

Briefly

Deputies seek cause of teenager's death

WALTERBORO — Authorities were investigating the death of a 14-year-old boy found on a path Wednesday off Brittlebank Road but had not determined how he died.

The path where the youth was found leads from Koth Street to Brittlebank Road near Walterboro, a release states. The Colleton County Coroner's Office expected to know more after an autopsy Thursday.

The child had a history of medical problems, but it was unknown whether they caused his death, the sheriff's office said. Deputies are treating the investigation as a homicide, which is standard when they do not know how a person died.

Boater reports hand seen in Shem Creek

MOUNT PLEASANT — Rescue workers were searching Shem Creek at high tide Thursday for possible human remains.

At about 5:30 p.m., a boater reported seeing what was thought to be a hand at the surface of the water, police Lt. Amy McCarthy said.

Mount Pleasant police and firefighters and members of the Charleston County Volunteer Rescue Squad searched the area near Mill Street late into the evening.

Ashley bridge power cable breaks loose

A 15-foot-long piece of a cable that provides power for the Ashley River drawbridges broke loose from its mooring at the bottom of the river and floated to the surface near the West Ashley side of the river, the state Department of Transportation said Thursday.

"There's no danger to boat traffic and car traffic," DOT spokesman James Law said.

It will take about two weeks to re-anchor the section of power cable. The DOT is in the process of contracting the work, which is estimated to cost about \$17,000, Law said.

— Staff reports

Hoisington deputies eyeing post

2 lieutenants lead list for 9th Circuit prosecutor

BY SCHUYLER KROPF
The Post and Courier

The top two lieutenants of former Solicitor Ralph Hoisington are the leading candidates to be appointed his successor by the governor.

Deputy Solicitor Blair Jennings, who oversees prosecutions in Berkeley County, and Scarlett Wilson, chief deputy solicitor in Charleston County, both are interested in taking over as the 9th Circuit's top prosecutor.

Two-term Republican incumbent Ralph Hoisington, 59, passed away from pancreatic cancer Saturday.

The vacancy has sparked a round of speculation in the local legal and political community, largely because the choice could be in office for years to come. Whomever is appointed is likely to have an eye toward defending the seat at the polls next November.

The opening already has triggered some political pressure on Gov. Mark Sanford. The voting records of both prosecutors have been examined by local Republicans to see how active they were in recent party primaries.

Both Wilson and Jennings confirmed their interest in the post

Thursday but declined to say much else. Both worked for Hoisington for about six years.

Jennings, 36, grew up in Mount Pleasant, received his undergraduate degree from Emory University and graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1996, clerking with the solicitor's office in Columbia for two years of that time. He worked as a private practice attorney in Columbia until he was hired by Hoisington after he was elected in 2000.

Wilson, 39, is a native of Hemingway. She graduated from Clemson University and then USC Law, in

1992. After clerking for Circuit Judge Don S. Rushing, she worked as an assistant solicitor before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office and its Violent Crimes Task Force in 1995. She also began working for Hoisington after his election.

Under state law, Sanford will make the pick, but it would become official with the consent of the Senate, which could come at any time during the next Statehouse session.

Sanford spokesman Joel Sawyer said there is no timetable to fill the vacancy, although the selection is likely to come "sooner rather than later," he said.

A lobbying, phone-calling and letter-writing campaign to the

governor's office is expected to grow in the coming days from both attorneys and party leaders looking to influence the choice.

There is also a chance that others may come forward from outside the solicitor's office to seek the job, either by approaching Sanford now, or next year as challengers in the party primaries.

Sawyer declined to say whether the governor has someone in mind or who he's consulting with locally about the vacancy.

"We talk to a lot of people throughout the process," he said.

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Building the future



MELISSA HANELINE/STAFF



On the Web

For more photos from the "Let Go of My Legos" camp, visit www.charleston.net/webextras.

Andrew Williams (from left), Mark Jenkins, Jackson Inabinett and Joseph Hansknecht test their Lego car creations Thursday against the parameters of a challenge course. Trident Technical College's summer camp program "Let Go of My Legos" is a weeklong program designed to build basic engineering and logical thinking skills.

Sanford vetoes primary funding

Dems, GOP will have to foot bill

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Mark Sanford vetoed a bill Thursday that would have had the state run the 2008 presidential primaries instead of the Republican and Democratic parties.

South Carolina is the only state in which political parties are expected to pay for the presidential primaries next year.

In the past, both parties had raised money to run primaries or caucuses and used volunteers. The legislation called for the State Election Commission to handle the voting and the state to pick up the \$2.2 million tab.

The parties had asked for the legislation because they had been criticized in the past and even sued for not opening every precinct in the state, something they say is difficult with a party-run primary staffed mostly with volunteers.

In his veto letter, Sanford said he would support the state paying for the primaries if both parties had their votes on the same day.

But State Republican Party Chairman Katon Dawson said that is unlikely. Democrats are bound by the date set by the Democratic National Committee and Republicans in South Carolina have vowed to maintain their status as the GOP's first contest in the South.

Iraqi seeks insight on Chas. visit

BY DAVID SLADE
The Post and Courier

What questions might Lowcountry residents ask if they could sit down and talk with a young man from war-torn Iraq?

Haider Hamza, 22, hopes to find out today as part of a scholarly road trip that's been dubbed "Ask an Iraqi."

And he'll be asking some questions of his own.

"It's basically to engage with people from across the U.S. to see what they know about what's happening in Iraq, and how they feel about it," said Hamza.

Hamza is the son of a retired Iraqi ambassador who spent parts of the past four years embedded with U.S. troops as a freelance journalist.

"First I want to see what they know," Hamza said. "Then I would ask them if this war has changed their lives at all."

"I know it changed mine." Hamza will be in the heart of Charleston's tourism district at 10 a.m. today, with a film crew from the television show "This American Life" in tow, looking to speak with people at a booth at Market and Meeting streets.

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Sneak peek planned for upcoming Parish auction

BY SCHUYLER KROPF
The Post and Courier

The buildup to the July 13-14 auction of Al Parish's assets will include a push for early media exposure to help build momentum.

Officials behind the auction are planning a media day July 12 to let reporters walk through the hundreds of items and see what's for sale. The idea is to get the word out on TV and in print, which would increase foot traffic and the chance of sales.

Parish's collection of art, clothes, prints and other investable items will be auctioned at the Charleston Area Convention Center. Proceeds will help pay investors who say

they lost tens of millions of dollars in Parish's collapsed investment pools.

There will be a small admission fee, a charge that will be rebated to successful bidders.

The media day announcement came as the federal judge overseeing Parish's fraud case approved several housekeeping matters Thursday, including the April bill for the company assigned to tabulate his assets.

Hays Financial Consulting of Atlanta has collected more than \$1 million by liquidating and freezing Parish's accounts. But the bill was



Parish

nearly \$350,000 in April as a team of lawyers, accountants and appraisers worked long days at rates from \$60 to \$470 an hour.

No one at the hearing spoke in opposition to the bill amount, which U.S. District Judge David Norton called part of "a Herculean effort" to track Parish's wealth.

Parish, a former economist at Charleston Southern University, was arrested in April and charged with 10 counts of criminal fraud surrounding his investments. He is free on \$1 million bail while the charges against him play out.

Digging up a turtle

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knowledge of the genus is spotty at best because scientists usually find only little pieces of shell. Knight said that's why he's particularly excited to get a complete specimen, saying it will help to shed light on the mysterious genus.

Freelance graphics designer Paul Bailey co-founded the Lowcountry Fossil Club six years ago and often goes around with a metal stick, prodding for fossils.

Then, one day in late May, while searching around a drainage ditch behind Brandy Mill subdivision in Summerville, Bailey struck lightning.

"I started to slowly dig it out ... just to get a small piece," Bailey said. "So I kept digging until I realized it was a complete shell. And then that's when I got excited."

When Bailey first discovered the animal and realized he couldn't dig it out alone, he got in touch with Vance McCollum, a fellow club member who also volunteers for the State Museum as a field liaison. The club waited anxiously for paleontologists to arrive, hoping



SOURCE: ESRI STAFF

that no curious passers-by would disturb their find.

The ditch flowed with ankle-deep water from recent rains as a team of local and state volunteers carefully dug out the muck around the fossil.

"Kids sit out there and say, 'Yeah, I want to be a paleontologist,'" Knight said jokingly as he swung the pickaxe again into the mud on a humid Lowcountry day.

The team plans to cover the fossil in plaster to protect the outer edge, then flip it over so they can protect the bottom as well for transport.

After scientists have studied it, the fossil eventually will go on display at the State Museum in Columbia.

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Tests on computer

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priority," Turner said. "Computerized tests are far and away a superior mode of assessment. The payoff would not be only for the testing program but for the entire instructional program."

Rex said three testing-related task forces will further delve into the report this summer before education officials decide how to proceed. State Rep. Bob Walker, chairman of House Education and Public Works committee, said he plans to hold public hearings to discuss Rex's wholesale plan to change state tests, with the idea of computerized testing playing a role in those forums.

Walker said there's no way a conversion to a computerized system can be achieved without phasing in the tests on a year-by-year basis, rather than the state swallowing the \$58 million figure all at once. The report suggests adopting a plan that would offer online tests for seventh-grade science in the first year. All English/language arts and math tests would be added by the third and fourth years.

Another effort to pass budget

Lawmakers returning to Statehouse for 3 days to try to break deadlock

BY YVONNE M. WENGER
The Post and Courier

COLUMBIA — The Legislature will reconvene Tuesday in a three-day session extension to try again to pass a state budget. In the meantime, Gov. Mark Sanford on Thursday put the Legislature's contingency plan in place to keep government operating.

For the first time since 1972, lawmakers have failed to sign off on a new spending plan this late in the year. A tentative \$7.4 billion budget is in place, but the House is refusing to sign it until lawmakers restructure the state Department of Transportation.

The House wants \$40 million annually, growing to \$200 million, for road maintenance, bridge repair and new construction, partially flowing through the state Transportation Infrastructure Bank.

Sanford said he supports the House's attempt to leverage a deal on the agency reform and believes that's more important than passing a budget.

The Senate's plan to reform the Transportation Department doesn't include any new funding.

If the lawmakers fail to adopt a budget by July 1, government will freeze at current spending levels for as long as a year. It would also leave a \$1.5 billion surplus available if the economy sours, Sanford said.

President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell, R-Charleston, said he can't recall similar circumstances in the years since he was first elected to the Senate in 1980.

"The problem is, there are a lot of complications and ramifications that people are debating and no one is certain," McConnell said.

There are several opportunities to adopt a budget between now and next June when a new spending plan would be scheduled for approval. The session will likely continue June 28-29, and Sanford said he hasn't ruled out the possibility of ordering the lawmakers to return beyond the end of this month.

On behalf of House DOT reform negotiators, Rep. Annette Young, R-Summerville, asked Senate negotiators to meet on Monday to try to reach an agreement.

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Be part of Dems' debate

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debate to last longer than one night, because the video will be obtainable forever.

Although the competition is national in scope, an "antenna" will be out for South Carolina-relevant submissions because of the host relation, Bohrman said.

South Carolina Democrats are scheduled to hold their first-in-the-South primary Jan. 29.

Candidates invited to next month's debate are U.S. Sens. Joe Biden of Delaware, Hillary Clinton of New York, Chris Dodd of Con-

necticut and Barack Obama of Illinois; Ohio Rep. Dennis Kucinich; New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and former Sens. John Edwards of North Carolina and Mike Gravel of Alaska.

The debate will be held in McAlister Field House, which seats 6,000. How many live attendees will be invited is not clear, but CNN said as many as 1,500 could be present.

A ticketing dispersal system has not been determined by the state Democratic Party, but, as is the norm at previous Democrat and Republican debates, party regulars usually have the first choice.