third daughter of Emelie Crumpton and Walter Will Bankhead. She attended Shorter College in Rome, Georgia, then left for travels abroad, exploring much of Europe and South America, before moving to New York City to work and study dance. Returning to Alabama in 1952, she married John Thomason Oliver, Jr. and, after two years in New Jersey at Fort Monmouth, the couple moved to Jasper which became their lifelong home. As the mother of five children, Barbara was an amazing multi-tasker for her household, a marvelous cook and hostess who still found time to participate in her children's activities while working tirelessly in service to St. Mary's Episcopal Church. She and John began making trips to Ireland in the 1970's and built a house in County Cork on Roaring Water Bay in the 1990's. They were never happier than during visits to their cottage by the sea with its breathtaking view, seeing friends they had made in this special place, and welcoming family for vacations. Barbara loved her family mightily, and we are grateful for her extraordinary life. Barbara was preceded in death by her siblings, Blossom, Sis, and John, and a grandson, John Thomason Oliver, IV. She is survived by her husband of 65 years, John Thomason Oliver, Jr., her children: Melissa Oliver, Beth Oliver Ballentine (Blake), Rebecca Oliver Haines, John T. Oliver, III (Jean), and William Bankhead Oliver (Jo); her grandchildren: Henry Perkins (Sarah), Malcolm Perkins, Kevin Lehner, Kent Haines (Andrea), Lillian Sharp (Shawn), Charles Haines, Davis Haines (Leeann), Rives Oliver, Sara Oliver, Simon Oliver, Laura Oliver, and Camille Peebles; her great grandchildren: Joel, Haddie, and Dalia Haines, and Cora Gilly. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 28th, 2018, at 11:00 a.m. at First United Methodist Church, Jasper, Alabama, with a reception in the fellowship hall immediately following the service. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 801 The Trace W, Jasper, AL 35504, or Hope for Women, Box 2128, Jasper, AL 35502. Burial will be private. Friends may sign the guest register at kilgoregreenfuneralhome.com Kilgore-Green Funeral Home, Jasper; 205-364-9503
Official to exit UA post

Jo Bonner has served in economic development

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Former congressman Jo Bonner is leaving the University of Alabama System at the end of the month to focus on his work as the interim executive director of the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority.

“I have been working since December as the interim executive director of TCIDA. They are still in the process of looking for a new permanent executive director,” Bonner said. “They have indicated that process could take a little longer than originally planned. They have asked me to continue to help them out.”

Bonner was appointed interim executive director of the TCIDA in 2017 after the retirement of longtime executive director Dara Longrear.

“I am excited to continue to work with TCIDA as they

See BONNER, B3

Alabama labor secretary Fitzgerald Washington speaks with Jo-Bonner before Governor Kay Ivey delivered an address to the Chamber in Session State of the State luncheon at the Embassy Suites in Tuscaloosa, May 15, 2018. (STAFF PHOTO/GARY COSBY JR.)
do some really great things to keep building the economy,” Bonner said. “But long-term, there is probably something else out there I will gravitate towards. I don’t know quite what that is yet.”

Bonner said he informed UA System Chancellor Ray Hayes in May has was considering stepping down as vice chancellor for economic development. Hayes made the announcement to the system staff on Wednesday. Hayes said Bonner’s last day with the system will be July 31.

“Vice Chancellor Bonner has been a key player in our state for many years,” Hayes said in his message to staff. “We will miss Jo’s expertise and his skillful ability to work with diverse coalitions to advance our state. We all wish him the very best in his next endeavor. Jo and (administrative associate MargaretAnn Corbett) will continue their work with the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority in the interim.”

Bonner, who was part of Alabama’s U.S. House delegation from 2003-13, was hired by the system in 2013 as the vice chancellor of economic development and government relations, but in 2015, the position was split with Bonner focusing on the economic development efforts by the system.

Bonner said he is still considering his options long-term as he considers what to do after his interim role with the TCIDA.
Ranking: Alabama has top business climate

William Thornton wthornton@al.com

Business Facilities named Alabama as the state with the best business climate, and gave the state high marks in a number of other categories.

The publication ranked Alabama second in workforce training, third in free trade zone activity among exports, fourth in economic growth potential, fifth in manufacturing employment concentration and sixth in automotive manufacturing strength.

"In Alabama, they've nailed the economic development fundamentals — maximizing resources with regional cooperation, a diverse growth strategy, world-class workforce training — and they're running up the score with one big-ticket project after another," the publication stated.

The prime position can be attributed to this year's biggest economic prize — the $1.6 billion Mazda Toyota manufacturing plant announced in January for Huntsville.

The state has also attracted big projects from Google, Amazon and GE this year.

"In Alabama, they've nailed the economic development fundamentals."  
Business Facilities magazine

Gov. Kay Ivey said efforts to speed job creation "have produced a lot of success lately, and we're going to keep moving forward at full speed on this mission."

Among Alabama cities, the results were also good.

Huntsville ranked No. 1 for economic growth potential among mid-size U.S. cities, and Auburn-Opelika was No. 1 in the same category among small cities. Auburn-Opelika also placed third for job growth among small cities and Huntsville seventh for diversity in types of occupations.

Akio Toyoda, left, president of Toyota Motor Corp., and Masamichi Kogai, president/CEO of Mazda Motor Corp., gathered with Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey. File photo
State tops business ranking

Publication praises Alabama's business climate

By Ken Roberts
City Editor

Alabama's business climate ranks No. 1 in the nation, according to a publication that analyzes economic development.

The publication, Business Facilities, touted Alabama's recruitment of the Toyota-Mazda automobile manufacturing plant as one of the reasons for the top ranking. The $1.6 billion plant, announced in January, will provide 4,000 jobs in Huntsville.

Business Facilities announced its 14th annual business climate rankings Tuesday on its website. The survey will be featured in the publication's July/August print issue.

Rounding out the ranking's top five states were Texas, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia.

Business Facilities said Alabama's business climate "is hitting on all cylinders," citing GE Appliances, which is spending $115 million in an expansion in Decatur, and Amazon, which is opening a 1,500-worker fulfillment center in Bessemer.

"In Alabama, they've nailed the economic development fundamentals — maximizing resources with regional cooperation, a diverse growth strategy, world-class workforce training — and they're running up the score with one big-ticket project after another," according to the publication.

Business Facilities also gave the state high marks for growth potential and workforce training.

Greg Canfield, secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce, said that companies around the world have discovered the strength of Alabama's business climate.

"These rankings are a powerful testament to the hard work that's been put into positioning Alabama for economic growth," Canfield said.

Gov. Kay Ivey said the news proves that Alabama is on the right track for economic growth.

"I'm committed to facilitating the creation of good jobs across Alabama and expanding opportunities for the state's hard-working citizens," Ivey said. "Our efforts have produced a lot of success lately, and we're going to keep moving at full speed on this mission."

Alabama's other rankings from Business Facilities were:

- No. 2 among state workforce training
- No. 4 for economic growth potential
- No. 6 for automotive manufacturing strength

Huntsville and Opelika also earned top rankings from Business Facilities.

Huntsville ranked No. 1 for economic growth potential among mid-size U.S. cities, and Auburn-Opelika was No. 1 in the same category among small cities.

Business Facilities also ranked Auburn-Opelika No. 3 for job growth among small cities and Huntsville No. 7 for diversity in types of occupations.
4th District among highest for opioid use

By: Ashley Remkus

Two congressional districts in Alabama rank among the five highest in the U.S. for the number of opioid prescriptions, a recent Harvard University study found.

Alabama's 4th Congressional District, which includes parts of more than a dozen northern and western counties, has higher prescribing rates of opioids than another other district in the country, the study says.

The study used 2016 prescription data and population information from the 2010 census to identify which areas of the U.S. have the highest prescription rates for fentanyl, hydrocodone, morphine and other opioids.

The study says during 2016 there were 166 prescriptions per 100 people in Alabama's 4th Congressional District. That's more than double the average, which is about 67 prescriptions per 100 people.

The district includes Franklin, Colbert, Marion, Lamar, Fayette, Walker, Winston, Cullman, Lawrence, Marshall, Etowah, and DeKalb counties, plus parts of Jackson, Tuscaloosa and Cherokee counties.

The district with the fifth highest prescription rate is Alabama's 1st Congressional District, which includes Washington, Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia and Monroe counties, plus part of Clarke County in southwest Alabama.

"It is deeply saddening to learn that the 4th Congressional District has such a high opioid prescription rate," said U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, the Alabama Republican who represents the district. "I think this crisis, particularly in rural America, corresponds directly to President Trump's popularity in these areas. People here have felt left behind and have seen their jobs and opportunities disappear. Due to the epidemic of depression, some people have turned to prescription drugs to dull the pain.

"However, I believe that President Trump's renewed focus on these areas and increasing jobs has resonated here strongly," the congressman's statement continued.

Trump last year declared the opioid epidemic a "public health emergency." In the past decade, opioid prescriptions and overdoses have quadrupled in the U.S., according to the Harvard study.

In his statement, Aderholt pointed $4 billion worth of funding that was set aside by Congress for fiscal year 2018 to address, prevent and treatment opioid addiction. Aderholt also noted that $130 million was set aside for the Rural Communities Opioid Response program.
Rural areas with mostly white populations are hit particularly hard by the crisis, researchers said. The areas with the highest prescription rates were mostly in the southeast part of the country.

Alabama ranks first in the nation for the number of painkiller prescriptions per capita, according to Attorney General Steve Marshall, who has sued opioid manufacturers and co-chaired the state's Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council.

In the Alabama 1st Congressional District, which includes Mobile, there were about 131 prescriptions per 100 people during 2016, the study found.

"No community in the entire country is immune from the opioid epidemic, including right here in Southwest Alabama," said Rep. Bradley Byrne, the Republican who represents the 1st district. "That's why I have been such a strong advocate for additional funding to address the opioid crisis, as well as a package of over 50 bills dealing with everything from alternative treatment options to best practices for prescribing opioids. We must continue working to ensure everyone receives the care they deserve while ensuring best practices on the prescription of dangerous opioid drugs."

In Mobile last year, a doctor was sentenced to 20 years in a local "pill mill" case. Earlier this year in Fairhope, a doctor was acquitted in the overdose death of a former 3 Doors Down guitarist.

Other districts on the top five for prescriptions are the Kentucky 5th at No. 2, the Tennessee 3rd at No. 3 and the Tennessee 1st at No. 4.

The study by researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health was published earlier this month in the American Journal of Public Health. It's believed to be the first to examine opioid prescription rates by congressional district, the study says.

"...while I think that while Congress can address the funding, this battle will be won at the state and local level," Aderholt said in his statement. "It will take a targeted approach that can't be done from Washington. With that being said, I will continue to work to make sure that state and local governments and organizations have the resources they need to win this war."

The study's authors said, "By knowing opioid prescribing rates by congressional district, instead of at the state level, which may be very different, representatives may be able to advocate more strongly for federal policy."
Honda announces $54.8 million expansion

William Thornton  wthornton@al.com

Honda is announcing another expansion at its Talladega County factory, a little more than a year after its last one.

The automaker is pumping another $54.8 million into the plant, adding more than 50,000-square-feet to its Line 2 operations. The project is expected to be finished in early 2021.

The company said the project will “improve vehicle manufacturing flexibility, strengthen the efficiency for future models and prepare for future technologies.”

The Talladega County Commission approved a tax abatement for the project on Monday. Last year, Honda announced an $85 million expansion at the south end of its Line 1 operations. It expects to open that addition next month. Together, the two projects will add more than 425,000 square feet to its production operations.

Honda Manufacturing of Alabama employs more than 4,500 people and has invested more than $2.6 billion in its plant, which annually produces more than 340,000 vehicles and engines.

The news also continues a series of major automotive announcements for Alabama. Since late March of 2017, Alabama has announced seven vehicle production projects, totaling more than 5,400 jobs and encompassing more than $3.3 billion in investments.

In one year’s time, all of Alabama’s major auto plants have announced expansions, as well as Mazda and Toyota announcing a $1.6 billion auto plant to be built in Huntsville.

Since March 2017, Alabama has announced seven auto projects, with 5,400 jobs and $3.3 billion in investments.
The Tuscaloosa News publisher to leave position

Jim Rainey has been with the News since 2012

Staff report

Jim Rainey is leaving his position as publisher of The Tuscaloosa News on Aug. 1, GateHouse Media announced Tuesday.

"We are incredibly appreciative of Jim’s leadership, both at The News and in the community, and we’re proud of the leadership team we have here in Tuscaloosa," said Jim Doughton, regional publisher for GateHouse, which owns The News.

Rainey, who has been publisher of The News since November 2012, said he appreciated the support of readers and advertisers during his tenure and was "extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve this community for the past six years."

"While I don’t know what the future holds, I’m excited to take that next step," Rainey said. "I wish GateHouse and all the people at The Tuscaloosa News all the best in the future."
CORRUPTION TRIAL

Guilty on all counts

Federal jury convicts Balch attorney, Drummond executive of bribery

Ivana Hrynkiw ihrynkiw@al.com

A Balch & Bingham attorney and a Drummond Company executive have been found guilty on all federal charges involving bribery of an Alabama legislator.

The verdict was announced early Friday night after a four-week trial.

Balch partner Joel Gilbert and Drummond Vice President of Government Affairs David Roberson were convicted on all six criminal charges: conspiracy, bribery, three counts of honest services wire fraud, and money laundering.

They were on trial together, but jurors were told to consider their actions and cases separately.

Prosecutors said the two men bribed former state Rep. Oliver Robinson to oppose the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s expansion of a Superfund site, and also to oppose prioritizing the site’s expensive pollution cleanup.

SEE GUILTY, AS
Guilty

FROM A1

Sentencing will be in approximately three months, the judge said. The two men will remain free on bond until then.

U.S. Attorney Jay Town said after the verdict that the case was not about the EPA or pollution.

"This was a case about greed at the expense of too many," he stated in a prepared release.

"The findings of guilt for these three individuals, by trial or plea, should forewarn anyone who would be corruptly motivated to act in similar unlawful interest. Voters deserve public officials who seek to represent them honestly and fairly. When elected officials, corporate executives or their lawyers violate our federal laws, they should expect to suffer the fate of these three guilty defendants."

Drummond Co. issued a statement immediately after the verdict.

"We are disappointed by the jury's decision to convict our employee, David Roberson. While we respect the judicial process, we consider David to be a man of integrity who would not knowingly engage in wrongdoing," it read.

"When an environmentalist group raised allegations regarding our operations in the Birmingham area, Drummond responded by hiring one of Alabama's most well-respected environmental law firms. As testimony in the trial showed, we were assured the firm's community outreach efforts on our behalf were legal and proper."

Stan Blanton, managing partner, Balch & Bingham LLP, also issued a statement saying Gilbert was no longer with the firm.

"We respect the trial process and the jury's verdict. The jury determined that Joel Gilbert engaged in conduct that is contrary to the standards to which each of us at Balch & Bingham is committed and expected to uphold," he stated.

"Although our firm was not a party to the case, I and the rest of our partners, associates and staff are deeply disappointed in any conduct that does not adhere to our commitment to the rule of law and to the communities in which we are fortunate to live and work.

"We all greatly value the trust our clients place in us and have redoubled our efforts to earn that trust. Mr. Gilbert is no longer a partner with or employed by Balch & Bingham."

Another Balch lawyer, Steven McKinney, was also charged in the conspiracy — but he was dismissed from the case one day before closing arguments began. U.S. District Judge Abdul Kallon didn't elaborate on the details of McKinney's dismissal. And McKinney's lawyers didn't comment to AL.com, and court records weren't immediately available.

FOUR-WEEK TRIAL

According to prosecutors, the men formed a contract through Balch with Robinson's nonprofit organization to pressure state officials to oppose the EPA, to meet with EPA representatives, and vote on a joint resolution in the legislature to denounce the expansion and the naming of the Superfund site to the EPA's National Priorities List.

Defense teams for both men said Robinson acted alone, and the contract with his foundation was for legitimate community outreach work. They said Robinson's allegations about Gilbert and Roberson shouldn't be trusted.

During the four weeks of testimony, dozens of witnesses took the stand to talk about their conversations or relationships with Gilbert and Roberson. Scores of billing records from Balch, which showed Gilbert and McKinney logging hours working on Drummond matters, were shown in court, along with emails between the men.

Robinson took the stand during the trial, saying he was first approached by Roberson in 2014 and asked if he would be inter-
Joel Gilbert and David Roberson were convicted on six charges each and are expected to be sentenced in about three months.

"When elected officials, corporate executives or their lawyers violate our federal laws, they should expect to suffer the fate of these three guilty defendants."

U.S. Attorney Jay Town

Fed charged in working with Balch and Drummond on the EPA matter. Robinson met with Gilbert, and a contract between his organization — The Oliver Robinson Foundation — and Balch was signed in early 2015.

Days after the contract was signed, Robinson picked up a $14,000 check from Balch. Robinson said he went to an Alabama Environmental Management Commission meeting and spoke on behalf of Balch and Drummond, using talking points he said Gilbert wrote.

Gilbert and Roberson's lawyers said no one forced Robinson to go to that meeting, and the check was for community work — not the meeting appearance.

Robinson has pleaded guilty to several federal charges, but has not yet been sentenced.

SITE CLEANUP

Meanwhile, EPA cleanup operations are ongoing at the 35th Avenue Superfund site.

EPA Region 4 spokesman James Pinkney last week said more than 50,168 tons of soil have been excavated from properties in the residential Collegeville, Fairmont and Harri man Park neighborhoods of north Birmingham because tests showed they contained unsafe levels of potentially harmful substances like arsenic, lead or benzo(a)pyrene.

Pinkney said soil has been removed from 389 properties in the area, while 138 additional properties have tested above the EPA's removal limits for those substances.

It will take at least two more years to finish removing the tainted soil from properties that have already been tested, Pinkney said.

EPA is still seeking access to some properties within the site boundary, as they must have the owner's permission before sampling the soil. It is possible additional properties could require remediation.

EPA Region 4 Administrator Trey Glenn was called to testify in the trial because of work he did as a private consultant before he was appointed to his position at EPA.

Glenn, who is now overseeing the regional office in charge of the cleanup, was previously paid as a consultant to help Gilbert and others prevent the site from being expanded or added to the National Priorities List.

Drummond is one of five potentially responsible parties identified by EPA, and could be forced to pay for part of the cleanup, which Pinkney said has cost about $23 million so far.

When asked if the trial or issues surrounding the trial had any impact on the cleanup operations, Pinkney said, "No."

Dennis Pillion of AL.com contributed to this report.
Money will be used for tarmac upgrades, new master plan

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

A federal grant totaling $2.65 million has been approved for improvements and planning efforts at the Tuscaloosa Regional Airport. The money will be used to rehabilitate some of the oldest pavement at the airport, city officials said, which will provide an improved apron, or tarmac, for aircraft to park. The improvements will help attract new development and air shows.

Some of the proceeds also will go toward the development of an updated airport master plan, which the Federal Aviation Administration requires at least every 10 years. The city's last master plan, which analyzes existing conditions, future needs and development concepts while serving as a key management resource for the airport, was last updated in 2009.

Tuscaloosa's share is part of an overall $25.5 million

See AIRPORT, B2
“Our airports are essential in supporting $1.6 trillion in total economic activity and nearly 11 million jobs. These federal grants will help our airports to maintain safety and improve efficiency for freight and passengers.”

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao

are preliminary estimates” and “subject to change prior to award.”

No award date was affixed to Tuscaloosa’s funding allotment.

The only Alabama airport with an actual award date — July 10 — was the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport, which was approved for $1.22 million for a series of needs, such as acquiring aircraft rescue and firefighting safety equipment, airport erosion mitigation, runway distance signs, lighting improvements and taxiway rehabilitations, among others.

Savannah Howell, director of administration for the city’s Infrastructure and Public Services department, which oversees the airport’s management, said the no formal word has yet been received.

“The city has not received any documentation that we, in fact, received the grant,” Howell said, “so we cannot confirm that the project was awarded and will be happening.

“If funded through FAA, that money will be matched with ALDOT and the city of Tuscaloosa funds for planning and development of the Tuscaloosa Regional Airport.”

Shelby chairs the Senate Committee on Appropriations, which unanimously approved the fiscal 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill last month.

For Alabama, the grants range from $7.08 million for the Mobile Downtown Airport to $94,500 for the Thomas C. Russell Field Airport in Alexander City.

Nationally, these grants — funded through the Airport and Airway Trust Fund and federal appropriations — totaled $659.8 million for the benefit of 390 airports in 47 states.

This is part of an overall $3.18 billion package for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding for airports across the United States.

“Our airports are essential in supporting $1.6 trillion in total economic activity and nearly 11 million jobs,” said U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao in a press release announcing the grants.

“These federal grants will help our airports to maintain safety and improve efficiency for freight and passengers.”

Overall, this funding provides 450 grants for 664 infrastructure projects including runways, taxiways, aprons, terminals, aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicles and snow removal equipment.

Airports receive AIP entitlement funding each year based on activity levels and project needs. If their capital project needs exceed their available entitlement funds, the FAA can supplement their entitlements with discretionary funding. These funds are made available from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. These grant awards do not include any funds from the $1 billion supplemental funding appropriated under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, the availability of which was recently announced in the Federal Register.

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosanews.com or (205) 722-0200.
Airbus CEO: Mobile presence vital to our future
‘An important industrial and political asset’

Lawrence Specker lspecker@al.com

Airbus CEO Tom Enders says the company’s Alabama assembly line is only becoming more important to its plans amid rising protectionism.

“We’d be much more vulnerable in these uncertain and protectionist times if we didn’t have this footprint in the U.S.,” Enders told The Seattle Times in a November interview. “The A220 will help us enhance that footprint.”

Enders’ comments came as the Farnborough International Airshow, a showcase for the world’s aerospace industries, opened Monday southwest of London. It’s an event at which Airbus and other companies tend to announce new initiatives and major orders for their products.

The A220 referenced by Enders only recently took on that name. Formerly called the C Series, it’s a jet developed by Canada-based Bombardier to compete in a new global marketplace for fast, smaller aircraft that can seat 100-150; Airbus holds a majority stake in a joint venture to produce the jet, and the companies say that they plan to add a new assembly line at the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, where Airbus already builds its A320 family.

Even before the airshow, industry observers calculated that Airbus had enough A220 orders to keep an assembly line in Mirabel, Canada, and the one in Mobile — as yet unbuilt, but projected to be operational by 2020 — working at capacity until 2024.

SEE AIRBUS, A6

Airbus

FROM A1

Enders confirmed that, saying he expects big demand for the A220. He said the current state of affairs in the aerospace world validates his support for placing a new assembly line in Mobile. "For me it was a strategic decision," he told The Seattle Times. "It cannot be wrong to build a strong industrial presence in the most important markets. Mobile is today an important industrial and political asset in the south of the U.S."

Enders said that England’s expected exit from the European Union could cause supply-line problems, although he hopes those are averted. Similarly, he said that an escalating exchange of tariffs prompted by President Donald Trump hasn’t yet hit the aerospace industry.

“We are all nervous about rising protectionism and a looming trade war,” he told The Seattle Times. "Maybe we are already in a trade war between America and Europe. And there’s a serious possibility that this could go south from here. But it hasn’t had a negative impact so far."

Enders said that if more American companies move to overseas production to beat foreign tariffs, as Harley-Davidson has said it will do, that might cool U.S. enthusiasm for tariffs.

Big order is big news for Mobile

Airbus and JetBlue founder David Neeleman made it official Tuesday: Neeleman wants 60 of the A220 jets Airbus plans to build in Alabama for a new startup airline.

It has previously been reported by aerospace news outlets that Neeleman and partners were pitching a new airline, possibly to be named Moxy, and that they were interested in the A220. Airbus is now the majority partner in a venture to build and sell the jets developed by Bombardier; leaders of the two companies have said they plan to add an A220 assembly line to the facility in Mobile where Airbus assembles A320-family jets.

At the Farnborough International Airshow near London on Tuesday, Airbus confirmed a Memorandum of Understanding for the purchase of 60 A220-300 jets. The customer is a new airline whose investors are led by Neeleman, according to information provided by Airbus.

"After years of U.S. airline consolidation, the conditions are improving for a new generation of U.S. airline to emerge, focused on passenger service and satisfaction," said Neeleman, majority investor in the new venture. "The A220 will enable us to serve thinner routes in comfort without compromising cost, especially on longer-range missions. With deliveries starting in 2021, we will have ample time to assemble a world-class management team and another winning business model."

Airbus has indicated that it plans to break ground this year on the new Mobile assembly line, and to begin delivering aircraft by mid-2020. Currently, A220s are assembled in only one factory, a Bombardier plant in Mirabel, Canada. — Lawrence Specker
City extends services for students

Offices expand hours; temporary garbage bins deployed

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

With students returning for the upcoming college semester, Tuscaloosa City Hall is extending service hours and placing temporary garbage bins to assist with the transition.

Starting Monday, the city's customer service phone hours for water service will extend until 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Customers can reach the water department during these hours by phone at 205-248-5500 or anytime via email at ubcontact@tuscaloosa.com.

These extended hours will continue until demand subsides, city officials said.

Customers also can open a new account, transfer existing service or cancel water service online at any time at tuscaloosa.com/onlineservices, and existing customers can pay bills and track account history online at tuscaloosa.com/pay-water-bill.

To help with the household waste and garbage that accumulates during this time, the city’s Environmental Services department has placed nine additional garbage bins dumpsters around the city in areas with high college student populations.

These specialized bins were set out on July 22 and will remain in place through Aug. 5. They can be found at:

- Fifth Avenue at 16th Street
- Meador Drive at Cloverdale
- Eighth Avenue at 11th Street
- 11th Avenue at 12th Street
- 12th Street (behind Tutwiler)
- Seventh Avenue at 13th Street
- Ninth Avenue between 12th and 13th streets
- 12th Street at 14th Avenue
- Thomas Street

City officials said users should look for the bins marked with the "Move In/Move Out" signs and noted that these additional bins are strictly for residential use and are not intended for contractors or businesses.

All debris should be placed inside the bins and on the ground nearby.

And to limit the amount of garbage created during

See STUDENT, B3

See next page
this time, recyclable materials like cardboard boxes, plastic bottles (bearing the Nos. 1 or 2 symbols), plastic bags, aluminum cans, steel soup cans, newspapers, magazines, and office paper can be placed in the blue curbside recycling bins or taken to drop-off recycling trailers located around the city.

Some of the recycling drop-off locations also can accommodate glass, which cannot be placed in the curbside bins for safety purposes.

Recycling drop-off locations that accept glass are located at:
- Environmental Services Department — 3440 Kauloosa Ave.
- Leroy McAbee Sr. Activity Center — 3801 Loop Road
- University Church of Christ — 1200 Julia Tutwiler Drive
- The former Kmart site — 635 Skyland Blvd.
- Bobby Miller Activity Center — 352 Bobby Miller Parkway
- Tuscaloosa County High School — 12500 Wildcat Drive, Northport
- Munny Sokol Park’s Watermelon Road entrance — 5901 Watermelon Road
- University of Alabama’s Recycling Drop Off center — 1115 14th St.
- The Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum — 1901 Jack Warner Parkway

Recycling drop-off locations that do not accept glass are:
- Faucett Brothers Activity Center — 13040 Eugenia Faucett Drive, Northport
- Alabama One Credit Union — 4520 21st St.
- Tuscaloosa Fire Station No. 10 — 8101 New Watermelon Road
- Fosters Supermarket — 13474 U.S. Highway 11, Fosters
- Peterson Water System offices — 12926 Deacon St., Cotondale
- Shelton State Community College — 9500 Old Greensboro Road
- Tuscaloosa Regional Airport — 7601 Robert Cardinal Airport Road

For more information about recycling in Tuscaloosa, visit tuscaloosa.com/recycle or call Tuscaloosa 311 at 205-248-5311.
Los Angeles attorney earns literary prize

Award honors legacy of ‘Mockingbird’ author Harper Lee

Staff report

A Los Angeles appellate attorney has won the 2018 Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction given by the University of Alabama School of Law and the American Bar Association Journal.

C.E. Tobisman, author of “Proof,” her second novel featuring hacker-turned-lawyer Caroline Auden, is the eighth winner of the prize. The award, authorized by Lee, is given to a book-length work of fiction that best illuminates the role of lawyers in society and their power to effect change.

“I am honored, humbled, and frankly, totally stunned,” Tobisman said in a news release. “The spirit of ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ is the spirit of one person’s ability to make the world a little more fair. That the selection committee saw that spirit in my book is something that I will treasure forever.”

The prize was created eight years ago to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the publication of “To Kill a Mockingbird,” and to honor Lee, a former UA law student and author of “Mockingbird.”

“‘Proof’ best captures the spirit of iconic characters, role of the legal profession in addressing social issues, and the concluding legal monologue of ‘To Kill A Mockingbird’ and ‘Go Set A Watchman,’” Green said.

“Caroline Auden is the perfect cross between lawyer Atticus Finch and the grown up Scout.”

See PRIZE, B3
Tony Mauro, another member of the selection committee who also a U.S. Supreme Court correspondent for Law.com and The National Law Journal, said Tobisman’s book proves that a thriller can also have substance.

“The main character is Caroline Auden, a Los Angeles solo practitioner who takes on elder abuse and corporate skulduggery with quick-witted determination. In the tradition of Harper Lee, Tobisman shows that lawyers can effect societal change,” Mauro said.

Tobisman will be honored with a signed special edition of “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The 2018 prize will be awarded Sept. 1 at the Library of Congress in conjunction with the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C.

“It’s exciting see to this award go to a practicing attorney who’s relatively new to the fiction scene,” said Molly McDonough, editor and publisher of the ABA Journal. “We also love seeing attention being drawn to the important field of elder law.”

Tobisman’s first novel, “Doubt,” was published in 2016. The sequel, “Proof,” was released in 2017. Tobisman has bachelor’s and juris doctorate degrees from the University of California at Berkeley.
New welding wing will give juvenile offenders a skill

By Drew Taylor
Staff Writer

When Terry Saban attended Kent State University, she took a class with a peculiar name: “What Is Freedom?”

Eventually, Saban and her classmates came up with their own definition of freedom, one she applied to the crowd gathered Wednesday afternoon at the Tuscaloosa County Juvenile Detention Center.

“At the end of the class, we decided that freedom is happiness,” Saban said as she and other community leaders held shovels, ready to break ground on an added wing to the center’s welding building.

“Happiness is having choices, and these young men and women don’t have choices, so we’re giving them choices.”

The center’s new wing will include four welding bays and a classroom for GED courses.

Saban, who is co-founder of the charity Nick’s Kids Foundation, helped raise $100,000 in donations for the nearly $200,000 project.

“They will leave here having a skill, a really good skill that our community needs and having their GED so they have the chance to have choices and to have happiness,” Saban said.

Cathy Wood, director of the center, has said the welding program has been very popular since it was first implemented in 2010. Classes of eight students learn about welding three hours per day, two days per week.

“Hands-on activities always seem to be really positive for the kids, so we decided to do a trial run,” Wood said in an interview with The Tuscaloosa News last December.

Outgoing Tuscaloosa County Probate Judge Hardy McCollum was also on hand at the ceremony, commending Wood for her drive to better the lives of children at the center.

“Cathy has had this dream of improving the quality of life for a lot of these kids that come through,” McCollum said.

“We all know how dedicated she is to this program, and I would be remiss if I didn’t say a big, big thank you to Cathy.”

State Sen. Gerald Allen echoed praise for the program.

“This is a good start for all those young men and girls,” Allen said. “This is a great day for them.”

Crews will begin construction on the 16-by-60 square foot wing by the end of August and could complete the project by the end of the year.

Reach Drew Taylor at drew.taylor@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0204.
Sister Schubert’s founder, Randy Owen in class

William Thornton wthornton@al.com

The University of Alabama's Culverhouse College of Business announced the seven newest inductees to the Alabama Business Hall of Fame.

The 2018 class will be honored Nov. 15 at the Hyatt-Regency Birmingham — The Wynfrey Hotel.

They are Patricia “Sister Schubert” Barnes, Bayer Properties CEO Jeffrey Bayer, Don James, formerly of Vulcan Materials; former Alabama Power CEO Charles McCrary, Randy Owen of the group “Alabama,” James Pursell of Parker Fertilizer and Pursell Farms, and the late John Rhoads of Ernst and Ernst.

A 14-member board of directors governs the Hall of Fame. All candidates must meet the qualifications of being retired for a minimum of three years or be 65 years of age or older, prior to induction, if still active in their careers.

Barnes founded her bread company in her home kitchen using her grandmother's yeast-roll recipe, evolving it into a national brand producing more than 9 million rolls per day.

Bayer is the president/CEO of Birmingham's Bayer Properties LLC, which develops, leases, manages and markets mixed-use real estate properties nationwide.

James, who served as Vulcan Materials' chairman/CEO from 1992 until his retirement in 2015, saw the company become one of the largest public corporations in Alabama.

McCrary served for more than a decade as president/CEO of Alabama Power. He was also president of Birmingham-based Southern Nuclear, president of Southern Company Generation, chief production officer of Southern Co. and president of Southern Power.

Owen has been the front man and lead vocalist of "Alabama," the most successful band in country music history, with more than 80 million records sold.

Pursell joined Parker Fertilizer in 1959, eventually becoming its president. In 1997, he relocated the company headquarters to the family farm, and he established Pursell Farms resort.

Rhoads, who died in 2001, was a partner at accounting firm Ernst & Ernst. He was also council chairman of the State Society for the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants and a UAB adjunct professor.
UA opens $15 million dining hall for athletes

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

It's been a three-year wait since the University of Alabama put its order in. Now, the new Alabama Athletics Dining Facility is ready to begin serving.

The facility was officially opened on Monday at a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring head coach Nick Saban, director of athletics Greg Byrne, president Stuart Bell, director of performance nutrition Amy Bragg and student-athletes.

The 25,000-square foot dining hall opened earlier this month and began serving meals to the football team. The project cost a little more than $15 million, said assistant athletics director Brandon Sevedge.

"To my knowledge, there's no place with this kind of square footage and the ability to feed an entire athletic department this way," Bragg said. "We're very, very fortunate."

The idea for the facility began when the NCAA passed

See DINING, A5
legislation that allowed schools to provide unlimited meals and snacks to student-athletes in 2014. The staff at Alabama took some time to learn about the demands that would be necessary for a new dining facility with the new rules. Then it took time to gain support for the project and plan the building. Construction itself took about a year.

The building includes two floors with outdoor patios on both the upper and lower levels overlooking Alabama’s football practice fields. It features more than 50 flat screen TVs, 10 cook-to-order stations, plus a fuel center for snacks and shakes.

“I never thought, 15 years ago, that I would be working in a place like this,” Bragg said. “I could not have imagined or dreamed it. Back then, we could hand out a Gatorade or a water, maybe a multivitamin or Clif Bar. ... We’ve come a long way.”

Its staff includes five "performance chefs," four registered dieticians and more than 20 assistants. It also has DXA technology that can assess body composition and bone health. The facility has capacity for 500 people. It also considered details to make things more convenient for student-athletes, such as outlets to charge cellphones and close proximity to a campus bus stop. There are also video cameras to produce how-to cooking videos.

“We all want to reinvest in the student-athletes that we have here,” Saban said. “For them to get the first-class quality nutrition and have a facility that obviously will serve them well, and also attract great recruits here in the future, is something that’s very important to the continued success of all programs at the university. Not just the football program.”

Alabama also debuted the new Robert Alan Hall Recruiting Room adjacent to the dining facility. The recruiting room cost an additional $2 million. It houses Alabama’s national championship trophies, displays its championship rings, shows off the program’s Heisman Trophies and more.

University staffers, athletics employees and donors toured the new dining facility after the ceremony. The facility is designed to be used by all programs within the athletic department.

“Coach Saban talks about recruits, what they expect when they visit Alabama,” Byrne said. “They expect us to be the best. Our new athletic dining facility today is another great reminder of that.”

Bragg and other Alabama staffers helped plan the building based on what was needed to fill the menus that are fed to college athletes. That informed the type of equipment and staff that would be needed.

“When I first started (in college sports), meals were viewed as an award instead of as essential as a sock or a shoe or equipment that we provided,” Bragg said. “To be able to develop an athlete and support their sport and their demands, we can now provide and have an amazing facility to do that.”

Reach Ben Jones at ben@tidesports.com or 205-722-0196.
Renovated building will be portal into UA's College of Engineering

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The University of Alabama College of Engineering will move back into H.M. Comer Hall at the beginning of August, capping a year of renovations.

“Our vision for the building to be a grand and heroic portal to the College of Engineering and the Shelby Engineering and Science Quadrangle is absolutely being realized,” said Ken Fridley, senior associate dean for administration for the college. “Anyone entering H.M. Comer will surely recognize they have arrived at a premier college of engineering at a premier university. The new H.M. Comer cements Senator (Richard) Shelby’s vision for premier teaching and research space at the University of Alabama.”

The building remains on schedule to reopen next month, said Tim Leopard, associate vice president for construction.

Renovations began last year. The work included adding a new entrance on the west side, modernizing the exterior to match with the adjacent North Engineering

See REOPEN, A5

REOPEN

From Page A1

Research Center, updating the mechanical electrical and plumbing systems, and internal renovations. The new entrance includes an open atrium in the central lobby. The budget for the project is $24.6 million.

The project is designed to centralize student services for the college and create a more open office environment to encourage departmental collaboration. The hall houses administrative and departmental offices for the college, a welcome center, study space and classrooms.

The hall will house the Center for Unique Business Enterprises, an open-access student innovation lab, the Patterson Engineering Welcome Center; the Brasfield & Gorrie Engineering Advising Center; the ACIPCO Engineering Career Development Center; and the Marzak Student Lounge, Fridley said.

Academic functions, with the exception of the large lecture hall, will be relocated to other buildings in the nearby science and engineering complex.

“We believe the new H.M. Comer will positively impact our students for many generations to come, building on the tradition of premier engineering facilities that started with Shelby Hall and continued through the completion of the Shelby Engineering and Science Quad,” Fridley said.
University of Alabama delays new parking plan

By: Ed Enoch

The University of Alabama announced plans for a new evening parking pass, but will delay implementation until 2019 after the new requirement “caught some by surprise.”

“Changes to UA parking rates and services were recently posted, including an “evening/weekend only” parking permit that is a new practice. Since this new permit caught some by surprise, we will delay implementation of the “evening/weekend only” permit until January 2019 to allow ample time for communication with our campus community,” the university said in a statement released Friday.

The university announced the new permit in June as part of its parking fee schedules for the upcoming academic year. Parking permit prices for students, staff and faculty at the University of Alabama will increase 5-8 percent for the upcoming academic year.

The evening parking permit, which is meant for students and employees who do not have another annual permit, will cost $100. The university cited campus safety as the reason for the new permit, which is described on the Parking Service webpage as a pass for those who work or attend class in the afternoon and evening.

“Anyone who parks on campus will be required to purchase a parking permit, park in one of the three pay-to-park decks, or multi-space pay stations,” the university statement said.

The other employee and student parking permits are still valid on campus 24 hours a day, according to the UA Parking services website.

The evening permits for the faculty and staff are valid in perimeter, green and the upper recreation center surface lots beginning at 3 p.m.–7 a.m., Monday through Friday and on weekends.

The evening permits for students and employees allow access to Ferguson Center, Campus Drive, North ten Hoor, and Magnolia parking decks between the hours of 4:30 p.m.–7 a.m., Monday through Friday and on weekends.

The evening permits can be used at the Stadium Drive reserved parking deck and all surface lots except gated or reserved between the hours of 6 p.m.–7 a.m., Monday through Friday and on weekends.

Drivers with evening permits will have to remove their cars from the pay decks before 7 a.m. on weekdays to avoid being charged the daily visitor rate on exit, according to the website. Vehicles must be removed from the Magnolia and Stadium Drive parking decks before 7 a.m. on weekdays to avoid being issued a ticket.
The new parking regulations will have not change game-day parking rules, the university said.

The parking permit rates will again increase $20-$30 as part of an annual trend the university has historically said is necessary to fund maintenance and operating costs for the parking facilities, campus buses, student services and road paving.

Perimeter and handicap permits will increase by $20 to a total of $240. Student commuter permits and green permits for faculty and staff will increase by $20 to $345. Student residential permits will increase by $20 to $400. Reserve permits will increase by $30 to $660. Rose Administration reserve permits for faculty and staff will increase by $30 to $680. Motorcycle permits will increase $25 to $100 for the academic year.

This August, the parking decks will no longer accept cash, according to the university. Payment will have to be with a credit card or Bama Cash.
Alabama overwhelming favorite to win SEC championship

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

Alabama led all league schools with 13 players earning 14 All-SEC selections across the three all-conference teams as chosen by the media assembled in Atlanta this week at SEC Media Days.

Georgia was next with 12 players on the three teams. Auburn had nine selections on the three teams and Florida had eight.

Running back Damien Harris, offensive lineman Jonah Williams and center Ross Peitschbacher were on the first-team offense. Guard Lester Cotton earned second team honors. Wide receiver Jerry Jeudy and offensive tackle Matt Womack were on the third team.

Defensive lineman Raekwon Davis, defensive back Deionte Thompson, outside linebacker Anfernee Jennings and inside linebacker Mack Wilson were first-team picks on defense.

Defensive lineman Isaiah Buggs was a second team pick and inside linebacker Dylan Moses made the third team.

Trevon Diggs was chosen as the second-team all-purpose player and the third-team return specialist.

Alabama was picked as the overwhelming favorite to win the 2018 SEC championship by the media. The Crimson Tide received 193 first-place votes as conference champion to Georgia’s 69 votes. Auburn received 14 votes to win the conference; no other school had more than four.

Alabama was also picked to win the SEC West. Of 284 ballots, 263 chose the Crimson Tide. Auburn was next closest with 19 votes to win the West; Mississippi State received two votes.

Georgia was an even heavier favorite to win the SEC East, pulling in 271 votes. South Carolina received eight votes and Florida received four. Tennessee and Kentucky each earned one vote.

The champion predicted in the preseason at SEC Media Days has gone on to win the conference only six times since 1992.
Old drug could provide new promise for diabetes patients

Lily Jackson  For AL.com

Researchers at the UAB Comprehensive Diabetes Center say an old blood pressure drug could improve the lives of patients with Type 1 diabetes.

Research has led to the discovery of a “safe and effective novel therapy to reduce insulin requirements and hypoglycemic episodes in adult subjects with recent onset Type 1 diabetes,” according to a report from UAB.

Diabetes affects more than 30 million Americans, with 1.25 million suffering from Type 1, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Verapamil, a common blood pressure medicine, can be administered orally and will prompt a patient’s body to produce more of his or her own insulin, thus limiting the number of necessary insulin injections, according to UAB research.

“While this research is not an end-all cure for Type 1 diabetes, these findings are getting us closer to disease-altering therapies that can enable individuals with Type 1 diabetes to have more control over their disease and maintain some of their body’s own insulin production,” said Anath Shalev, center director.

In 2014, Shalev found verapamil reversed the effects of Type 1 diabetes, and human trials began after the center received a $2.1 million grant from the JDRF; a research fund focused on diabetes research.

The UAB team found a way to promote the patient’s own beta cell function and insulin production, and its findings were recently published by Nature Medicine.

Anath Shalev’s research marks the first time that verapamil has been tested for safety and efficacy in treating Type 1 diabetes.

The clinical trials encompassed 24 patients between the ages of 18 to 45 over the course of a year. According to UAB, 11 patients received the blood pressure medication and 13 received a placebo.

“Although this is a smaller sample group, our trial results give us promise that subjects with Type 1 diabetes have therapy options and that we are nearing a more effective way to deal with this disease,” said Fernando Ovalle, director of UAB’s Comprehensive Diabetes Clinic and co-principal investigator of the study. “Beyond verapamil allowing subjects with Type 1 diabetes the ability to live a life with less external insulin dependence, these findings will impact the quality of life that they can have.”

Ovalle said by improving blood sugar control, patients suffering from Type 1 diabetes will be less likely to experience heart attacks, blindness, kidney disease and other issues.

According to UAB, the finding is “groundbreaking” in the field, and the data collected from the clinical trials have proven to be safe and effective. Shalev said the results reassured the team it is on the right track.
UAB scientists reverse signs of aging in mice

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Scientists at UAB created a genetic tweak in mice to cause skin wrinkling and hair loss and reverse them, a discovery that could potentially be used to develop treatments for those conditions in humans.

Wrinkles and baldness are some of the most visible signs of aging. For the study, researchers induced a mutation in mice that caused them to lose fur and develop wrinkles. The gene caused mitochondrial dysfunction in the rodents, according to a UAB press release.

The affected mice developed wrinkled skin and marked hair loss within weeks. When researchers reversed the mutation and stopped the mitochondrial dysfunction, many of the wrinkles vanished and fur returned.

Keshav Singh, a senior scientist at UAB's Comprehensive Cancer Center, led the study. “This mouse model should provide an unprecedented opportunity for the development of preventive and therapeutic drug development strategies to augment the mitochondrial functions for the treatment of aging-associated skin and hair pathology and other human diseases in which mitochondrial dysfunction plays a significant role,” Singh said.

Scientists working with the mice found little change in the internal organs after mitochondrial dysfunction was induced. But the study seems to show that mitochondria play a strong role in skin aging and hair loss, and that it may be reversible.

Results of the study were recently published in the online journal Cell Death and Disease.
BJCC bonds sold, so what's next?

Erin Edgemon  edgemon@al.com

The BJCC received a blended interest rate of 3.91 percent on the series of bonds it sold last week to fund the construction of the downtown stadium and renovation of Legacy Arena.

"The final yield to the BJCC was on the higher end of expectations," said Tad Snider, BJCC president and chief executive officer.

This interest rate is the yield for investors who bought the bonds, as well as the interest rate to be paid on the bonds by the BJCC and other partners on the project.

The five series of bonds were priced and sold Tuesday for nearly $300 million, which will finance the $175 million stadium and $125 million in major upgrades to the arena.

Snider didn't immediately have a blended interest rate for each series of bonds. Each bond also has a different maturity date, ranging from one year to 30 years.

Site work on the downtown stadium is expected to start before the end of the year, Snider said.

The stadium is expected to be completed in 2021, and the arena upgrades are expected to be finished in 2022.

The bond sale closes Aug. 7. Until they are ready to be spent, the bond proceeds will be invested, Snider said.

The $300 million BJCC expansion project is being funded by the BJCC, Birmingham, Jefferson County, UAB and corporate partners and a 3 percent tax on car rentals in Jefferson County.

Snider said the design phase of the downtown stadium will begin soon. The development of the schematic design, design development and construction drawings could take up to a year, he said.

Populous, a Kansas City, Missouri, design and architecture firm, is the lead architectural firm on the stadium and Legacy Arena renovations.

Populous developed the conceptual plans for a stadium with seating of up to 55,000, plus additional exhibition space.

The Legacy Arena improvements include adding new luxury suites, a club lounge, upgraded concession stands, expansion of the concourse and exterior updates. The loading docks also will be improved and the locker and dressing rooms modernized.
5 ways Alabama researchers are taking on aerospace challenges

By: Dawn Kent Azok

Universities across Alabama are helping to shape the future of the global aerospace industry.

From complex research projects to intensive training for future pilots and engineers, these institutions are making a significant impact on the journey to conquer skies and space.

As global aerospace industry leaders gather at the 2018 Farnborough International Airshow, it’s time to take a look at five interesting projects happening inside labs and classrooms across the state:

‘Marsbees’

An assistant engineering professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville recently received a 2018 NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) Award for his proposal involving robotic bumble-bee-sized flapping-winged fliers to aid in the exploration of Mars.

Dr. Chang-kwon Kang is collaborating on the project with other researchers at UAH, as well as those from George Washington University and the Tokyo University of Science. The proposal features the Marsbee, whose large cicada-like wings have the ability to hover in the Martian atmosphere. It’s also equipped with sensors and wireless communication devices.

“Flying on Mars is challenging because of the ultra-low density in the Martian atmosphere. Our preliminary work shows that bio-inspired aerodynamic mechanisms can help in generating sufficient lift to fly on Mars,” Kang said.

“One of our main goals for the first phase is to experimentally demonstrate that these Marsbees can lift off their own weight in Martian density conditions in the vacuum chamber of UAH’s Propulsion Research Center.”

He said the long-term goal is to develop swarms of Marsbees that can help with the human exploration on Mars.

Kang’s proposal was one of only 25 selected to receive an award from the NIAC program, which invests in early-stage technology with the potential to revolutionize future space exploration. It provides up to $125,000 in funding over nine months to award winners, and the concepts that succeed in feasibility testing are eligible for Phase II awards.

Rfid Tech Research

At Auburn University, the new Delta Air Lines Aviation Education Building is expected to open this fall.

The 23,000-square-foot facility, funded with a $6.2 million gift from Delta Air Lines, the Delta Air Lines Foundation and the Jacobson Family Foundation, is the first building designed exclusively for aviation education at Auburn.

See next page
It will include more room for growing enrollment and class offerings, as well as state-of-the-art flight simulators, technology-equipped classrooms and faculty offices and workspace.

The gift is also supporting the university’s Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) lab, where scientists conduct research on how specialized sensor technologies can affect a variety of industries. For aviation in particular, such technology is useful in maintenance and safety history, tracking passenger baggage and making air travel safer and more efficient overall.

Also benefiting from the gift is Emerge, a student leadership program at Auburn that hosts monthly speakers focused on values, vision and teamwork.

Auburn’s Department of Aviation is home to one of the longest-standing public flight programs in the U.S.

“We know firsthand how capable Auburn graduates are and look forward to a future with Auburn in which truly, the sky is the limit,” said Paul Jacobson, Delta’s executive vice president and chief financial officer, trustee with the Delta Air Lines Foundation and chair of the Jacobson Family Foundation.

**Space Station Freezers**

A research group at the University of Alabama at Birmingham designs and builds freezers that play key roles in experiments conducted on the International Space Station.

A multi-year contract between NASA and the UAB Engineering Innovation and Technology Development (EITD) research group was recently doubled, giving the group a $50 million cap on work to provide and maintain these cold-stowage units for the ISS.

The freezers are capable of maintaining temperatures as low as negative 160 degrees Celsius, and each line meets specific cold-stowage demands. They are used to store scientific samples and serve as galley refrigerator/freezers for the ISS crew.

The group also monitors the units from its Remote Operations Command Center on the UAB campus.

EITD is comprised of nearly 40 engineers and technicians and led by Dr. Lee Moradi, a UAB engineering professor.

“These contracts are evidence of the quality of personnel we have in our group,” Moradi said. “Our engineers and technicians have an impeccable reputation that has been built over decades, and we have been able to recruit extremely talented young engineers and software developers, including several top UAB students, both graduate and undergraduate.”

**Electric Space Sails**

A University of South Alabama researcher is studying a form of propulsion that would revolutionize deep space missions.
Dr. Carlos Montalvo, an assistant engineering professor, is conducting research on the electric sail, or E-Sail, which has major implications for aerospace.

"The Electric Sail is a relatively new concept of advanced in-space propulsion," Montalvo said. "This technology has the potential to provide propellant-less propulsion throughout the solar system. An electric sail deploys multiple long (20 km) tethers that are positively charged. The solar wind interacts with the tethers to provide propulsion."

Based on the E-Sail's characteristic acceleration, it can reach the heliopause region, the boundary marking the end of the sun's influence, in 10 years. By comparison, the characteristic acceleration of a solar sail puts it in the heliopause region in 20 years, while chemical rockets take 24 years.

"The only spacecraft to reach the heliopause region is the Voyager 1 and 2 spacecraft, which reached the heliopause region in 36 years," Montalvo said. "The increase in performance from a solar sail to an E-Sail lies in the growing sheath width of the electric sail, which grows with distance from the sun."

E-sails provide a new way for small spacecraft to be used for deep space missions.

"This has never been done before. It would pave the way for small secondary payloads to reach uncharted territories of our universe," Montalvo said.

**Training the Future Workforce**

Tuskegee University's Aerospace Science Engineering Department is focused on sparking an interest in STEM activities among local students, using the power of flight.

Along with the university's Mathematics Department, Aerospace Science Engineering hosts a weeklong summer camp, "Fly High Your Math and Science Skills," for Macon County middle school students.

One of the program's highlights for the students is flying various missions on a flight simulator.

"The simulator is a favorite for students – it provides hands-on experience and allows us to better connect math and science concepts for them," said Dr. Javed Khan, head of the Aerospace Science Engineering Department.

The activities also teach critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and communication skills. In addition, middle school teachers receive science and mathematics education training.

The project is funded by the Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program of the National Science Foundation (NSF).

"This is the second year for the program, and it continues to be an outstanding learning opportunity that will greatly benefit teachers and students alike, as well as prepare students for career opportunities in the STEM fields," Khan added.
Educators Turn to 3D Printing to Train Nursing Students

By: Kenneth Michek

Healthcare simulations are a time-tested and effective way of training new clinicians. They provide students with much-needed hands-on experience, allowing them to practice specific skills in a safe setting.

Unfortunately, the cost of developing a simulation program is prohibitive to many organizations, with components costing thousands of dollars with finite applications.

Faced with this conundrum, Dr. Lori Loice, a clinical associate professor in the College of Nursing at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), contacted Norven Goddard, a research scientist at UAH’s Systems Management and Production (SMAP) Center, about the growing trend of using 3D printing to develop healthcare simulations.

"Norven mentioned that the [UAH] has six 3D printers," says Loice, who also serves as the executive director of the college’s Learning and Technology Resource Center. "So I gave him a long list of what we needed and a bag of samples, and we collaborated on what he and his students could print."

"These models cost more than a thousand dollars, but we wanted something that would save money, be cost effective, and use the university’s resources," says Goddard. "We asked ourselves, how cheaply can we do this?"

An Interdisciplinary Approach

Goddard assembled a team of undergraduate-student interns from a variety of disciplines to help tackle the problem. The students downloaded open-source digital design files for a cricothyrotomy trainer, a simulation that is used to teach nurses how to perform an emergency procedure to clear a patient’s airway when traditional methods proved ineffective.

Loice worked with the students "to get the right texture and strength," and after just three prototypes, they successfully created a functional and accurate 3D printed cricothyrotomy trainer. The entire process cost only $15, the price of the materials used. "Now we are using four of them in our class, with a savings of $6,000," Loice reports.

In addition to the cricothyrotomy trainer, the team also built a 3D-printed vein finder; a typical vein finder costs $100, but the 3D-printed version cost only $6 to print. They're also working on a 3D-printed onychectomy trainer, a device used to teach nurses how to remove a thumbnail, and a 3D-printed injection pad, which is used to simulate injections.

Loice is proud of what the team has already accomplished and excited about what they can achieve going forward; she hopes to expand the collaboration between the College of Nursing and SMAP to benefit both programs.

"We’re trying to cross-pollinate so everyone knows how to 3D print, injection mold, solder, use the software, and do whatever else is needed," she says. "Diversity of thought and science

See next page
stimulates needed growth and solutions... It's precisely because we think differently that we are innovative together."
Spring Hill names interim president

Lawrence Specker lspecker@al.com

E. Joseph Lee will take office as Spring Hill College interim president on Aug. 1, filling in until the Jesuit school installs a permanent successor to Christopher Puto.

It is likely that Lee will serve for "at least a year," said Ashley Rains, the college's assistant director of media relations. She said Tuesday that the college trustees will assemble a search committee that will begin the process of selecting a 38th president.

At the end of May, the college announced that Puto was leaving as president after a three-year tenure. Puto will retain a role at Spring Hill, enjoying the title of president emeritus and serving as founding director of the John J. Burke Center for the Study and Advancement of Free Enterprise. That center, an independent institution within the college's business division, was funded by a $2 million gift from John J. and Kathryn Burke.

Puto also will chair the Spring Hill College Foundation Trust and the board of trustees real estate task force, according to the May announcement.

Since June 1, the Rev. Christopher Viscardi has served as a short-term interim president. He is the secretary for the board of trustees and has been a faculty member since 1979.

According to information released by the college, Lee "comes to Spring Hill College from The Registry, a national firm providing interim leadership in higher education." He has held interim positions at the University of Maine, Pine Manor College in Massachusetts and Boston Archi-rectural College. Other previous positions include stints as president of St. Joseph's College in Maine and Thomas More College in Kentucky.

Lee earned a bachelor's degree in French literature and a master's in education from St. Michael's College in Vermont; attended the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University; and earned a doctoral degree in higher education administration at Boston College.

"I could not help but be impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone I met during my two days on campus," Lee said in a statement released by Spring Hill. "I have deep respect for Spring Hill's Jesuit, Catholic mission and feel privileged to be a part of the college's next chapter and build on the hard work of Dr. Puto in renewing our full accreditation."

"We are excited and confident about the leadership and experience Dr. Lee brings with him to Spring Hill," said board Chairman Michael Coghlan. "Knowledge and successes in leading institutions of higher education and his credentials inspire faith in his work and his ability to advance our college through an ever-changing culture that's impacting colleges and universities across the country. He has also shared his dedication to our Spring Hill mission as the core of the college's Jesuit, Catholic identity and future growth."

37
Stadium board: Give Ladd some love

'I know Ladd is not gorgeous. But it's not a dump.'

Lawrence Specker lspecker@al.com

With football season coming up fast, board members at Ladd-Peebles Stadium worry that the city has left the public wondering whether it's safe to go there for a game.

They maintain that the stadium is indeed safe, as does the mayor's office. Still, the board members are concerned that the stadium's image has been tarnished amid a larger debate about its future.

Mayor Sandy Stimpson proposes that the city provide the University of South Alabama with $10 million for long-term debt service, allowing it to build an on-campus stadium for its football team, as well as to host the Reese's Senior Bowl, the Dollar General Bowl and the Gulf Coast Challenge games. The university, in return, would provide $2.5 million to help downsize Ladd-Peebles, redeveloping it as a high school athletic venue with new recreational features.

Late June, Stimpson brought up a 2016 warning study that gave Ladd-Peebles a "plus" rating due to minor deficiencies that could become bigger problems if neglected. This caused consternation among board members, who said they'd been informed of the study.

Stimpson's office released a statement to AL.com saying that the city already addressed the "most critical phase" of work called for in the report, such as the for additional guardrails.

Stimpson's position is that the study was used to show that 70-year-old Ladd-Peebles will require ongoing and expensive enhancement, not to put it in a negative light. Stimpson says that helping fund a new stadium at USA makes more budget sense than tearing down with Ladd-Peebles.

Monday, Ladd-Peebles board chair Davis reiterated her wish — already submitted to the City Council — for the city to require the stadium some kind of certification for its safety.

I put it this way: I don't think the could have let us play if it wasn't safe," said, adding that she did not understand ator's choice of phrasing for some of the narks about the stadium.

See Stadium, A6

See next page
Stadium: ‘There are currently no immediate safety issues’

FROM A1

Davis cited a media report in which Stimpson said the city had taken steps to ensure that the stadium could be used without danger.

“Sounds like a guarantee, to me,” said Mark Newell, an attorney who represents the board. “It does to me, too,” said Davis.

Davis said that ultimately she wants what’s best for the city. But she said she thinks that Ladd-Peebles has been unfairly maligned. It’s an asset to the city, she said, and it’s in far better condition now than at some times in its past.

“I know Ladd is not gorgeous,” she said. “But it’s not a dump.”

Four high schools play their home football games at Ladd-Peebles. Davis said she’d heard that City Council members had received calls from school representatives asking about stadium safety, but that stadium management had received no such calls.

Davis said she’d like a “legal document” that she could post, making clear to anyone that the stadium is safe and solid. Ideally, she said, it’d be something based on a survey by a third-party company and would be in hand before the season’s first high-school game in late August.

A request for comment from Stimpson’s office drew a brief statement Monday afternoon from Deputy Director of Communications Laura Byrne: “There are currently no immediate safety issues and there is no need to suspend games and activities at the stadium,” she said. “It is not procedure for the City to issue certificates of completion for repair work.”

Generally, Ladd-Peebles board members said they’re waiting to hear the results of a community meeting called by City Councilman Levon Manzie. To take place July 23, the meeting is intended to be a chance for residents of the neighborhoods around Ladd-Peebles to weigh in on the future of the stadium. Davis said she plans to attend and respond to questions as necessary.

The council may vote on the university funding proposal on July 31.
In Ladd’s shadows, watching warily

A dicey question: Why should the city pitch for a new stadium across town?

Lawrence Specker lspecker@al.com

In the discussion about public funding to underpin a University of South Alabama football stadium, this past week’s main development might have seemed anticlimactic. The emotion on display was anything but.

Perhaps for the first time, the events fully illustrated just how carefully university, community and city leaders will have to tread in order to keep a potential win-win from turning into an embarrassing lose-lose.

In purely procedural terms, the outcome of Tuesday’s discussion before the City Council was clear enough: The council put off a vote for at least three weeks. That doesn’t guarantee that a vote will happen July 31, but it does mean that a vote must await a July 23 forum that District 2 Councilman Levon Manzle will hold for members of the Maysville community.

While the delay might irk USA supporters, the extra time could prove valuable to their cause. Now, the university and city have a chance to re-frame the perception among many in the public that this is a case of the Haves trying to take from the Have-Nots.

Among those decrying that perception and trying to find a way past it, was Manzle, who repeatedly pounded his desk for emphasis Tuesday as he lamented the way the debate had evolved.

SEE STADIUM, A5
STADIUM
FROM A1

"I wish — and I'm going to say it until we agree to something, or disagree — I wish that this had been two separate discussions," he said.

But linking USA stadium funding to the possible destruction of the city's Ladd-Peebles Stadium, he said, had left him in a "very precarious situation as to how do I move forward. Because my downtown merchants have one opinion. My citizens and stakeholders around Ladd Stadium have another opinion. And I'm hearing all of it. And I can't deny that I'm sensitive to what I'm hearing from the community."

At one point he asked for a show of hands: Who in the audience was worried about Ladd's future? Of those people, how many also wanted USA to achieve its own goal of an on-campus stadium?

"Every last one of them wants that," he said of the hand-raisers. "But we've tied this conversation up with Ladd, and it's causing all this of consternation in the community. That's exactly what has happened. And it's unfortunate that that's the road we took because we would not have raised the antennae of any of these individuals. They want South to have whatever South wants, and I do, too. But when you tie Ladd into it, you've created a whole 'nother monster relative to this conversation. And I'm having to deal with the monster."

'HISTORICAL VICISSITUDES'
The complication may have been difficult to avoid. Mayor Sandy Stimpson has asked the council to approve a letter of intent that says the city will give $500,000 a year to the university for 20 years, helping to pay off the debt that it incurred building its stadium. In return, a couple of years down the line, USA will give the city a lump sum of $2.5 million to help redevelop Ladd.

Small wonder that, given the vagueness of that redevelopment notion, some saw this as a plan to tear down Ladd, with help from USA.

On Wednesday, council members shared a presentation sheet from Stimpson's office, restating his case. The stadium will not be demolished, it stated, but "the number of seats will be reduced." It said that the $2.5 million will help create a "multi-purpose use complex which could include walking/exercise pathways, a practice field and other additions to enhance recreation. These options could expand the usage of Ladd stadium for the community as well as middle and high school teams."

The sheet went on to address the question of why the city shouldn't simply invest the $10 million in Ladd-Peebles. According to the mayor's office, over the same 20-year period, the stadium will require $33 million to repair and maintain.

Some in the city want to protect Ladd-Peebles, which reaches its 70th anniversary in October, through the Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017. The law was signed by Gov. Kay Ivey with the intent of safeguarding Confederate monuments, but its language may allow it to reach much further than that.

Another theme that has emerged is that Ladd-Peebles truly is a point of pride for many who live close enough to hear the call of a game announcer or the roar of a crowd.

That pride was vividly evoked at Tuesday's council meeting by the Rev. Joseph Rembert. And it wasn't just what Rembert said, but how he said it, bringing a healthy dose of historical perspective, hope and humor along with a glib of hard dealing.

He noted that prior to integration, some black high schools played games at Hartwell Field. He said that it was a powerful moment when the players finally were allowed to tee up at Ladd.

"I don't believe that any other statue, building or stadium depicts the historical vicissitudes of Mobile, Alabama, better than Ladd Memorial Stadium, aka Ladd-Peebles Stadium," he said.

"Ladd stadium also became the landmark in Mobile where black boys and white boys could play on the same football team against other black boys and white boys while black folk and white folk of all ages could sit in the stadium in places that were reserved for the schools rather than because of the players' skin," he said.

Rembert prompted laughter when he referred to one of the stadium's more recent milestones.

"President Donald Trump would not have appointed his second nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court if he had not gotten his fledgling campaign jump-started at Ladd stadium," Rembert said. "Trump came back to Ladd stadium to thank all the voters who turned out for him. And be assured I was not one of them."

Yet Rembert also had a sharp edge in his words, and he turned it toward USA.

"The president of the University of South Alabama has an annual salary plus benefits in the neighborhood of $500,000," he said. "The head football coach makes more than that. Their boosters have millions, maybe hundreds of millions. I beg this honorable council to think seriously about this matter. Citizens who let people park cars in their yards, those who work concessions and provide security, city workers who work early for little pay and benefits are God's children, also. Be careful how you treat them."

'TRYING TO CONTRIBUTE'
It/full to Nick Lawkis, associate director of USA's office of governmental relations, to restate the university's position. He started by saying that the letter of intent proposed by Stimpson mentioned nothing about the destruction of Ladd-Peebles.

He agreed strongly with Manzlie's assertion that city support of USA and the future of Ladd-Peebles were two separate decisions that shouldn't have become so entangled.

"That's absolutely correct," he said. "You're right on."

"South Alabama did not mingle these two together," Lawkis said. "What is in this letter, all we're saying is, whether it's this deal or in the future, when we start playing games at home, on campus, it will have an impact on the community. So we're saying, here's $2.5 million to help the community with whatever enhancements they would like to do with Ladd. If not, so be it, we don't have to. We don't have to do it. We're just saying, as a part of this deal, if you would like $2.5 million to help renovate or spruce it up, whatever you'd like to do, we're trying to contribute to leave the community in a better place than when we got there ... We'd like to contribute a little bit to what we've called our home stadium for the last nine years. That's all.

As to Ladd-Peeble's future, he told the council. "That's not our decision to make. That's yours. That's the community."

The USA hierarchy has said that the public support is an essential component to building the campus stadium and having it ready for 2020. The project will cost upward of $70 million.

Lawkis' comment "whether it's this deal or in the future" serves as a reminder. The university may need city support to build the stadium right now, but if that support doesn't come, it'll almost certainly build one in the future, regardless of whether the city contributes.

If it comes to that, Ladd-Peebles will lose a major tenant and likely won't receive a parting gift to help with its makeover. At least some of the marquee events played at Ladd — the Senior Bowl, the Dollar General Bowl and the Gulf Coast Challenge — will consider relocating to the shiny new venue. The city will face the same maintenance expenses for Ladd-Peebles, even as the stadium stands mostly silent.

Where exactly the line lies between "demolition" and "repurposing" is very much an open question, however. The July 23 community meeting is a chance to see if it's a line that can be drawn to the various parties' general satisfaction. The same meeting may also be USA stadium backers' last, best chance to convince some voters, and their elected leaders, that a "yes" for USA isn't a "no" for Ladd-Peebles and the community around it.

"This road we've decided to go down, that was decided for us to go down, has complicated this conversation. It really has," Manzlie said Tuesday. "We're going to get there, I believe, but the road we took to this point has been unnecessarily complicated."
Fans Long for the Heavyweight Bout That Isn’t Happening

By The Associated Press

Anthony Joshua was welcomed by applause on the stage. He stood front and center in Greenwich Village, promoting his Sept. 22 bout against Alexander Povetkin.

Even there, he couldn’t escape talk of the heavyweight he isn’t fighting.

Someone in the crowd jumped at the opportunity and shouted, "A.J., we want Wilder!"

"Let them train to be a fighter and fight Wilder," Joshua said later to a reporter, referring to the undefeated Deontay Wilder. "It’s easy talking about it. It’s another thing doing it."

But with his hands on his hips, Joshua looked in the direction of the outburst and stoically mouthed, "Same."

Meanwhile, Povetkin was standing off to the side. Povetkin and Joshua were both in New York last week for the launch party of DAZN, a global sports streaming service. Its first event is their fight.

Povetkin, a Russian, is partially the reason Joshua (21-0, 20 knockouts) isn’t fighting Wilder (40-0, 39 KOs) this year.

In June, the World Boxing Association ordered Joshua to fight Povetkin (34-1, 24 KOs) or have his title stripped away.

He signed, ending the chances of a Wilder-Joshua fight in 2018. But Wilder said that if Joshua wanted the fight to happen, it would be happening.

"Most definitely he could have gotten an exemption for this fight," said Wilder, a 32-year-old American. "That was the least of the worries right there because everyone wants it. When everyone wants it, there’s nothing that could stand in the way of a fight of this magnitude. No possible way."

"Even when he’s announcing Povetkin, they’re talking about me. Everywhere we go, they’re talking about this fight."

But Joshua doesn’t care what everyone wants. He said he’s following protocol.

"This career isn’t determined by what people want," Joshua said. "It’s my career. I’ve always pulled for and done what was right for myself, which has ultimately led me to becoming a champion."

Right now, Joshua holds three of the four major belts: W.B.A., International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Organization.

See next page
Deontay Wilder, above, holds the World Boxing Council crown. He has been lobbying for a unification bout against Anthony Joshua, left, who has won the other three title belts.

Wilder has the other: the World Boxing Council. If the two were to fight, which they still both believe they will, the winner would be named the undisputed heavyweight boxing champion.

The most recent boxer to claim that honor was Lennox Lewis in 2000.

"It's not about the big light," said Joshua, a 28-year-old from Britain. "It's not about taking from the industry. I don't want to drive a Rolls-Royce tomorrow. I don't want a one-hit fight wonder; then I'm a champion one week and few months later I've lost it because I'm living the life. I want to add to the industry, give back. I do it because I'm passionate about it."

His passion is just different from Wilder, who said he tried everything possible to make this unification fight happen.

Wilder accepted a flat fee of $15 million and offered Joshua a guaranteed $50 million, plus 50 percent of the revenue if the fight took place in the United States. Joshua wanted the bout in England, and Wilder agreed.

"We've done everything," Wilder said. "I can't express how much I mean by that when I say we've done everything day and night, day and night, day and night. And the only thing they've done is try to come up with plans of distracting the fans and trying to come up with plans of lies."

More negotiations took place. Each side says something different transpired — Wilder said Joshua sent blank contracts missing a date or place; Joshua said Wilder didn't meet the deadline. There was also a disputed rematch clause.

Regardless, months passed without any signed contract, leading the W.B.A. to step in.

Wilder thinks Joshua would rather fight Povetkin, 38, anyway because he's not ready to compete against the best.

"Wilder has a big power punch, but he likes to fight. He likes to get into the brawl a little bit," Povetkin said through an interpreter.

"Joshua is more technical, but he also has a lot of power. It would be a different approach, but they're both great fighters." Povetkin would rather fight Joshua — probably because he's going to — but thoughts of fighting Wilder cross his mind often. He'd be glad to get in that ring, too. (They've tried, but two failed drugs tests by Povetkin prevented a fight from actually happening.)

If Povetkin defeats Joshua, the unification discussion might change. Only time will tell. Both parties say they want it to happen. It's just not happening this year.

Joshua has Povetkin at Wembley Stadium in London. Wilder says he will also have a fight and to be on the lookout for an announcement soon.

Life is moving on — for now.

"At the end of the day, me and Joshua don't need each other," Wilder said. "Not to survive and live. We've been doing that before we even met each other, and we're going to do that after we've met each other."

"But for this fight to happen — for fans to see one of the biggest fights in world history and to see one champion, one face, one name — we definitely need each other."
UA women's tennis releases schedule

Staff report

The Alabama women's tennis team released its 2018-19 schedule Wednesday, which consists of five fall tournaments and 30 dual matches in the spring.

The Crimson Tide will open its fall season at the Rice Invitational in Houston from Sept. 21-23. Following the ITA Riviera All-American Championships (Sept. 29-Oct. 7) and the ITA Southern Regional Championships hosted by Ole Miss (Oct. 12-14), Alabama will host the annual Roberta Alison Fall Classic on Oct. 26-28. This year's field will feature players from Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Southern Cal, Wisconsin and Tulane, among others.

UA will close its fall season at the Oracle ITA National Fall Championships in Surprise, Arizona, on Nov. 7-11.

Alabama will open its dual-match campaign with a doubleheader on Sunday, Jan. 20 against UAB and Belmont, with another doubleheader on Saturday, Jan. 26 against Mercer and Alabama A&M.

The Crimson Tide will travel to Santa Barbara, California, to compete against UCSB, Gonzaga and Cal Poly on Feb. 1-2. Alabama returns with a five-match homestand when it hosts Georgia State (Feb. 8), UT Martin (Feb. 8), Lipscomb (Feb. 10), Kennesaw State (Feb. 10) and UCF (Feb. 15).

After the annual Blue-Gray Tennis Classic, which features three matches (Feb. 22-24) in Montgomery, UA will open SEC play.

Alabama will visit LSU (March 1) and Texas A&M (March 3) to open league play. UA opens home SEC play against Kentucky (March 8), and Vanderbilt (March 10). Alabama will also have home SEC contests against Auburn (March 22), Georgia (March 29), Tennessee (March 31), Arkansas (April 12) and Missouri (April 14). Alabama will travel to Ole Miss (March 15), Mississippi State (March 17), Florida (April 5), and South Carolina (April 7).

"We're looking forward to our upcoming 2018-2019 season and all of the opportunities ahead," coach Jenny Mainz said.

The 2019 SEC Women's Tennis Championships will be held April 17-21 in College Station, Texas.

Alabama returns seven of eight players from a year ago, including lone senior Andie Daniell. The Crimson Tide roster this year will also feature five juniors and two sophomores, including last year's Conference USA Freshman of the Year, Moka Ito, who transferred from Western Kentucky.
UA softball playing exhibition games in Japan

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

Patrick Murphy has been around. Alabama’s softball coach has traveled to Canada, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, the former Czech Republic, Columbia and Venezuela.

He will add Japan to the list starting Thursday, when the Crimson Tide’s plane touches down for an overseas trip to play four exhibition games and experience a different culture on a 10-day tour.

“I’ve never been overseas before,” outfielder Merris Schroder said. “I’m really excited to get there.

“I know we’re doing a lot of cool historical stuff. We’re getting to go see a lot of cool things.”

Alabama is taking nearly the entire team, including several of last year’s seniors. All but one incoming freshman will travel — infielder Skylar Wallace had obligations to a summer travel team. Pitcher Courtney Gettins, who will be a senior next spring, is playing with the New Zealand national team, so she will actually play against UA. Sarah Cornell, a transfer pitcher from Hofstra, was not able to enroll in time to make the trip.

The Crimson Tide has been practicing twice a day in addition to doing weightlifting and running for more than a week. The newcomers are getting to mix with returning players.

“It’s been a huge bonus for everybody,” Murphy said. “That’s been invaluable to everyone.”

Freshman Montana Fouts, a 6-foot-2 pitcher who won national high school player of the year honors from USA

See SOFTBALL, C4
SOFTBALL

From Page C1

Today and MaxPreps, has benefitted from the early start.

"This is the first time you get to be around everybody," she said. "I think that means a lot getting to come in as a freshman and they get to take us on this trip.

"They're all really welcoming, all the coaches and players. They're making it an easy transition being away from home."

Alabama will play a doubleheader against New Zealand on Friday and another against Great Britain on Sunday. Many national teams are in Japan preparing for the World Championship, which is being held in Tokyo.

The team will also tour Hiroshima, go on shopping trips, ride the bullet train, visit sites including a Buddhist temple and spend some time in downtown Tokyo.

"I'm expecting a lot of fish and rice and stuff," Schroeder said. "That will be interesting because I don't eat a lot of raw fish. I'm excited about getting to try some new things and experience a new culture."

Players will also get to see the U.S. and New Zealand teams in action in the World Championship, which will be held in stadiums that will host the 2020 Summer Olympics.

Murphy took a previous team to the Netherlands.

"The response from the players and everybody on the trip was just awesome," he said. "I said I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

The team raised money to cover the estimated $140,000 cost. The travel party of 32 includes players, coaching staff and key support personnel.

"Our booster club really came through big-time," Murphy said. "So many people helped us.

"Last time we took nobody extra. It was 21 people. And we weren't able to take the (incoming) freshmen last time, and they're going to be able to go. We wanted this to be a reward trip."

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
Alabama basketball releases non-conference schedule

By: Cecil Hurt

The Alabama men’s basketball team will play at least four teams that made the 2018 NCAA Tournament — and perhaps as many as six — in its 2018-19 non-conference schedule, which was released by UA on Thursday.

The 2018-19 SEC game dates, as well as all start times and television carriers, will be revealed at a later date. The SEC office announced league opponents in early June but has not finalized the game dates.

The Crimson Tide will face 2018 NCAA Tournament teams Murray State (Nov. 26 in Tuscaloosa), Georgia State (Dec. 4 in Tuscaloosa), Arizona (Dec. 9 in Tuscaloosa) and Stephen F. Austin (Dec. 30 in Nacogdoches, Texas) before the beginning of league play. In addition, UA will face 2018 NIT champion Penn State (Dec. 21 in Tuscaloosa) and Baylor (Jan. 26, 2019 in Waco, Texas) as part of the annual SEC/Big 12 Challenge.

The Crimson Tide could also play two other NCAA Tournament teams in the ESPN Charleston Classic (Nov. 15-18) after opening the event with Northeastern. Virginia Tech, Davidson, Purdue and Wichita State, all NCAA Tournament participants in 2018, are also in the field and are potential opponents for UA.

Alabama will also host Southern University (Nov. 6) and Appalachian State (Nov. 11). Along with the Coleman Coliseum games, the Crimson Tide will play in Huntsville for the third consecutive year, facing Liberty at the Von Braun Center on Dec. 18. In addition to the road games against Stephen F. Austin and Baylor, UA will play at Central Florida in Orlando on Nov. 29.

“Our strategy each year is to have one of the strongest non-conference schedules in the country — one that will challenge our coaches and players, and be exciting for our fans. This year’s schedule certainly meets that criteria,” Alabama coach Avery Johnson said in a release. “We will welcome some terrific teams to Coleman Coliseum — Power 5 and high-quality mid-major programs — and we will face some great competition on the road against teams that are favored in their respective conference to reach this year’s NCAA Tournament. There is no doubt this schedule will prepare us well for the SEC season.”

UA will play home-and-home SEC games against Auburn, LSU, Mississippi State, Texas A&M and Vanderbilt. In addition to those home games the Crimson Tide will host Kentucky, Florida, Georgia and Ole Miss. SEC road games for Alabama also include Arkansas, Missouri, South Carolina and Tennessee. Alabama will play an exhibition game prior to the start of the regular season, but the opponent and date of that game are yet to be finalized.
By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

The Alabama men's basketball team has played in almost every state of the Union, including Alaska and Hawaii, and in territories including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Crimson Tide has played in exhibition games from Canada to Japan to Italy. But in December, Alabama will be making a trip it has never made before — Nacogdoches, Texas.

Alabama will play at Stephen F. Austin on Dec. 30, the first time in the 94-year history of SFA basketball that an SEC team will travel to the East Texas campus.

The game came about in part because of the relationship between Alabama coach Avery Johnson and SFA coach Kyle Keller, who was an assistant coach at Texas A&M when Avery Johnson Jr. was a member of the Aggie team.

The Lumberjacks won the Southland Conference Tournament last season before falling to Texas Tech 70-60 in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

A return game in the series will be played in Tuscaloosa.

See BASKETBALL, C4

BASKETBALL
From Page C1

in the 2019-20 season.

Alabama has not released its full 2018-19 non-conference schedule yet. Arizona has announced that it will play in Tuscaloosa on Dec. 9, and Penn State of the Big Ten has been confirmed for a Dec. 21 game at Coleman Coliseum. The Crimson Tide is also expected to host Murray State in December, although no venue (possibly Huntsville or Birmingham) or date has been announced.

The Crimson Tide will also play in the ESPN Charleston (S.C.) Classic beginning on Thursday, Nov. 15, against Northeastern. The other game in Alabama's side of the bracket will match Ball State against Virginia Tech, a team that Alabama eliminated from the 2018 NCAA Tournament. Purdue, Wichita State, Davidson and Appalachian State will make up the other half of the bracket.

Alabama will also participate in the SEC/Big 12 Challenge in January, playing at Baylor in Waco, Texas.

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Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Dirty little secret

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

ATLANTA – They’re all small. Sometimes they’re downright nasty.

In the SEC, which boasts some of the best football programs and facilities in the country, visiting locker rooms are the dirty little secret.

“Whoever has the best locker room, hands to them, because some teams want to put their visiting team in the worst locker room possible trying to mess with their heads,” Georgia wide receiver Terry Godwin said last week at SEC Media Days.

The Tuscaloosa News surveyed more than three dozen players at the league’s annual preseason gathering. Of more than 20 responses naming a worst locker room, LSU had the most votes for being worst with four. Vanderbilt, Tennessee, South Carolina, Missouri, Mississippi State, Ole Miss and Florida all got multiple mentions. Alabama, Auburn and Kentucky were also named.

A few players said they hadn’t had a bad locker room experience on the road in the SEC, but everything is relative.

“If I was a home team and I had a visiting team coming I’d design a visiting locker room like that too,” said Florida offensive lineman Martez Ivey.

See ROOM, C4
Added Texas A&M defensive lineman Kingsley Keke, "I don't expect visiting locker rooms to be great. They're pretty much all the same."

Which isn't to say they are good.

That's why the SEC included visiting locker rooms as a topic to be addressed by a working group of athletics directors and event managers assembled last year to survey facility expectations. The group's undertaking is ongoing.

"We've produced some expectations already," SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey said. "Absolutely visiting locker rooms are part of that discussion."

What can be done, at least quickly, is limited. Schools would have to renovate and upgrade within existing space in most cases.

"It's not as if you can just adjust a locker room on 30 days notice," Sankey said. "Some of those are pretty significant structure projects."

Sankey prefers to characterize complaints by schools about opposing locker rooms as "observations." Some situations have been brought to his attention.

"They've observed the differences in visiting locker rooms, yes," he said. "There is a wide variance in visiting team locker rooms."

Alabama visited Texas A&M in September of 2013 and arrived to find the visiting locker room had no working air conditioning. UA brought in its own portable air conditioners to overcome the conditions.

"There's a lot of ones that don't have soap or hot water," Kentucky linebacker Josh Allen said.

That's not a problem at South Carolina.

"They have no showers," said Kentucky tight end C.J. Conrad.

What makes LSU's so bad?

"It's so small," Florida defensive end CeCe Jefferson said. "It's like little daycare cubbies and they're like right by each other."

Making it more cramped, there are lockers lining the walls in Tiger Stadium and another set standing up in the middle.

"It's so crowded," Arkansas linebacker Dre Greenlaw said. "I just don't like them."

Ole Miss got low marks on a couple of fronts. Trayveon Williams said there weren't enough lockers, so Texas A&M players had to double up.

And then there's the restroom.

"The bathroom is nasty," Arkansas defensive back Santos Ramirez said. "It's like they unwelcome you on purpose. We expect that, but that's the worst locker room."

"It's like they're trying to get in your head; They make it disgusting on purpose."

Georgia defensive back J.R. Reed said Tennessee's visiting team space is "just like a middle school locker." South Carolina defensive lineman D.J. Wonnum added, "There weren't really many chairs. We were standing up."

Missouri's issue is lack of space and air conditioning. Said Auburn defensive lineman Dontavius Russell, "It's hot, so hot. I just hate being hot."

Alabama named its visiting locker room after donor James M. Fain in 2008. It used to be the Crimson Tide's home locker room, so it's probably not as bad as a lot of others. The only player to give UA low marks for visiting accommodations, in fact, was Alabama running back Damien Harris.

"I would say our own is pretty bad," he said. "We named it the Fail Room."

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Former Crimson Tide players join Alabama football radio broadcast team

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

Former Alabama quarterback John Parker Wilson will be color analyst on the Alabama football radio broadcast team this fall, with fellow former Crimson Tide player Rashad Johnson reporting from the sideline, the school announced Thursday.

Wilson will replace Phil Savage, who announced earlier this month that he would not return in the color analyst role.

Chris Stewart has been promoted to broadcast anchor of Alabama football games, hosting the pregame and halftime shows and providing in-game updates. He will also host Nick Saban’s weekly show. Eli Gold will return in his role doing play by play.

“The addition of Wilson and Johnson will bring a lot of energy to the broadcast, while their knowledge of the game — and Alabama football in particular — will provide great inside for our listeners,” said Jim Carabin, vice president and general manager of Crimson Tide Sports Marketing.

Said UA Director of Athletics Greg Byrne, “We are thrilled to welcome back two of Alabama's greatest to our football radio broadcasts. ... They are both extremely knowledgeable when it comes to the sport and have great passion for the Crimson Tide.”

Wilson was a three-year starter from 2006-08. He spent five years in the National Football League with the Falcons, Jaguars and Steelers. Johnson came to UA as a walk-on running back and ended up earning a scholarship and earning All-America honors as a defensive back. He played eight years in the NFL with the Arizona Cardinals and Tennessee Titans.
Jalen Hurts’ decision to return one less distraction for Alabama

By: Cecil Hurt

Like a Wimbledon tennis star ripping an ace on his serve, Nick Saban got everyone’s attention at Southeastern Conference Media Days last week when he said, in response to a question, that he “didn’t know” if junior quarterback Jalen Hurts would be on hand when the Crimson Tide begins practice on Aug. 2.

Not even Roger Federer or Serena Williams could match Saban’s feat on Tuesday when, in a day of interviews at the ESPN campus in Bristol, Connecticut, he went to the opposite end of the court and returned his own volley for a winner. While at ESPN, Saban managed to pull off a rare feat from such a day, breaking news that, after returning from Atlanta, he had talked to Hurts and the starting quarterback of the past two seasons had assured Saban he would be back, would compete for the starting job against sophomore Tua Tagovailoa and would go on to graduate as scheduled this December.

“Jalen actually came to me and said ‘I am going to be here. I am going to be here. I came here to get an education. I graduate in December, and I’m going to be here,’” Saban told ESPN’s Sage Steele. He also complimented the way both quarterbacks have handled the situation.

To be fair, there was never a huge wave of speculation that Hurts might actually not be back this fall. The very next words out of Saban’s mouth In Atlanta were “I expect him to be there.” Hurts wasn’t missing — he was in Tuscaloosa, going through summer workouts, attending class and doing everything you’d expect of a player who was getting ready to compete for a position, whether as a quarterback or a linebacker or a long snapper. Walking away wouldn’t have been on keeping with Hurts’ character. As has been written before, it wouldn’t have made practical sense either. If he left immediately, prior to graduation, he’d have to sit out 2018 and have two years to play at his new school. This way, he can see what happens at Alabama, using the new redshirt rule if there’s not an avenue to make a contribution — and still have two years of eligibility at another school, even within the SEC. Among another of his comments at Bristol on Wednesday morning, as he wrapped up a round of radio shows, was that “if both guys can help us win...why wouldn’t we utilize their talents?”

In the end, Saban seemed to be doing his best to tie up every loose end before practice starts, attempting to reduce the outside noise — I am not sure if it is technically “rat poison,” but may wait before asking for a clarification — surrounding the quarterbacks. His statement about wanting the quarterbacks not to call attention to themselves was phrased in a new way but has been a topic of conversation (hence no interviews) for most of the summer.

By the time Saban does his next public question-and-answer session next week, Alabama will be in full practice mode. Until then, he’s given an update that sounds like a final statement — unless something happens on the field to change it.
Tide players on Outland, Nagurski watch lists

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

Two Alabama players were included on the preseason watch list for the Outland Trophy, it was announced Tuesday. Red-shirt senior offensive lineman Ross Pierschbacher and junior offensive tackle Jonah Williams were both among 82 candidates for the award.

The Outland Trophy is presented annually by the Football Writers Association of America to the nation's best interior lineman.

Pierschbacher is a three-year starter at guard who moved to center in the spring to replace Bradley Bozeman, a Rimington finalist last season. Pierschbacher has started 43 games, beginning as Alabama's left guard in 2015. He moved to right guard for part of the 2016 season. He was a first-team preseason All-SEC pick by league media.

Williams has started all 29 games during his first two seasons at Alabama. He played right tackle as a true freshman in 2016 and moved to left tackle in 2017. He was a first-team All-SEC selection in 2017 and has received numerous preseason All-America honors this year. Williams allowed 2.5 sacks and eight pressures in 831 offensive snaps last season and was chosen as a player of the week three times by Alabama coaches.

Alabama players have won the Outland Trophy four times, with offensive tackle Cam Robinson most recently winning in 2016. Defensive lineman Raekwon Davis was Alabama's lone representative on the 97-man preseason watch list for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy.

The Nagurski Trophy is awarded to the nation's best defensive player by the FWAA. Davis finished the 2017 season with 69 tackles and 8.5 sacks as a sophomore. The 6-foot-7 defensive lineman had a key interception in the national championship game as well. He's projected as a potential first-round pick in the 2019 NFL draft by some analysts.

Jonathan Allen won the Nagurski Trophy in 2016.
Sabian addresses scheduling

The topic of scheduling still simmers around the SEC and especially with Nick Sabian.

A longtime proponent of adding a ninth league game, Sabian again relayed his thoughts on an interview Tuesday morning on ESPN. He sees the trends heading in the wrong direction.

"I think somebody needs to step up in college football and get ahead of dwindling attendance and people not coming to games — too many games that people are not interested in," Sabian said. "I think every player in the SEC should play every team in the SEC in their career and we don’t do that since we expanded to 14 teams and we only play eight SEC games. I’ve been for that for a long time."

College football attendance dropped by an average of 1,409 fans per game or 3.23 percent — the largest dip since 1983 according to CBS Sports.

Alabama regularly sells out the SEC games but not all of the non-conference meetings with smaller schools fill the 101,821-seat Bryant-Denny Stadium.

Sabian also calls for playing only Power-5 level schools.

"So, when people go to buy tickets and you have to pay premium for all of that, they are not seeing Division II schools," Sabian said, "they’re seeing, oh we’re playing five SEC schools and Oklahoma this year at home. I think it’s a good thing for college football. It’s a good thing."

Alabama athletics director Greg Byrne in an interview with AL.com cited similar reasons for scheduling home-and-home series with Texas (2022-23) and Notre Dame (2028-29).

"I just think from a big-picture fan standpoint, playing a bunch of games nobody is interested in is not good for the game," Sabian said. "And, you know, players, when you’re playing SEC games, they’re not interested in playing somebody that doesn’t matter."

Alabama plays home games with Arkansas State, Louisiana-Lafayette and The Citadel in 2018. — Michael Casagrande
Sabans coaching tree casts large shadow

Charles Odum  Associated Press

ATLANTA — There is no escaping Nick Sabans influence on the Southeastern Conference. His coaching tree was represented on each of the four days of the SECs media gathering.

South Carolinas Will Muschamp, who was Sabans defensive coordinator when LSU won the 2003 national championship, took the stage Thursday. It was no surprise he was asked to talk about Saban.

New Texas A&M coach Jimbo Fisher, who also worked under Saban at LSU, took his turn Monday.

Then came two of Sabans former Alabama defensive coordinators Georgia’s Kirby Smart on Tuesday and new Tennessee coach Jeremy Pruitt on Wednesday.

“When you work for coach Saban, its a total education in the game of football, recruiting, all of the things that youve got to do to be successful,” Muschamp said.

Muschamp and the other former Saban assistants all are chasing the Alabama legend in the Southeastern Conference.

It’s not easy to top the mentor. Saban is 120 against his former assistants, including a win over Smart’s Bulldogs in last season’s national championship game. Even in a season in which Smart took Georgia to its first SEC title since 2005, it wasn’t enough to beat Saban in the biggest game.

Still, university presidents and athletic directors in the SEC can’t be blamed for looking to hire coaches who have trained under Saban, who has won six national championships, including five at Alabama.

“You are what your record is,” Muschamp said. “Nick is the best coach in college football because of the accomplishments he’s had. He’s done an outstanding job running his program from a scheme standpoint, from a recruiting standpoint, from a development standpoint. You name it, he does an outstanding job.”

Alabama is 125-14 under Saban in the last 10 seasons, the most wins by any FBS school in a 10-year span in The Associated Press poll era (since 1936).

Perhaps SEC administrators have hoped some of Sabans magic comes as part of the package when hiring his former assistants. Or maybe theyll have a hotline to Saban for help in times of crisis.

Pruitt poked a little fun at that idea.

“You think coach Saban is going to give me advice?” Pruitt asked.

Actually, yes. Saban said, he often takes calls seeking advice.

“Well, there’s been many occasions where the guys that are coaching other places, even in our league, call on occasion and ask questions about things that may be a management problem for them, whether it’s their quarterback situation, whether it’s what I think of a certain rule or something that’s going to happen in the future,” Saban said Wednesday.

“Sometimes I call them and ask for their advice and their opinion on things.”

Perhaps the most important advice is to avoid trying to impersonate anyone, including Saban.

“What I tell every guy that when they leave, whether it was Jim McElwain or Kirby or whoever, I said the most important thing for you, when you go to be your own head coach, is you have to be who you are,” Saban said. “You have to be yourself.”

Pruitt also coached under Mark Richt at Georgia and Fisher at Florida State. He had the longest stay, eight years, under Saban.

Pruitt described Saban as “relentless.”

“Nobody works harder than he does,” Pruitt said. “He’s a great coach, great teacher.”

Saban’s SEC coaching tree also includes former Florida coach Jim McElwain and former Tennessee coaches Derek Dooley and Lane Kiffin.

His influence extends outside the league to such current coaches as Michigan State’s Mark Dantonio, Houston’s Major Applewhite and Oregon’s Mario Cristobal.

Current NFL coaches who worked under Saban include Atlanta Falcons’ Dan Quinn, Dallas Cowboys’ Jason Garrett and Miami Dolphins’ Adam Gase.
Linebackers Jennings, Moses, Wilson on preseason watch list for award

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

Three Alabama linebackers were represented on the preseason watch list for the 2018 Butkus Award, it was announced on Monday. Alabama was the only school with three players on the 51-man list.

Redshirt junior Anfernee Jennings, sophomore Dylan Moses and junior Mack Wilson were all on the list. The Butkus Award is presented annually to the nation's best linebacker. Jennings and Wilson were also preseason candidates for the Bednarik Award.

Jennings enters his redshirt junior season after posting 41

See LIST, B4

LIST

From Page B1

Moses played both inside and outside linebacker for Alabama during his true freshman season. He finished 2017 with 30 tackles, including 5.5 tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks. He also had one interception.

Wilson is poised to be a starter at inside linebacker as he begins his junior season. He posted 40 tackles last season as a backup who was called upon for a bigger role when injuries took their toll on the position group in 2017. He had 2.5 tackles for loss and a team-high four interceptions as a sophomore.

Alabama players have won the Butkus Award four times since it was first given in 1985, tied with Oklahoma for the most of any school. Most recently, Reuben Foster won it in 2016.
Tide's new color analyst will have to be prepared

There's been no word yet on the replacement for Phil Savage as the color analyst in the Alabama football radio booth ... but as the great Ken Stabler would have put it, "I think something is fixing to happen, Eli."

From an avalanche of applications, Alabama is down to three finalists. There has been no acknowledgement from any candidates, who are looking to keep the process quiet. Jim Carabin, the general manager of the Crimson Tide Sports Network, was not immediately available for comment. But with Crimson Tide practice set to begin on Aug. 2, there is little question that UA would like to have a replacement on board by then, perhaps as soon as next week.

The job isn't easy, requiring both radio chops and an ability to analyze the on-field action without the aid of instant replay, only a verbal description. There's more and more weight given to the technical side of football as fans become more perceptive about that aspect of the game. The generation of fans who might watch (or listen to) one or two games per weekend is being replaced by fans who might watch a dozen, all augmented by computerized technological that makes a broadcast (or telecast) from 10 years ago look almost as dated as archival film from

See HURT, B2
HURT

From Page B1

the 1945 Rose Bowl.

Fans still consider the radio broadcast as part of "their team," distinct from the television crew.

As such, a great call can go down in history — or infamy, if you decide to joke about Tua Tagovailoa’s game right before a second-and-26 play.

Because of that connection, fans can be forgiving. That’s why Stabler didn’t have to get every single pronunciation of every single name right. (Like Nick Saban, I think Snake would have gone exclusively with the name “Tua” and let Eli handle the heavy lifting of “Tagovailoa.”) Savage didn’t have the sly Stabler charm — who does, in these times? — but handled the X’s-and-O’s well. That’s why there was a ticking clock to name his replacement, so the next color commentator can have a good month of working practices and scrimmages, handling a flood of interviews and so forth. There isn’t a need for a Dick Vitale-type. This isn’t a criticism of Vitale, a great ambassador for college basketball. But he does have a tendency to take over a broadcast or, to extend the analogy to football, an entire booth. The best college commentators don’t have to talk over every single play, but when they do have a point to make, they should be able to back it up, sell it and, when the occasion arises, come back and expand on it. If it is a former Alabama player — probably a good bet — mix it in with relevant experiences.

The fans are going to be inclined to like a familiar name anyway, so the new commentator won’t have to overwhelm anyone.

Also, they will need to be ready for a little controversy — not to create it, but to know that some decisions aren’t going to please every fan all the time. That might start with the first snap in the Alabama booth — right? — so it will be best to be prepared.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Alabama linebacker back with the team after recovering from Sugar Bowl injury

By James Ogletree
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

ATLANTA — It happened on a routine second-and-10 run, within the final three minutes of an 18-point game. Alabama linebacker Anfernee Jennings jumped to avoid the scrum surrounding a Clemson ballcarrier, but as he did, his left knee collided with the leg of hard-charging teammate Ronnie Harrison. The knee buckled as Jennings fell to the ground, rolling over and lying on his side. His sophomore season had ended in garbage time of arguably the best game of his career: last season's Sugar Bowl, the national semifinal.

Now fully recovered from the sprain, he spoke last Wednesday at SEC Media Days. The event took place a half-mile away from the site of the national championship game that he watched from a wheelchair, but he said that triggered no bitter or wistful memories.

"It's not really frustration, but joy," Jennings said. "I'm a firm believer that everything happens for a reason, and it happened and we came out on top."

As the crimson and white confetti fell on the field at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, linebacker Jamey Mosley wheeled Jennings around to celebrate with his teammates, especially fellow linebacker Terrell Lewis.

"Jamey and Terrell are some of my close friends on the team," Jennings said. "They both just embraced that we won and they both wanted me to be a part of the celebration, so they came and got me."

Entering this season, Jennings is expected to share snaps at outside linebacker with Lewis and Christian Miller. After Lewis’ torn ACL and subsequent surgery last week, Jennings’ onfield performance and willingness to mentor inexperienced linebackers have become more crucial.

He was recently named to the watchlist for the Lott IMPACT (Integrity, Maturity, Performance, Academics, Community, Tenacity) Trophy, which is presented annually to a college football defender who excels on the field and demonstrates those character attributes. Past winners include NFL All-Pros J.J. Watt and Luke Kuechly and former Alabama linebacker DeMeco Ryans.

"It means a lot for them to see that in me and think highly of me," Jennings said. "I just know that my focus right now is being a leader and focusing on this season."

Offensive lineman Ross Pierschbacher said having Jennings back with the team brings an extra layer of toughness. Even if it sometimes rubs him the wrong way, he knows Jennings, whom coach Nick Saban called an "outstanding outside linebacker," makes the team better in the long term.

"Anfernee's kind of got that bulldog mentality on defense that I like to see," Pierschbacher said. "He'll be on the field talking trash and everything. At the moment I don't like it, but then I'm thinking we need that kind of bully on the field, so I think Anfernee brings that."
Louisiana Oks med school license for Louisiana-Monroe

From wire reports

BATON ROUGE, La. — Future doctors could be trained in Monroe by 2021.

The Louisiana Board of Regents in May approved an initial three-year operating license for the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine to open a new branch on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Monroe, the News-Star reports.

"While the process is not complete, I am optimistic we have the right partner with VCOM," ULM President Nick Bruno said. "This is huge for our region, the state and ULM."

Louisiana has three medical schools — LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport, LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans and Tulane University in New Orleans.

VCOM began in 2001 and has campuses and Auburn University in Alabama, in Virginia and in South Carolina. President and Provost Dixie Tooke-Rawlins said during the May board meeting that part of its mission is to train physicians for rural areas that tend to be "underserved" or face doctor shortages like the Louisiana Delta region.

VCOM plans to build a 100,000-square-foot, $31 million building on Louisiana-Monroe's campus to house the college, breaking ground as early as September.

Tooke-Rawlins, who has a Doctor in Osteopathic Medicine degree, said most with the degree go into primary care, which is increasingly needed as more medical students choose to specialize.

Faculty are to be employed in 2020 in advance of enrolling the first entering class of 150 to 162 students in fall 2021, according to the application.

It is to be a four-year medical school with classroom work the first two years followed by two years of clinical work. Following graduation, students enter residencies that can last three to seven years, depending on the specialty, according to Regents documents.

Regents will monitor the school's progress annually, and after three years, leadership will come before the board to determine if the license will be renewed.
In lieu of loans, colleges asking for a share of students' future salary

By David Jordan
The Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. — As more students balk at the debt loads they face after graduation, some colleges are offering an alternative: We'll pay your tuition if you offer us a percentage of your future salary.

Norwich University announced Tuesday that it will become the latest school to offer this type of contract, known as an income share agreement. Norwich's program is starting out on a small scale, mainly for students who do not have access to other types of loans or those who are taking longer than the traditional eight semesters to finish their degree.

"Norwich University is committed to offering this new way to help pay for college in a way that aligns incentives and helps reduce financial barriers to degree completion," said Lauren Wobby, the school's chief financial officer and treasurer.

In contrast with traditional loans, in which students will simply pay down the principal and interest until there is nothing left, students with income share agreements pay back a percentage of their salary for a set period of time. Those touting the programs say they give colleges greater

See LOANS, A6
LOANS

From Page A1

incentive to help students find high-paying jobs after graduation, because a higher salary means the school may recoup its investment in a shorter period of time.

For some students, income share agreements are seen as less risky, especially if they end up in a lower-paying job or struggle to find work after graduation.

While students are unemployed or earning below a certain threshold they don’t have to pay anything back.

"Taking on the debt through a contract, where you don’t take on a debt per se but instead will repay a portion of your future income, has a certain appeal to students when the concept is fully explained to them," said Clare McCann, deputy director for education policy at the New America Foundation.

But because employment and salary determine repayment, it’s possible providers could be seen as discriminating against recipients who choose lower-paying professions.

"If income share agreement providers aren’t careful, they can definitely see unintended consequences in discriminatory terms toward students. This is one of the biggest differences between income share agreements and federal student loans," McCann said. "Federals loans offer the same terms to all borrowers."

Income share agreements were first proposed by Milton Friedman in 1955, and Yale University briefly experimented with the idea in the 1970s. In the past decade, technical training programs, such as coding boot camps, have used this type of funding largely because participants do not have access to federal student loans.

In 2015, Oakton, Virginia-based Vemo Education began working with accredited colleges and universities. The company now works with nearly 30 public and private colleges and universities across the country, including Norwich University.

Vemo’s first partnership was with Purdue University. It began financing the school’s “Back a Boiler” income share agreement program in 2016.

Andrew Hoyler, 22, graduated from Purdue last year with a degree in professional flight with the goal of becoming a pilot. Now he is working as a pilot for American Airlines regional carrier PSA Airlines.

“One of the biggest pros for the income share agreement was the fact that out-of-college pilots do not make a lot of money, especially looking at the costs for an educational program,” Hoyler said.

The terms can vary, notably the length of the agreement and the salary percentage. Hoyler is currently paying back 8 percent of his income. Since future salary is generally unpredictable, it can be difficult to forecast how much a student will pay back over time, although most agreements do place a cap on the amount paid back.