

Rick's PICKS FOR '04
Columnist Rick Cleveland makes his predictions for the football season, 1D

ART APPRECIATION
The Glory of Baroque Dresden could affect future exhibits, 1E

The Clarion-Ledger

Tuesday, August 31, 2004 Real Mississippi clarionledger.com Jackson, Miss. ■ 50¢

No charges in land deal

ATA CLANCE

The length of the grand jury term is unprecedented in Rankin County. A grand jury usually meets once a month, but the panel has been meeting once a week to take up the land deal as well as regular criminal cases. The grand District Attorney David Clark said. The grand jury was scheduled to have concluded in June but probably will remain seated until the end of the year, although the land deal investigation could wrap up before then, Clark has said.

Grand jury finds no criminal wrongdoing by Rankin school board

By Jacob Bennett
A grand jury has found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing by Rankin County School Board members in the purchase of land for a new Brandon High School, but the panel did find out the possibility of indictments for others, according

to a report released Monday. The grand jury determined that millions of tax dollars were wasted on the project. The report comes two months after the grand jury decided to extend its session to investigate the land deal. Madison Rankin County District Attorney David Clark, an outspoken critic of the land deal, praised the grand jury's progress on the case. "This comes at a time when money is needed for teachers' salaries and the education of our children," Clark said.

District Superintendent Lynn Weathery and school board President Debbie Rankin would not comment. Attorneys for the district could not be reached for comment. Clark and the FBI announced a joint investigation of the land deal in March. Several construction projects, including the Brandon High project on Mississippi 19, were included in a \$69.35 million bond issue approved in 2001 and a \$12 million bond issue approved in

"We need a leader with the experience to make the tough decisions..."
Sen. John McCain

Basement bedroom's outlets suspect Electrical cause cited in fire

Classes resume; lab results from fatal blaze to take about two weeks

By Steve Brown

DEFOYD — A fire that killed three Alpha Tau Omega fraternity brothers at the University of Mississippi may have been electrical, an official said. The cause was "multiple points of origin" corresponding with electrical outlets in a basement bedroom, Jol Albert, assistant vice chancellor for university relations, said Monday. It will be two weeks before the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms gets lab results from samples taken from the ATO house, Albert said.

On Monday morning, students shuffled past the charred remains of the fraternity house as they headed to class. Some stopped and gazed. Others dialed on their cell phones. The decision to have classes Monday was tough to make, Albert said, but Ole Miss family members must "turn our faces to the future."

"I think part of that turning to the future is saying we came here to study and to learn and to grow, and that process continues even without these members of our family," Albert said.

Jordan Williams, 20, of Atlanta, Howard Stone, 19, of Martinsville, Va., and William Townsend, 19, of Clarksdale, died in the Friday morning blaze that occurred the same week the fall semester started.

Classes resumed at 9 a.m. on Thursday and Friday will be canceled as students and faculty gathered for a 7 p.m. campus memorial service at Tad Smith Coliseum near the ATO house. The service is for all students who have died since May.

Physical plant employees began craning a fence around the house, which is under 24-hour surveillance. The fire broke in good surveillance, the second floor is destroyed, and the basement is destroyed.



A friend of Will Townsend's says a final farewell after Monday graveside services in Clarksdale. The 19-year-old was one of three Alpha Tau Omega members killed in a Friday fire at the fraternity house. Hundreds packed the First United Methodist Church for the funeral.

Student hero 'reacted to who he was'

By Lara Hines

CLARKSDALE — Will Townsend was a hero long before he rushed into a burning house to save his fraternity brothers. It's just that not everyone realized it, the Rev. Charles Langford said.

"What he did was important. But who he was was more important. He simply reacted to who he was," Langford said Monday at Townsend's funeral at the First United Methodist Church.

Townsend, 19, died of smoke inhalation Friday in a fire at the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house at the University of Mississippi. A explosion, Townsend was one of 23 people in the house when the fire started about 4:30 a.m. He went back into the burning building to save the fraternity house member and Jordan Williams, 20, of Atlanta, and Howard Stone, 19, of Martinsville, Va. Williams and Stone, both sophomores, also died.

See FUNERAL, 3A

McCain, Giuliani stump for Bush

NEW YORK — Republicans belittled Democratic Sen. John Kerry as a lackluster candidate Monday, repeating their national convention four miles from Ground Zero of America's worst terrorist attack. "We need George Bush more than ever," said former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

Election 2004

INSIDE

"We need a leader with the experience to make the tough decisions and the resolve to stick with them," added Sen. John McCain of Arizona. He called the location of the "necessary, achievable goal."

The president, locked in a tight race for re-election, campaigned in New Hampshire and Michigan. But he triggered an instant campaign stir that muddled the campaign's carefully scripted message when he told an interviewer he doubted victory is possible in the war on terror.

"I don't think you can win it. But I think you can create the conditions that those who use terror as a tool are less acceptable," Bush said on NBC. Kerry responded that the struggle was "undeniably" real and Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards said Bush's remark amounted to a concession of defeat in the war that terrorists launched in 2001.

In a prelude to the evening's political op-ed, delegates noted Bush's unflinching conservative re-election platform. The GOP scripted message also lauded his response to terrorist attacks, declaring, "The president's most solemn duty is to protect our country. George W. Bush has kept that charge."

I finally learn whether the monster is living inside me

A SPECIAL REPORT
LAST PART OF 10-DAY SERIES
GENETIC DISASTER
A STORY OF FATE, FAITH AND FAMILY

Families are bound by shared love, time and memories. Mine is also bound by shared disease, a monster that has lived with my family for more than a century, a monster that first attacks the muscles and then ravages the brain and sometimes the bone, a monster that leaves his victims in cramped beds, eyes staring, unable to focus. It is a monster that came to be called "the family disease," a monster that may live inside me.

CHAPTER 10
By Jerry Mitchell
BOSTON — News that researchers are willing to discuss my family's faulty gene explains how he lives.

Research fellow Gita Watta explains what he's done, showing me a three-dimensional computer model of the isolated gene. The gene is known as the Val36Met mutation (VCP).

Saraj Mehta, Gita Watta, Dr. Virginia Kinross and Erica Saeborn work in the Kinross Laboratory at Children's Hospital in Boston which helps repair DNA. In cells it turns out, works hand-in-hand that need to die and targets certain proteins for degradation. VCP.

FORECAST
Warm and breezy
Showers possible
Weather, 2A

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CORRECTIONS
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