

Lake City Reporter

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Inmate convicted



JASON MATTHEW WALKER/Lake City Reporter

Principals in the capital murder trial of Richard Franklin for the slaying of Columbia Corrections Institution corrections officer Sgt. Ruben Thomas III are seen in Columbia County Court on Wednesday. **LEFT:** State Attorney Jeff Siegmeister (right) speaks with Assistant State Attorney David Phelps. **RIGHT:** Assistant Public Defender Jonathan Austin (right) speaks with Robert Baker, assistant regional counsel for the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel.

Jury returns quick verdict in prison guard's murder

Death sentence could be ordered during penalty phase of trial.

By **TONY BRITT**
tbritt@lakecityreporter.com

A Columbia County jury took less than three hours Wednesday to convict Richard P. Franklin of first-degree murder in the stabbing death of Columbia Correctional Institution officer Sgt. Ruben Thomas III. Franklin was also convicted of felony battery and possession of

contraband in a prison. A seven-man, five-woman jury took about three hours to render its verdict. Two hours into deliberation the jury sent a note to Circuit Judge Paul Bryan asking which charges carry the most weight for a specific assault charge. Franklin was facing first-degree murder, aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer and possession of contraband in prison charges. The jury convicted Franklin of the felony battery charge, which is a lesser crime than aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer.

The jury foreman handed the verdict sheet to a bailiff, who gave it to Bryan. Bryan then reviewed it before passing it to the court clerk, who read the verdict. Franklin, who stood with his attorneys to hear the verdict, lowered his head when the clerk read the jury's decision. He the crossed his arms, sat back down and listened intently as Public Defender Blair Payne whispered to him. Payne didn't offer many comments after the verdict was read and the proceedings had concluded for the day.

"I respect the hard work of the jury and I respect the verdict," he said, as he walked out the courtroom. The court gallery was standing room only with people waiting to hear the verdict. Although people in the gallery were quiet while the verdict was read, many shared hugs with each other when court was dismissed. Although the verdict had been rendered, many of Thomas' friends, family members and Department of Corrections colleagues, stayed in their seats and watched as Franklin was fingerprinted. Franklin was later

escorted from the courtroom by uniformed DOC officers on the security detail. After the legal proceedings, State Attorney Jeff Siegmeister turned and hugged each member of the Thomas family, who were sitting in the second and third rows of the gallery. Each day after jury selection and trial proceedings, Siegmeister would sit outside the courtroom on a bench or stand outside the courthouse and tell Thomas' family what he expected to happen next or what the next part of the

VERDICT continued on 3A



JASON MATTHEW WALKER/Lake City Reporter

Taking a peek

Playmates (from left) Casey Rivera, 2; Rosemary Davis, 2; and Isiah Mathews, 6, peek out of holes in a tunnel while playing at Youngs Park on Wednesday.

Elder abuse awareness raised

Elder Options summit brings attention to growing problem among seniors.

By **AMANDA WILLIAMSON**
awilliamson@lakecityreporter.com

Pill-box hat and patent leather purse adorned the petite elderly lady

in the Piggly Wiggly checkout line. With eyes downcast, she accepted the verbal abuse her son doled out. Kim Roane, standing behind the two shoppers, did nothing. "To this day, I'm still incredulous I did nothing," she said. "But at that time, I didn't even know about elderly abuse." Now, Roane works as a registered

nurse specialist for adult protective services at the Department of Children and Families. She spoke at the Elder Options' 2013 Elder Abuse Prevention Summit Wednesday at the Parkview Baptist Church. Karen Hatton, assistant state attorney for District 3 of the Florida

SUMMIT continued on 3A

Problems halt Bell Road work

Commissioner wants road paved no matter what.

By **DEREK GILLIAM**
dgilliam@lakecityreporter.com

Progress was halted on the Bell Road economic development project after preliminary engineering and soil studies found a nonpermitted landfill near the road right of way and other problems, a memo from Columbia County's County manager says.

Northwest Bell Road is a dirt road that parallels Interstate 10 and connects U.S. 41 with U.S. 441. The area also has railroad lines and is considered for future industrial development.

The state Department of Transportation has approved a grant for about \$1.1 million for paving Bell Road, which the county is required to match. The aim of the grant is to pave Bell Road to provide economic opportunity.

County Commissioner Ron Williams said the road has access to I-10 frontage and utilities, both attractive to companies looking for



Ron Williams



Dale Williams

new locations. "I was displeased with stopping work with that project," he said in a phone interview. County Manager Dale Williams discussed some of his concerns about the

project with the Economic Development Advisory Board at its Wednesday morning meeting.

He said the majority of soil contains a high level of clay. Jordan Green, planning director with FDOT, said clay is difficult to compact, which can lead to dips in roads from clay settling after paving. Also, water takes a long time to dissipate — leading to longer construction times.

Also, a nonpermitted landfill exists along part of the right of way, which has not been abated or

ROAD continued on 5A



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Puzzles..... 2B



TODAY IN PEOPLE
Taking practice swings.

COMING FRIDAY
Local news roundup.



Wednesday:
Afternoon: 2-7-8
Evening: N/A



Wednesday:
Afternoon: 3-8-8-9
Evening: N/A



Tuesday:
5-7-23-29-32

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Cher: Stars can't escape paparazzi

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif.
Cher is no stranger to tabloid fodder.

The 67-year-old singer who has spent most of her life in the spotlight offered this advice to young artists on navigating the world of paparazzi attention: "You're screwed. That's my advice."

"You don't deal with it. You just try to get a place where no one can find you and that's your little sanctuary," continued the "Believe" singer in an interview Tuesday. "I have a fabulous house that I love and it's my sanctuary."

Looking ever the rock star in leather and studs, Cher took the stage Tuesday for the season finale of NBC's "The Voice." She performed "Woman's World," the first single off her upcoming album of the same name — her 26th album since she began recording in the 1960s.

Cher said reality singing competitions are simply a modern incarnation of classic star-makers like "The Ed Sullivan Show" and "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts."



JASON MATTHEW WALKER/Lake City Reporter

Practice swings

Nick Tuttle, 20, lines up his shot while practicing on the driving range at The Country Club at Lake City on Tuesday.

that pitched his records.

But he was a serious musical influence on early rock, and in the British Isles, he was known as a pioneer of country music for popularizing the style there. Whitman also encouraged a teen Elvis Presley when he was the headliner on the bill and the young singer was making his professional debut.

Whitman recorded more than 65 albums and sold millions of records, including 4 million of "All My Best" that was marketed on TV.

Madonna premieres tour film, talks secret project

NEW YORK — Madonna said there were days when she was

exhausted during her recent "MDNA" world tour, but she decided to press on.

You won't see those behind-the-scenes battles in her new concert film, "The MDNA Tour," which premieres Saturday on the online and cable network Epix. But you will see the 54-year-old pop icon performing — mainly highlights from her Miami shows — for two hours on her tour, which started in May of last year and wrapped in December.

"There's no such thing as not in the mood because the show must go on, right?" the singer said at the film's premiere Tuesday night at New York's Paris Theater.

■ Associated Press

Celebrity Birthdays

- Actor Martin Landau is 85.
- Actress Olympia Dukakis is 82.
- Actor Danny Aiello is 80.
- Actor John Mahoney ("Frasier") is 73.
- Musician Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys is 71.
- Actor John McCook ("The Bold and the Beautiful") is 69.
- Singer Anne Murray is 68.
- Home repair show host Bob Vila is 67.
- Singer Lionel Richie is 64.
- Actor John Goodman is 61.
- Bassist Michael Anthony (Van Halen, Chickenfoot) is 59.
- Bassist John Taylor of Duran Duran is 53.
- Keyboardist Mark De Gli Antoni (Soul Coughing) is 51.
- Bassist Murphy Karges of Sugar Ray is 46.

Daily Scripture

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.

— Ephesians 5:25-26

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Publisher Todd Wilson 754-0418
(twilson@lakecityreporter.com)

NEWS

Editor Robert Bridges 754-0428
(rbridges@lakecityreporter.com)

ADVERTISING 752-1293
(ads@lakecityreporter.com)

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Family: Country singer Slim Whitman dies

MIAMI — Country singer Slim Whitman, the high-pitched yodeler who sold millions of records through ever-present TV ads in the 1980s and 1990s and whose song saved the world in the film comedy "Mars Attacks!," died Wednesday at a Florida hospital. He was 90.

Whitman died of heart failure at Orange Park Medical Center, his son-in-law Roy Beagle said.

Whitman's tenor falsetto and ebony mustache and sideburns became global trademarks — and an inspiration for countless jokes — thanks to the TV commercials

AROUND FLORIDA

Poll: Rubio gets negative marks

Miami — Florida voters give Sen. Marco Rubio negative marks for his handling of immigration and gun issues in Washington but still hold favorable views of the rising Republican star, a statewide poll released Wednesday shows.

The Quinnipiac University poll finds 41 percent disapprove of Rubio's handling of an immigration overhaul in the Senate that would give an estimated 11 million immigrants in the U.S. illegally a path to citizenship. The random telephone survey of 1,176 registered voters taken June 11-16 shows 33 percent approve.

Rubio, a tea party favorite and possible GOP presidential candidate, is one of the authors of the far-reaching immigration proposal but has refused to pledge support for the measure without tougher border security provisions and stricter standards for who qualifies for government programs. He also wants immigrants to prove they are proficient in English before receiving permanent legal status.

The poll found that 58 percent of Florida voters back a path to citizenship for those here illegally. Overall, a slim majority of Florida voters — 51 percent — approve of the job Rubio is doing as the state's junior senator.

On gun issues, 49 percent of voters said they view Rubio less favorably after he voted against a proposal that would have required background checks on people buying firearms at gun shows or online, compared to 10 percent who view him more favorably. Thirty-eight percent said the vote made no difference.



JASON MATTHEW WALKER/Lake City Reporter

Summertime fun

Aliyah Tannenbaum (left), 9, sprays Kendall Thomas, 9, with a water hose while playing at the Girls Club of Lake City on Wednesday.

Judge sends man to prison for life

BUNNELL — A judge has ordered a 66-year-old north Florida man to spend the rest of his life in prison for fatally shooting his neighbor during an argument over barking dogs.

Paul Miller offered apologies on Tuesday as he stood shackled before Circuit Judge J. David Walsh in Flagler County.

But Walsh noted that the March 2012 killing of 52-year-old Dana Mulhall "stuns the sensibilities of reasonable people."

The Daytona Beach News-Journal reports the neighbors were arguing about dogs over a white fence that separates the two yards. Records show that Miller shot Mulhall five times. They had first argued two months earlier when Mulhall yelled at Miller's wife about the

barking dogs.

He was convicted in May and faced a minimum of 25 years in prison.

Man indicted in triple killing

OCALA — A grand jury has indicted an Ocala man on first-degree murder in the shooting deaths of three men over a video prank.

The jury met for several hours Tuesday before issuing their indictment against 31-year-old Andrew Lobban. He's entered a written plea of not guilty.

The Ocala Star Banner reports the state has not said whether it will seek the death penalty.

An arrest affidavit states that Lobban told police he shot the men for teasing him about a video that showed him being "punked."

■ Associated Press

THE WEATHER



REGIONAL FORECAST MAP for Thursday, June 20



LAKE CITY ALMANAC

TEMPERATURES

High Wednesday 92
Low Wednesday 72
Normal high 90
Normal low 70
Record high 100 in 1897
Record low 58 in 1961

PRECIPITATION

Wednesday 0.00"
Month total 5.39"
Year total 16.39"
Normal month-to-date 4.19"
Normal year-to-date 20.18"

SUN

Sunrise today 6:29 a.m.
Sunset today 8:35 p.m.
Sunrise tom. 6:30 a.m.
Sunset tom. 8:35 p.m.

MOON

Moonrise today 5:42 p.m.
Moonset today 3:45 a.m.
Moonrise tom. 6:49 p.m.
Moonset tom. 4:37 a.m.

June 23 Full
June 30 Last
July 8 New
July 15 First

UV INDEX

12

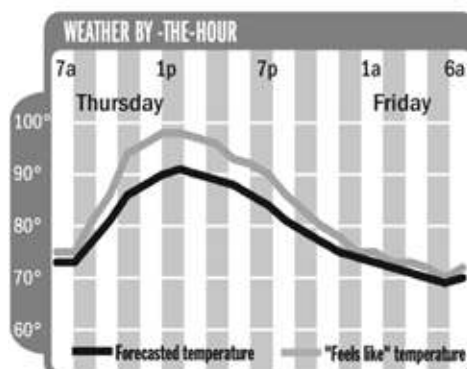
EXTREME
10 minutes to burn
Today's ultra-violet radiation risk for the area on a scale from 0 to 10+



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WEATHER HISTORY

On this date in 1997, eastern Nebraska woke to a very hot morning. Thunderstorms produced a rapid heat burst, warming temperatures into the 90s. Millard, Neb., recorded a temperature of 97 degrees.

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Lake City Reporter

Pot smell was giveaway

By AMANDA WILLIAMSON
awilliamson@lakecityreporter.com



Ratliff

A Lake City man faces drug charges after he allegedly swallowed Molly, a drug similar to ecstasy, during a traffic stop, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office arrest report said.

Benjamin Hank Ratliff, 30, 227 NW Guerdon St., was charged with marijuana possession, resisting an officer, destroying evidence, possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug equipment.

Deputy Brian Lucas stopped a white Chevrolet Impala in the intersection of State Road 47 and Hudson Lane after he noticed the passenger, Ratliff, was not wearing a seat belt.

While speaking with the driver, Diontae Hayward, Lucas smelled a strong

odor of marijuana. Hayward told Lucas there was nothing illegal in the vehicle and gave him permission to search.

As Lucas searched Ratliff, he noticed the man's zipper was down and asked whether there was anything illegal in his pants.

As Ratliff began taking off his pants to prove he didn't have anything illegal, Lucas noticed a clear plastic bag with a white substance in Ratliff's underwear.

"Benjamin then grabbed a large amount of substance and shoved it in his mouth," Lucas wrote in the report. "I then grabbed him by the throat and advised him to spit it out in fear that it was something that could

be harmful to his health."

Cpl. Rick Glover ran over to Ratliff and placed him in a choke hold to encourage him to spit out the substance, but Ratliff swallowed it anyway, the report said.

Ratliff admitted the material he swallowed was Molly, the report said. He was transported to Shands Lake Shore Regional Medical Center.

At the hospital, Lucas continued to smell marijuana. Ratliff denied having anything else on his person, but a thorough search revealed a plastic bag containing marijuana between Ratliff's buttocks, the report said. Inside the bag, there were two smaller bags containing more Molly.

Lucas took Ratliff to the Columbia County Detention Facility. His bond was set at \$64,000.

SUMMIT: Elder abuse highlighted

Continued From Page 1A

State Attorney's Office, and Laura Lange, case management supervisor at the Lifestyle Enrichment Center, also spoke during the event.

In 2006, June 15 became World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. For the past three years, Elder Options has organized a summit to raise awareness about elderly abuse and how to prevent it, said Chrystal Holmes, community services coordinator with Elder Options.

Last year, the event drew about 30 professionals to hear about local resources and contacts involved with elderly abuse prevention. Holmes said this year Elder Options decided to make the summit available to the public.

"A lot of elderly abuse goes unreported," she said.

"Either people don't recognize it, they are afraid to get involved or they don't even know how to report it."

According to Roane, elderly abuse victims usually suffer from impaired ability due to mental illness, emotional disorders, long-term physical disability, brain damage or sensory impairment.

Possible indicators of abuse in older adults include bruises, broken bones, lacerations, burn marks and untreated injuries.

Quana Perry, an employee with Another Way Inc., usually works with domestic and spousal abuse at the local domestic violence and rape crisis center.

"Abuse is abuse, whether it's spousal, elderly or children," she said. "When

these types of cases come in, they are referred to our agency. I'm here today to just get as much information as I can."

Lake City Mayor Stephen Witt welcomed guests to the event.

A video presented from Elder Options, "An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America," stated that elderly abuse is an invisible crime, costing \$2.6 million a year in financial abuse.

Roane warned the audience that it is not an individual's responsibility to investigate, interview or prove abuse. The public should only be concerned with reporting suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities.

To report possible elderly abuse, contact the hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

VERDICT: Jury takes just three hours to convict inmate for guard's death

Continued From Page 1A

trial would encompass.

Members of the family attended each day of the trial, often leaving blankets and pillows in the courtroom to mark their places for the next day of court.

Siegmeister was also tight-lipped about the verdict.

"I can't make a comment until after the penalty phase," he said.

The penalty phase of the trial will begin at 9 a.m. Tuesday in Courtroom 2 of the courthouse. Franklin could face the death penalty if recommended by the jury.

Closing arguments in the trial began just before 10 a.m. Wednesday. Siegmeister used a PowerPoint presentation. He said the case has had many common themes and noted the first was the defendant, Franklin, just doesn't fight fair.

Siegmeister said Franklin "sucker punched" Thomas and Corrections Officer William Brewer.

"He brought a knife to a fist fight," he said. "He (Franklin) said he had the knife to negotiate, but failed to negotiate at every given opportunity... We're not here for Count 3 (possession of contraband in a prison). We're here for the murder of Ruben Thomas — for the premeditated killing of Ruben Thomas. This case comes down to this was a premeditated killing of Sgt. Ruben Thomas. This is not a second-degree murder case."

Siegmeister said Franklin hunted Thomas before he killed him.

"He (Franklin) said he got in range and — I'm not a hunter, but that sounds like hunting to me," he said. "He took a deadly weapon to a fist fight because he intended to make it a murder... He knew what he was doing. He reflected and he reflected until he killed Sgt. Ruben Thomas."

Assistant Public Defender Jonathan Austin presented closing arguments for the defense.

He said the state asked for the most extraordinary verdict, but asked whether the state produced extraordinary evidence.

"It's a lot of passion, but a lack of evidence," Austin said, indicating Franklin was just trying to serve his time. "He admitted to you he owned the knife — the shank — and it was for just in case."

Austin argued that Franklin had the knife months before the attack and the incident was not premeditated.

"Why would he suddenly want to kill the man," Austin asked. "He just got into a fight and what has changed since this man (Thomas) left his cell? Why would he want to kill him now?"

Austin also questioned the testimony of several state witnesses who were inmates, and even called one inmate's testimony inaccurate. He said several of the inmates exaggerated.

"They have a high initiative to come in here and tell whatever

they think the jailer needs," he said. "The burden is to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that premeditation occurred. There is no proof of that in this case. It was not premeditated, first-degree murder; that's it in a nutshell."

In Siegmeister's rebuttal, he said several of the witnesses' testimonies matched the scientific evidence presented by the medical examiner and Florida Department of Law Enforcement reports.

"The only person whose testimony doesn't fit together is Richard Franklin's," he said. "Ruben Thomas was murdered with premeditated intent. By that we mean the only verdict is premeditated murder."

The jury was then excused to begin deliberations.

According to state Department of Corrections information, Franklin, from Daytona Beach, is already serving two life sentences for first-degree murder

and robbery with a firearm. Both crimes were committed in Volusia County in 1994.

Franklin was convicted of murdering 25-year-old Bethune-Cookman University student Gregory Roper. The victim's body was found in a wooded area near Daytona Beach on Nov. 24, 1994. He bled to death from after being shot several times in his legs.

Franklin also received a life sentence for robbery and aggravated battery with a deadly weapon for shooting a 72-year-old man in the parking lot of an Ormond Beach apartment complex and stealing the victim's car nearly a month after Roper was killed.

Franklin, already a suspect in Roper's killing, was arrested a short time later when he crashed the stolen car and tried to flee.

Franklin had been arrested on a battery charge in June 1994, but he escaped about two months before Roper was killed.

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ANOTHER VIEW

Rare good news in Iran

To Westerners, so weary of the carefully cultivated arrogance and belligerence of Iran's outgoing president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the fact that a genuinely moderate cleric, Hassan Rouhani, will succeed him can only be taken as encouraging news. What's somewhat surprising is that Iran's all-powerful religious establishment even permitted Rouhani to be on Friday's ballot in the first place. His opponents were all ultra-conservative.

And yet Rouhani won a surprisingly easy victory, sending a clear signal – actually, a sharp rebuke – to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that regardless of his unbridled political power, the Iranian people have their own priorities. A much better life is probably at the top of their list, along with better relations with the rest of the world.

But can the hoped-for changes actually happen? Iran's economy is in shambles, largely because of sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies, and there are no easy solutions, especially if Iran maintains its quest for nuclear weapons, which Rouhani has defended in the past.

Tehran would have to sharply change direction, and it's hard to imagine the ayatollah allowing that to happen, even in the face of last week's election results.

The White House was so pleased with Rouhani's victory that it immediately called on the ayatollah and his associates to "heed the will of the Iranian people." Ayatollahs, however, are not in the habit of accommodating Washington's wishes.

Actually, what Iran calls a democracy is in fact a cynical exercise in deception because it is totally within Khamenei's power to neutralize any liberalization initiatives the new president might wish to take (and the Iranian people would surely welcome).

Whatever reforms Rouhani may promote, they will always have Khamenei and his military supporters standing firmly in their way...

And Iran's role in the Syrian civil war represents a real obstacle to rapprochement in Washington's eyes. Iran supports the brutal Assad dictatorship in Damascus, both directly and indirectly (through Hezbollah, the anti-Israel, pro-Iran rebel army based in Lebanon). Obama is reluctant to intervene directly on the side of the anti-Assad rebels and has so far rejected the notion of a no-fly zone to aid their cause.

However, on Saturday, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi may have changed the equation. He not only said he had cut all diplomatic ties with Syria but went so far as to call for a no-fly zone and demanded that Hezbollah withdraw from fighting – though Russia on Monday said a no-fly zone must not be established.

"We stand against Hezbollah in its aggression against the Syrian people," Morsi said. "Hezbollah must leave Syria – these are serious words. There is no space or place for Hezbollah in Syria."

Morsi said he was organizing an urgent summit of Arab and other Islamic states to discuss the situation.

You can't assess the situation in Syria without also considering the implications of Iran's election results, and that makes Rouhani's triumph all the more intriguing.

■ Tampa Tribune

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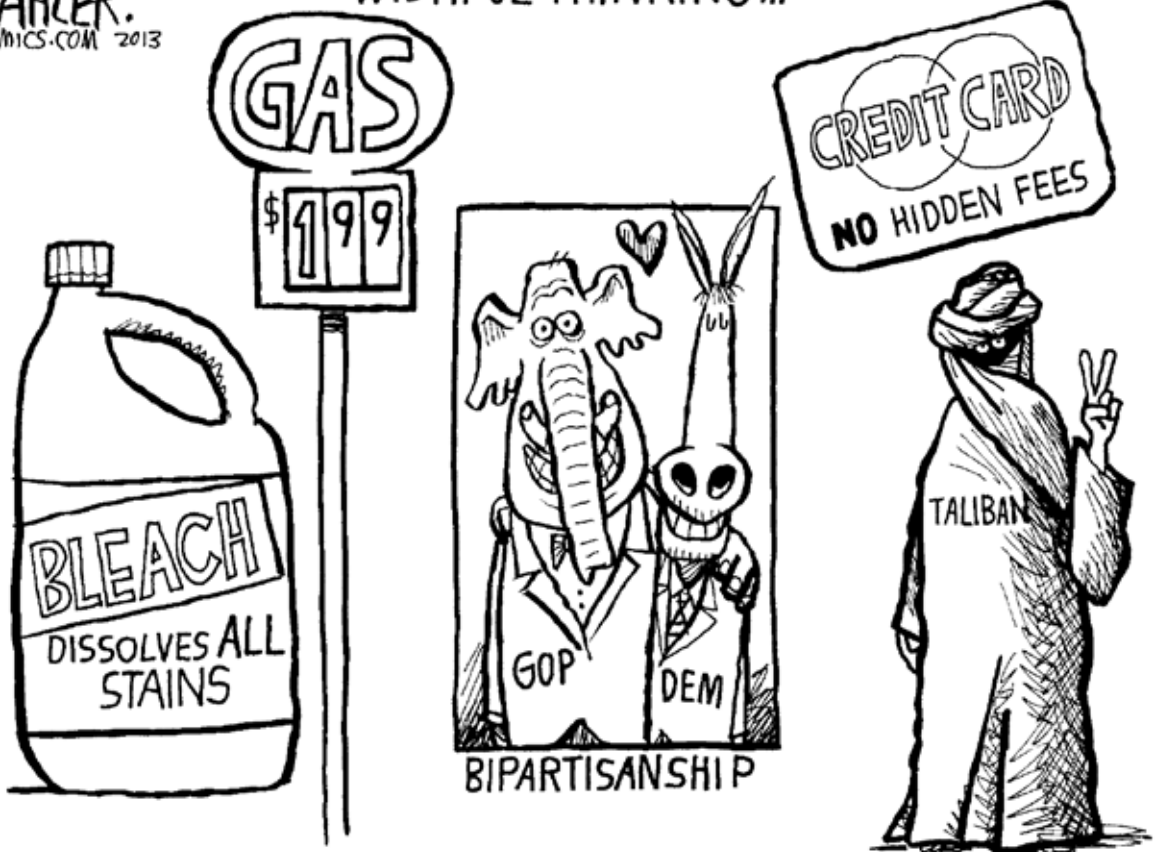
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WISHFUL THINKING...



Revive America's can-do spirit

I recently toured the Johnson Space Center here, while vacationing with my retired, itinerant, sainted parents. The most striking thing at NASA's legendary facility is a Saturn V rocket. It lies within a giant hangar, beneath incredibly bright lights. It is humongous and breathtaking.

In large red letters, the words UNITED STATES appear proudly along the vehicle's length. It brought tears to my eyes. I thought: This is what America did, back when America did things.

Today, America has that no-can-do spirit.

The U.S. now wheezes beneath the crushing weight of lawsuits, environmental impact reports, diversity consultants, a \$17 trillion national debt, entitlement proliferation, lethargic economic growth, the lowest labor-participation rate since 1979, relentless Twitter distractions, and the mind-dissolving effects of Kardashianization.

When another Saturn V sent Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the moon in July 1969, America was a serious country. Forty-four summers hence, not so much.

U.S. astronauts headed for the International Space Station now must hitchhike there on Russia's rockets. Fare: \$70.6 million per seat.

Beyond America's downshift in space, innovation seems stuck in a lower gear. When did a new invention make you slap your head in astonishment, as was routine for decades? Smartphones do grow smarter. Aside from that. ...

Yes, the Saturn V was a product of big government – but not as big then as today. When Armstrong took "one small step for man," Washington, D.C., spent 19.3 percent of gross domestic product. By 2011, its share was 24.5 percent. Besides, big government used the



Deroy Murdock
deroy.murdock@gmail.com

Saturn V to accomplish "one giant leap for mankind," as Armstrong declared. Here on Earth, that mission catapulted America well ahead of the Marxist Soviet Union.

Compare that to big government today: \$787 billion squandered on a stimulus that stimulated nothing; green jobs that, at best, cost \$575,000 each, and an entitlement state that expands as poverty grows. On a smaller but also irritating scale, conference-going IRS employees have occupied \$3,500-per-night hotel rooms. The tax agency also spent \$17,000 so "motivational artist" Erik Wahl could paint pictures of Michael Jordan and Bono.

Meanwhile, America devolves from constitutional republic to banana republic. Federal abuse of power, spying on journalists, politically discriminatory tax agents, and official impunity thrive beneath a tropical canopy of incompetence and economic stagnation. America is becoming Venezuela with atomic weapons.

Thanks to the high stakes of the Cold War, the clenched-jawed relentlessness of the Greatest Generation, or perhaps some other factor(s), America once exuded gravity. That largely has floated away.

As common sense evaporates, for instance, Petrona Smith told her Bronx Spanish students that "black" in that language is "negro."

Some took offense, and she got fired. Now, she is suing for damages.

Tracey Hannema, a Manhattan dyslexic, is suing for 50 percent more time so she can take a medical-school admissions test in a quiet, distraction-free environment where she says she could boost her score. Will she also demand such tranquility in a hospital emergency room?

Instead of an Apollo-style celebration of achievement and individual excellence, standards slide. NBC News recently profiled Oregon's South Medford High School and its 21 valedictorians. At Alabama's Enterprise High, 34 students are "first in their class."

It's important not to over-romanticize this picture. The best and the brightest who built the Saturn V also authored the food stamp program that burgeons today. Medicaid barely wobbles along, 48 years after its creation. And Washington shipped some 2.6 million GIs to Vietnam. Some 58,000 returned in body bags.

Still, there is something truly inspiring even now about the words with which President John F. Kennedy launched the Apollo program in September 1962: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

Imagine a president of the United States challenging the American people this way. These days, in a nation perpetually on break, it would seem almost rude.

Houston, we have a problem.

■ Deroy Murdock is a columnist with the Scripps Howard News Service and a media fellow with the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University.

U.S., Taliban will hold peace talks

Since 1973, when King Mohammed Zahir Shah was ousted in a bloodless coup by his communist brother-in-law, pessimism about Afghanistan has generally not gone unrewarded.

But hope in Afghanistan, if not exactly springing eternal, does come to life every few years, and so it has again with the announcement that the U.S. and the Taliban will begin talks in Doha, Qatar, on how to end that 12-year war.

The initial talks are to be followed by a Taliban meeting with President Hamid Karzai's High Peace Council. That's progress of a sort because for years the Taliban have refused to meet with Karzai's peace council on the grounds that the group was a U.S. puppet.

The Taliban agreed to two key U.S. conditions for beginning talks: a pledge not to use Afghanistan to threaten other countries – still far short of the public break with al-Qaida that the U.S. wants – and an endorsement of the negotiating process.

The U.S. and its coalition part-



Dale McFeatters
mcfeattersd@shns.com

ners want, in addition to a public disavowal of al-Qaida, an end to violence and an acceptance of the constitution with its endorsement of the rights of women.

The announcement came as the Karzai government formally assumed responsibility for the security of all 403 districts in Afghanistan's 34 provinces. The handover is the first step in the departure of coalition forces, numbering 100,000 troops, including 66,000 Americans.

By the end of the year, the number is to be halved and all combat troops are to be gone by the end of 2014, except for a small group of trainers and advisers. With the security of Afghanistan ostensibly

in Afghani hands, a force of about 352,000 amid grave questions about its reliability and loyalties, the coalition will be largely limited to air strikes and medical evacuations.

The departure date would seem to indicate that a wise Taliban strategy would be to sit and wait, but perhaps the Taliban see the possibility of a genuine peace. Then again, perhaps not. An earlier attempt at peace talks ended abruptly when a Taliban suicide bomber killed Burhanuddin Rabbani, the previous head of the High Peace Council, in September 2011.

And it seems not everybody has bought into this process. During the handover ceremony, a bomb targeting Mohammad Mohaqiq, a prominent Shiite member of Parliament, exploded, missing Mohaqiq, but killing three people and injuring dozens.

An administration official told the Associated Press that peace talks would be "complex, long and messy." Pessimism is rarely misplaced in Afghanistan.

■ Dale McFeatters is editorial writer for Scripps Howard News Service.

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SPO RTS

Story ideas?

Contact
Tim Kirby

Sports Editor
754-0421

tkirby@lakecityreporter.com

Thursday, June 20, 2013

www.lakecityreporter.com

Section B



COURTESY

The Lake City Babe Ruth 15U All-Stars are competing in the District 6 tournament in Madison this week. Team members are (front row, from left) Micah Kriehauser, Dalton Williams, Tyler Morgan and Cody Bass. Second row (from left) are T.J. Price, Lucas Bedenbaugh, James Shimmel, Dylan Stalter and Christian Matthews. Third row (from left) are Witt Register, Drake Hammett, Austin Matthews, Chase Cevantes and coach Jonathan Ulsh. Not pictured is coach Sam Bass.



COURTESY

The Fort White 15U All-Stars are playing in the District 6 tournament in Madison this week. Team members are (alphabetical order) Jeremy Barber, Dillon Boone, Cameron Certain, Mason Coleman, Joshua Cribbs, Brandon Harvey, Cameron Hilbert, Harley Jaffe, Norberto Miranda, Daniel Peek and Philip Wooley. Coaches are Norberto Miranda and Raymond Barber. Not pictured are Austin Shingleton and coach Jonathan Boone.

CHS going hard with summer drills

Tigers to travel for 7-on-7 leagues in Palatka, Trenton.

By **BRANDON FINLEY**
bfinley@lakecityreporter.com

Columbia High enters the second week of its summer conditioning program and besides it getting hotter outside, the intensity is also turning up on the foot-

ball field.

Columbia will travel to Palatka for its first 7-on-7 passing camp today and travel to Trenton on Saturday for a second camp.

"It's a chance to see how we execute the different wrinkles we've put in this year," Columbia head coach Brian Allen said. "We've added little tweaks on our defense and we'll get to

look at how we can execute the different formations."

The biggest battle that could wage in the 7-on-7 camps this summer, however, could be between the quarterbacks vying for the starting spot in the fall.

The Tigers have a competition going between senior Austin Williams and newcomers Jake Thomas and

SUMMER continued on 6B

All-Stars to travel

Games start today for Lake City, Fort White teams.

From staff reports

The Florida Babe Ruth Baseball All-Stars District 9 Tournament starts today at the Madison County Recreation Complex

The Madison fields are on U.S. 90 west next to Madison County High School.

There are tournaments for 9U, 10U, 12U and 15U age groups, with all championship games scheduled for Sunday.

Lake City has teams in

all divisions. Fort White has teams in 10U and 15U. Opening round schedules for Columbia County teams follow.

Today

■ 12U — Lake City vs. Wakulla, 10 a.m.; with a win, Lake City vs. Taylor, 1 p.m.; with a loss, Lake City vs. Union/Suwannee loser, 2:30 p.m.

■ 10U — Fort White vs. Gilchrist/Madison winner, 1 p.m.; Lake City vs. Wakulla, 2:30 p.m.

Friday

■ 9U — Lake City vs. Wakulla, 11:30 a.m.

■ 15U — Lake City vs. Jefferson, 11 a.m.; Fort White vs. Lafayette/

Hamilton winner, 1 p.m.

The tournaments are double elimination. Additional opponents and game times will be determined by winning or losing.

All-Star teams in the divisions follow:

■ 9U — Lake City, Wakulla, Suwannee, Union;

■ 10U — Lake City, Fort White, Gilchrist, Madison, Wakulla, Suwannee, Union, Lafayette, Hamilton;

■ 12U — Lake City, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison, Lafayette, Gilchrist, Taylor, Hamilton, Union, Suwannee;

■ 15U — Lake City, Fort White, Lafayette, Hamilton, Jefferson.

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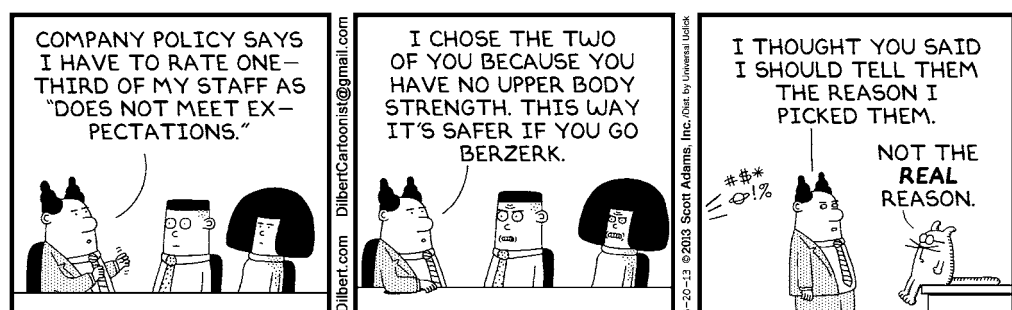
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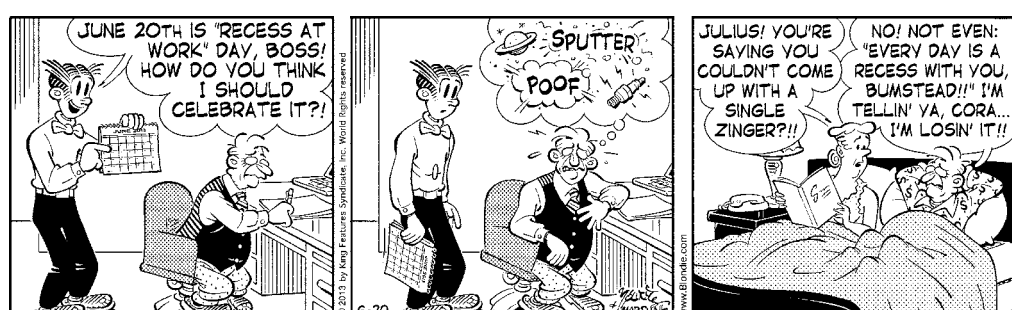
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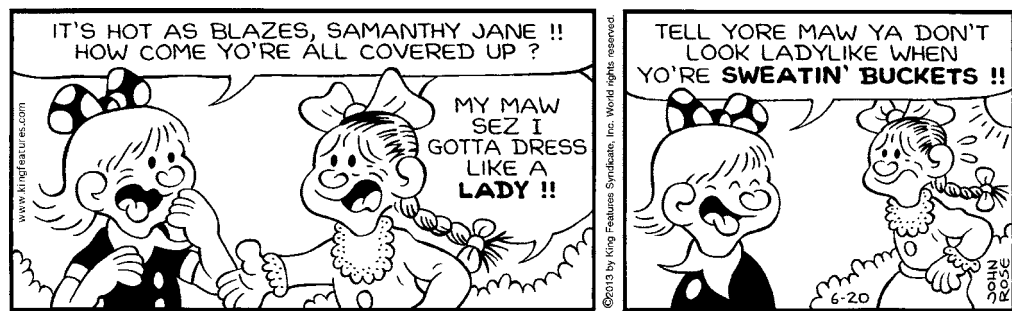
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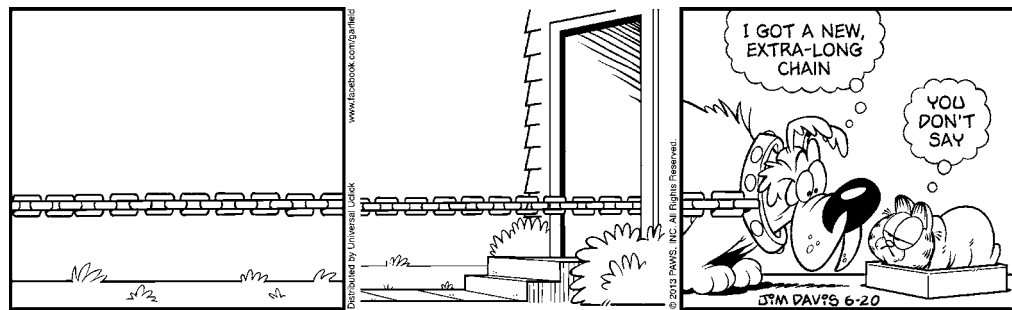
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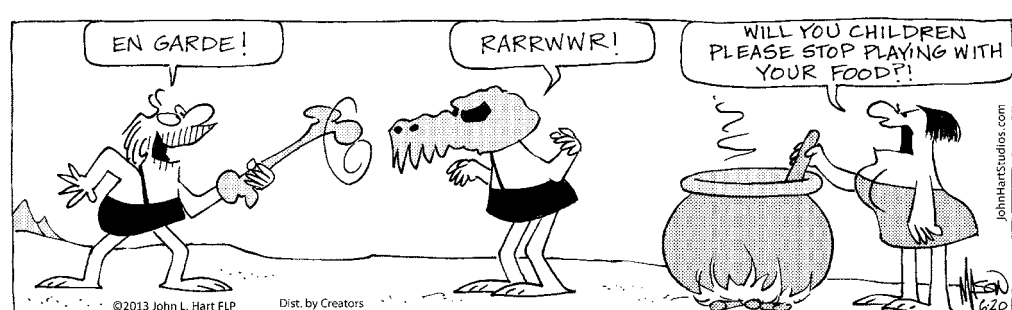
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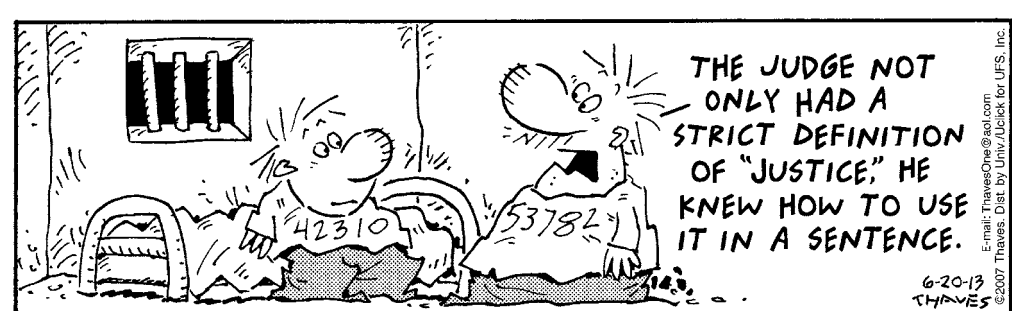
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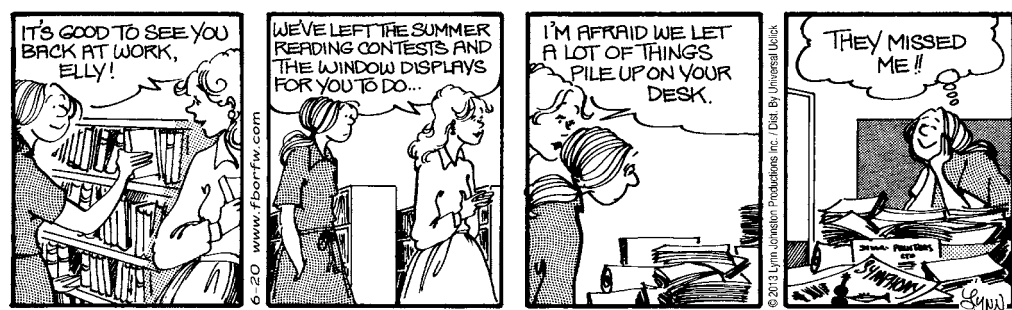
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FOR BETTER OR WORSE



DEAR ABBY

Mom should keep kids away from their gun-toting grandpa



Abigail Van Buren www.dearabby.com

DEAR ABBY: The letter you printed from "Gun-Shy in South Carolina" (March 5), about the antics of her gun-toting, alcoholic father-in-law, caught my attention. I'm a former mental health clinician and program inspector. I discussed that letter with a friend who is a psychiatrist.

"Grandpa" has probably already violated a municipal ordinance regarding discharging a firearm in corporate limits. I agree with you that he has endangered his grandchildren. My friend advised that, according to the local interpretation of mental health statutes, Grandpa might be eligible for involuntary commitment and evaluation in a psychiatric facility. He could be disarmed by the police, if necessary.

"Gun-Shy" should heed her motherly instincts, stay home and refuse to visit Grandpa until he enters treatment. Otherwise there's a high probability that she will mourn the loss of one or more dead children.

Grandpa seems to think that booze and guns make him brave. A brave person is a military medic, a member of the U.S. Coast Guard and the thousands of first responders who demonstrate their bravery

(illegal), unsecured loaded weapons (illegal), and firing guns around children in a home environment (illegal). That jerk should have been arrested! - SMOKEY IN FLORIDA

DEAR ABBY: Thank you for reminding your readers that when someone shoots a gun into the air, the bullet comes down somewhere. A child near my hometown died last New Year's Eve when she stepped outside with her grandmother to watch the fireworks and a bullet fell to earth and lodged in her brain. The police believe the gun may have been fired from a few miles away. - CHRISTINA IN MARYLAND

DEAR RESPONSIBLE: I agree. Some readers felt I should have been tougher in my response, and that Gun-Shy and her children should not visit Grandpa at all. Failure to act on her fears is called child endangerment and could result in the children being taken away. Readers let me have it with both barrels:

DEAR ABBY: Your answer to "Gun-Shy" was off the mark! As a vet and former law enforcement officer, I think the whole family is in "wimp" mode. For adults to watch a drunk adult fire a gun in the air around his family and not call 911 was ignorant and dangerous. ALL states have laws about firing guns in the air (illegal), firing guns while drunk

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HOROSCOPES

THE LAST WORD Eugenia Last

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Make a deal that counts. Look over your investments, a contract or a settlement or close a deal. Rearrange your living space to suit your needs. Expand your interests and your friendships. Personal changes will boost your confidence. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Share your emotions and offer your support to those in need. Romance is highlighted and a close encounter is likely if you watch for the signals that someone is sending you. A short trip or attending an event will raise your profile. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep an even disposition regardless of what you encounter. An argument will not solve anything and will probably be based on false information. Bring about positive change that will improve your community or help you advance. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your drive and determination will impress someone. Love and romance are on the rise, and being a participant will help you explore new possibilities. Self-improvement will lead to compliments and opportunities. An innovative idea of yours should be presented. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

Keep your thoughts a secret but explore new possibilities. Making a change at home will encourage a new beginning or lifestyle, but doing so with great thought and finesse will be required if you want to be successful. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): An unusual connection or information will help you view life differently. Opening up about the way you feel or regarding a cause you believe in will bring you greater experience and know-how to find solutions. Don't let what others do discourage you. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Use who you know and what you know to get ahead. Expect someone to interfere, and be prepared to outmaneuver anyone who tries to come between you and your success. An original approach coupled with Libra charm should help you get ahead. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Make changes at home that are conducive to pursuing a goal you set. Living in an unusual setting or adjusting your routine will give you a chance to explore something you love to do. Romance is on the rise. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Fight for what you want but don't exaggerate in order to get it. Excess will lead to trouble. Sizing down and cutting back will bring you greater freedom to enjoy the people, pastimes and places you enjoy most. ★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Look for the best deal and you will find it. Spending more time with peers will help you become more diverse with work-related projects. Avoid any impulsive moves involving relationships or your home. Offer help and a reward will follow. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Do your research, learn all you can, explore your options and mingle with people who have something to offer. A problem with regard to your position must be handled uniquely and with consideration. A change of location may be required. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Express minimalism in all that you do. Find a way to get more for less using creativity and a hands-on attitude. You will impress someone who offers love and support if you live in the moment and act with compassion. Love is highlighted. ★★★★★

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

" O J K Z A J V V B M J D C W T R B M O F T Y M Y F K W , J F T O Z L W V V Z C X Y A U C - O Z M J D S W O F U C W V T Z Y U W Z C W X S B Z C W T O X Z . " - W T O W L J V K Y

Previous Solution: "An old brush has vitality, it's a brush that has lived, that has had a life of its own." - Joan Miro

TODAY'S CLUE: M equals R

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CLASSIC PEANUTS



SUMMER: Workouts continue

Continued From Page 1B

Nathan Taylor. "The competition is still heating up," Allen said. "We're looking for someone to show they are the guy in a competitive atmosphere." Williams will be missing from the competition as he's been out of practice this week with an illness. "We'll split the reps between the guys," Allen said. "Austin has been sick with an infection, so the two young guys will be battling. We'll even it out, so one guy might get a series and then the other. We want to see someone emerge as the guy." Allen said one advantage that the quarterbacks have is working against the Tigers' secondary each day at practice. Allen believes that Columbia will have one

of the toughest defenses in the state this fall. "I like it a ton that our guys get to go up against our defense," Allen said. "I don't know if they'll get to go up against a better defense than they'll face internally. It is good to see them go up against other teams." As far as specifics, Allen went into detail over what he'll be looking for out of his quarterbacks. "We want to see them operate efficiently," Allen said. "They have to make the right reads and find the weak spot in the defense. We want a guy that isn't going to turn the ball over. That's key for us. I feel that we'll force turnovers on the defense in the fall that will give our offense an opportu-

nity to come away with points." Allen expects to see around 30 teams at Trenton, while there won't be as many teams in Palatka today. Despite the lack of teams, the competition should be fierce with Deland, Palatka and Gainesville high schools in attendance. "It'll be a competitive atmosphere," Allen said. "I don't expect it to be as good as the FCA camp later this summer, but I expect good things. We haven't been with the teams that long, but it should be competitive." Columbia will host a car wash at 9 a.m. on Friday morning at the Hardee's on U.S. Highway 90 West next to Walmart. The car wash will last until 3 p.m. as a fundraiser for next season.



BRANDON FINLEY/Lake City Reporter
Columbia High head coach Brian Allen watches as players run through drills during a Tigers summer conditioning practice last week.

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