

# LAGNIAPPE

WEEKLY

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## WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE

Mobile County License Commissioner Kim Hastie is mired in a criminal trial alleging she abused her elected office. The jury will have a number of counts to consider, but must weigh the evidence in two very different narratives.  
By Jason Johnson



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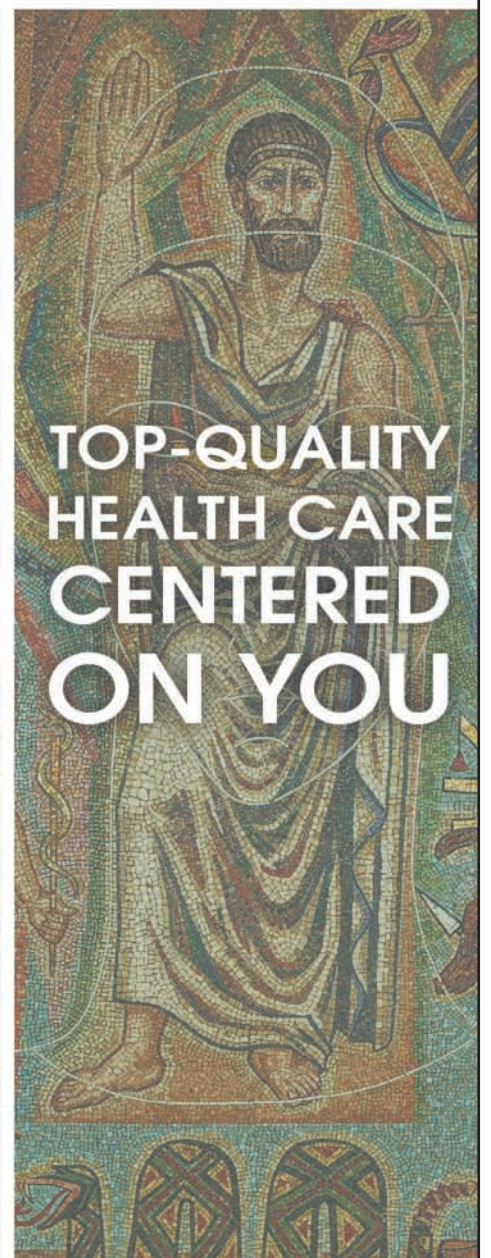


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**On the Cover: Hastie at Trial**  
by Dan Anderson

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## COUNTERPOINT: The facts about oil risks

“There is simply no basis in science or fact to require a bigger setback (for above ground oil storage tanks) from a safety perspective.” Thus wrote Steve Gordon, a representative of a “nonprofit” organization formed by industry to provide tax write offs for the purpose of lobbying governmental organizations and “educating” the public (“Fixed petroleum tank setbacks a competitive disadvantage” Lagniappe, May 14, 2015). Let me share a few facts that might shed a different light on his position.

In the professional Journal of Loss Prevention in the Process Industries (Vol. 19, Issue 1, January 2006) Drs. James Chang and Cheng-Chung Lin reviewed 242 accidents storage tank accidents and revealed these facts: 30 percent of accidents were caused by lightning; 30 percent of accidents were caused by human error in design, operation, or maintenance; 80 percent involved fire and explosion sending toxic fumes into the air.

Oil and the chemicals it is treated with are deadly in any form. According to Biologist and commercial fisher, Dr. Riki Ott, “exposure to oil may reasonably be anticipated to cause death, disease and infection, behavioral abnormalities, cancer, genetic mutation, endocrine disruption, miscarriage or birth defects, and other physiological malfunctions in exposed organisms, including humans.” Dr. Ott was one of the many fishers who was put out of business by the Exxon Valdez spill in 1989. By 2010, almost all of the cleanup workers on that spill had died. None of them are alive today. Their average lifespan was 51 years.

Severe storms and flooding are also causes of storage tank accidents. On June 19, 2006, an estimated three million gallons of waste oil were released into the Calcasieu River in Louisiana from a tank at the Citgo Refinery there. The “protective” booms failed and the Calcasieu Lake was also

contaminated. Imagine three million gallons of oil floating down the Mobile River and into Mobile Bay. How long would we be before we were able to fish, crab, or boat in the bay again? The fisheries in Prince William Sound have never recovered.

The U.S. Coast Guard released the following statistics after hurricanes Rita and Katrina:

3.78 million gallons of oil were released into Cox Bay from damaged storage tanks at Bass Enterprises Production Company in Louisiana, and another 460,000 gallons spilled from its facility in Point La Hache; 44 separate oil spills resulted in Louisiana alone from tanks belonging to Shell, Chevron, Murphy Oil, Sundown Energy, Venice Energy Services, and Bass Enterprises among others; 11 million gallons of oil were released into the navigable waterways of Louisiana during those two storms; 540 oil spills were counted across the Gulf Coast.

A tank at the Chevron Empire facility in Buras, Louisiana was “still bleeding oil” in October. Again, the so called “protective” booms failed. The 990,000 gallons of oil that seeped into surrounding wetlands were then “burnt off,” again sending toxic fumes into the air. Imagine that happening just a few miles from downtown Mobile and across from Africatown and other residential neighborhoods.

A storage tank at the Murphy Oil facility in Chalmette, Louisiana was “dislodged from its foundation, lifted, and damaged.” The families in 1,700 homes had to be evacuated. I spoke with two insurance adjusters who said that they recorded oil stains on the ceilings of some of these homes. De Tonti Square and Orange Grove, Beware!

Here in Mobile, on Sept. 1 2011, an oil storage tank was “overfilled” and “for an unknown reason” a rainwater drain valve was left opened allowing the oil to spill into Mobile River. “Crews raced to clean

up the spill” before Hurricane Lee paid its visit. (MPR, Sept. 3, 2011)

Port Authority Director Jimmy Lyons reported that 42,000 gallons had spilled from the tank. The Coast Guard estimated the spill at more than 275,000 gallons. The company declined to comment. Under estimating an oil spill is commonplace as we know from experience with the BP disaster here and the recent spill by Plains All America in California.

In fact, it would seem to be the very nature of oil companies to misrepresent the truth, even to each other. Remember the Gulf Coast Asphalt explosion that rocked Midtown after midnight on March 30, 2009? Do you also remember the lawsuit filed against Chevron for the million gallons of oil that it “intentionally” hid underneath the asphalt when it sold the property to the asphalt company?

I would like to point out that none of the “numerous regulations” mentioned by Mr. Gordon protected any of these waterways, homes, or people from any of these spills. He also failed to consider the noxious fumes that such storage tanks emit which are harmful to the respiratory system of children, the elderly, and pregnant women, and can cause cancer.

The directive given to the 10-member Citizens Advisory Committee on Above Ground Oil Storage Tanks was to investigate and propose restrictions to such facilities in Mobile that would ensure our safety. The committee of engineers, businessmen (big and small), Mobile Baykeeper, and everyday citizens met for three months to study and discuss this issue. I would prefer to defer to their recommendations than that of an industry spokesperson or a city lawyer.

*Herb Wagner,  
Mobile*

## Public notice law outdated

What is so dangerous about House Bill 102 that it can't even be discussed? A century ago it might have been necessary for a newspaper to have a U. S. Postal permit, because households were so spread out that it was impractical to deliver the papers any other way. No publisher has delivered newspapers by mail in our lifetime. It probably goes back to the days when Benjamin Franklin was Postmaster General, and a major publisher.

In my opinion it's unfair to only publish public notices in papers like the Press-Register. I pay about \$200 a year for the Press-Register, which includes a generous tip for the carrier. How many households cannot afford to pay that much, and how else are they supposed to find out about notices that may directly affect them?

I intend to allow my subscription to the Press-Register to expire. It wrote its own death notice when it ceased to be a daily paper. Lagniappe gives better coverage of the news, and I can pick up a copy for free every time I go to the grocery store.

*William Smith,  
Mobile*

## POLICE DISPATCH

### Teen arrested in Ann Street murder

Only a few days after finding the body of 17-year-old Roy Don-tel Davis, Mobile Police believe they've identified the young man's killer — Demarcus Perdue. Authorities say a report of a shooting arrived just before 11 a.m. on May 27, and as police responded to South Ann Street they found Davis suffering from a gunshot wound to the head. Mobile Fire-Rescue Department personnel responded, but the victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

The following Sunday, May 31, homicide detectives arrested Perdue in connection to the crime. Purdue was charged with murder, and has a few violent offenses in his previous criminal history. The investigation into Davis' murder remains open.

### Street narcotics team boasts bust

On May 29 the Mobile County Street Enforcement Narcotics

Team (MCSENT) concluded an investigation by executing a search warrant at a house on Willard Drive West.

There officers only arrested only one individual, but were able to come away with 36.2 grams of crystal meth, 40.8 grams of marijuana, more than 120 Xanax tablets, 55 Hydromorphone pills, several Morphine and Clonazepam pills, 30 packs of Spice and a small amount of crack cocaine.

Also Included in the seizure was \$2,770 in U. S. currency, a handgun, a pickup truck, three four-wheelers and assorted electronics and property valued at more than \$10,000.

Kevin Neville Ward, 44, was arrested following the raid and charged with trafficking methamphetamine and marijuana analog, possession of a controlled substance, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

### Four suspects wanted in ongoing 'pill' operation

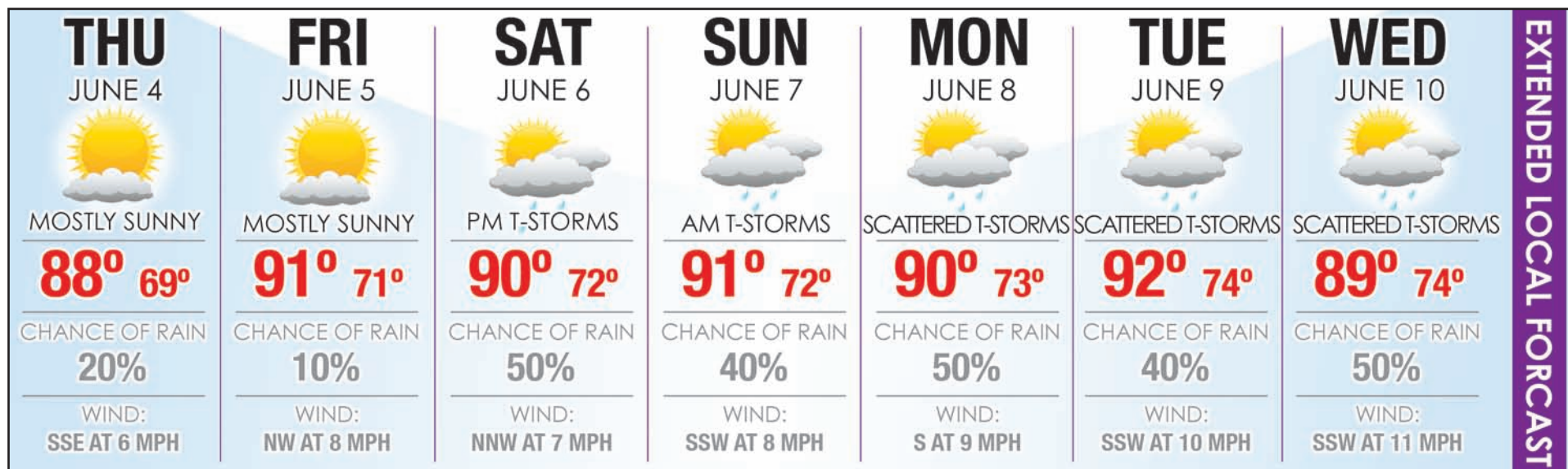
Authorities are still searching for four suspects, after conducting a drug raid on an illegal prescription pill operation in Saraland Friday.

According to a press release, the raid was conducted around 5 a.m. Friday and was the culmination of an ongoing investigation involving police personnel from the Mobile County Sheriff's Department, the city of Saraland and the U.S. Marshals.

Six individuals were detained during the operation, but the MCSO is still searching for at least four — Cleve McKenneth Orso, Terry Rutherford, Elizabeth Corbett and Meagan Jean Adams.

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of these individuals are asked to contact the MCSO at 574-8633 or report anonymously at mobileso.com/report-a-crime.

**CORRECTION:** An article entitled “Counties consider AltaPointe commitment” in the May 28 issue of Lagniappe suggested that Alabama Psychiatric Services, which closed earlier this year, managed hospitals. APS did not manage hospitals, it managed outpatient offices. Also, AltaPointe CEO Tuerk Schlesinger said Strategic Behavioral Health also had no intention of accepting “adult Medicaid or indigent care patients,” not Medicare patients, as originally reported. Finally, it should be noted that despite Baldwin County Commissioner Chris Elliot's statement, AltaPointe is a nonprofit organization.



# Mobile green lights traffic signal innovations

BY DALE LIESCH/REPORTER | dale@lagniappemobile.com

**M**obile is the largest Alabama city without the latest in traffic signal technology, but with new capital money available, it is looking to innovate.

Huntsville, Montgomery and Birmingham participated in a pilot program that brought adaptive traffic signal technology to some of their busiest intersections, while Gulf Shores recently added the technology to intersections along State Highway 59, Gulf Shores Public Works Director Mark Acreman said.

The new adaptive systems — which are the first in southwest Alabama — have been installed on 59 between Baldwin County 8 and State Highway 182. They allow signals to communicate with one another and react based on real-time traffic issues, Acreman said. The results have been visible.

The signals, which were installed just before the 2015 Hangout Festival, led to improvements in traffic the week before Memorial Day. Acreman said the technology resulted in a reduction in the traffic load following the festival. He said the highway cleared about an hour sooner than the year before. For example, where traffic had been heavy from about 10 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. in 2014, traffic this year cleared after about 11:30 p.m.

“We’re still collecting data on Memorial Day, but we’re expecting a 14 percent increase in efficiency,” he said. “It equates to more capacity.”

The new signal systems detect vehicles using radar, and account for traffic in all directions while being immune to fog, rain or sun glare, like older camera systems, Acreman said. The radar is not used to monitor speed, he said.

The information gathered by the system, which has been installed in 15 signals, is shared with all the signals in the system and can adjust cycle lengths based on the feedback, Acreman said.

The conversion to the adaptive systems was a 10-year process in partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation, Acreman said, with Gulf Shores spending about \$2 million so far.

Mobile is beginning to come out of a long drought in capital funding for signals, Traffic Engineer Jennifer White said. The city

used \$200,000 this fiscal year on detection and camera system parts and plans for more upgrades.

“We spent about \$200,000 just on buying either spare parts — in case an accident happens we’ll have something on the shelf we can pull out, put in a cabinet and put on the street quickly and won’t have to order it,” she said. “Then we bought stuff for upgrades to existing signals we know need new detection systems.”

The capital money was a change from years past, White said, when maintenance was all they could do.

“A couple of years ago there were no capital funds available to departments and the budgets were real tight,” she said. “The city was basically doing whatever needed to be maintained.”

White said the city also used stimulus money a few years ago to upgrade to newer systems in many of the signals, although the manufacturer is “trying to phase them out” now.

Many of the current signals are older and out of production, but White stopped short of calling them obsolete because they still work as intended.

Even without upgrades, all of the city’s signals are on some sort of detection system, White said, and don’t rely solely on timers. The city currently uses camera systems and in-ground magnetic loops as forms of detection.

The problem is that loops, which are embedded in the asphalt, can be disrupted by road work or degradation of the asphalt surface, White said.

“Utility work goes on and they cut them by accident,” she said. “You know, any number of things can cause a loop to go bad. We know where they’re at and we’ve bought material for them and we’re in the process of getting a new loop-cutting saw. We’ll start some of that repair work this summer.”

Some of Mobile’s busiest intersections are linked together, but many of those links are made with copper wiring. White said a future upgrade would include switching all the links to fiber optic cables. The oldest coordinated system in the city dates back to the 1970s, Electrical Supervisor Billy Smith said.

Many signals in major intersections across the city are given peak times in which they react to increased traffic, for example, during rush hour. This is different from the newer adaptive systems because they operate on the same schedule no matter the day of week or time of day.

Mobile is a little behind the curve because the city’s signals work off time-based progression, ALDOT Area Traffic Engineer Daniel Driskell said.

Under the current system, Driskell said, Mobile drivers constantly “go and then stop,” but under an adaptive system drivers would be able to move through the city more efficiently.

“The adaptive technology is designed to optimize the system,” he said. “What we’ve got now, we’re just living with.”

To begin with, Driskell said, Airport Boulevard from Interstate 65 to University Boulevard would greatly be enhanced by an adaptive system. Driskell said while needed upgrades vary, it could cost between \$60,000 to \$100,000 per signal to accomplish it. But the cost benefit for the new system is much greater than an upgrade such as adding a lane of traffic, he suggested.

Hannah Pritchard, a traffic engineer with Toole Design Group, was part of team that recommended a plan for transportation improvements in downtown. At a recent presentation, Pritchard said many of the signals downtown could be scrapped for stop signs and could save the city money. Pritchard added that cycles at some of the downtown intersections were too long and could be improved.

One problem intersection for the city is at Cottage Hill and Hillcrest roads, White said. The issue at the standalone, eight-phase intersection is the number of vehicles that hit it at the same time, between 5:15 and 5:30 p.m. on weekday evenings, White said.

“The problem is everyone meets at the exact same time,” she said. “It’s like, whatever their route is from wherever their jobs are they all meet, but they’re all usually going west (and) going out further down Cottage Hill.”



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# Daphne delays neighboring Spanish Fort's annexation request

BY ERIC MANN/REPORTER | eric@lagniappemobile.com

For the second consecutive meeting, the Daphne City Council did not hold a vote on a de-annexation request from the city of Spanish Fort June 1.

Spanish Fort Mayor Mike McMillan made a request April 29 that Daphne consent to the de-annexation of a 4.19-acre parcel in the Spanish Fort Town Center north of Interstate 10 so that it can be annexed into Spanish Fort. McMillan and City Attorney David Conner approached the council at its May 11 work session to discuss the issue and also came to the council's May 26 and June 1 meetings hoping for a vote.

At the June 1 meeting the resolution was introduced by Councilman Ron Scott but was not seconded, leading the council to take no action. Scott later said he was concerned that Daphne had not received all the information it had requested regarding the annexation. He said he did not want Daphne to be seen as obstructing progress at the Spanish Fort Town Center, but said he needed more information before making a decision.

"This is an item [Spanish Fort] has been working on for a long time but it has just come to our attention and I don't know that we have all the details," Scott said Monday. "The first thing we heard was that it was just a sliver of land, and later we found out that there had been improvements on it and then we found out that one property owner did not want to be annexed."

At the previous meeting, McMillan and Conner had stressed the importance of Daphne consenting to the de-annexation before the state's legislative session ended, as lawmakers in Montgomery have jurisdiction over de-annexation issues.

Conner said the de-annexation is necessary to correct an error that occurred during the development of the property.

"The developer took a quick claim deed for that portion and for the right-of-way from I-10 from ALDOT during the development of the property," he said. "It was not included in the ultimate prop-

erty and the ultimate annexation into the city of Spanish Fort."

An April 29 letter from McMillan to Daphne Mayor Dane Haygood included a notice that a proposed bill for Daphne to de-annex the property to be annexed into Spanish Fort would have been introduced during the legislative session. McMillan's letter said the legislative act would aid the city of Spanish Fort and Town Center developers in correcting the discrepancy.

On Monday McMillan said the city would continue to work with Daphne leaders to resolve the issue.

"I'm a little disappointed that the council didn't act on it but they have questions and I understand that," McMillan said. "I would like to see this move forward because it does affect the Town Center, which has recently gone through a refinancing and reorganization. Accompanying that is the re-subdividing of the property. We can't re-subdivide property that is still partly in the city of Daphne. Hence, this was a clean-up effort."

Haygood said the cities would try to come to an agreement but Daphne leaders needed more information before making a decision.

"There are still some details that need to be worked out," Haygood said. "I know there is some concern that with the legislative session coming to an end that this is not just an arbitrary deadline. But there are still some questions that need to be answered. We need the facts to try to make good decisions."

Also at issue is that a portion of the parcel Spanish Fort is seeking to annex is inside the La-Z-Boy store at the Spanish Fort Town Center. At the May 26 meeting, Conner said only a small corner of the store, owned by David and Bess Marks, would be part of the de-annexation.

"The vast majority of that property is already in the corporate limits of the city of Spanish Fort," Conner said. "Only a very small portion of the corner of the store is in the city of Daphne.

The rest of it is owned by Cypress Equities, who as I understand it is in favor of the annexation."

David and Bess Marks said June 1 they like being able to claim both Daphne and Spanish Fort as the store's home.

"We like being in both cities, we like being able to say we are the La-Z-Boy furniture gallery in Daphne and Spanish Fort," David Marks said. "We have a lot of customers in both cities and we want to be part of both communities."

Bess Marks said they purchased the property in 2008 and did not know anything was wrong with the zoning until 2011, when the town center's developer went into receivership. She said when they discovered that part of the store was actually in Daphne, they applied for and received a Daphne business license and building permit.

"I don't want this to be an obstruction issue, it just came to us very suddenly and it was a pretty hard push," Councilman Robin LeJeune said. "We would like to have a little more information before we make this decision."

In other business, the Daphne City Council approved the appropriation of \$14,520 from the general fund to hire Mobile-based Carey Technology LLC to perform redistricting geographic information services. When finished, the company's recommendations would be presented to the council for consideration and approval.

Carey Technology previously assisted in the redistricting of the three Mobile County Commission districts in 2011, five Mobile County School Board districts in 2011 and 2013 and Mobile's voting precincts in 2011 and 2014.

Carey's proposed work for the city of Daphne would include updating the current city limit and council district boundaries, establishing population statistics for city council districts and changing political boundaries to even population within city council districts. The work is expected to take three to seven months.

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NCUA

# Mobile ponies up for pension

BY DALE LIESCH/REPORTER | dale@lagniappemobile.com

The city's contribution to its Police and Firefighters Pension Fund will increase slightly in the 2016 fiscal year.

An actuarial valuation report, which was approved by the pension board in March, shows the city will be responsible for \$1.4 million more in contributions than it had to pay this fiscal year.

Finance Director Paul Wesch said the increase can be partially attributed to an annual 4 percent increase the city pays toward the fund each year, in order to reduce its unfunded liability, or the amount by which future payment obligations exceed the present value of the fund.

Additionally, Wesch said, the increase is due to lowering the fund's anticipated return on investment to 7 percent from 8 percent, to fall more in line with national averages.

"Compared to the national average, we were too high," Wesch said. "We had an optimistic view of our return on investment."

Pension fund assets actually gained nearly 7.5 percent this year, but the contribution increase is due to a five-year investment average, which drops it to just over 2 percent for this year. A 7 percent annual investment return was required to keep the contribution stable, the report states.

The fund increased in value over last year according to an investment summary, from \$136,768,931 as of Dec. 31, 2013, to \$147,441,679 one year later.

The rate of return slowed dramatically during the same period. The rate of return at the end of 2014 was roughly 1 percent and held at 3.92 percent the previous 12 months. The rate of return at the end of 2013 was 5.79 percent, down from a whopping 19.54 percent the previous 12 months of the year.

Wesch said the fund is "getting healthier every year" following a reorganization almost two decades ago. At the time, he said, the fund would have only been able to pay about 20 percent of its obligations. Now, the fund is at 58 percent.

As a result of the unfunded liability, the city's general fund will pay \$13 million to \$17 million into the future. The city's contribution is set at \$15.8 million for the next fiscal year.

"The unfunded liability comes from decades of not funding the pension," Wesch said. "It hurts, but we have to do it."

Jimmy Connick, a firefighter and pension board member, explained that the city started a pension plan without funding it.

"It just paid people when they couldn't work anymore," he said.

Connick said in 1985, the unfunded liability was "through the roof," but the city started making payments on it in 1997.

Today, at nearly 60 percent funded, Connick said the pension is far from being in a "crisis."

"I feel like this: As long as the city of Mobile is a city and it's not bankrupt, if it's not 100 percent funded, it's not like it's a crisis," he said. "It used to be a crisis."

Right now, the average pension payout is about \$2,000 per month, Connick said. The payout is based on rank and years of service.

Despite the health of the fund, Connick, who is also the vice president of the local firefighters union, said he doesn't feel it helps the city to recruit new firefighters.

"I don't feel like a new hire considers it, until he has some years under his belt," Connick, a 21-year veteran, said. "I don't think it's a big pull."

Executive Director of Public Safety Richard Landolt agreed, writing in an email message that he didn't believe the pension plan had an impact on recruiting. Landolt wrote the most recent Mobile Fire-Rescue Department recruiting class had 90 applicants for 30 spots.

Former Mobile Police Department (MPD) Assistant Police Chief Joseph Kennedy officially retired as a sworn officer last Friday. While he will be paid at least \$4,500 a month through the pension fund, he will also be drawing a salary as a civilian chief of staff in the department.

Kennedy was a Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) participant, which means he had to retire from the force by the end of May or risk losing money he had already paid into a separate account.

Police Chief James Barber said it's not unusual for a retired officer to seek a second career once he or she has reached the 30 years of service required for maximum pension benefits. In fact, he said MPD officers routinely move to the Mobile County Sheriff's Office upon retirement.

Former Prichard Police Chief Lawrence Battiste will take over as assistant chief for Kennedy.

## Number of participants included in previous valuations

DATE	ACTIVE	DROP	INACTIVE	RETIRED	TOTAL
2005	872	40	7	692	1,611
2006	868	41	7	705	1,621
2007	923	25	6	719	1,673
2008	971	20	4	715	1,710
2009	1,002	12	5	714	1,733
2010	977	28	5	702	1,712
2011	986	39	8	699	1,732
2012	984	54	8	695	1,741
2013	977	47	14	703	1,741
2014	974	36	13	718	1,741

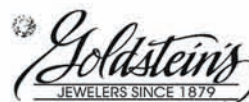


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# City hoping to add historic districts

BY DALE LIESCH/REPORTER | dale@lagniappemobile.com

The Mobile City Council on Tuesday approved a \$30,000 contract with Shaun L. Wilson to nominate two new sites for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to nominating the Automobile Alley and Texas Hill historic districts to the national list, the allocation will help Wilson complete a survey of eight to 10 houses in Lewis Quarters to see if they can be added as well. Lewis Quarters is perhaps the most isolated neighborhood in Mobile — at the end of a dirt road sandwiched between Scotch Gulf Lumber and Interstate 165, southwest of the Africatown Historic District. Its intended designation would be similar to Africatown's, Wilson said.

"The primary focus would be archeological," he said.

Wilson said the addition of Lewis Quarters would be important because it would serve as a connection from the slave ship Clotilde to the slow shift in culture that progressed from its final shipment of human cargo in 1859.

While it could mean more historic development for the area around Africatown, Lewis Quarters would be its own district, Wilson said. Furthermore, he reported the addition of industrial areas nearby were slowed by the state this year, Wilson said.

He said he added industrial areas to this year's grant application, but was told to remove them by someone at the state level. Wilson suspects the removal was spurred by the number of properties he had already added to the grant application.

Councilman Levon Manzie said he hopes Lewis Quarters will be recognized much in the same way as the larger Africatown Historic District, adding he believes it won't be the last portion of the area added to the list.

"The community sees the boundaries of Africatown as one configuration and experts ... have a slightly different configuration," he said.

Manzie said the community would continue to work with Wilson and Cart Blackwell in trying to change the boundaries as much as possible.

Wilson said the contract will also allow him to add the building behind Barton Academy to the Church Street East Historic District and help place Lafayette Square Historic District on the city's

historic properties website.

The state will pay \$15,000 and the city will pay \$15,000 on the contract.

## Reaction to police promotions

The Mobile Police Department on Friday promoted 28 sworn officers to new positions. In a letter addressed to Mayor Sandy Stimpson, Council Vice President Fred Richardson joined Councilmen C.J. Small and Levon Manzie in expressing their disappointment that only seven of the 28 promoted officers were black.

At issue for the councilmen was a contract the council approved last year with Booth Research Group for up to \$500,000 that was intended to make the promotion process more favorable toward minority candidates.

"Even after expending half a million dollars, the process yielded only one African-American above the rank of lieutenant," the letter stated. "We know for a fact that there were several African-American candidates eminently qualified, through both experience and education, to serve in any of the leadership positions above the rank of captain."

The city spent about \$187,000 for Booth to recommend this first round of promotions, city spokesman George Talbot said.

Before the council meeting June 2, Richardson said while members were promised a more inclusive promotion policy within the police department, "quite the opposite is true."

In a statement released Tuesday, Police Chief James Barber said a diverse group of experts were brought in to evaluate personnel for promotion.

"They took into consideration education, experience, training and practical exercise performance," he wrote. "The process identified in rank order the performance of each employee to identify the absolute best candidates for promotion."

Barber also wrote that he was confident in Booth's selections.

"As the Chief of Police, it is my fundamental responsibility to ensure the safety of our community," he wrote. "I will make no excuses or apologies for fielding the absolute best leadership team we can assemble to accomplish our mission to make the city of Mobile the safest city in America with respect for everyone."

## Bring Back Broad Street initiative

The council approved a resolution to allow the city to apply for a \$13.6 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

If awarded, the grant will provide funds for a complete rehabilitation project along Broad and Beaugard streets, including bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Additionally, Keri Coumanis with the city's legal department told councilors a portion of Dr. Martin Luther King Avenue would be included to provide access to Three Mile Creek and help win the grant.

Coumanis said the section of Broad and Beaugard streets is the "perfect mix" because it would connect workers to transportation and industry, which is a major stipulation for the grant. The completed corridor would stretch from the WAVE transit headquarters at the GM&O building downtown to the Brookley Aeroplex and would also include Three Mile Creek.

## In other business

The council approved an ordinance that would fall in line with new state legislation and streamline nuisance abatement procedures. Now, if the council declares a non-building property a nuisance once and the property falls back into disrepair, the city will be able to take care of it without advertising or bringing it back before the City Council.

The council also approved a \$2 million sexual assault kit backlog elimination grant from the New York Attorney's Office and a \$1.4 million Community Oriented Policing Services, or COPS grant, with a local three-year match of \$469,406. Barber said the grant would help the department continue its hot spot policing efforts.

The city introduced the new Chief Procurement Officer at Tuesday's meeting. Don Rose, who started Monday, June 1, will be paid \$95,000 a year. The city will shortly begin looking for candidates to fill the position of supplier diversity officer to work in Rose's office.

The next meeting of the City Council will be held Wednesday, June 10, instead of the usual Tuesday, at 10:30 a.m. at Government Plaza.

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## Daphne extends sewer service

BY ERIC MANN/REPORTER | eric@lagniappemobile.com

**W**ith a unanimous vote, the city of Daphne took steps Monday to provide public sewer service to approximately 96 homes in the Whispering Pines community.

The council approved a resolution to allow Mayor Dane Haygood to apply for a \$450,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Approximately 96 homes in the Whispering Pines community are part of a 200-home group that does not have access to Daphne's public sewer system. Most of the homes are in low-to-moderate-income areas.

"We have had a lot of discussions about it and we are working on ways to fund this project," Councilman Randy Fry said. "Hopefully we will be successful in securing the grant."

During the city's budgeting process in October, officials expected to pay approximately \$1.5- to \$2 million to extend sewer service to this portion of the city. The CDBG grant would provide \$450,000 in funding and the city would pay \$1 million in matching contributions, for a total of \$1,450,000.

Public Works Director Richard Johnson said the bulk of the city's portion would come from funds that were set aside for sewer service when the city refinanced its bonds last year. He said in 2011 the city connected homes on Highway 64 from 98 to Pollard Road to the public sewer.

"Over the last 15 years the city has had a goal of making sure that everyone has access to public sewer service," Johnson said. "This is something that this council and several previous councils have been very good about."

At the council's May 26 meeting, Grant Management LLC writer and administrator Cara Stallman asked the city to consider the CDBG grant. Based in Spanish Fort, Grant Management LLC provides grant writing and grant management services to municipalities, counties, nonprofits and utilities boards with a specialty in funding for infrastructure projects like drainage upgrades and water and sewer upgrades.

The city's CDBG application deadline is June 15.

At the May 26 meeting, Whispering Pines Road resident Orrie Smith Jr. approached the council and urged it to make a decision about sewer service that portion of the city. Smith said his family moved to the area in 1946. He said he is concerned that his 39-year-old septic system could be a public health hazard.

"Today it is working just fine," he said. "However, it is an accident waiting to happen. Heavy rains, storms and hurricanes cause the system to work very slow. Thank God we have not yet had a sewage backup. We need the sewer service because I don't want to cause a health problem in our community or harm the environment."

Victoria Mitchell has lived in her Pollard Road home since 1997. She said other subdivisions and apartment complexes nearby have been connected to the public sewer and asked

why her community had not. She was also concerned about the public health ramifications of having so many old septic systems in the area.

"We haven't had any backups yet but that's because I'm constantly doing maintenance to prevent it from happening," she said. "If we were allotted the same privileges the other citizens of Daphne have to be connected to the public sewage system, it would be a lot better for us. We should have the same privilege as everyone else."

Juniper Court resident Dr. Pam Henson sent a letter to Council President Tommie Conaway on May 24 asking why Whispering Pines residents had not been given access to the public sewer. Conaway represents District 1 on the council, including Whispering Pines and surrounding areas.

The city made an effort to apply for a CDBG grant for public sewer in 2014, but Johnson said the timing wasn't right and not enough Whispering Pines residents were on board with the project at the time.

"I moved into my home on Juniper Court in January of 2000 and within a month, I had to have the septic tank pumped," Henson's letter read. "At the time, sewer service was being installed on streets in the area surrounding Juniper Court. I inquired, but was never given a reason why Juniper Court was excluded."

Henson's letter said she had her septic tank pumped once a year until 2009, when her problems became worse. Water began to pool in and around her septic tank in the yard when she would use her washing machine or after heavy rains.

"This has continued over the last six years," she said. "I finally decided the washing machine could only be utilized once a week."

"We desperately need public sewer in the Whispering Pines community," Henson's letter continued. "Some of my neighbors have had sewage back into their homes. Many of us have had other problems with our septic tanks and we very much want to connect to the public sewer in the city. Why haven't we been offered the same service as everyone else? It will make Daphne a stronger community and a better place to live."

Any Whispering Pines homes connected to the public sewer would be served by Daphne Utilities, which serves approximately 10,746 residential accounts and has board members appointed by the city.

"They can't apply for this kind of grant but the city can, and upon completion of the project the city will turn it over to them," Johnson said.

The Daphne Utilities Board includes Chairman Bob Segalla, Vice Chairman Fenton Jenkins and Secretary/Treasurer Randy Fry, who is also a city councilman. Mayor Dane Haygood and Billy Mayhand are also board members.

Daphne Utilities, Park City Water and Belforest Water provide "potable water" services in the city, but only Daphne Utilities and Baldwin County Sewer Service provide sewer. Johnson said Baldwin County Sewer Service serves homes that were previously in county land that had been annexed into the city of Daphne.

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# Baldwin County approves Point Clear variance, denies one in Daphne

BY ERIC MANN/REPORTER | eric@lagniappemobile.com

The Baldwin County Commission approved a variance request for a proposed subdivision in Point Clear and denied a similar request from a community in Daphne at its regular meeting June 2.

The commission denied a variance request made by a three-lot, 28-acre subdivision in Daphne's planning jurisdiction called Peaceful Acres. The applicant had requested the commission approve a variance from the county's regulations on gravel roads as well as a request to privately maintain the road. The road to access the subdivision does not currently meet the county's requirements.

Commissioner Tucker Dorsey moved to deny the request, and Commissioner Chris Elliott seconded the action. Dorsey said the request would add lots to a road maintained by the owners at a low level of maintenance and would increase traffic, making the road's condition worse.

"This request to add lots to a road that is not maintained up to the county's standards will just increase headaches for the county in the future," Dorsey said.

Meanwhile, the commission approved a variance request from the Highlands of Point Clear for a development permit to allow a proposed six-lot subdivision with homes designed to be longer and narrower than the county's subdivision rules allow. The property is located on the east side of Scenic Highway 98, approximately 1,000 feet north of Baldwin County 32 in Point Clear.

The first five lots would be approximately 1.2 acres each, 530 feet deep and 100 feet wide, resulting in a depth-to-width ratio of 5.3 to 1 for each lot. The sixth lot would be 21.25 acres with a 5.1 to 1 depth-to-width ratio. The county's regulation allows for a ratio of no more than 4 to 1 for lots greater than 120 feet wide and 3 to 1 for lots less than 120 feet wide.

Permit and subdivision manager Seth Peterson said there is a significant portion of wetlands on the rear of the lots, and that the proposal is consistent with neighboring properties.

Several Point Clear residents spoke against the subdivision request, citing concerns about stormwater runoff and drainage. Albert Key said he lives a quarter mile south of the proposed subdivision. At a planning meeting in Fairhope, he said other residents were concerned that the new subdivision would cause greater stormwater runoff.

Key was concerned that, because the variance would allow for longer, more narrow homes, the subdivision would squeeze more homes into a smaller space, creating what he said could be more stormwater runoff on adjacent properties.

"This is in an area where we already have stormwater runoff that comes across the highway," Key said. "This is an issue we raised (Monday) with the Fairhope planning and zoning department. They put the determination of whether or not to approve this subdivision off for 30 days so that they can have their own engineer address the concerns."

"Our question is, what unnecessary hardship would be imposed upon the applicant if you don't allow this variance?" Point Clear Property Owners Association president John Carden asked. "We do not understand what unnecessary hardship would be there. That's why we are in opposition to the request."

Commissioner Elliott said he shared some of the residents' concerns about stormwater management, but the variance request did not deal with stormwater runoff.

"We have to take this in bite-size pieces and that's what we are doing here," Elliott said. "This variance request is consistent with past actions by the commission, specifically due to the amount of wetlands on this property. If you take into account the unbuildable parts of the property due to wetlands then you must adjust within those parameters."

"Another issue is that these deep lots are consistent with other lots in the area. As you know, Point Clear is famous for its narrow, long lots. That's pretty consistent up and down the bay."

Peterson said he has discussed the stormwater runoff issues

with staff and was confident the county would be able to work through it.

Commissioners also approved the vacation of a drainage easement east of State Highway 181, part of the Highland Farms subdivision. The property is near the Dunmore subdivision and the Church of His Presence.

County engineer Cal Markert said the request was made by the county in an effort to get the property "off the books" before a proposed Alabama Department of Transportation project to widen 181 begins.

Property owners Michael D. and Alecia Carol Abbott were concerned about what will happen after the vacation. County attorney David Conner said the county has no plans to do anything with the property, but he could not speculate about how ALDOT will use it in the future.

"It is my understanding the county has never maintained this area and has no anticipated need for this area in the future for drainage," Conner said. "I don't know that the county has intended to exercise a prescriptive right, but it is a state-maintained highway. We are hands off as it relates to that development. That might be an issue with you and the state."

"While we may not claim a right to this property, I think the county and the state would have a problem if the property owner tried to convert that ditch or cover it up to stop the drainage and force it back upstream," Conner concluded.

Markert said approximately 90 percent of the 1,900-foot easement is on property owned by the Abbotts, who are concerned about future drainage with proposed road construction on 181.

"From our standpoint, we are all very hopeful that we will see the widening of 181 some day, but it is our position as well that the drainage situation is well controlled by the state and I think we will see that in their construction plans," Dorsey said.

Commissioner Frank Burt was absent from the meeting following the death of his wife the previous week.

## Fairhope residents seek help for flooded subdivisions

BY ERIC MANN/REPORTER | eric@lagniappemobile.com

More Fairhope residents have come forward with stories about flooding in their neighborhoods since representatives from River Oaks Phase II addressed the city council in May about problems with drainage systems in their subdivision.

Fairfield Pointe Village is a 32-lot mixed use development with single-family homes, condos and townhomes located at the corner of Baldwin County Road 44 and Boothe Road, adjacent to the soccer fields at Founders Park and Fairhope High School. Village resident Shana Cooper said her home flooded twice between 2013 and 2014, while her back yard flooded four times.

Cooper said the subdivision takes on water from two directions, from Cowpen Creek to the north and from Founders Park to the south.

"It is unreal," she said. "If I stepped out my back bedroom I would be swept away."

According to Cooper, other Fairfield Pointe Village residents had two to three feet of water inside their houses and one neighbor had \$50,000 to \$70,000 in damages after the last flood. Further, she claimed most of the residents didn't have flood insurance until recently.

After her home flooded in July 2013, Cooper said she and three other residents filed an insurance claim against the city for damages incurred during the rain.

"I'm just amazed that the city won't do anything," she said last week. "And with hurricane season coming up, if a hurricane hits us, all hell will break loose."

River Oaks Phase II is a 52-home subdivision located off Boothe Road in Fairhope. Stephen Pecot is a River Oaks resident who has addressed the council on two occasions, at the May 11 meeting and again at a work session May 26.

Pecot and Fairfield Pointe Village Homeowners Association representative Brooks Lyons asked the council for help at its May

26 work session.

"We've had a large amount of damage that began many months ago," Lyons said. "We are starting the process of trying to find out if anything can be done to fix it."

According to Pecot, in the last year a pair of sinkholes has developed along the western easement for drainage in River Oaks Phase II. He said the pipes underneath have collapsed in on themselves, creating an 8-foot-deep, 8-foot-wide set of sinkholes, before water drains to a retention pond. He said the asphalt and rock road behind the easement also is causing sedimentation to go into the retention pond.

"It all starts right around where the new retention pond is around Winn-Dixie," Pecot said. "That drain goes down to the west side of our subdivision to Cowpen Creek, and it all ends up down at Fairfield Pointe Village."

River Oaks residents have looked into having a private company fix the sinkholes, and Pecot said that of the four they called, only one gave them an estimate. He said the \$25,000 to \$30,000 estimate divided among 52 households would cost about \$500 per homeowner. He said it would just be a temporary fix if nearby subdivisions did not make repairs to their drainage systems.

"Our biggest concern is that we will spend this money, then the other subdivisions will still drain into ours," he said. "We don't want to spend \$30,000 this year and then next year, with regular rainfall, have even more sinkholes develop."

Council President Jack Burrell said the city must consider what is best for all of its citizens, noting that it has no business getting into a dispute between neighbors.

"We have to look at what it costs the city of Fairhope, not because we are greedy but because we have to protect the people's interests," Burrell said. "If we go out and fix something that really is not our responsibility, then we'll have to start throwing out money left and right every time somebody has an issue. We have

to be smart about how we do that."

Mayor Tim Kant said when subdivisions are built, the drainage systems are turned over to the homeowners for maintenance.

"Unless the laws change, once the city touches a drainage pipe or a ditch or digs out a retention pond in a subdivision, it becomes the city's," Kant said. "These devices, and retention ponds, and pipes have always been given to the homeowners. It always happens, after 25 years the pipes start rusting and problems start coming, then they look to the city to fix the problem."

Burrell said councilors would need to consult the city's engineer and attorney to find out what steps are appropriate for the city in this case.

"Anything we touch, if we go in and start moving rocks or pipes or making improvements, then we become the owner," Burrell said. "Anything that happens after that, from here to eternity, we have to take care of it. That's a big concern to me. We have to be cautious about what projects we take on. We want to help out, but only to the extent that we can and should."

For Pecot, getting neighboring subdivisions to tackle drainage problems has been difficult. Kant said the city needs to work on making sure the letters it sends to neighboring subdivisions have "some teeth" so they will get on board.

"We want to get ideas from the city about how our subdivision can be helped," Pecot said. "I'm not an engineer, I'm just a landowner. We are here asking you guys for help."

Kant said damages occur in places like Fairfield Pointe Village when the city's older drainage systems are filled after heavy rain events that have occurred more often than they used to.

"What happens over time is that those retention ponds were built for 25-year or 50-year storms and now we are getting those kinds of storms regularly," he said. "Once they fill with water and then more water comes, that's when you see the destruction like in Fairfield. When it comes, it comes like a wave."



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# Don't count your chickens after dark

BY ROB HOLBERT/MANAGING EDITOR | rholbert@lagniappemobile.com

Alabama's constitution is said to be among the longest in the world and certainly the most unwieldy among all 50 states. The reason for some of that is leaving ridiculous prohibitions on the books long after the original necessity — assuming there ever was one — has gone. That's why until Rep. Chris Pringle pushed a bill to help clean up some of the state's dumber laws, it was still illegal in Alabama to catch a garfish and throw it back into the water alive or to sell chickens after dark.

And after spending the past few months working to try to change another completely useless law Pringle sought to remove, I can easily see why it can be so hard to amend a little logic into the constitution.

Many of you may have followed the efforts to do away with the requirement that newspapers have a publications class postal permit before being allowed to run public notice advertising. Changing this law in Mobile County would have allowed Lagniappe to begin competing for the same advertising sold by the Press-Register, Citronelle Call News and Mobile Beacon. We thought the arguments for why the change is both wanted and needed were watertight, but last week a member of Mobile County's legislative delegation played politics and shut the matter down without even letting us all gather in the same room for a discussion.

Rep. David Sessions of Grand Bay pulled rank as the chairman of the local delegation and refused to hold a hearing or vote on changing this antiquated law, regardless of the fact the city, county and local bar association have all expressed support for it, as did most of his own delegation. Scratching the hearing came as a surprise to everyone working to get the law changed because bills that would only be voted on by the Mobile County delegation almost always at least get that courtesy. But Sessions wasn't going to let that happen.

The move was so out of the ordinary that one member of the delegation apologized and told me this was wasn't how things are supposed to work.

So why did Sessions block the bill? His flippant excuse was he had decided Lagniappe should have to get a permit because other local newspapers did too. I guess that's a point, even though none of us was alive when they got theirs, and the horse was still a major mode of transportation. If a law made sense in 1890 it makes sense forever, right?

When I spoke with Sessions, his decision not to hold a hearing appeared to be made out of significant ignorance of the bill and of the newspaper business in general. We had sought to educate him during our recent trips to Montgomery, but when he saw us coming he generally wandered off the other way or quickly brushed past. So we hoped Sessions and a few others who made themselves scarce as hen's teeth would at least get to hear what we had to say during a public hearing.

So why would Sessions deny even just having a hearing and vote on the issue? Let's start from the beginning.

Public notice advertising is a big deal in every county in the state. For many small newspapers in rural counties it may be the difference between life and death. It adds up lots of money because notices have to be run for every foreclosure, estate hearing, proposed law, ordinance change, zoning change, etc. Between the city of Mobile and the county, it's hundreds of thousands a year. For attorneys doing probate work it's far more. Across the state it comes out to millions and millions of dollars a year.

The system here started breaking down when the Press-Register reduced to three days a week. Notices were run improperly or not at all, creating problems when probate cases came to court. Things got bad enough that earlier this year Mobile County Probate Court Judge Don Davis banned the P-R from taking certain types of ads for a while. Advertisers started shifting public notice purchases to the much smaller Citronelle Call News, despite it only having a circulation of about 5,500 papers and reaching almost no one in Mobile.

Last year Lagniappe started getting calls from the city and county agencies, as well as law firms, asking us to find a way to start running legal ads. So we tried. We spent seven months working with the Post Office to get the permit, but were ultimately denied at the federal level because Lagniappe is a free newspaper. The Postal Service requires at least 50 percent of a newspaper's circulation be paid in order to qualify for the permit, which meant we would have to start charging in order to meet the requirement.

Anyone who knows anything about the newspaper business can tell you trying to start a subscription-based paper these days is like putting your money into rotary phones. The business has changed. But on top of all of that, the postal permit does nothing to guarantee public notices are being run properly or appearing in newspapers with wide circulation. Some microscopic publications sell these ads. The requirement is there to create a hurdle for anyone who might compete with the old-line newspapers that have had their permits for decades. Every other part of the public notices law has been manipulated to serve old-school newspapers that belong to the Alabama Press Association.

Now I will say the majority of the Mobile County Legislative Delegation did listen intently to what the city, county, bar association and Lagniappe have had to say about changing this law, but a few representatives have made it clear they're not fans of your favorite weekly newspaper. Some don't like the way we covered Sam Jones, or issues with their own political

racers. Others don't like us breaking news about Kim Hastie's troubles, or delving into the mess that was the Mobile County Water, Sewer and Fire Protection District. Some, it seems, would prefer a newspaper that only publishes pictures of quilting bees.

Most of the objections we heard dealt not with the bill, but with personal agendas. A few legislators were able to express their personal issues and also look at the bill on its merits. Others weren't.

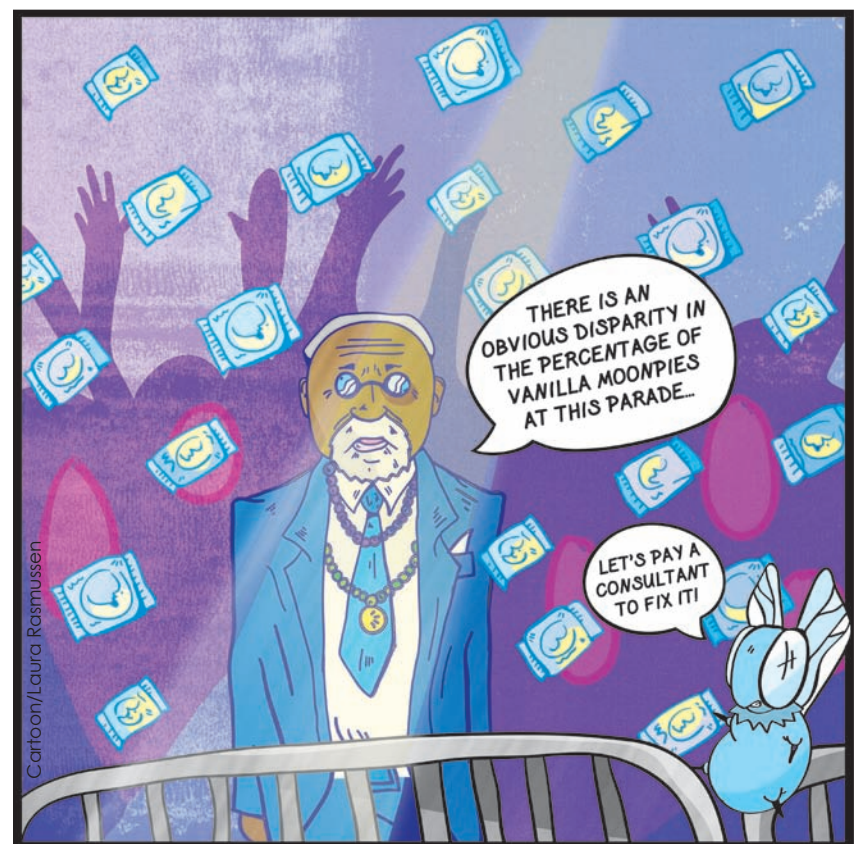
A couple also made it clear they were more concerned about ensuring the Press-Register, Call News or Mobile Beacon don't have more competition. In the end David Sessions gave everyone with a personal agenda a free pass and pushed aside the wants and needs of the taxpayers forced to spend money on these ads.

Sessions played the stopper so he and a few others could continue to crow about being pro-business and pro-taxpayer. The non-vote lets everyone hide his or her agenda. Personally I have no problem with legislators voting one way or another on this issue, but hiding from a hearing is shirking their duties.

After seeing the way Sessions and his cohorts chickened out on even discussing a bill for purely personal and political reasons, it's hard to imagine them scratching up the courage to do much of anything in Montgomery that's not self-serving.

I guess some of our legislators haven't figured out that part of being an elected official is still doing your job even if you get your feathers ruffled.

## THE GADFLY



Alleged inequitable promotions at the Mobile Police Department are not the only discriminatory practice catching Fred Richardson's eye.

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# Here we go again

BY ASHLEY TRICE/EDITOR | ashleytoland@lagniappemobile.com

Last week, Councilpersons Levon Manzie, Fred Richardson and C.J. Small sent a letter to Mayor Sandy Stimpson expressing their “disdain and disappointment” in the lack of diversity in 28 officers who were recently promoted to various positions, including majors, captains, lieutenants, sergeants and corporals. The promotions were, in part, determined by a firm out of Colorado, Booth Research Group, hired at the hefty price of \$500,000 to increase diversity. But only a third of the officers promoted were minorities.

“We were assured that by supporting the Booth contract we were implementing a process that would bridge the gap of ethnic disparity as it relates to hiring and promotions. In good faith despite grave concerns from our various constituencies, we stepped out to support you and Chief James Barber in this \$500,000 initiative only to discover not only are we no better off, it appears that we are worse off,” the councilors wrote.

Barber fired back with a statement of equal disdain.

“I am as bewildered as I am dismayed at the comments of Councilman Richardson. It is the fundamental role of government to provide for the safety of the community. If we fail to do that, we fail as a government. The careful selection of the best candidates for promotion is paramount to the success of the organization. A great deal of time, cost and effort was placed into this process to ensure that we identify the best possible leadership team in the police department. These processes were conducted independent of the Office of the Chief and I am confident in their selection,” Barber said.

Barber told al.com while the councilors were accurate in their numbers, the pool of minority officers available to promote was relatively small. Barber said there were more than 20 lieutenants tested for major and only two were minorities, adding you can’t take a patrol officer and just make him a captain.

Barber is proud of his department’s new selection process. There were other changes in it that allowed performance and experience to be considered, along with education. In previous years, a lot of weight was given to officers with a college degree – a change that

would also seem to afford more opportunities to all officers.

“A diverse group of subject-matter experts were brought in from throughout the country to evaluate our personnel for promotion,” Barber told Lagniappe. “They took into consideration education, experience, training and practical exercise performance. The process identified, in rank order, the performance of each employee to identify the absolute best candidates for promotion. I am confident in the selection. As the chief of police, it is my fundamental responsibility to ensure the safety of our community. I will make no excuses or apologies for fielding the absolute best leadership team we can assemble to accomplish our mission to make the city of Mobile the safest city in America with respect for everyone.”

But Richardson and his fellow councilmen weren’t buying it, saying the new process is geared toward the exclusion of minorities, even though it should be noted former Prichard Police Chief Lawrence Battiste, an African-American, was just promoted to assistant chief.

“We know for a fact that there were several African-American candidates eminently qualified, through both experience and education, to serve in any of the leadership positions above the rank of captain. It appears that we have implemented a process that assures that the prolonged historical pattern of exclusion of minorities continues,” they wrote.

Stimpson’s Chief of Staff Colby Cooper responded to the councilmen on behalf of the administration, saying they felt the department was already “better off” than it was under former chief Michael Williams and the process of diversification would be ongoing.

“The Mayor and I are confident that Chief Barber and Assistant Chief Battiste (formerly Assistant Chief Kennedy) are transforming not only the way we police Mobile, but how we build sustainable and diverse ranks. To think this can all be done overnight is not realistic. To recognize that we are advancing the overall objectives through multiple cycles is completely realistic,” Cooper wrote.

I am certainly no expert on what the promotion practices in the

Mobile Police Department — or any other department, for that matter — should be. And I really have no idea if this firm was worth the half a million dollars they were paid. I sure hope so. I am still waiting on Ann Street to be repaved.

But I do know, no matter what initiatives Stimpson and his administration put forward or personnel choices they make, Fred Richardson is going to oppose it and call it racist.

I mean, for goodness’ sake, he stopped just short of making the ridiculous squirrel ordinance a racial issue a couple of weeks ago.

And it’s sad because I don’t really think he believes that in his heart of hearts. If he does, then I think his version of reality is quite distorted and that’s even sadder.

But it’s just so insulting to accuse the chief of police, mayor or anybody, for that matter, of making decisions based on race. Are we supposed to believe they all colluded with this company in Colorado to act like they were diversifying the department, but really it was just a vast conspiracy to do anything but that? Come on.

I’m sure part of the reason this independent firm was brought in was to make sure there was no appearance of impropriety going on in the hiring process. And it cost us big and still couldn’t satisfy the good councilman.

Nothing does. And at this point, if something was truly being done that was actually designed to exclude minorities, how would you even know with Fred, because he says everything is. What is that thing about crying wolf?

Unfortunately, I believe Richardson’s very vocal opposition to everything the mayor proposes all boils down to politics and preparation for the next mayoral election, which is nothing new and probably to be expected. That’s just the way the game is played. But I just hate that he uses race to do it.

Attack the mayor’s initiatives on their merits if you just have to disagree with him on everything. But stop trying to put a giant wedge in our city for purely political purposes. It’s just so transparent and most of us just refuse to see our beautiful city in the black and white you try to paint it in anyway.

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# A tale of two counties, Madison and Mobile

BY KEN ROBINSON/CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**A** tale of two cities, or shall I say, two counties. Not in the Charles Dickens sense, as he described life in London and Paris during the dark days of the French Revolution in his famous work “A Tale of Two Cities.” Rather, a look at the trajectory of two of Alabama’s largest counties, Mobile and Madison.

Current projections put the two counties on a path to switch places in population rank by the year 2040. Among Alabama’s 67 counties, Madison is projected to add the greatest number of people — 40 percent more — while Mobile is looking at a modest 6 percent population growth. Anchored by the city of Huntsville, Madison County is on the move, not just demographically but economically as well. With the second-highest per-capita income in the state, home to a bevy of businesses and with Huntsville considered one of the leading technology centers in the Southeast, the future looks very bright for the county on the northern end of the state.

Interestingly, while speaking here in Mobile several months ago, renowned historian Dr. Wayne Flynt noted, “the future is Madison County, where one-third of all the engineers in Alabama live.” That’s a powerful statement, and one that gave me pause. Dr. Flynt’s statement seemed counter to the prevailing view of many Mobilians. Many locals would say, “Are we not the city that has landed Airbus, with all the latent economic potential that comes with such a large enterprise taking root here?” Also, what about the presence of Austal, the Alabama State Docks, etc. To say the least, I was quite intrigued by his comment.

In a subsequent email conversation with Dr. Flynt, he elaborated. “Mobile has experienced a renaissance in the past 20 years: government has become more diverse and

representative of the entire community; Thyssen-Krupp and Airbus have, and will, bring high-tech manufacturing to the area; some low-income schools are performing far better than we have any right to expect given the investment we make,” Flynt said. “In some ways, Mobile is more progressive and prosperous than it has been since the end of the Civil War. But looking down the road, the manufacturing economy, which is already connected hip-to-leg to the global economy, is going to depend on the quality of a skilled technological labor force: think North Carolina’s ‘Research Triangle’ or Madison County’s research park; Austin, Texas; Silicon Valley; Seattle. That is the future.”

With Alabama having one of the lowest-skilled labor forces in the country, and long-range economic forecasts showing job growth in the state at the lowest skill levels, Flynt sees Madison County and the city of Huntsville in a better long-range strategic position than most places in Alabama.

I queried one of the foremost experts in this area on the topic, Dr. Semoon Chang, director of the Gulf Coast Center for Impact Studies. “There are two major differences between Madison County and Mobile County,” Chang said. “First of all, Madison County currently has Redstone Arsenal with about 35,000 employees who are on the federal government payroll and are heavily concentrated in science and engineering. Mobile County, on the other hand, lost its main federal employer, Brookley Air Force Base, with its 12,000 employees in the 1960s and had to rely on development of the private-sector employers. Mobile County did an excellent job of that by attracting Airbus, Austal and the AM/NS Calvert steel mill, among others. The other difference is that Mobile County is adjacent to Gulf waters, with its port facility, seafood industry and a more beautiful landscape than

Madison County.”

There seems to be a consensus among local experts that although Mobile may lack the technological base and highly skilled workforce Madison County has, by focusing on what it does best, Mobile can thrive, albeit in a different fashion. As Dr. Donald Epley, professor at the University of South Alabama, and director of the Center for Real Estate and Economic Development Studies, observed, “A more meaningful approach is to examine the industrial structure of the local economy, and determine the clusters of firms that work together to produce local services and products. Examples for the Mobile and coastal areas could be tourism or fishing and fish production. The absolute number of engineers may not be as critical to each as skills in other specialties.”

Like Flynt, Chang and others I spoke with showed a deep concern for the lack of resources being committed to K-12 public education. The trajectory of any area is deeply tied to investment in this area. It’s a critical component in the growth and long-range vitality of any community. As the current school funding debacle in Baldwin County shows, getting citizens to realize this fact is hard work, but a must if an area is to stay economically viable. Mobile is making strides in this area but still has a ways to go.

Mobile is an area blessed with beauty and charm. Unfortunately, it has been more of a place where people are comfortable coming to work and play rather than live (evidenced by the population bleed from Mobile to Baldwin County). As leaders exploit opportunities to propel Mobile forward economically, may equal effort be invested in making it a place where people want to put down roots and stay. In this tale of two cities, may it be said that Mobile is just as much a magnet for people as it is for jobs.

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# Rand Paul's big gamble

BY JEFF POOR/COLUMNIST | jeffreypoor@gmail.com

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) has been ruffling feathers within his own party by taking a stand against the reauthorization of the National Security Agency's surveillance program, based on what he perceives to be a violation of civil liberties.

Paul objects to the NSA program's allowing for the dragnet bulk collection of telephone metadata, which he argued violates Fourth Amendment protections of the Constitution guarding against warrantless searches.

Paul's Republican colleagues view his objection as misguided and a threat to national security.

In addition to those criticisms, the junior Republican senator from Kentucky may have political motivations. Paul is among a crowded field of a dozen or so hopefuls vying for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination.

With so many running, there is a desire by some candidates to distinguish themselves from one another. Much as his father, Ron Paul, did in the prior two presidential election cycles, Rand Paul has chosen to sell the libertarian approach as a way to promote his candidacy.

This could be a risky proposition, something Paul seemed to acknowledge in a speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate over the weekend.

"People here in town think I'm making a huge mistake," he said. "Some of them, I think, secretly want there to be an attack on the United States so they can blame it on me. One of the people in the media the other day came up to me and said, 'Oh, when there's a great attack aren't you going to feel guilty that you caused this great attack?' It's like the people who attack us aren't responsible for attacks on us."

He has since walked back those remarks, but should there be a major terrorist attack between now and when the GOP nomination is decided, Paul's presidential aspirations will be stopped dead in their tracks. But that's a risk he's apparently willing to take.

Paul has some work to do. According to the Real Clear Politics average of polls conducted over the past month and a half, Paul is mired in the middle of the pack of GOP hopefuls at 9 percent. This far out, it's meaningless except that if his candidacy isn't taken seriously in the early going, fundraising will be difficult.

Paul has also been aggressive in his attacks on former President Bill Clinton and his wife, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, herself a 2016 presidential hopeful.

The Clinton name has been sullied in recent weeks over their financial dealings involving the family's charitable foundation and whether or not Hillary Clinton used her office as the nation's top diplomat to secure contributions and perhaps financially benefit personally.

Paul has used that and the past sexual indiscretions of Bill Clinton to attack the Democratic candidate on numerous occasions, which may explain why, in a hypothetical match-up with Hillary Clinton, Paul does much better than his Republican competitors.

In a number of hypothetical general election polls featuring Clinton against each of the perceived frontrunners for the GOP nomination, Paul only trails by seven points on average — whereas with the exception of Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Florida), who also trails Clinton by seven points — Clinton leads Paul's competitors by anywhere from eight to 12 points.



Photo/ U.S. Senate

**For a Republican presidential candidate, Sen. Rand Paul has taken an unconventional stance against the Patriot Act.**

To his credit, this Paul presidential bid is so far being taken more seriously than any of his father's runs for president. The elder Paul mounted three unsuccessful bids for the White House, first in 1988 as the Libertarian Party nominee and then twice contended for the Republican nomination, first in 2008 and then in 2012.

The key for Rand Paul will be maintaining the energy of his father's bids, which had something of a loyal cult following willing to devote itself to helping further Ron Paul's candidacy. There is a fine line, however, between mustering energy via staking out alternative positions and marginalizing oneself.

That probably will mean avoiding a push for the gold standard, reducing U.S. power abroad and any talk of secession, which were some of the things his father promoted in the past.

Rand Paul's positions on the NSA come very close to that. He's catering to the crowd that invigorated his father's campaign. But a key difference is that as a U.S. senator he has more of an ability to act on his beliefs than his father did as a member of the House of Representatives.

Rand's opponents are already publicly criticizing him for being out of the mainstream and making the country more vulnerable. "There's not evidence, not a shred of evidence, that the metadata program has violated anybody's civil liberties," former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, himself a potential 2016 candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, said regarding Paul's efforts to delay reauthorization of the Patriot Act last weekend. Others in the field have echoed Bush's sentiments, which may be to Paul's advantage.

If the United States avoids any major terrorist attack over the next year and a half, Paul's naysayers in the GOP field may cancel one another out and, in the end, the libertarian wing could prevail. That "if," however, is a huge gamble.

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# Providence Hospital recognized for heart care

BY RON SIVAK/COLUMNIST | [business@lagniappemobile.com](mailto:business@lagniappemobile.com)

Providence Hospital was recently ranked as “high performing” for heart failure care in the latest U.S. News & World Report Hospitals for “Common Care” rankings. The rankings evaluated more than 4,500 hospitals across the country on common inpatient procedures and conditions.

“Our innovative heart failure program continues to earn national recognition, including ‘gold’ status from the American Heart Association’s ‘Get with the Guidelines’ program,” Clark Christianson, president and CEO of Providence Hospital, said. “This latest rating honors the commitment of physicians, clinical personnel and support staff who provide outstanding care to patients experiencing heart failure. We are very proud to be the only area hospital rated as ‘high performance’ in the area.”

According to Michael King, director of planning and marketing for Providence Health System, the 161-year-old locally founded infirmary’s congestive heart failure outpatient clinic has been nationally recognized on several occasions since its inception 12 years ago.

“Effectively managing patients through the outpatient program carries over to our inpatient programs as well,” King said.

U.S. News evaluated hospitals in five procedures and medical conditions — heart bypass surgery, hip replacement, knee replacement, heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) — and rated them as high performers, average or below average. Only about 10 percent of the hospitals were rated as high performers.

“The choice of hospital is one of the most important and costly decisions an individual makes,” said Ben Harder, chief of health analysis for U.S. News. “We evaluated the treatment of more than 3.6 million patients and identified a small percentage of hospitals that have superior outcomes compared with their peer institutions. Whenever possible, patients, in consultation with their doctors, should seek out high-performing hospitals that excel in treating their specific condition.”

Providence Hospital was founded in 1854 by the Daughters of Charity from Emmitsburg, Maryland, who were invited by Mobile’s first

bishop, Michael Portier. A board of local citizens was formed, and voted in 1855 to build a new 60-bed hospital at the intersection of Broad and St. Anthony streets

In 1902 the facility moved to a new Mediterranean Revival structure on an 11-acre campus on Springhill Avenue. Another new 250-bed modern-style structure was completed in 1982 but was outgrown by the 1980s. Groundbreaking for the current 250-acre site in west Mobile, at an initial cost of \$60 million, began in 1982 under the guidance of well-known architect Bertrand Goldberg, with the first patients accepted in 1987.

Today Providence Hospital is a 349-bed facility with 374 doctors on staff. The facility cares for more than 15,000 inpatients and 150,000 outpatients per year across an affiliated physician network of 10 practice locations as part of Providence Health System. It is wholly owned by Ascension, the largest non-profit health system in the country and largest Catholic-based health system in the world, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri.

## Commercial real estate moves

**Coastal Benefits** has leased 1,274 square feet of office space in **Montlimar Place** at 1110 Montlimar Drive in Mobile. **Cameron Weavil** of the **Weavil Company** represented the tenant and **David Dexter** of **NAI Mobile** worked for the landlord.

**Read-Write** has leased 2,600 square feet of office space at **15 Midtown Park W.** in Mobile, according to **Robert Cook** with **Valias Realty**, who represented the tenant. Read-Write is an education clinic providing testing, consultations and therapy for students and adults with language-based learning disabilities. **Bradford Ladd** with **Roberts Brothers CPM** worked for the landlord.

**Sheffield School of Dance** has leased a 1,300-square-foot studio space in **Olde Shell Square**. They will move from their current location in Springhill Village Shopping Center this summer. **Michael Wilson** with **White-Spinner Realty** represented the tenant and **Pratt Thomas** with the **Merrill P. Thomas**

Co. Inc. worked for the landlord.

According to **Jeff Barnes** of **Stirling Properties**, an Indiana-based franchise called **The House of Jerky** has recently opened at **The Wharf** in Orange Beach on the Intracoastal Waterway. Barnes worked for the landlord. The retailer offers a variety of jerky and specialty products.

## Hargrove Engineering awards scholarships

The University of South Alabama (USA) recently presented Emaleigh Sargent and Shawn Morris with the Hargrove Foundation Engineering scholarship at an awards luncheon hosted by USA’s College of Engineering.

Sargent, a junior, is an electrical engineering major in the USA College of Engineering. She has worked as an intern at Hargrove Engineers + Constructors since 2012. As part of the Hargrove Electrical and Instrumentation Design Team, Sargent has worked on a number of client projects including recovery boiler gas burners, chemical plant power systems and retrofit projects.

Morris, a junior, has a degree in mathematics from Birmingham Southern College and is currently pursuing an engineering degree from USA. Morris is active in ASCE, Reformed University Fellowship, Associated General Contractors of America and National Society of Black Engineers. In 2014, Morris was the recipient of the MACE Raybun Scholarship.

“This is another example of the Hargrove Team giving back to the community and supporting the development of our future engineers in the Mobile area,” said Dennis Watson, representative for the Hargrove Foundation.

In 2014, The Hargrove Foundation established a continuing engineering scholarship for USA’s College of Engineering, in conjunction with the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative. The program sprang from Mobile native Abraham Mitchell’s commitment of \$50 million to the university. Of that amount, \$25 million is a matching gift challenge to support undergraduate scholarships. The Hargrove Foundation’s initial contribution was \$35,000.

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# Uncle Jimmy's features delicious workingman's fare

BY ANDY MACDONALD/CUISINE EDITOR | fatmansqueeze@comcast.com

I get my fair share of fine dining in this area. Yes, I'm fortunate to be able to visit some of Mobile's higher-end restaurants, but don't think for one minute that I'm someone who doesn't enjoy food on the lower end of the spectrum. To imply that burgers and dogs are less important than collar-shirted date nights is not my intention. Some days it's very important to get greasy with a bit of the less expensive side of the menu.

When a little birdie reminded me this week about Uncle Jimmy's Delicious Hot Dogs on DIP, I got a hankering for something a little more casual. For good, hearty hot dogs with all the fixin's we usually round up the boys, so Rob, Snake and I met for our first visit to the eatery just south of the interstate.

You have a bit of an odd system at Uncle Jimmy's. You grab a menu and fill in how many of each item you wish to order and turn in the slip of paper, much like ordering sushi. It took us a couple of tries, as we trashed a menu or two with scratches and circles and arrows, but in the end we figured it out. To be fair, one of us was on the eve of speaking at a Mensa meeting and we were trying to get all our mistakes out of the way before the weekend.

The meal began with a hefty serving of **nachos (\$2.50)** smothered exactly how you'd expect. Chili, cheese, onions and jalapenos reminded me of ballpark nachos. Nothing fancy, these kind of fall into the guilty-pleasure category much the same way frozen pizzas and Natural Light do.

Snake was quick to go classic with a **Deluxe Hot Dog (\$3)** loaded with ketchup, chili, cheese and onions. It was no match for our slithery friend, who also nabbed a **small macaroni and cheese (\$1)** and washed it all down with a **Diet Coke (\$1)**. "It's very important," Snake said, "to cut your calories with diet drinks when eating hot dogs with chili." From that side of the table there were no complaints.

Rob was not as fond of the macaroni and cheese as Snake, but did enjoy his dog with chili, ketchup, and coleslaw. He preferred the **potato salad (\$1.50 small/\$2.50 large)**, which was quite a surprise since he hates mayonnaise more than anyone I know. He abstained from the nachos and undertook a **pulled pork sandwich (\$3)**, which served as fuel for his upcoming address. It was a plain-Jane bun and barbecue pork that put a smile on his face.

I love hot dogs, but I didn't want to order the same old things as these two clowns, especially when there's another side of the menu. The **daily special dinner plate (\$4.95 with two veggies/\$5.95 with three)** had my undivided attention. I couldn't resist fork-tender pork loin. Add to that collard greens and mashed potatoes and I was in for a treat. It isn't often you see a hot plate of meat and vegetables in a hot dog joint, so I will admit I was pleasantly surprised.

None of us was stoked about the dessert menu, which consisted of three flavors of moon pies. Not that there's anything



wrong with that, I actually find it charming, but we're not fans of marshmallow. Adding to that, Snake couldn't stomach another Diet Coke, and I take my moon pies with RC.

This is the kind of spot with a good many regulars, as the cook called some by first name and you don't have to guess why. The prices are insanely cheap. It's a place area workers can stop in on their lunch break, have a meal in minutes and basically be stuffed, for less than five bucks if they order frugally.

Photo/Dan Anderson

It's nothing fancy, but Uncle Jimmy's invites you to be part of the family with hot dogs, ribs, peas, macaroni and cheese and other Southern favorites on DIP.

Uncle Jimmy's is also a place where one might spot a celebrity if one visits on a lucky day. Word on the street is that Mr. Clean is one of the regulars. That's right, you read that correctly. I cannot divulge my source, but Mr. Clean is apparently a fan of Uncle Jimmy's Delicious Hot Dogs. The chance of that alone makes the drive down DIP a couple of miles south of the interstate worth it.

True, this place is no Legacy or Bull or Royal Scam, nor would it wish to be. You have to have something for the Ben Matlocks of the world, and this place would suit our seersucker-wearing barrister just fine. I had a delightful time enjoying some easygoing cuisine and the drive home was as next to nothing as the price. Long live the mighty hot dog stand. Visit Uncle Jimmy's as soon as you get the chance.

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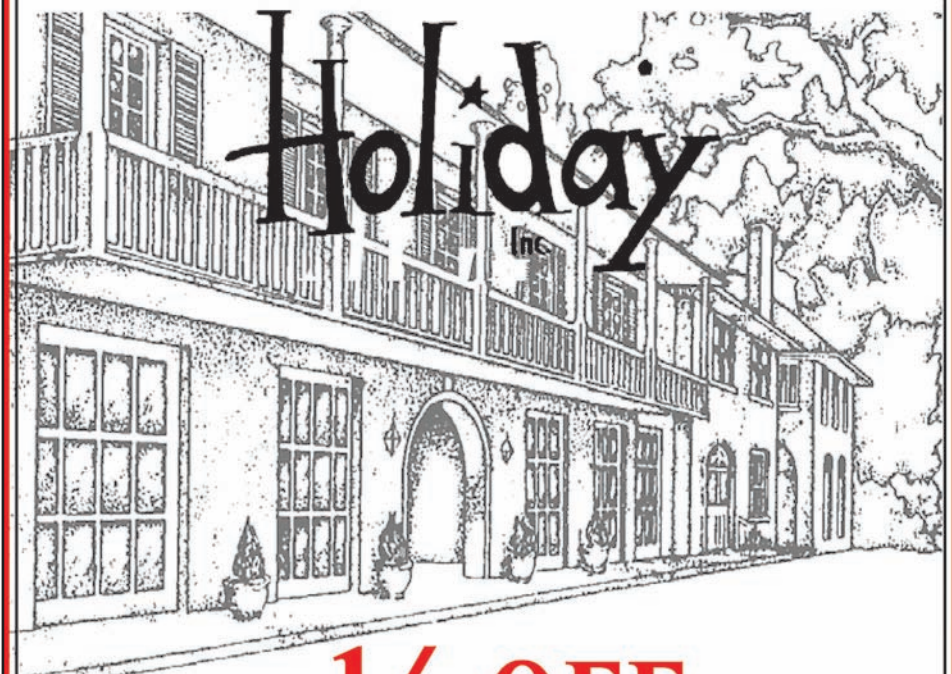


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# Bistro Escoffier offers more affordable menu items

BY ANDY MACDONALD/CUISINE EDITOR | fatmansqueeze@comcast.com

“This little restaurant, here in Mobile, has been the only thing I’ve been working toward for the past 10 years,” said Lee Thompson, owner of Bistro Escoffier. “It is a beautiful little place in a perfect neighborhood and was really the only location I wanted.”

Thompson learned how to cook from Yannick Marchand and took over his restaurant Quatorze in 2003. After closing its doors three years later, Thompson began looking for a place to start anew; his very own restaurant to build from the ground up. After working overseas for a few years, he came back to Mobile to open the bistro he always dreamed of.

Bistro Escoffier was born at 1714 Dauphin St., in the former Mobile Popcorn space, and was immediately well received. But over the past few months a few neighbors have mentioned that although they enjoy the high-caliber food, they just can’t afford to dine there very often.

This has led to a menu expansion that’s much easier on the pocketbook without sacrificing the high-quality food diners have come to expect. They recently started opening for Sunday brunch from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. to give customers a chance to sample several dishes, which include Bloody Mary and mimosa specials.

I personally can’t wait to try the Croque Madame, but there are other sandwiches, including a burger, offered on the new menu. If you haven’t yet tried Bistro Escoffier, now is the time. Call 251-450-2030 for reservations.

## NAIFA BBQ lunch for Ronald McDonald House

Like barbecue? Treat yourself to a heavenly portion of the stuff that made the South famous and raise money for a worthy charity while you’re at it.

The National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) is teaming up with Ronald McDonald

House of Mobile to deliver barbecue to an expected thousands of folks on Thursday, June 11. A mere \$10 gets you a half pound of pulled pork, baked beans, coleslaw, bread and the famous Ronald McDonald House chocolate chip cookie. If that doesn’t seal the deal, I don’t know what will.

You’ll find order forms at [www.rmhcmobile.org](http://www.rmhcmobile.org), or you can order food for pick-up or delivery by calling 251-694-6873.

## 7th annual Duel on Dauphin benefits food bank

I remember 2009 fondly. Gas was \$2.73 per gallon. Taylor Swift was a country star. Times were different then. But the significance of 2009 for Mobilians may be the inception of the Duel on Dauphin.

The 7th annual Duel on Dauphin will be held Sunday, June 7, downtown on Dauphin Street. This crawfish cook-off has enticed those near and far to support downtown Mobile and the Bay Area Food Bank. The cost for a wristband is \$10 at the door or a donation of 10 non-perishable food items.

The event runs from 2 until 6 p.m. as bars compete for bragging rights. This year we’ll be sampling mudbugs prepared by Hayley’s, The Brickyard, LoDa Bier Garten, Saddle Up Saloon and Alchemy Tavern. As you do the “crawfish crawl” from place to place, suck some heads, pinch some tails and donate to a great charity.

## Tilmo’s smoking up Dauphin and I-65

Tilmo’s BBQ first opened in Tillman’s Corner a few years ago. Then came Cotton State BBQ in downtown Mobile as a sister restaurant. The latest barbecue venture for Ryan Tillman is almost ready at Dauphin and I-65.

Though the Tillman’s Corner branch is no longer around, its namesake has taken up new residence in Midtown. Locat-

ed in the former Foosackly’s building next to the BP station, Tilmo’s will be a short bike ride from my house. We’ll let you know as soon as grand-opening plans are made.

## Manci’s kitchen now open for business

The music has been great, the atmosphere stellar and the drinks have been flowing. A brief visit with co-owner John Thompson let me know the kitchen at Manci’s will be open this week with a limited menu. Think burgers, certain sandwiches and maybe a salad or two. You’re welcome, Daphne.

## Two Brothers New Orleans Kitchen a hit in Foley

I’m never upset when a bit of New Orleans makes its way to our area. Foley is the most recent recipient of the honor in Two Brothers New Orleans Kitchen.

Located at 8272 State Highway 59 S., the new restaurant is only weeks old and has plenty of fans. Expect such New Orleans fare as seafood gumbo, chicken and sausage gumbo, oysters on the half shell and po’boys. Those of you who understand me know I’m a sucker for a real muffuletta. No, this isn’t some muffuletta hoagie or other ridiculous abomination. This one is the real deal, and diners are already raving about it.

A website is still under development, but you can find them now on Facebook. There you’ll see a full menu as well as upcoming lunch specials for the month of June. The Brothers Two are keeping this business very homegrown, so don’t expect too much high-tech wizardry. Apparently they focus on the food. The reviews are stellar. For more information, call Two Brothers New Orleans Kitchen at 251-943-5555.

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# Jury weighs two narratives in Hastie corruption trial

BY JASON JOHNSON/REPORTER | [jason@lagniappemobile.com](mailto:jason@lagniappemobile.com)

Opening arguments in a federal corruption trial gave two vastly different explanations for why Mobile County License Commissioner Kim Hastie and Deputy License Commissioner Ramona Yeager found themselves in court last week. In a 17-count indictment originally handed down last November, the U.S. Attorney's Office accused the pair of conspiring to defraud taxpayers and the Mobile County Commission by falsifying invoices and misusing earmarked funds for political purposes.

The allegations include mail fraud, wire fraud and conspiracy. Additionally, Hastie is charged with five counts of extortion under the Hobbs Act and a 17th count alleging she illegally provided thousands of email addresses from the license commission's database to the mayoral campaign of Sandy Stimpson in 2013.

To the contrary, defense attorneys Neil Hanley and Dennis Kinzley claimed Hastie and her second in command were simply political victims of "disgruntled employees" bitter about being held accountable for performance at work for the first time in years.

In the first week of the trial, Hanley painted whistleblower Victor Crawford as an overpaid contractor who turned on his friend Hastie after he became desperate to cling to the single lucrative government contract that sustained his company.

Though a jury will weigh the entirety of the evidence, the charges against Hastie can be simplified into four events: more than \$10,000 of public relations work Hastie paid for through her usual billing for IT services from Crawford's APL Software Engineering; a \$10,000 fee she paid from a restricted account to political consultant Jonathan Gray to write legislation on her behalf; the allegations of extortion Crawford says caused him to turn in Hastie to the FBI; and finally, the leaked emails to the Stimpson campaign.

## Stimpson campaign emails (September 2013)

The final charge, added to Hastie's federal indictment in January 2015, accuses her of intentionally disseminating more than 30,000 private email addresses from the license commission's database — one containing restricted personal information from every registered motor vehicle, mobile home and boat owner in the county.

A federal law prohibiting the disclosure of that information serves as a disclaimer on the license commission's website, yet Hastie herself instructed a subordinate to provide the email addresses to the Stimpson campaign.

The defense has argued the law does not specifically recognize email addresses as "personal information," but acknowledges it was enacted in a time before the widespread use of email.

Despite testimony from several witnesses at trial, Hastie's attorneys made no immediate attempt to refute her involvement with an email blast sent to the addresses the day before Stimpson defeated incumbent mayor Samuel Jones.

Brad Bray, an employee of the license commission since 2007, was the prosecution's first witness. He testified that Hastie initially asked him to "send an email she had already written up" expressing her support for Stimpson sometime in August 2013.

According to Bray, when he declined the order, Hastie asked him to aggregate a list of email addresses from the database. Bray said he delivered a thumb drive with the email addresses to Hastie's assistant just days before the election. According to his testimony, he had narrowed his search to only include residents of Mobile at Hastie's request.

As their second witness, prosecutors called Candace Cooksey, finance director for the 2013 Stimpson campaign. Under direct examination, Cooksey testified to working directly with Hastie preparing to send out the mass email in support of Stimpson.

It what seemed unusual for a legitimate agreement, Cooksey said all the emails she exchanged with Hastie regarding the statement of support originated from an address registered to her daughter, Hannah Hastie.

Cooksey testified she didn't remember the exact date she received the list of email address, but did say she knew it came from Hastie. She forwarded the thumb drive to Webjed, a Mobile-based online branding firm.

Despite all the evidence supporting the allegation of Count 17, defense attorneys focused much of their cross-examination on Bray and his attitude around the office. Hanley asked Bray about attempts to align colleagues against Hastie and Yeager, which he denied, along with an allegation he'd passed around a petition to have another license commission employee terminated. Though Bray also denied that allegation, Crawford later testified that Bray had indeed taken part in the petition.

On the stand, Bray only admitted to "discussing Hastie in a negative way," but only with other employees who "shared the same negative experiences."

## Alleged extortion of Crawford (2012 to 2014)

Opening the trial, which is expected to continue through this week, more than two straight days of testimony focused on the witness who alerted the federal government to Hastie's alleged conspiracy — computer contractor Victor T. Crawford.

The original indictment suggested Hastie used intimidation to extort Crawford into making contributions to her political campaign, to purchase gifts for office Christmas parties and to cover payments to Strateco LLC for political work performed on Hastie's behalf.

In opening statements, defense attorneys suggested those expenses were "gifts," but Crawford testified he only agreed to the payments because he "feared for his job" with the license commission — a contract worth millions of dollars that he's maintained since 1991. Crawford also testified Hastie routinely fired employees who crossed her and made working conditions so difficult for some, they decided to quit on their own.

"(In an office meeting), Hastie stated she was 'really easygoing until you cross her, then it's hell,'" Crawford testified. "If she said, 'I needed to pay for things,' then I paid for things. If I didn't, I thought I would see a letter written and I would be let go by the county."

Crawford said Hastie encouraged him to "pad his bills" in order to make up for the unrelated expenses his business was paying on behalf of her office. Because of Crawford's large monthly invoices, the extra charges went largely unnoticed by the Mobile County Commission.

Federal prosecutors declared Crawford a "whistleblower," which means his \$150 per hour salary is currently secure. Prior to Hastie's indictment, county records indicate APL Software Engineering billed the license commission \$292,958 between November 2013 and June 2014.

According to his testimony, Crawford only had one employee at the time and paid no rent or utilities. With virtually nonexistent overhead, the majority of the billings found their way back to Crawford

— a fact the defense quickly pounced upon.

During cross-examination, Hanley questioned the combined millions of dollars Crawford has billed Mobile County since the early '90s. Particularly, Hanley scrutinized a series of invoices APL Software Engineering submitted to the county from 2012 through 2014.

According to the invoices, Mobile County was billed \$75 per hour for work performed by an APL Software employee named Katie Williamson. However, in Crawford's testimony, he admitted he only paid Williamson around \$25 an hour, while he put the other \$50 per hour in the company's coffers.

Defense attorneys also established that throughout its history with the county, APL Software typically operated with very few employees, if any at all. Hanley asked Crawford if he was "pocketing the money," an accusation he didn't deny. But Crawford also testified he never "over-billed" the county and emphasized he wasn't being paid "for doing nothing."

According to invoices, Crawford was making an average of \$7,500 per month for hours billed to Williamson on top of the \$150-an-hour rate he was already receiving for his own work. Altogether, those expenses totaled nearly \$195,000 over two years, according to Hanley's calculations.

However, in his direct examination, Crawford said Hastie had him pay for Williamson's tuition at Auburn for a course on Alabama taxes. The class was unrelated to work she performed for Crawford, but does apply to Williamson's new position as chief clerk at the license commission — a position she has held since May 2014.

It was also revealed that Crawford was required to pay back \$82,000 to the county's engineering department in 2007, with which he had a contract at the time. Hanley asked Crawford if the payback was necessary for "listing people's tasks in his bills" his employees "didn't have the ability to perform."

Hastie's corruption trial is not the first time Crawford's lucrative contracts with Mobile County have been scrutinized. According to records supplied to Lagniappe last year, APL Software was paid \$6,312,462 by the county since 1999, but evidence suggests their relationship began in the late 1980s.

In a midday motion June 1, defense attorneys seemed confident they'd beat the government's allegations of extortion — filing a motion for acquittal through Yeager's attorneys. From the bench, U.S. District Court Judge Kristi DuBose seemed to agree, at least in part, with the defense in that the government's claims had fallen short in the courtroom.

"There has to be proof [Crawford] was in fear for his job. Where's that explicitly?" DuBose asked. "It can't be just something [he] might be think in his own mind, there has to be a meeting of the minds, not that he was fearful if he didn't provide the gifts he would be fired. The Hobbs Act is a very serious allegation of extortion that requires explicit promise and proof of a quid pro quo."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory Bordenkircher pointed to a handwritten note Hastie left Crawford detailing what Christmas presents she wanted him to purchase for the party. Bordenkircher referred to it as a "demand," but DuBose said his characterization was one "most favorable to the prosecution," considering Hastie thanks Crawford at the end of the same note.

Despite the back and forth, DuBose said she would take the mo



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tion under advisement, which means she could issue a ruling from the bench.

### Strateco paid through APL Software (January 2014 to May 2014)

It's undisputed that Crawford's company paid marketing agency Strateco LLC at least four times in 2014 for work related to the license commission, but the legality of those payments could likely boil down to the jury's interpretation of Crawford's contract with Mobile County.

In 2014, Strateco created a newsletter that discussed, among other things, Hastie's self-promoted campaign to merge the offices of the county's license and revenue commissions. Instead of being submitted to the Mobile County Commission separately, Strateco's invoices were added to Crawford's monthly billings.

Hanley argued Strateco's payments were legal and proper because the county's contract with APL Software Engineering allows for "other related services" to be added at the discretion of the license commissioner.

However, Crawford said his business has nothing to do with marketing, political consulting, social media or any of the services Strateco provided. He also denied any knowledge of the scope of work Strateco was performing for Hastie.

Meanwhile, Strateco CEO Chad Tucker testified that when Hastie first sought his services in 2014, "initially it was about running for revenue commissioner." Later, it "transitioned into merging the two offices together" after Hastie realized she was the only candidate qualified for the position. Tucker further testified that he assumed Hastie was paying him through Crawford because of budgetary restrictions.

Charges related to the payments Strateco received for the work in 2014 constitute most of the wire and mail fraud charges against Hastie and almost all of the charges against her co-defendant, Yeager.

According to FBI Forensic Accountant Kathryn Scott, the invoices Strateco submitted underwent several changes before they were finally submitted to the county. Scott tracked the payments in their entirety, and detailed how the descriptions of the work Tucker performed changed over time. Before they reached the county commission, four versions of Strateco's bills were sent between the company, Hastie and Yeager.

As a part of their investigation, the FBI had Crawford wear a camera during certain conversations with Hastie and Yeager. In one recording, Hastie is seen discussing attempts to reclassify Strateco's expenses to make them seem related to computer work.

"I realized I can't have it saying that, if it's going to have my name I need to pay it," Hastie says in the video. "If anybody was to ask you, that's what it's for. It'll be the newsletter, social media and Facebook [because] that's kind of like IT and that's what it's all about. It's easy and it justifies it because that's all [Strateco] does. I just want to

run it through you because I didn't want to listen to [County Commissioner] Merceria [Ludgood] and them."

Ludgood is among two other county commissioners who approve the expenses of the license commission each month. In other recordings, both Hastie and Yeager discuss organizing Crawford's invoices in such a way that they wouldn't "draw too much attention."

In Hastie's defense, Hanley argued she changed the invoices to "make the descriptions more accurate."

### \$10,000 payment to Strategy Inc. (January 2014 to May 2014)

Hastie also sought the services of public relations firm Strategy Inc. and specifically its founder, political consultant Jonathan Gray. It's undisputed Hastie paid Gray \$10,000 to help author the legislation aimed at combining the offices of the license and revenue commissions. It's also undisputed that those funds were improperly pulled from a segregated account funded by a \$1.25 fee assessed to all electronic transactions at the license commission. According to a law Hastie championed, that "\$1.25 fund" is required by statute to be used explicitly for computer and IT purchases.

Her defense attorneys claim the payment was "a mistake," but prosecutors have pointed to comments Hastie and Gray made to the media suggesting the pair may have known they were skirting the law all along.

Prior to her indictment, Hastie told Lagniappe in recorded conversations introduced into evidence that Gray was never compensated for his services offering: "Chad [Tucker, of Strateco] is who we pay. Jon? No."

Gray eventually returned the money a few weeks after FBI agents raided Hastie's office.

When asked why he returned the money, Gray described it as "blood money."

"I don't want somebody to go to prison because they wrote me a check out of an account they shouldn't have and didn't know it," Gray said. "I don't think Kim intended to break the law in writing me that check, but that's my opinion."

When Gray initially returned the money, Hastie told Lagniappe "no one asked" or "suggested" he do so, but Gray's testimony to a grand jury prior to the trial suggested he was indeed approached by the FBI and one of Hastie's attorneys about refunding the account. The attorney, Buzz Jordan, wrote a letter to Gray requesting he return the money to the license commission.

Gray however, maintains he and his business partner had already decided they wanted to return the \$10,000 of their own volition.

Testimony in the trial concluded Tuesday. If Hastie is convicted, she faces automatic removal from office, as well as fines and prison time. Daily updates are available on [lagniappemobile.com](http://lagniappemobile.com).

*Dale Liesch contributed to this report.*

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# Makalani Theatre Ensemble impresses with 'Art'

BY KEVIN LEE/ARTS EDITOR | klee@lagniappemobile.com

The first few steps of any arts organization are always the most important. You need to be a quick study, to build on previous efforts so observers are tantalized by both progress and possibility.

Chalk up one in that column for Makalani Theatre Ensemble. Their second year's effort topped the first in various respects.

The most obvious was in the selection of work; Yasmina Reza's 1998 Tony Award-winner "Art" is a great choice. Last seen in these parts at Mobile Theatre Guild some 15 years ago, its themes of subjectivity, perception and the shifts of personality and friendship are as salient now as ever.

The cast is 50 percent larger than last year's two-person work, "Brilliant Traces." The trio of characters allows for more twists and turns, increasing the emotional pugilism on display.

The black-box theater-in-the-round in the University of South Alabama's Laidlaw Performing Arts Building seats roughly 50 to 60 and the coziness works. Its intimacy helps with the uncomfortable air marking the final 10 to 15 minutes.

The set design too employs more creativity this time around. Still minimalistic — more so without the scattering of accoutrements in last year's imaginary Alaskan cabin — yet there's an employ of varying levels in angular relationships that gives it more subtle complexity. It is analogous to the characters and their relationships.

The play opens with characters Marc and Serge facing each other from opposite corners, the primal thump of a double bass buttressing a latent tension. The rhythm might as well be the chime of a ringside bell.

It seems Serge spent a relative fortune on a stark, white canvas of modern art. For him, it's testimony to his sophistication.

Marc's opening lines bear the unabashed needling only afforded by years of friendship. He thinks the art overrated and Serge pretentious.

Each man turns to beleaguered Yvan to voice irritation with the other. The third friend wants to avoid conflict as he is navigating

the insanity of an approaching wedding. Ultimately, Yvan's "live and let live" tack only exacerbates matters.

Kudos go to the costumer. Remember the old saw about glimpsing someone's personality through their shoes? It applies here and works its way up.

Traditionalist Marc, who likes his paintings to be landscapes, wears earth-toned saddle oxfords. He tops it with conservative garb — knit shirt and khakis — that would allow him to meld into a Mobile social scene.

Serge's stylish dress shoes are more cosmopolitan, matched with dress slacks and a natty sweater. He obviously considers himself both urban and urbane.

Neurotic Yvan pads around in boots. His jeans and flapping shirttail give the hint of a guy whose self-image is somewhat laid back, maybe even irresponsible.

Another change from last year is the heightened comedy. As Marc, Robert Wells III often breaks the fourth wall to glance at the audience as if they naturally find Serge's behavior as amusing as he does. He also projects a suppressed intensity that somehow fits with his character's judgmental outlook.

Christopher Peck's Serge isn't as mirthful but the actor's timing is strong. He also reflects a natural quality in his portrayal sorely missing from many local productions.

In a reversal of last year, South Alabama professor Peck stars while his colleague Keone Fuqua directs. The pair birthed Makalani's first production.

While supposedly a mess, Fulton Burns' angst-filled Yvan would fit just as well in a Woody Allen flick as on stage. His rant about matrimonial ordeal was the comedic apex of the show.

When the animosity between Serge and Marc finally boils over, it becomes clear how much they are using Yvan and it becomes uncomfortable. When they turn on him, you just want them to stop attacking the person whose overriding goal is armistice.

If you're at least middle-aged and familiar with life's circuitous course, the subject matter has relevance. None of us remains stag-



Photo/ Joelle Grace Photography

Mobile's Makalani Theatre Ensemble presented "Brilliant Traces" last year. Currently, the troupe is performing "Art," which runs through June 7.

nant or dormant — not those interested in discovery and growth, anyway — and the price it exacts isn't always obvious or avoidable.

Makalani's goal is to up the theatrical bar for Mobile. They've managed to do it for themselves with this year's effort and hopefully ascension looms.

"Art" runs through June 7. Evening performances are at 8 p.m. Sunday matinee is at 2 p.m. In a wonderful move intended to reward diligence, there's an understudy performance Saturday, June 6, at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door, \$12 for students and military. Cash, check and credit cards are accepted.

Tickets can be ordered through Makalani's Facebook site or via [universe.com/mtepresentart](http://universe.com/mtepresentart). A service charge will be applied to online sales.

Direct email inquiries to [makalanitheatreensemble@gmail.com](mailto:makalanitheatreensemble@gmail.com).

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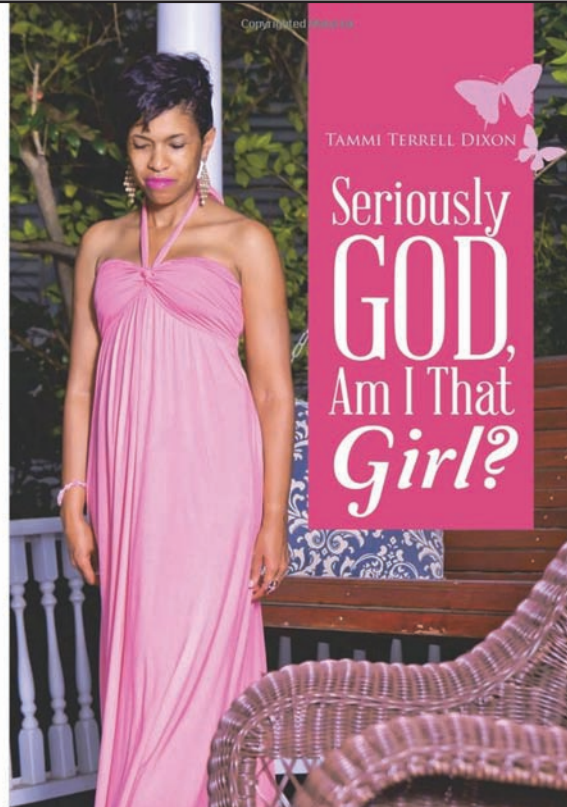


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# Exploreum exhibit literally out of this world

BY KEVIN LEE/ARTS EDITOR | klee@lagniappemobile.com

A quarter million miles is a long way to come just to luxuriate by the banks of the Mobile River. At least this guest won't be lacking for company.

That's because the visitor is a lunar rock on loan from the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville. Its vigilant companion? The ever-present security on hand to make sure this Very Important Breccia stays in place throughout its short stay at Mobile's museum devoted to STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) pursuits.

The lunar sample was brought back to terra firma during 1971's Apollo 15 mission. With its age calculated at 3.9 billion years, the composite stone is older than 99.9 percent of all earth rock.

The lunar specimen is joined in the upstairs gallery by other space minerals, mainly a smattering of asteroids and their pieces from Russia, Namibia, China and Texas. Alongside these minerals are other rare, historic collectibles such as an Apollo 11 medallion minted with metal from the Columbia spacecraft, a Saturn rocket data book, a commemorative button honoring astronaut Gordon Cooper and a 1952 book on Mars missions authored by Wernher von Braun, the father of the U.S. space program.

The majority of the exhibit is located on the ground floor and contains a wealth of models, artifacts and varied interactive computer exhibits orbiting both our history of exploration and a future aimed at Mars. A pair of 3-D stations detail what life aboard the International Space Station entails and lets visitors see some of the myriad ways our everyday life has been enhanced by the space program technology and research, not the least of which is medical in nature.

Pieces of the space shuttle program are in place, including tires, astronaut gear, insulating foam and heat-dispersing ceramic tiles. Coincidentally, there is one model of a space shuttle atop a 747 air transport like the tandem that landed at Brookley Aeroplex in 1984.

While the lunar sample leaves Mobile after June 10, the rest of the exhibit remains in place until Sept. 7. It is made possible from sponsorship by steel fabricator AM/NS Calvert.

Summer hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.,

Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

For more information, call 251-208-6893 or visit [www.exploreum.com](http://www.exploreum.com).

## Fiddler climbs Carlen Street roof

It's 1905 in a Russian hamlet on the Pale of Settlement, an area where Jews are allowed permanent residency and Tevye the Dairyman is worried about his five daughters. The three eldest kids are looking for romantic marriages but their pursuits are diverging from their father's traditional customs and beliefs.

Inspired by Sholem Aleichem's late 19th century stories of a harried and perilous existence for Jews in Imperial Russia, the story had been considered for dramatic presentation for decades before Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick and Joseph Stein brought "Fiddler on the Roof" to Broadway in 1964. It not only became the first American musical to surpass 3,000 performances but won nine of its 10 Tony Award nominations, became a hit 1971 film and has had four Broadway revivals.

Now the Joe Jefferson Players bring this tale of cultural touchstones and changing times to life, with nearly 40 cast members. The run in their 11 S. Carlen St. playhouse lasts June 5 through 21.

Friday and Saturday curtain times are 8 p.m. Sunday matinee is at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$20, \$15 for seniors and military, and \$10 for students.

For more information, call 251-471-1534 or go to [joejeffersonplayers.com](http://joejeffersonplayers.com).

## Saenger puts 'change of life' to song

As four female shoppers rifle through lingerie at Bloomingdale's, common ground emerges. They begin to joke about wrinkles and weight gain, mood swings and hot flashes, nocturnal sweats and memory loss. Inevitably, song and dance erupts as they resolve to dissolve the "silent passage."

These are the unmistakable ingredients of "Menopause the Musical." Penned by Jeannie Linders, its natural appeal to female

Baby Boomers of a certain age launched it to off-Broadway success beginning in 2001. One of the longest-running scripted productions in Las Vegas, it has played 450 U.S. cities, nearly 300 international cities and a total of 15 countries.

Now after entertaining audiences across oceans, GFour Productions brings the show to Mobile's Saenger Theatre (6 S. Joachim St.) on June 11 at 8 p.m. The 90-minute production is constructed around parodied pop songs of the '60s, '70s and '80s.

Tickets are \$45 and \$39; additional fees may apply.

For more info, call the Saenger Box Office at 251-208-5600 or go to [mobilesaenger.com](http://mobilesaenger.com).

## GCEHJF unveils poster, holds auditions

The 17th annual Gulf Coast Ethnic and Heritage Festival (GCEHJF) will unveil its poster at noon, June 6, at the Mobile Arts Council (318 Dauphin St.) in downtown Mobile. The work by noted Mobile artist Mateo also commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act.

GCEHJF also sponsors an annual week-long Summer Youth Jazz Camp for aspiring jazz musicians, held this year from July 27-31. Auditions for the program will be held after the unveiling, from 1-4 p.m. Interested campers will be asked their level of musical knowledge and to possibly perform a piece for instructors in order to place them in the skill-appropriate class.

The Gulf Coast Ethnic and Heritage Jazz Festival is a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to further the preservation and growth of jazz music as America's only original music art form. Founded in 1999, the organization's vision is to provide music lovers throughout Mobile and the Gulf Coast area with a vibrant mix of professional jazz entertainment and music education. The GCEHJF is sponsored by grants from The Alabama Council on the Arts, The Mobile Arts Council and the Mobile County Commission.

For more information please call Yvette Chestang, Jazz Festival Marketing Director at 703-595-7427 or email at [yvettechestang@gcejazzfest.com](mailto:yvettechestang@gcejazzfest.com). Also visit [www.gcejazzfest.com](http://www.gcejazzfest.com).

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# Vomit Spots annual reunion is all-inclusive

BY STEPHEN CENTANNI/MUSIC EDITOR | scentanni@lagniappemobile.com



**Band: The Vomit Spots 30th Anniversary Reunion, featuring Black Irish Texas, Post-Mortem Delirium and Sazerac Band**  
**Date: Saturday, June 6 at 9 p.m.**  
**Venue: Alchemy Tavern, 7 S. Joachim St., www.alchemytavernmobile.com**  
**Tickets: \$12 at the door**

When it comes to a local underground music scene, Mobile has always been feast or famine: The Azalea City can be teeming with underground bands and venues catering to them, or be virtually devoid of both. Over the years, one beloved local band has served as a sonic time capsule, taking fans back to the glory days of the '90s when underground bands such as Lopybogy, La Brea Stompers and The Rigid Kittens graced local stages at Vincent Van Go-Go and Four Strong Winds Coffee House.

The Vomit Spots have spent the past 30 years performing before crowds of adoring fans, and front man Keith Hammett loves every minute of it. Almost every year, Hammett, guitarist Al de Lorge, bassist Robbie Turpin and drummer Anton Garriz revive the Azalea City's '90s underground scene by performing furious Spots' cuts such as "Axl Rose," "Beano" and "Talking to Al." According to Hammett, the band, along with friends and fans, use these shows as de facto high school or college reunions. While scenesters from the past make up a large portion of the audience, the band's reputation also brings out new-schoolers.

"It's kind of cool and kind of scary," Hammett said. "I know sometimes people haven't seen us before, and they come and see a bunch of old guys jumping around on stage. I wonder why people talk such good things about us. We're bigger now than we were back in the day, so that's cool."

The Vomit Spots began in a place where many other great '90s bands formed: college. The members were students at Spring Hill College and the University of South Alabama and in different bands when they met. Defunct Spring Hill College radio station WTOH was at the center of their social circle. With a radius barely reaching a couple of miles, WTOH brought the Azalea City its first taste of bands like The Jesus and Mary Chain and Jane's Addiction.

The Vomit Spots emerged from the ooze as what Hammett would describe as "a joke band." The band took its name from the aftermath of a hurricane party at which too many hurricanes were consumed and then regurgitated on a white dorm room carpet. Even though the band was formed as a joke, they quickly gained popularity with songs such as "Booger Snot" and "Nina Haagen Dazs" at local venues promoting the '90s alt. rock movement.

"As far as the bar scene goes, at first it was Poor Richard's and George's," Hammett said. "Poor Richard's had alternative nights on Tuesday or Wednesday nights, so we would stay up late on a school night and play over there. Even Thirsties and Boogies on Old Shell Road had shows, but we pretty much took off at the



Photo/ facebook.com/pages/Vomit-Spots

Remember the '90s? Mobile's Vomit Spots return for their annual reunion show June 6 at Alchemy Tavern.

Vincent Van Go-Go."

The band also became synonymous with artist Lindsey Kuhn, who is known for his memorable show prints. In the band's early days, Hillsdale was the epicenter of the local scene. Bands such as Buffalo Roam and Lopybogy lived alongside The Vomit Spots and Lindsey Kuhn. Hammett explained that Kuhn was instrumental in creating The Vomit Spots' T-shirts, which were a major moneymaker for the band at live shows. Kuhn's handiwork can still be seen at the Spots' reunion shows.

"We tried to make new T-shirts every time we went on a little tour or had something new coming up," Hammett said. "I've got shirts this time, but they're leftovers. I need to call Lindsey today. Lindsey is doing very well for himself. He's living in Denver, Colorado, now, so it's hard to get him to do little favors."

Eventually, The Vomit Spots grew beyond Mobile. The band began to tour across the Southeast on mini-tours that usually were scheduled for holiday weekends and summers. Even California received a taste of Mobile's underground music scene when the band toured the West Coast. The Vomit Spots developed one of their largest out-of-town followings in Birmingham, and this popularity led to an unfortunate episode in the band's history. It was there that an HBO documentary crew shooting "Skinheads U.S.A.: Soldiers of Hate" showed up at a Vomit Spots show. The documentary profiled neo-Nazi Bill Riccio and his group of young white-power skinhead followers. They informed the band that Riccio and his group planned to attend the show.

"They came to the show, because that's where all the other young people were going that night," Hammett said. "HBO asked

us if they could film under the idea that any publicity is good publicity. Then, it was like, 'Oh no!'"

After the documentary aired, the band found themselves associated with the skinhead movement. The nature of the underground music scene at that time also did not help in distancing The Vomit Spots from this false perception of the band. Hammett said that in those days in Mobile, anyone on the social fringe gravitated to the underground scene. These subcultures included punks, hippies, metal heads and even skinheads. It was not uncommon to see skinheads at their shows. This inadvertent association with the white power movement became serious when federal authorities began to monitor the band.

"After that show, the FBI came to a show to see if we were involved in all that stuff," Hammett said. "There were a lot of police there and undercover people. The promoter was like, 'You know, if I were you, I wouldn't curse too much or take your shirt off on stage or anything that could be misconstrued as breaking a law.' Everybody thought we were skinheads, and we were like, 'No, we're not skinheads.'"

The band's rich and varied history is played out on stage with each reunion show. In addition to The Vomit Spots, Black Irish Texas will be joining the band with their Celtic punk sounds. Post-Mortem Delirium will deliver an injection of brutal horror punk laced with metal overtones. Newcomers the Sazerac Band completes the lineup with a fresh batch of homegrown underground sounds.

Hammett warns it will be "a late night," which will be a good thing for their audience.

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# As funky as you want to be

BY STEPHEN CENTANNI/MUSIC EDITOR | scentanni@lagniappemobile.com

**Band:** Mobile Funk Fest 2015  
**Date:** Saturday, June 6 with gates at 5 p.m.  
**Venue:** The Grounds, 1035 Cody Road N., [www.the-groundsmobile.com](http://www.the-groundsmobile.com)  
**Tickets:** \$35 advance/\$40 day-of with VIP available through Crown Tickets

Each year, Funk Fest pulls a multitude of people to The Grounds for a day filled with the best R&B, funk, hip-hop and soul. Funk Fest 2015 will be a sonic time capsule filled with some of the most memorable urban artists from the '80s and '90s. Mobile Funk Fest boasts a line-up filled with headliner-level entertainment.

Many consider the 2 Live Crew reunion to be one of the best reasons to attend Funk Fest. Even though this hip-hop collective earned notoriety with their controversial album "As Nasty As They Wanna Be," their reputation for no-holds-barred lyricism broke out with the album "Move Somethin'," which contained memorable tracks such as "Do Wah Diddy" and "S and M." Throughout the years, 2 Live Crew has shown no mercy and made no concessions with their music. This line-up will include infamous front man Uncle Luke (Luther Campbell), Brother Marquis and Fresh Kid Ice.

In addition, Bel Biv Devoe will bring their "Poison" and Salt & Pepa will make the crowd "Push It." Eighties dance club superstars Cameo will get the crowd grooving, and Doug E. Fresh will prove why he is the "World's Greatest Entertainer" with his beat box skills.



Photo/ saltpepa.net

## No Suh drops new album

**Band:** No Suh Foster album release party  
**Date:** Friday, June 5 with doors at 9 p.m.  
**Venue:** Soul Kitchen, 219 Dauphin St., [www.soulkitchenmobile.com](http://www.soulkitchenmobile.com)  
**Tickets:** \$7 advance/\$10 at the door, available at Soul Kitchen and on website

Modern hip-hop artists struggle to find a trademark flow that will characterize their sound. Local wordsmith No Suh Foster has taken a spoken-word approach to his verbal delivery. He has also enhanced his hip-hop sound with a social/political message that he hopes "will eventually lead to the break of your shackles." No Suh Foster will be showcasing tracks from his latest effort, "Across the Street from the Church."

The public has been previewing this album through its debut single, "Manchild in the Promised Land," which was produced by Seattle beat-master Neuromansah. The album shares its title with a Claude Brown book. The track begins in a chaos of beats of echoed vocal work before the artist pulls it together with a smooth, rolling delivery. Judging from this track, No Suh Foster's style is a rare and welcome commodity on the local music scene.

In addition to Foster's set, the crowd will be treated to performances by Unicorn Bounty Hunters, King's Tomb, Love Moor, Ms. Charm Taylor and Baron Amato. The show will also feature pop-up shops and performance art.



Photo/ Justin "JMILLZ" Milhouse/youtube.com

## Listen closely to Barbato

**Band:** Johnny Barbato  
**Date:** Friday, June 5 at 8 p.m.  
**Venue:** The Listening Room, 78 St. Francis St., [thelistening-roommobile.com](http://thelistening-roommobile.com)  
**Tickets:** \$7.50 at the door

The Listening Room has been satisfying local music junkies with an environment that provides an intimate experience with each evening's featured artist. For this Friday performance, The Listening Room brings a bit of the Flora-Bama to its stage. Life experience is one of the most appealing aspects of Flora-Bama's line-up of performer-songwriters, and Johnny Barbato has plenty of life experience to share.

Barbato developed a love for music during his early years in New Orleans. When he began to compose original pieces, he mingled soulful country with blues and Southern rock. Eventually, this singer-guitarist made his way along the Gulf Coast and spent time performing as both a solo artist and with his band the Lucky Doggs.

Barbato is also a veteran of the International Blue Challenge's Solo and Band divisions. His set at the Listening Room will feature "a master fiddler from Louisiana." As always, audience members will get a chance to get to know Barbato better through a meet-and-greet intermission.



Photo/ The Southern Rambler/Facebook



JUNE 4 - JUNE 10

AREA MUSIC LISTINGS

**THUR. JUNE 4**

**Alchemy**— Ryan Balthrop  
**Baumhower's (OBA)**— Destiny Brown  
**BLUEGILL**— Brandon & Pierce, 6p  
**Blues Tavern**— John Nemeth, 8:30p  
**Callaghan's**— Phil Proctor  
**Captain's Table**— Jerry Squires, 7p  
**Felix's**— Grits N' Pieces  
**Flora Bama**— Brittany Grimes, 3p// Johnny Barbato, 5:30p// Mark Sherrill, Chris Newbury, John Joiner, Mel Knapp, 6p// Lee Yankee & Hellz Yeah, 10p// Joe Hart & All That's Left, 10:30p  
**The Grand Mariner**— Order of LaShe's Poker Run, 10a (first draw)// Cary Laine, 4p  
**Hard Rock (Center Bar)**— The Flying Steinway Brothers  
**Legacy**— Ryan Balthrop  
**Lulu's**— Adam Holt Band, 6p  
**McSharry's**— TJ & Marsh, 7:30p  
**Moe's BBQ (Daphne)**— Yellowhammer, 8p  
**Old 27 Grill**— Songwriters Night, 6:30p  
**Pinzones**— Amy True  
**Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)**— Damien Lamb Duo, 6p  
**Sunset Fest @ The Wharf**— Brian Hill  
**Veets**— Cary Laine & Dale Drinkard, 8p

**FRI. JUNE 5**

**Alchemy**— Josh Ewing  
**Baumhower's (OBA)**— Roger Plemons  
**Bill's by the Beach**— Lisa Zanghi & Scott Koehn, 6:30p  
**Bimini Bob's**— Destiny Brown  
**Blind Mule**— Paper Bison and Enjoy the Weather, 10p  
**BLUEGILL**— Dale Drinkard, 11a// Jeri, 6p  
**Blues Tavern**— 61/49, 9p  
**Callaghan's**— Great Peacock  
**Captain's Table**— Jerry Squires, 7p  
**Cockeyed Charlie's**— MT Pockets  
**Ed's Seafood Shed**— Les Hall  
**Felix's**— Blind Dog Mike  
**Flora Bama**— Shindig in the Sand: Jack Robertson, Mary Sarah & thee Church, Shawna P & Earth Funk Tribe, LeaAnne Creswell, John Joiner, Darrel Roberts,

Karen Waldrup Band, Brian Hill Band, Smokin Elvis, Hung Jury, Whyte Caps, Rhythm Intervention.  
**Garage**— The Red Field, 9p  
**Hard Rock (Center Bar)**— Kings County  
**Hard Rock (Live)**— Jamey Johnson, 8p  
**IP Casino**— Arsenio Hall, 8p  
**Legacy**— Brandon Bailey, 6p// Soulshine Band, 8:30p  
**Listening Room**— Johnny Barbato and Friends, 8p  
**Lulu's**— Kyle & Karl, 6p  
**Main Street Cigar Lounge**— Matt & Sherry Neese, 8p  
**Manci's**— Chris Powell  
**McSharry's**— DJ CHI, 10p  
**Moe's BBQ (Mobile)**— Robbie Sellers, 6:30p  
**Moe's BBQ (Daphne)**— Neil Dover Band, 8p  
**O'Daly's**— Gene Murrell, Tony Edwards and David White, 10p  
**Old 27 Grill**— Acoustic Punch, 6:30p  
**Pirates Cove**— Kelly Poole and the Swingsets, 7p  
**Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)**— The Budz, 6p  
**Tropics**— Certainly Unsure  
**The Shed (Ocean Springs)**— Bayou Rhythm, 7p  
**Soul Kitchen**— No Suh Foster, 9p  
**Veets**— The Family Jewels, 9p  
**Windmill Market**— Sam Bonfe, 11a// Martin Rodrigue, 6p

**SAT. JUNE 6**

**Alchemy**— Vomit Spots Annual Reunion Show  
**American Legion Post 88**— Bill and Arron  
**Baumhower's (OBA)**— Christina Christian  
**Bill's by the Beach**— Barstool Surfers, 7p  
**BLUEGILL**— Jimmy Lumpkin, 11a// Fat Lincoln, 6p  
**Blues Tavern**— Chico & Chris, 9p  
**Callaghan's**— Phil and Walon  
**Captain's Table**— Jerry Squires, 7p  
**Ed's Seafood Shed**— Les Hall  
**Felix's**— Jimmy Lumpkin Duo  
**Flora Bama**— Shindig in the Sand: Jack Robertson, Gove Scrivenor, Grayson Capps

& Corky Hughs, LeaAnne Creswell, Scott Koehn, Lisa Zanghi, Kim Carson & the RealDeal, The Springs, J.Hawkins, Lucky Doggs, Federal Expression and others.  
**Garage**— Sarah Percy Band, 9p  
**Hard Rock (Center Bar)**— Kings County  
**Listening Room**— Melissa Joiner, 8p  
**Lulu's**— Shiny Objects, 6p  
**Manci's**— Great Peacock  
**McSharry's**— DJ Twiggans, 10p  
**Moe's BBQ (Mobile)**— Nicki Talley, 6:30p  
**Old 27 Grill**— Tyler Champion, 6:30p  
**Pinzones**— Lee Yankee  
**Pirates Cove**— The Budz, 11a// Rhythm Intervention, 3p// Grayson Capps and The Lost Cause Minstrels, 7p  
**Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)**— Charlie Wilson Duo, 12p// Marty McIntosh, 6p  
**Tropics**— The Worx  
**Soul Kitchen**— GlowRage, 9p  
**Veets**— The Family Jewels, 9p  
**The Wharf**— Steve Miller Band, 8p  
**Windmill Market**— Cathy Brumback, 11a

**SUN. JUNE 7**

**Alchemy**— Gregg Fells, 7p  
**Bimini Bob's**— Destiny Brown  
**BLUEGILL**— Dale Drinkard, 11a// Peek, 6p  
**Blues Tavern**— 61/49, 5p  
**Callaghan's**— Cardinal and Sons  
**Felix's**— Bobby Butchka  
**Flora Bama**— Shindig in the Sand: Wayne Toups Band, Heritage, Kim Carson & the Real Deal, Nikki Talley & Jason Storm, Sugarcane Janem=, Ultraviolet, Perdido Brothers, Hotel Oscar, Zachary Diedrich & the Bama Bayou Boys and others.  
**Garage**— Mojo Duo, 5p  
**Hard Rock (Center Bar)**— Mason Holland  
**Legacy**— Rebecca Barry and John Cochran, 11a  
**Little Flower Church**— Gloria Dei Chorale, 3p  
**Lulu's**— Shiny Objects, 6p  
**Manci's**— Modern Eldorados  
**McSharry's**— Trad Irish Music, 6:30p  
**Pinzones**— Less Hall, 11a// Ross Newell, 5p

**Pirates Cove**— Seth Walker, 11a// Elvis and the Promise Land, 3p  
**Tacky Jacks (Orange Beach)**— Jonsey Gambino, 11a  
**Tropics**— Al & Cathy  
**Soul Kitchen**— RS Battle League, 9p  
**Veets**— The Budz, 8p

**MON. JUNE 8**

**Felix's**— Hannah Wallace  
**Flora Bama**— Brittany Grimes, 3p// Marty McIntosh, 5:30p// Cathy Pace, 6p// Big Muddy, 10p// Smokin' Elvis', 10p  
**Lucky's Irish Pub**— Marcus, 8p  
**Lulu's**— Brent Burns, 6p

**TUE. JUNE 9**

**American Legion Post 88**— Mark and Greg  
**Beau Rivage**— YAYE, 7p  
**BLUEGILL**— Matt & Josh, 6p  
**Butch Cassidy's**— Chris Powell  
**Captain's Table**— Jerry Squires, 6p  
**Felix's**— Bruce Smelley  
**Flora Bama**— Ryan Conner, 3p// Zachery Diecrich, 5:30p// Perdido Brothers, 6p// Justin Jeansonne Band, 10p// Shawna P., 10p  
**Hard Rock (Center Bar)**— Radio Inc.  
**Lulu's**— Alvarado Road Show, 6p  
**Veets**— Laci Wright, Jo Anna Berlage & Melanie Robertson, 8p

**WED. JUNE 10**

**Beau Rivage**— YAYE, 7p  
**Bimini Bob's**— Al and Cathy  
**BLUEGILL**— Ross + 1, 6p  
**Blues Tavern**— New Band audition  
**Bucky's Birdcage (Grand Hotel)**— Adam Holt Piano Show, 8p  
**Callaghan's**— Deluxe Trio  
**Captain's Table**— Jerry Squires, 6p  
**Cockeyed Charlie's**— Ryan Balthrop  
**Felix's**— Lee Yankee  
**Flora Bama**— Neil Dover, 3p// Johnny Barbato, 5:30p// Smokin Elvis, 6p// Hung Jury w/Wade Reeves, 10p// Rebecca Barry Duo, 10p  
**Hard Rock (Center Bar)**— Radio Inc.  
**Legacy**— Lee Yankee  
**Lulu's**— Alvarado Road Show, 6p  
**Tacky Jacks (Gulf Shores)**— Nigel, 6p  
**Veets**— Grits N' Pieces, 8p

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[Gulf Shores]  
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**Pelican Reef Restaurant**  
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| 973-2670

**Trader's**  
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**The River Shack**

6120 Marina Dr. S.  
443-7318

**Tin Top**  
6232 Bon Secour Hwy. County  
Rd. 10 | 251-949-5086

**Touch Down Tavern**  
5460 Inn Rd | 662-7543

**VFW Post 7320** [Saraland]  
244 Old Telegraph Rd. | 679-1188

**Whiskey Blues** [Theodore]  
5791 Swedetown Rd. | 633-1769

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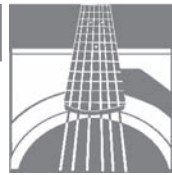
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# Jamell Richardson headlines free Second Tuesday concert

BY STEPHEN CENTANNI/MUSIC EDITOR | scentanni@lagniappemobile.com

Jamell Richardson, “The Gulf Coast Blues Boy” and winner of 92 ZEW’s 2015 Reach the Beach competition, performed with his band at Hangout Fest last month to an enthusiastic crowd. Richardson even took time out to pay homage to the late B.B. King, whose death had been announced just hours earlier. Richardson’s blistering performance of an extended version of “The Thrill is Gone” is available to view on YouTube. But in case you missed it, locals can experience Richardson in Mobile at 92 ZEW’s next Second Tuesday concert. Richardson and his band will appear Tuesday, June 9, at 7 p.m. at a new venue for Second Tuesday concerts, the Azalea Manor at 751 Dauphin St. The concert series is free.

## Great Peacock struts back with new members

When Great Peacock made their Callaghan’s debut, regulars instantly fell in love with their earthy brand of modern folk. Great Peacock has made

the Azalea City a regular stop, and have attracted more fans with each Callaghan’s performance. The band has also increased in numbers, with Nick Recio and Ben Cunningham joining founding members Blount Floyd and Andrew Nelson. The new lineup returns to Callaghan’s Friday, June 5, at 7:30 p.m.

Great Peacock will feature songs from their full-length debut, “Making Ghosts.” For this project, Great Peacock brought in Nashville producer Dan Fernandez and Birmingham notable Les Nuby III (Verbena, Vulture Whale), but kept a hand in some of the production. From the opening title track, it’s clear Great Peacock made a good decision to continue creating dreamy aural snapshots of the modern South. The title track is a great example of where current alt. country should be. Expert harmonies are joined with a sound that doesn’t quite cross the genre line enough to be called country. If there is one contrast to the band’s initial EP offering, it’s the excellent production. The live delivery of this album should be just as appealing.



Photo/ jamellrichardson.com

Gulf Coast Blues Boy Jamell Richardson won 92 ZEW’s “Reach The Beach” contest.

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# 'Welcome to Me' turns up the strange factor

BY ASIA FREY/FILM CRITIC | afrey@lagniappemobile.com



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- SAT, JUNE 21 - ERIC ERDMAN / 4-7 PM
- SAT, JUNE 27 - ORDER OF VENUS POKER RUN / 2ND STOP
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<b>TUES JUNE 9</b> Hamburger Steak Rice and Gravy Green Beans Dessert Roll	<b>WED JUNE 10</b> Turkey & Dressing Baby Carrots Cabbage Dessert Rolls
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**K**risten Wiig continues to grow as a performer in "Welcome to Me," which makes use of her singular comedic gifts, tempered in this film with a truly weird streak of drama and pathos. Everything about her role, as mentally ill adult Alice Kleig, has the signature of a truly personal interpretation. The result is a film for which the term "quirky" just scratches the surface. Alice is an unforgettable character that could only belong to Wiig.

Alice has borderline personality disorder. She ekes out a highly specialized existence, supporting herself on disability benefits and creating a world that is tolerable to her. She lives alone in an apartment full of VHS tapes of "Oprah," her favorite television show, and has an old TV set that she has left on for 11 years. She sees a therapist (Tim Robbins) as a required condition of her benefits, and believes she can control her decades-old problems with a high-protein diet instead of Abilify.

Alice wins the California lottery and with her \$86 million, and her sweet, patient best friend (Linda Cardellini), moves into a casino. The women attend a live taping of an infomercial beloved by Alice, for a high-protein powder sold by Wes Bentley, and Alice quickly gains the stage as an audience participant. Eager to talk about herself on television, Alice declares her wish to have her own talk show, entirely about herself. Bentley's brother and business partner, played by James Marsden, quickly realizes that Alice's unwise expenditures can save their faltering television studio and agrees to produce her show.



Photo/ imdb.com

**Kristen Wiig stars as Alice Kleig, an emotionally unstable person with \$86 million in the bank.**

While Wiig neither wrote nor directed this film, she deftly handles a character that could easily have been a caricature or worse. When a comedy is about a sick person, you can get a little queasy essentially laughing at that person's problems, but this film walks the line between sympathy and comedy and, despite being nutty and over the top, also feels realistic.

Alice's two-hour show, "Welcome to Me," is a bizarre and disturbing stream of consciousness extravaganza, in which she bakes and consumes a ground beef cake, reenacts upsetting scenes from childhood with actors and, eventually, neuter her own dog. She records her own opening

song and rides out in a rolling swan boat. She is bursting with suspect ideas, and the staff gives in to every one of them. In one scene, a veteran producer weeps with frustration at a production meeting.

As her show gains a bit of momentum and even a few intrigued fans, Alice's self-confidence grows and she moves ahead even more recklessly with her tell-all segments. Her friends, family and those working on the show exhibit a funny and interesting array of responses to her alternately aggressive and retiring personality. Even the brothers who take her money give her what she asks for, even if they know she shouldn't have it.

Wiig's amazing performance anchors the film, of course, but the supporting cast rounds out the story perfectly. Cardellini ("Freaks and Geeks") is touching as Wiig's put-upon best friend. Bentley almost matches Wiig in portraying emotional damage. I particularly enjoyed Joan Cusack as the producer who grudgingly comes to respect Alice. This film is almost as bizarre as its subject, and not to be missed.

"Welcome to Me" is playing on VOD and in select cities, but thanks to Hoopla, a program through the Mobile Public Library, you can also stream it for free. A huge selection of films is available on Hoopla, but "Welcome to Me" is the first title to premier there on the same day it opened in theaters. Get your library card and visit [www.mplonline.org](http://www.mplonline.org) to sign up for your Hoopla account. They also have music, e-books and audiobooks.

## NEW IN THEATERS



Photo/ Entourage/youtube.com

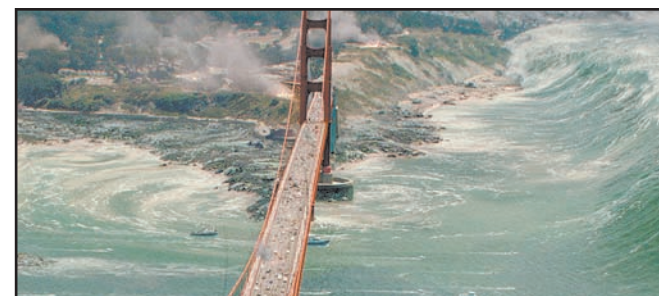
**ENTOURAGE**  
This big-screen followup to the HBO series picks up where that story left off, following movie star Vincent Chase (Adrian Grenier) and his best friends as they navigate Hollywood. All listed multiplex theaters.

**SPY**  
CIA analyst Susan Cooper (Melissa McCarthy) has spent her entire career as a desk jockey, working hand-in-hand with dashing agent Bradley Fine (Jude Law). Using high-

tech equipment and a hidden earpiece, Cooper is the guardian angel who helps Fine avoid danger. However, when Fine is assassinated by Bulgarian arms dealer Rayna Boyanov (Rose Byrne), Cooper wrangles her way into her first undercover assignment to help capture Boyanov and avenge Fine. All listed multiplex theaters.

**INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 3**  
The newest chapter in this horror series is a chilling prequel. All listed multiplex theaters.

## NOW PLAYING



Photo/ San Andreas/youtube.com

**FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD**  
Crescent Theater  
**ALOHA**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**SAN ANDREAS**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**POLTERGEIST**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**TOMORROWLAND**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**MAD MAX: FURY ROAD**

All listed multiplex theaters.  
**PITCH PERFECT 2**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**HOT PURSUIT**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**THE AGE OF ADALINE**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**PAUL BLART: MALL COP 2**

All listed multiplex theaters.  
**UNFRIENDED**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**FURIOUS 7**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**GET HARD**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**HOME**  
All listed multiplex theaters.  
**CINDERELLA**  
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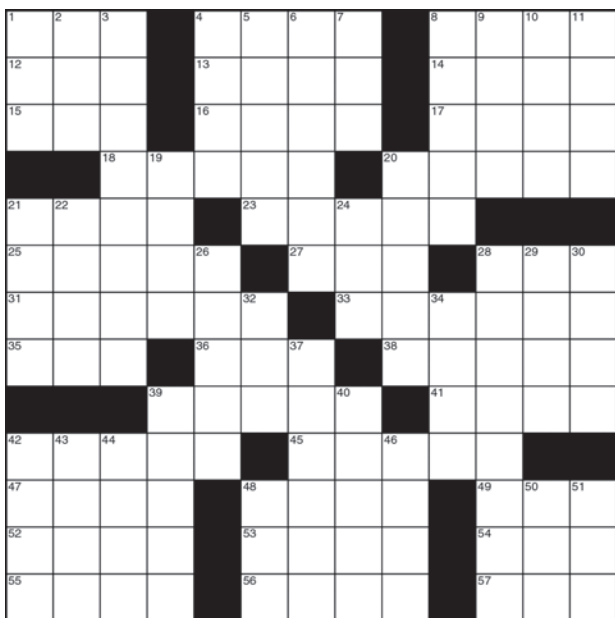
**EASTERN SHORE PREMIERE CINEMA 14**  
30500 Alabama 181 #500  
Spanish Fort, AL  
(251) 626-0352

Information accurate at press time; please call theaters for showtimes.

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

## ACROSS

1. Feature of a Swiss skyline
4. Director's shot
8. Sing under pressure?
12. Home to many schools?
13. Traveling, say
14. Field team
15. That guy
16. Helpless?
17. Kind of pool
18. Prepares for vacation
20. Societal stratum
21. Guitar part
23. Countess spouses
25. Italian and French bread?
27. Bring action
28. Limo passenger, often
31. Menswear accessory
33. Spanish procrastinator's word
35. Common connector
36. On the dark side
38. Army supply
39. Make good on
41. Atomizer's release
42. Like well-worn jeans
45. Big volumes
47. Sharer's pronoun
48. Luau entertainment
49. Quoits target
52. Order in the court?
53. Really bugs
54. \_\_\_ de vie
55. Children's seats
56. Newspaper department
57. Martini preference



2. Blooming souvenir
3. Spoiled rotten
4. Barber's stock
5. Responded to an alarm
6. Part of the Louisiana Purchase
7. Storm center
8. Classic garb for senators
9. Geometrical reference lines
10. Time to give up?
11. Place for a pad
19. Crowning
20. Traction aid
21. Brine-cured cheese
22. Remains to be seen?
24. Jamaican export
26. Allied
28. Left no trace
29. Calligrapher's collection
30. Present preceder
32. It's in the winter air
34. Invitation list entry
37. Turn red, perhaps
39. Musical notations
40. Zabaglione necessity
42. Ducks and geese, e.g.
43. Psychic's reading material?
44. Stalactite starter
46. Item in a fencer's locker
48. Didn't seek
50. Bireme propeller
51. Broker's suggestion

## DOWN

1. Memento of an old flame?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 44

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**WHERE:** 5 RIVERS DELTA RESOURCE CENTER

**WHEN:** SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Grab 20 of your best friends and get ready to have a blast racing your dragon boat for a great cause! The FUSE Project Dragon Boat Festival provides a fun, unforgettable fundraising experience. See how well your team can compete against other local corporate and community teams — and who will win off the water raising money for The FUSE Project. Get on the boat and make waves! Events are held at 5 Rivers. For more information, visit [fuseproject.causevox.com](http://fuseproject.causevox.com).



Photo/fuseproject.org

## June 4

### Kids Day in Bienville

Bring the kids out to Bienville Square for summertime fun and enjoy live entertainment, arts and crafts, and visitors from the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the Mobile Police and Fire-Rescue departments, and much more! If you have any questions, please call 251-208-1550.

### Summer Outdoor Market

The city of Fairhope will host a Summer Outdoor Farmer's Market from 3 until 6 p.m. on Thursday evenings through July 9. The market will be set up behind the Fairhope Public Library on Bancroft Street downtown. The market will feature local farmers, bakers, fresh Baldwin County produce, fresh-cut flowers, local honey, plants, baked goods and more. The Fairhope Public Library will hold story times and children's activities at 4 p.m. each Thursday at the market. For general information or for information about becoming a vendor, call 251-929-1466.

### Market on the Hill

An outdoor market of locally grown produce, seafood and soaps is held at Lavretta Park (Old Shell Road and Parkway Street West) every Thursday through July 30 from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information, please call 251-208-1550.

### Community Conversations on Race

Do we need to talk about race in Mobile? Your input is crucial. All community input will be reported to the city. The conversation will begin at 6 p.m. at Pillans Middle School, 2051 Military Road. If you have questions, please contact [conversationmobile@gmail.com](mailto:conversationmobile@gmail.com).

### Thursdays at the Museum

Every Thursday from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. the Mobile Museum of Art (MMoFA) offers free admission to all visitors. Join MMoFA each week to experience the museum in new and exciting ways throughout the year. No reservations are necessary. MMoFA is at 4850 Museum Drive.

## June 5

### Celebration of Patriotism

At 7 p.m. on this, the eve of D-Day, the Baldwin County Republican Party will honor the brave men who stormed the beach at Normandy and helped rescue Europe — and the world — from tyranny.

Col. Allen West will be the speaker. A U.S. Army veteran, former congressman and author of the book "Guardian of the Republic," he is also a regular FOX News contributor. Daphne Civic Center; tickets start at \$35 and may be ordered on the Baldwin County GOP website or by calling 251-265-1113.

### Mary Poppins

Mary Poppins, enchanted umbrella in hand, descends on the East wind to the Chickasaw Civic Theatre stage for a three-weekend run of Disney's Tony Award winning musical of the same name. Fall in love with Mary Poppins all over again. Show dates are June 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14; showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays. Reservations may be made online at [cctshows.com](http://cctshows.com) or by calling 251-457-8887. Ticket prices are \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and seniors over age 60. The Chickasaw Civic Theatre is at 801 Iroquois St., Mobile.

### Strange Journeys

SJM Tours provides innovative, interactive and entertaining walking tours of Mobile. Strange Journeys is a two-hour guided walk in the city's historic districts through which you'll learn of unusual history, spooky tales and strange sightings. The walk begins at 8 p.m. For more information, call 251-644-1664 or visit [www.sjmtours.com](http://www.sjmtours.com).

### First Friday Art Walk

The Eastern Shore Art Center returns with new art and music. Come check out the new exhibits and live pottery demonstrations while enjoying refreshments and live entertainment by The Sound Carpenters. The art walk begins at 6 p.m. at the Eastern Shore Art Center, 401 Oak St., Fairhope. For more information, contact Adrienne at 251-928-2228, ext. 103.

### Ark of India

"Ark of India: An Alabama Artist Explores Southern Asia" is an exhibit about personal discovery and exploration. It's an account of late 19th and early 20th century India as seen by Alabama artist Roderick D. MacKenzie, using his paintings, drawings, sculptures and, most importantly, photographs and writings. The exhibition is organized by the History

Museum of Mobile, 111 S. Royal St. On view until September 1. Admission is free.

### Hatching the Past: The Great Dinosaur Egg Hunt

"Hatching the Past" features 100 real dinosaur eggs and 100 replica eggs at The Exploreum. The multi-media experience for all ages invites visitors to touch real dinosaur bones and reconstructed nests, dig for eggs, experience hands-on exploration stations and view animated video presentations featuring well-known dinosaur experts. The Exploreum, 65 Government St., is open daily. For more information visit [www.exploreum.com](http://www.exploreum.com).

## June 6

### Mobile Funk Fest

Good Music. Good People. Good Times. With classic hits by legendary artists like Frankie Beverly and Maze and the Ohio Players, to the sounds of contemporary music's heavy hitters like Jill Scott and Outkast, Funk Fest delivers an all-star line up that has the "old school," "new school" and everyone in between jamming all night long. Gates open at 3 p.m. with shows starting at 5 p.m. at The Grounds (1035 Cody Rd). For tickets and more information visit [funkfesttour.com](http://funkfesttour.com).

### Dragon Boat Festival

Grab 20 of your best friends and get ready to have a blast racing your dragon boat for a great cause! The FUSE Project Dragon Boat Festival provides a fun, unforgettable fundraising experience. See how well your team can compete against other local corporate and community teams — and who will win off the water raising money for The FUSE Project. Get on the boat and make waves! Events are held at 5 Rivers. For more information, visit [fuseproject.causevox.com](http://fuseproject.causevox.com).

### Arts in the Park Nature Fest

Under the oaks in historic Cadillac Square on beautiful Dauphin Island, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., this free event will feature fine artists and craftsmen from around the Southeast, as well as exciting nature exhibits, programs and events. The picturesque park will be filled with unique art, hands-on animal exhibits and nature and environmental presentations and exhibits. For more information, call 251-861-TRIP.

### National Trails Day

Come out and join the Alabama Hiking Trail Society for a National Trails Day hike on the beautiful Audubon Sanctuary Loop Trail on Dauphin Island from 8 to 10:30 a.m. This free hike is a three-mile loop trek to see beautiful wildflowers, dozens of varieties of birds, wetlands and the Gulf of Mexico. Meet at the Audubon Bird Sanctuary parking lot at 8 a.m. Bring plenty of water, snacks and bug spray. Dress for hot weather — wear a hat and sunscreen. Extra water will be available. Boots aren't necessary. This is an easy walk. Contact Joe Cuhaj for more details at 251-533-1812 or email [gulf@hikealabama.org](mailto:gulf@hikealabama.org).

### Market on the Square

Shop for the freshest crop at Cathedral Square in downtown Mobile. This time of year is our favorite because you can buy locally grown tomatoes, potatoes, sweet corn, cantaloupes, watermelons, plants and flowers as well as seafood, baked goods, pastas, casseroles, pies, handcrafted goods and much more. Stay for live music on the green. For more information, call 251-208-1550.

## June 7

### Gloria Dei Chorale's Spring Concert

Gloria Dei Chorale's Spring Concert will be presented at 3:00 p.m. at Little Flower Catholic Church, 2053 Government Street, Mobile. Under the direction of Louis Daniel, Saint Cecelia Mass by Adolfo Kaim will be featured, along with works by Bruckner, Palestrina, Durufle, Wesley, and more. The concert is free, with a \$10 suggested donation at the door. The Preschool Center for the Deaf and Blind will benefit. More information call Marian Boykin at 251-533-9810.

### Sunday Matinee at 5 Rivers

Every Sunday throughout the day, take a step inside 5 Rivers Tensaw Theater and catch a free film. This week's movie is "Animal Homes." For more information call 251-625-0814.

### Open Studio

Come enjoy complimentary mimosas as artists work at the Cathedral Square Gallery, 612 Dauphin St. Works by more than 60 area artists also will be on display. For more information call 251-694-0278.

**June 8**

**Top Cats Toastmasters**

Are you terrified at the idea of public speaking? We were. We got over it. Top Cats Toastmasters invites you to join us. We meet every Monday from noon to 1 p.m. at the Red Lobster near the southeast corner of Airport Boulevard and Azalea Road in Mobile. You can practice your speaking and listening skills and learn to think on your feet in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Dues are \$43 twice a year, and lunch must be purchased. Toastmasters International is a worldwide organization. For further information, contact 251-344-2938.

**June 9**

**'Lone Survivor'**

Decorated U.S. Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell — the man behind the Hollywood motion picture "Lone Survivor," and author of the New York Times best-selling book of the same name — will visit the bay area as part of the Baldwin County Drug Court Foundation's 6th annual "Knowing You Can Make a Difference" fundraiser at 6:30 p.m. at the Daphne Civic Center, 2603 U.S. Highway 98. It will feature a seated dinner by Naman's Catering and be emceed by Channel 10's Chasity Byrd. Tickets may be purchased at online at [www.baldwindrugcourt.com](http://www.baldwindrugcourt.com) or from Raina Macks at [auburn@hotmail.com](mailto:auburn@hotmail.com). For more information, visit our website or Facebook.

**Wine Tasting Party**

Join us for a wine tasting party to benefit The Playhouse in the Park. The wine tasting is complimentary though donations are welcome and tax-exempt. The tasting will be at Red or White, 1104 Dauphin St. beginning at 6 p.m. For more information visit [www.playhouseinthepark.org](http://www.playhouseinthepark.org).

**Addiction Counseling**

Narconon would like to remind families that the use of addicting drugs is on the rise. Take steps to protect your family from drug use. If you know anyone who is struggling with drug addiction, get them the help they need. Call for a free brochure on the signs of addiction for all drugs. Narconon also offers free screenings and referrals. Call 1-800-431-1754 or visit [DrugAbuseSolution.com](http://DrugAbuseSolution.com).

**Community Conversations on Race**

Do we need to talk about race in Mobile? Your input is crucial. All community input will be reported to the city. The conversation will begin at 6 p.m. at Mobile Public Library, 5555 Grelot Road. If you have questions, please contact [conversationmobile@gmail.com](mailto:conversationmobile@gmail.com).

**Teen Tech Tutor Program**

The Baldwin County Library Cooperative recently implemented a Teen Tech Tutor program at the Robertsdale Library. This program is designed to match high-

school-age students who have strong technological skills with adults and seniors who are unfamiliar with basic laptop computer technology. The free program is available Monday through Friday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. at 18301 Pennsylvania St., Robertsdale. An appointment is required; call the library at 251-970-4010.

**June 10**

**Wonderful Wednesdays: Summer Garden Walk**

Join Bellingrath Horticulture Managers for a guided tour to see the combinations of plants used in this year's summer displays and new additions to the Gardens. The program is the first in our Wonderful Wednesdays series in June and July. Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m. Admission is \$12.50 for adults, \$7 for children ages 5-12; free to Bellingrath members and to ages 4 and younger. Visit [www.Bellingrath.org](http://www.Bellingrath.org) to see the full schedule and register for your favorites. Bellingrath Gardens is located at 12401 Bellingrath Gardens Road.

**Downtown Toastmasters**

Are you interested in gaining more confidence in your public speaking ability? The Downtown Mobile Toastmasters Club 2815 invites you to join us for our weekly educational lunch meeting at T. P. Crockmeier's, 261 Dauphin St., from noon until 1 p.m. Practice your speaking,

listening and leadership skills in a relaxed, friendly environment. Lunch must be purchased. Our dues are \$42 twice yearly. Toastmasters International is a worldwide organization. For more information, call 251-404-3924.

**Brown Bag in Bienville**

Come out and listen to the soothing sounds of live jazz as you lunch in Bienville Square around the historic Ketchum Fountain. Catt Sirten sets up live musicians and the city sets up tables for your enjoyment each Wednesday during the spring, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. To make your Brown Baggin' easier, stop in at your favorite Bienville Square eatery and ask for the Brown Bag special. Questions? Call 251-208-1550.

**Little Discoveries at The Exploreum**

Little Discoveries is a weekly series in The Exploreum's Wharf of Wonder for children 6 and under. Lessons will fuse science, technology, engineering and math with creativity, art and reading. Each session will begin with a story reading that will serve as the launching pad for the day's hands-on activities. Wednesdays 10 to 11 a.m. and Thursdays 2 to 3 p.m. at 65 Government St. For more information call Josh Holland at 251-208-6893 or email [jholland@exploreum.com](mailto:jholland@exploreum.com).

SEND YOUR EVENTS TO [EVENTS@LAGNIAPPEMOBILE.COM](mailto:EVENTS@LAGNIAPPEMOBILE.COM)





# Lagniappe's readership growing

BY ROB HOLBERT/MANAGING EDITOR | rholbert@lagniappemobile.com

**A**ccording to Scarborough Research, which surveys the Mobile market every six months, Lagniappe's readership has increased significantly in recent months.

The latest survey was released this past week and found that average readership per paper has increased to 73,110. The survey also found an average online readership of 18,972, giving Lagniappe a reach of more than 92,000 readers each issue.

In the last survey, total readership — print and online — was just over 81,000 weekly. That's a 14 percent increase in weekly readership.

Scarborough also measures non-daily newspapers read over the past six months, and on that basis, including web readership, Lagniappe's readership has climbed to more than 163,000. In the previous survey, readership over six months was at 131,114. That's a 24 percent increase in readers who pick up the paper or check out the website over a six-month period.

The latest Scarborough survey ended in March. Scarborough is part of the Nielsen Local Insight Suite and surveys more than 200 markets in the United States.

Lagniappe prints 25,000 newspapers each week and they are distributed to more than 1,000 spots in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

## Spring radio numbers

Speaking of Nielsen, the radio numbers for spring are in, offering a look at listenership among the stations participating in the survey.

The company surveyed the average number of people ages 12 and up who listened during an average quarter hour

from 6 a.m. until midnight in the Mobile Metro area. Among the nine stations participating in the survey, there wasn't a tremendous amount of change, although there were a couple of big changes.

As usual, Cumulus Media stations WBLX-FM and WDLT-FM found themselves at the top of the heap. Both had 10.3 shares. For WDLT that was a fall from 11.1 in the winter survey and a fall from 10.5 for WBLX.

The big mover was WRKH-FM, which jumped from fourth place to third, with a move from 7.2 shares in the winter survey to 8.0. The classic rock station owned by iHeartMedia pulled a 4.2 share in fall of last year, so its improvement over the past two quarters has been impressive.

WKSJ-FM saw a small change to 7.2 this quarter versus 7.5 last quarter. The country juggernaut is owned by iHeartMedia and maintains pretty steady ratings.

WABD-FM landed in the fifth spot again this quarter, although ratings were up significantly, from 5.5 to 6.4 this spring.

The highest-rated AM radio station in the survey was gospel station WGOK owned by Cumulus, which pulled a 4.7 share after having a 5.2 in the previous quarter. It stays in the sixth position.

Adult contemporary station WMXC-FM maintained the seventh spot with a 4.5 share, down slightly from 4.7 in winter. It is owned by iHeartMedia. News/Talk format WNTM-AM followed with a 1.4 share, down from 1.8.

Rounding out the survey was WAVH-FM, a news/talk station owned by Bigler Broadcasting. Nielsen did not provide share information for WAVH in this survey. In the previous survey it drew a 2.5 share.

Several stations in the market, such as WZEW-FM, do not

participate in the survey, therefore are not ranked. It must also be noted that since the survey is 12-plus, these rankings are not necessarily relevant to individual stations' target audiences. For instance, talk radio stations' rankings in 12-plus are not indicative of their performance among those who typically listen to talk radio.

## And now for a word from our sponsors ...

Perusing al.com lately, it seems more and more "sponsored content" is making its way onto the site — a troubling development for those who care about journalism.

Back when I was learning about journalism, what's now called "sponsored content" was called "advertorial," and it was considered one of journalism's cardinal sins. Essentially sponsored content is allowing an advertiser to run what looks like a news story in the paper or online. While it may be marked as a paid advertisement, often it isn't done very prominently. The obvious effort is to lend the newspaper's journalistic credibility to the advertiser.

Al.com isn't by any stretch the only media outlet to use sponsored content. In these tight times many media outlets have kissed their ethics goodbye and started running sponsored content.

I've sent messages to the al.com honchos asking them about their use of sponsored content, but as usual, they haven't written back or contacted me in any way.

While I don't think there's anything wrong with an advertiser running an ad containing an article, as long as it is very clear it's not part of the newspaper's editorial content, the use of advertorial or sponsored content by serious journalistic organizations can only erode trust.

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**FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – 7:05PM**

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**Kids Run Bases – after every Friday night game!**

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# Application period open for upcoming gator hunt

BY J. MARK BRYANT/SPORTS WRITER | sports@lagniappemobile.com | Twitter @goulaguy

Summer has finally arrived, and people looking for new ways to enjoy the beautiful outdoors of South Alabama have plenty of options. For those wishing to get a closer look at some of our wildlife, registration for the state's 2015 alligator hunt has begun.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is conducting its 10th annual regulated hunt. The total number of alligator possession tags has increased this year from 240 to 260.

Registration must be completed online no later than 8 a.m. on July 14. The hunts will take place starting in mid-August. To register, visit [www.outdooralabama.com/registration-instructions](http://www.outdooralabama.com/registration-instructions).

For local hunters, there will be 150 tags for the Southwest Alabama zone. This includes private and public waters in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Also in the zone are private and public waters in Clarke, Monroe and Washington counties that lie east of U.S. 43 and south of U.S. 84. The dates for this zone are 8 p.m. on Aug. 13 through 6 a.m. on Aug. 16, and then from 8 p.m. on Aug. 20 until 6 a.m. on Aug. 23.

The application fee is \$22, and individuals may register one time per zone. Only Alabama residents and Alabama lifetime license holders ages 16 years and older may apply. While the tag is free, selected hunters and assistants are required to have a valid hunting license in their possession during the hunt.

## USA denied shot at Omaha

The University of South Alabama's extra-inning loss to Louisiana-Lafayette in the Sun Belt Conference (SBC) tournament final proved very costly to the Jaguars. Despite having won the regular season title and earning 37 victories, USA was not selected for the field of 64 in the NCAA baseball tournament. Only the Ragin' Cajuns will represent the SBC.

There were fewer at-large bids available this season, as both Texas (Big 12) and Michigan (Big 10) advanced only because they won their conference titles. Southeastern Louisiana and Nevada claimed regular-season championships, but are also sitting home.

Among the other teams missing was Southern Mississippi, which won 36 games and finished tied for second place in Conference USA. The Golden Eagles were among the last highly regarded teams left out, along with Missouri, North Carolina and Michigan State.

## Jaguars hoist Vic Bubas Cup

Despite the NCAA snub, it has been an incredible sports season for South Alabama (USA). Thanks to four Sun Belt championships, the Jaguars received the Vic Bubas Cup for being the league's top member across 17 sports.

It is the school's 11th time claiming the cup, the most for any school since the SBC formed in 1976. USA scored a total of 106 points, edging past Texas State and Texas-Arlington.

USA won league titles in soccer and men's cross country in

the fall, plus baseball and women's tennis this spring. The Lady Jag softball team, which made it to the NCAA Regionals, finished second in the regular season before winning the SBC tournament. The men's tennis team reached its tournament final, while the football team tied for third place.

## Rams add Jackson to coaching staff

T.J. Jackson has been named head coach of both the men's and women's golf teams at the University of Mobile. Jackson comes to the Rams after having coached the women's squad at South Alabama for the last 15 seasons. He also directed the Jaguar men during the 2002-03 campaign.

Jackson won the state individual title at Davidson High in 1981 and 1982, along with a team championship as a senior. After earning a degree at USA, he played professionally from 1989-94.

He takes over for Colby Odom, who led both UM teams to Top 25 rankings and runner-up finishes at the SSAC championships. Odom was named the conference's Men's Golf Coach of the Year.

## College honors

- USA pitcher Kevin Hill, a junior right-hander, was named to the Louisville Slugger Division I All-American second team. The Sun Belt pitcher of the year, he led the conference in wins (10), earned run average (1.73), opposing batting average (.208) and strikeouts (107). He was a perfect 10-0 in 13 starts.

- UM's Zach Day earned NAIA All-American honors in men's golf. The senior from Thomasville, Alabama, was one of 15 individuals named to the first-team list. After earning all-conference recognition, he got an individual bid to the NAIA nationals, where he finished tied for 23rd. During the regular season, he won two tournaments.

- Former USA right-handed pitcher Farish Beard, who earned her degree this spring, has been selected as a 2015 Senior CLASS Award Second-Team All-American. The award stands for Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School. The Fairhope native gained all-SBC honors for the third straight season, with an 11-4 record, a 2.53 earned run average and 101 strikeouts in 88 2/3 innings pitched. Beard was also named a 2013-14 National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-America Scholar-Athlete.

- Two Lady Jag teammates have also been honored by the NFCA. Sophomore Chloe Rathburn was named to the Division I All-Region second-team squad, while right-handed pitcher Kalven McGill is on the third team. Rathburn led USA in batting average, hits and RBIs, while McGill had a 16-3 record and 1.97 ERA.

- UofM's Sarah LeCroy has been named to the Capital One Academic All-District women's cross country team. The award selects the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances athletically and in the classroom. The Gadsden native is also a two-time Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athlete honoree.

- Santiago Casucci, a junior on the Rams' tennis squad who has a 4.0 grade point average, was picked for the 2014-15 Capital




Photo/ Billy Pope, ADCNR

Registration is open through July 14 to apply for the 2015 alligator hunting season.

One Academic All-District Men's At-Large Team. He went 11-3 in singles and 4-2 in doubles as UM advanced to the NAIA national tourney. In addition to tennis, the team combines golf, men's volleyball, wrestling, lacrosse, swimming, ice hockey, gymnastics, fencing and rifle.

- Two USA track and field athletes were selected for the Capital One Academic All-District teams. Jan-Louw Kotze and Joanna McCoy both carry 4.0 GPAs. Kotze set a SBC record in the discus, with a toss of 59.72 meters. McCoy ranks among the leaders on USA's all-time list in the 5,000-meter run and 3,000-meter race.



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# Coast to coast journey opens new chapter for Bill Hancock

BY TOMMY HICKS/ CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Most people involved in college athletics know Bill Hancock. He's the first and current executive director of the College Football Playoff (CFP), which had its first go-round last season. He was also the first full-time director of the NCAA's Final Four men's basketball tournament and the first executive director of the Bowl Subdivision Series (BCS).

But while Hancock is well known, he would prefer you know about Will Hancock, his late son who was one of 10 members of the Oklahoma State University (OSU) men's basketball program who died in a plane crash returning to OSU after a game at Colorado on Jan. 27, 2001. The younger Hancock was the Cowboys' sports information director.

To help him deal with the grief of losing his son, Hancock would embark on a cross-country bike trip from Huntington Beach, California, to Tybee Island, Georgia, dipping the rear wheel of his bike in the Pacific Ocean to start the 36-day, 2,747-mile journey that ended with him dipping the front wheel of his bike in the Atlantic Ocean. Along the way, he and his wife, Nicki, who made the trip with him in a support vehicle, learned about themselves, how grief affects everyone and they celebrated the life of their son through memories and speaking with others who had lost children.

The trip led to a book, "Riding With the Blue Moth," which Hancock published in 2005 and has recently been re-released in paperback by Nautilus Publishing of Oxford, Mississippi. To promote the book's re-release and to talk about the CFP, Hancock will speak at the Athelstan Club, located at 170 St. Francis St. in Mobile, on Wednesday, June 10, at 5:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

"My whole reason for this [bike trip and book] was to try and help people in a grieving situation. Having the book out there again to help more people is awesome," Hancock said in a telephone interview with Lagniappe. "The author usually only hears from people who really like the book. The best thing for me has been strangers either calling or sending me emails. I ran into a person in a national park in Texas and my name came up and he said, 'You're the guy who wrote the book.' For me, that's been the best part ... So many of them would say, 'Bill, your book gave me hope, this changed my life; I lost my son and I didn't think I could survive and I read your book and I realized maybe I can.'"

Hancock said the bike ride was simply him "just trying to figure out how to get back to my normal life and also to do a bucket-list adventure," he added. "The book helping people, I never anticipated this would happen. I went from a student to a teacher because of the book. I know the vast majority of people knew me from the playoffs and the BCS and had no idea about the book or Will Hancock or the bike ride.

"The thing for me, other than helping people, is for people to get to know Will. Oklahoma State's motto (for the tragedy) was 'We Will Remember.' I had the craziest thought that people would not remember Will ... That's another reason why the book helped me. I

know that those who read the book will certainly know Will."

As executive director of the CFP, Hancock oversees all aspects of the four-team, three-game event that crowns the college football national champion in the game's highest division. He said he and everyone else associated with the CFP were happy with how the first year unfolded and are looking forward to seeing how this year's playoffs unfold.

"From our perspective, it could not have gone better," Hancock said. "And that's everything from the selection committee to creating our protocol and the meetings and down to the games. We knew we only had one chance to get the first one right and we

**“From our perspective, it could not have gone better ... We knew we only had one chance to get the first one right and we really felt like we did. It really went well and we couldn't have been happier.”**  
- College Football Playoff Director  
**Bill Hancock**

really felt like we did. It really went well and we couldn't have been happier."

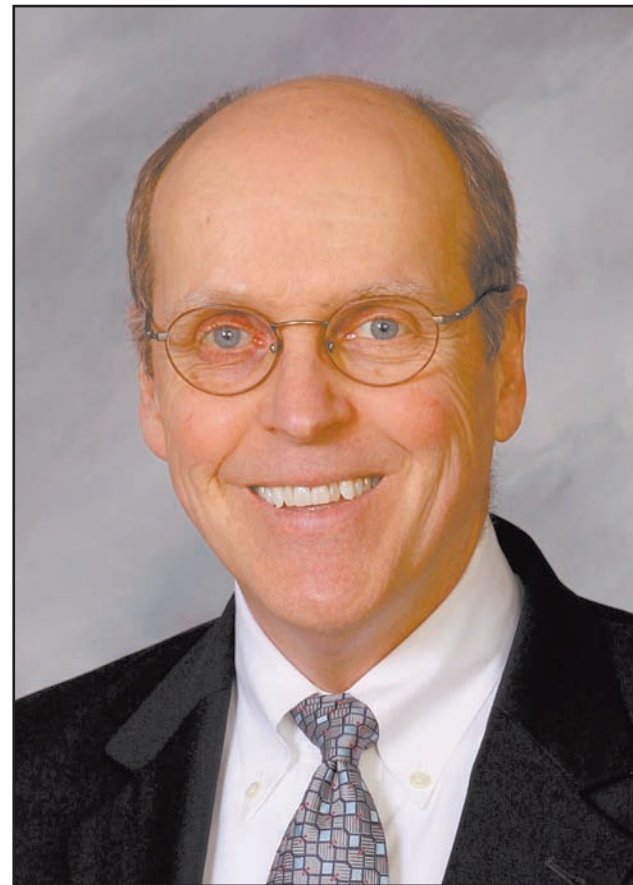
Last week, the CFP was named sporting event of the year by Sports Business Journal.

"I think all the people weighing in on it [suggesting adding more teams to the playoffs and other possible changes to the format] just shows how popular college football is," Hancock said. "Everybody wants to talk about it and have an opinion about it and they just want more of it. We get that. But the fact is we have a 12-year contract for a four-team tournament and it's going to stay. More is not always better. It keeps the focus on the regular season and it keeps the other bowls.

"A lot of people ask me about [Alabama head coach] Nick Saban's comments about his concerns about the other bowls, and I totally get that. But we didn't see any decline in interest in the other bowls this year. Yes, they're great for those of us who stay at home and watch them on TV, but they're even better for the athletes who go and participate in them," Hancock said.

So, what kind of encore can people expect this season?

"We made some notes of things to improve, especially at the championship game itself," Hancock said. "... What everybody learns is that every year is going to be different. That's the fun of it. I wouldn't trade that part for anything. I think a lot of people who want more, they just want more college football."



Photo/The Connell Agency

**Bill Hancock, executive director of the College Football Playoff, will speak at the Athelstan Club, 170 St. Francis St. in Mobile, on Wednesday, June 10.**

Whatever his role — administrator or father who lost a son — Hancock said each experience, both pleasant and difficult, has helped shape the person he is today and how he approaches all the decisions he makes in his life.

"I'll tell you, I'm the luckiest guy I know," Hancock said. "Sometimes I have to pinch myself to realize that I have gotten to do what I've had a chance to do in my career. I loved the [NCAA basketball] tournament; those 16 years were great. But when I went over to college football, I was blown away with the pageantry and just the festival nature of college football. I was proud of the BCS, but it was time to move on. The BCS did great things and we couldn't have had a playoff without it. I'm very happy with the playoffs.

"But the thing I want most in my life I can't have, which is to have my son back. But I've been very, very lucky in a lot of ways."

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LAGNIAPPE



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THE NOMINATION PERIOD HAS ENDED AND WE ARE BUSY COUNTING VOTES. FINALISTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE JUNE 18 ISSUE, WHERE WE WILL LIST UP TO THE TOP SIX FINALISTS IN EACH CATEGORY AND READERS WILL THEN HAVE A CHANCE TO VOTE AGAIN FOR ALL THEIR FAVORITE FINALISTS THROUGH JULY 13. WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE JULY 23 ISSUE OF LAGNIAPPE AND RECOGNIZED AT THE NAPPIE AWARDS CEREMONY ON FRIDAY, JULY 24 AT THE SAENGER THEATRE.

HAPPY VOTING! #NAPPIES2015

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- YOU MAY ALSO DROP PRINT BALLOTS OFF AT OUR OFFICE LOCATED AT 1100B DAUPHIN ST. MOBILE, AL 36604 DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS, (M-F 8:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.).
- BALLOTS MAY ALSO BE DEPOSITED INTO ONE OF OUR OFFICIAL BALLOT COLLECTION BOXES AT AREA BUSINESSES.

# LAGNIAPPE

WEEKLY



# Pisces picks a fight with office nemesis

BY DR. ZODIAC

**Gemini (5/21 - 6/21)** — Everything will go horribly for you this week. You will get a flat tire after you run over a tricycle in the parking lot at your tiny, overpriced apartment in Fairhope. After searching for My Little Pony pics for your daughter on your Instagram account, you'll get a bunch of strange new followers with pony mask avatars. You will lose your phone charger while reading comic books at the library. You'll show up early for an advanced screening of "Jurassic World," only to find out the theater is actually showing "Pitch Perfect 2."

**Cancer (6/22 - 7/22)** — After years of thinking Kangarooz in Spanish Fort was the place to buy Kangaroos (the original shoes with pockets!), you'll be disappointed to discover it is actually a bounce house birthday party place for kids. No problem, though, because you love bounce houses and birthday party pizza. When you get there, you'll enjoy hours of fun on the Pirate Ship slide and the Jungle Jumper. Everything will be great until you get stuck at the top of Mount Wanna-Hocka-Loogie and have to call your work buddy to rescue you.

**Leo (7/23 - 8/23)** — Everything will go well for you this week. The Bruce Jenner Starting Lineup "Timeless Legends 1976 Olympics" toy you bought at the sports collectibles shop at the mall in 1996 is finally seeing a price hike on eBay. You'll get a nice surprise when the McDonalds on the way to work gives you an extra slice of bacon on your morning McGriddles. A new coworker will compliment you on your choice of Where's Waldo socks, and that same co-worker will join you to share an order of

Grilled Stuff Nachos at Taco Bell on your lunch break.

**Virgo (8/24 - 9/22)** — After a week in federal court, you'll start to think you know the law better than you do. When you're unconvinced by what would be a routine traffic stop, you'll decide to test your unalienable rights while filming with your camera phone. Unmoved by your YouTube tomfoolery, the officer will pepper spray you with a vengeance. The event will prompt yet another debate about whether Americans have the God-given right to be assholes.

**Libra (9/23 - 10/22)** — You'll spend the week upset over the U.S. Army failing the eight women who attempted to join the ranks of the prestigious Ranger program. With outrage in your heart, you'll start to question the role sexism has played in defining the limitations of both genders on and off the battlefield, but then you'll remember most men can't make the program and that neither could you. Unless, of course, you're an Army Ranger who reads ancillary bits of the Lagniappe. In which case, Hooah!

**Scorpio (10/23 - 11/21)** — You'll race to get a free "dozen donuts" on National Donut Day, but you'll be painfully disappointed when you see the line. Though you'll try to go with the flow and "enjoy the day for what it is," you just won't be able to shake your pragmatic sensibilities. Mathematically, waiting in line for 11 hours to save a mere \$8 just doesn't add up. With that in mind, you'll ride down Springhill to pick the "fundraiser" boxes from the entrances at the Greer's Cost Plus.

**Sagittarius (11/22 - 12/22)** — The office

shares a chuckle over "Call Me Caitlyn," the recent Vanity Fair cover featuring the new, ahem, improved Bruce Jenner. But it takes you weeks of self-reflection to understand why you were so strongly attracted first to his bedroom eyes, then to his firm breasts, then to the curious pocket of manhood concealed by a seductive leotard. A social liberal, you're generally one to celebrate victories in the LGBT community, but this one has you in the throes of an identity crisis. Eat some chili this week.

**Capricorn (12/23 - 1/19)** — Sexist banter at the office gets a little uncomfortable when you have to explain yourself to a new coworker. You think back to simpler times, when referring to someone as "hot" simply referred their physical appearance. But in a half-assed attempt to backtrack, your qualification of the "hot" person as also "accomplished" and "pleasant" will do little to change the coworker's opinion that you are nothing more than a pig. Eat some vegetarian chili this week.

**Aquarius (1/20 - 2/18)** — Photos from the Kristen Saban wedding nearly force you to renounce your citizenship in the Crimson Tide Nation. Of course, every man should have the pleasure of walking his little girl down the aisle, but you're worried all the pageantry of the fairytale event made The Coach lose touch with The Process this summer. And who does she think she is, wearing a gown without even the slightest hint of houndstooth? You thought Lane Kiffin was going to be the death of this dynasty but just you wait. Just you wait.

**Pisces (2/19 - 3/20)** — You'll be banned

from the office kitchen after stupid Denise again catches you eating one of her Lean Cuisines. You'll try to explain to dense Denise that the meatballs on the cover of the frozen dinner looked too appealing not to eat, but it won't matter. She'll explain to the boss that you've now eaten four of her meals over a month's time and you must be stopped. Banned from the kitchen, you'll begin to scavenge for desk candy. That, too, gets you in trouble. Your survival instincts, much like your hunger, will not be satiated.

**Aries (3/21 - 4/19)** — Your care and compassion will soon make you the butt of all jokes within your social circle. You'll be one cat away from crazy cat lady status when a lonely tabby will start pawing at your door. Your friends will warn you of how the number of cats you own is directly proportional to the level of crazy that men think you are, but you won't be able to resist those beautiful cat peepers. You'll soon start preparing home-cooked meals for your feline company and by then, it'll be too late to save you. You'll die alone.

**Taurus (4/20 - 5/20)** — Offensive Facebook comments will land you in hot water with U.S. Marshals during the high-profile trial of a local business professional. After having your snacks confiscated prior to security screening, you'll unleash a social media rant comparing the hard-working professional to the main character in the Paul Blart Mall Cop movies. The next day, you'll be strip searched in front of everyone in the lobby of the federal courthouse. I hope you've learned your lesson; you're too antisocial for Facebook, or any form of social media.

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