Tallahassee Community College
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House District 9 candidates each claim they’re ‘not a politician’

By Bill Cotterell
FLORIDA CAPITAL BUREAU POLITICAL EDITOR

Democrat Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, a 23-year state employee who teaches legal ethics at Tallahassee Community College, faces Republican Peter Boulware, the former FSU and Baltimore Ravens football star who runs a Toyota dealership west of town, for the House District 9 seat.

In a heavily Democratic district the party’s nominee would normally be a shoo-in and the GOP nominee — if there was one — would be going it alone.

But House Speaker-designate Ray Sansom, R-Destin, and Florida Republican Party Chairman Jim Greer held a rally for Boulware on the steps of the House Office Building when he announced his candidacy. Gov. Charlie Crist even issued a statement of support.

Vasilinda has the backing of Rep. Loranne Ausley, the Democrat they’re running to replace, as well as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and Police Benevolent Association.

Boulware also raised more than $341,000 through Sept. 26, plus another $41,632 worth of in-kind support — staff salaries, polling and consulting — from the state GOP. Vasilinda raised less than half as much, $148,340, and got $10,459 worth of logistics help from her party.

“I’m not a newcomer to politics, though I’m not a politician,” Vasilinda said. “I could have practiced law and made a lot of money ... But I believe we need to make sure our children can compete in a global economy. We’re facing some very hard times in state government, but we’ve faced them before.”

Boulware, who moved to Tallahassee in 1993 as an FSU student, said that “I’m not a politician” either.

“‘I’m very thankful to Tallahassee and FSU for giving me a free education and a chance to live out my dreams,’’ he said. ‘‘I’m going to run a campaign the same way I ran my professional career and athletics — working hard and seizing every opportunity that I can to serve this community.’”

Also on the Nov. 4 ballot is John Shaw, a non-party candidate running to draw attention to marijuana laws.

“The illegality of it has not reduced demand for it,’’ said Shaw. “I’d like to see the power given back to the states, and maybe we’ll make our own cash crop.”
TCC Internship Program

Reporter: Angela Salerno
Email Address: angela.salerno@wctv.tv

School officials say it’s the only program offered in the Tri-County area where students can participate in an internship without declaring a major.

About 85% of the interns are still with their selected offices. And a number of students were offered employment.

Lisa Lu now works for the Florida’s Board of Governors. She says the internship offered a smooth transition from student to employee.

Lisa Lu said, “We moved to the United States from China because we had the American dream, if I have a job in the United States, my dream can come true.”

TCC Interns Gain Professional Experience Before Graduating

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (October 14, 2008) – Taking classes, passing exams and graduating aren’t the only guarantees a student needs to do well professionally. To better ensure students’ success, Tallahassee Community College offers an Internship Program which provides opportunities in the professional world.

Of the 15 TCC students currently enrolled in the program this semester, each is already interning for a business or government office. The program boasts approximately 85 percent of students interning since summer 2007 are still with their selected offices, and 10 students transitioned into full-time positions with the respective internship provider.

Two students from the current internship selection are Qingfang “Lisa” Lu and Taylor Hilaman.

Lu earned a bachelor’s degree in physical education in China, where she also taught prior to moving to America with her husband. Now 41 years old, she enrolled in TCC to get her A.S. degree in programming and is interning in the Information Resource Management office of the Florida Board of Governors.

Thrilled with the opportunity presented, Lu credits the dedicated service she received from TCC’s intern program coordinators, Catie Goodman and Kelly Garland. “I received assistance in everything from an overview of the program to writing my resume,” said Lu. “When I received the offer from the Florida Board of Governors office, they were as happy as I was.”

Governor Charlie Crist’s office offered Hilaman his internship. “Working in Governor Crist’s office has allowed me to see state government in a whole new light,” stated Hilaman. “I am engaged hands-on with the day to day workings of state government at its highest point.”

Hilaman plans to transfer to FSU’s College of Business after earning his Associate in Arts degree from TCC.

“TCC’s internship program is geared towards assisting students transition from student to professional,” stated Catie Goodman, Program Coordinator. “Our students appreciate this campus offering and so do the businesses and government offices that recruit from us.”

One such accolade is from Governor Crist’s office.

“The Executive Office of the Governor’s Internship Program is a mutually beneficial initiative; the Crist administration has the aid of college and graduate students, and interns have the unique opportunity of a hands-on political experience,” stated Kimberely Copely, Internship Coordinator for Governor Crist. “The office has come to rely on interns in many different capacities, and they serve a vital role in supporting all levels of staff. We are privileged to have the opportunity to select among some of Florida’s best and brightest young minds to work with us each semester.”

Current internship opportunities include, but are not limited to, jobs in administration, childcare, graphics, engineering, IT, natural science, paralegal and recreation. TCC’s internship coordinators assist students through every aspect of the program.

For more information on TCC’s Internship Program call (850) 201-8281, e-mail internships@tcc.fl.edu or visit www.tcc.fl.edu/internships.
Local venue hosts a Brawl of a tournament

By: Chris Hoadley

Gigabits, a LAN center on University Boulevard across the street from UCF, held a tournament for the Nintendo Wii game Super Smash Bros. Brawl on Saturday.

More than 50 people came to the event, titled “A Fall Brawl,” to compete with other players around the state and to get a chance to win cash prizes.

Groups of people traveled together to reach the neon-lit interior of the center, some as far away as Tallahassee, Jacksonville and North Miami.

The tournament was promoted through Gigabits’ Web site and other Super Smash Brothers sites, and several players brought in extra televisions and Wii systems to make the event run more smoothly.

“Basically we’re representing our crew back in Tallahassee,” Tallahassee Community College student Michael “Mr. FTW” John said.

John’s group was recognizable by the paper Burger King crowns they wore over their heads, which he jokingly referred to as “The Paper Hat Brigade.” It was the first tournament at Gigabits he attended.

Chad Rippey, the manager of Gigabits and the tournament director for most of the day, said that people often travel far to participate in its tournaments, sometimes attracting people from out of state. Rippey said that the Smash Brothers community in Florida is better than most states.

Brawl is the third game in the Super Smash Bros. series of fighting games, which features various characters from popular Nintendo franchises such as Super Mario Bros. and Pokemon, along with more-obscure characters from the company’s history and two characters from third-party developers.

The game is played in a king-of-the-hill format where the object is to knock the opponent off platform-like stages, with the borders of the television screen serving as the boundaries. The more damage characters take, the easier it is for them to be knocked back.

Although the Super Smash Brothers games were intended to be party games, a competitive community grew out of the second game in the series: Super Smash Bros. Melee for the GameCube.

Many players at the tournament began playing competitively during the Melee years, and the GameCube controller was the peripheral of choice for most of the participants.

The Web site Smash Boards functions as a core meeting place and as sort of a governing body that establishes tournament rules.

In competitive play, items are turned off, and players can only select from a small portion of the stages available to provide the fairest playing field possible.

Gigabits offered two double-elimination tournaments. The first was a doubles tournament with teams of two players competing against each other, and the second was a singles tournament featuring one-on-one play.

Entrance fees were $15 for singles and $10 per player for doubles.

The top-ranking players receive a percentage of the total entrance fees. “Friendly” matches were held when systems were not being used.

Players were allowed to enter their nicknames and controller preferences before their matches.

Periodically, competitors approached the front desk to tell Rippey the match outcomes, and he would make changes to the spreadsheet he used to make the brackets.

He would then take a microphone and announce the next matchup. Rippey said that this has become a sort of inside joke, with Rippey getting inappropriate team names that he had to announce with a straight face.

Florida International University student David “Seibrik” Silverberg was a part of the winning team for the doubles tournament.

He said he and his partner consider themselves the best in the state, having won more than 20 singles tournaments combined.

He said that they haven’t practiced as a team and instead use “divide and conquer” tactics to win.

Nicholas “Hrnut” Bernard, an Orlando resident who won the singles tournament, used the Fire Emblem character Marth as
his primary character, and Metal Gear Solid mercenary Snake to deal with bad match ups. Bernard won $342 for the tournament and said he would use the money to help pay for tuition at Valencia Community College.

University of North Florida student Geoff “G Money” Wark placed second in the singles tournament, using a combination of a “two-month-old” Wario and Meta Knight.

Wark said he used to use Meta Knight more than Wario, but started to use Wario more often as he and the community in general saw the Kirby series character as “pretty broken.”

Polk Community College student Darin “Weeg” Peachee used Luigi, the overshadowed one of the Mario Brothers, ever since the original Super Smash Bros. on Nintendo 64, and used only him during the tournament, even though Luigi is one of the less popular characters in Brawl.

“There are only a handful in Florida who, you know, main Luigi,” Peachee said. “But I like that aspect to it. I like being the character that nobody knows about ....”

Gigabits opened in 2004 as a location for people to play online computer games together, co-owner Frank Lozada said.

Lozada said that his brother, Manny Lozada, came up with the original idea, and the University Shoppes plaza next to UCF was chosen because it was a place where young people and students congregated.

About a month after Gigabits opened, it held its first tournament, using a game from the Counter Strike series. Lozada said several months later the store wanted to add more tournaments, and posted on its Web site’s message board for suggestions.

The game that got the most feedback was Super Smash Bros. Melee, the predecessor to Brawl that was made for the GameCube. While the turnout was small at first, Lozada said that Melee tournaments were highly successful, sometimes drawing 70 to 100 people.

So far, Gigabits has had 28 Melee tournaments and five Brawl tournaments.

Even after Brawl was released, Gigabits continued to hold tournaments for Melee, due to the number of people who preferred the game play of the older game. Throughout the day a station was set up for people who wanted to play Melee.

“I play Melee to satisfy my brain, and Brawl to satisfy my wallet,” Silverberg said.
TCC Saves Money By Going Green

By: Angela Salerno

In 2007, TCC paired up with Johnson Controls and installed sensor lights, low flowing water systems and upgraded its computer power management.

The changes decreased TCC’s utility bill by more than 20%. That saved the university $380,000 annually.

Robert Bell, Plant Operations Manager said, “The reason it works so well is that the administration has been fully behind it, they have supported the importance of it, and we have had the entire campus come behind us.”

The money saved will go back into the general budget and used for student services.
The TCC Capitol Center* and TCC’s EWD Center will premier different training workshops

Sept. 8 through Dec. 12, 6–9 p.m.

$25 each workshop

Schedule & registration online at www.tcc.fl.edu/tech@night
or call 201-8760

*Also available at TCC Quincy House, Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy and TCC Wakulla Center
Interested in a job in banking?

**TCC’s Bank Teller Training Essentials**
will help you prepare for the job *before* you interview!

The three-phase Bank Teller Training Essentials includes
6-hours of classroom instruction combined with an 8-hour online class.

**Classes begin November 4**

For more information

(850) 201-8069

[www.tcc.fl.edu/professionaldevelopment](http://www.tcc.fl.edu/professionaldevelopment)

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Students who successfully complete the training are invited to attend
a mini job fair to interview with local banks that are hiring.
FAMU bans Halloween costumes on campus

By Anthony Anamelechi
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Freshman Maya Brady, 18, said she thinks Florida A&M University’s “no costumes on campus” policy for Halloween is a good idea.

“(Wearing costumes) could be cool, but some people just don’t know how to be responsible,” she said.

The FAMU Police Department is asking students not to wear costumes for safety reasons.

“This is nothing new,” Corporal Sherri Luke said. “But there’s a lot more emphasis (this year) because of increased activities.” Five robberies were reported on campus last week, with police making an arrest in one case.

Luke said students’ response time and awareness is limited when wearing costumes. And without costumes, students are more visible to officers.

Student Chris Solomon, 19, said he thinks response time would improve without costumes, but costumes won’t affect criminal attempts.

“Just because a robber doesn’t have a costume on, doesn’t mean they are not going to rob you,” he said.

Alice Maxwell, spokeswoman for Tallahassee Community College, said the school has no preventative measures regarding costumes.

“We typically don’t see any problems with (costumes) on campus.”

Florida State University police spokesman Lt. Jason Trumbower said,“(Officers) definitely try to stay highly visible during Halloween.”

FSU will be sending Halloween safety tips to students today.
Holocaust Survivor Helps Teachers Understand

By Anthony Anamelechi
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

“Never forget.” That’s the message Holocaust survivors across the world continue to impart to younger generations. Oct. 27, one survivor helped local teachers understand the importance of spreading the “never forget” message to students. ABC 27’s David Taylor investigates.

In a Tallahassee Community College conference room, educators gathered to hear the story of Lisl Bogart. As a teenager in Czechoslovakia, Bogart was taken to the concentration camp at Terezin the Village, the Nazi’s infamously used to show the international Red Cross that genocide was not happening. Bogart escaped death on many occasions at Terezin, but the rest of her family was murdered.

“Because the hatred is still there, it’s going on all over the world. We have Darfur and other incidents where prejudice and hatred are in play. What we witnessed and what we lived through we don’t want to ever happen to anybody,” said Bogart.

“There are many different people all over the world and there are many ways we need to deal with each other and deal with problems, and to accept everybody as a human being. And everybody has a right to be here on this planet,” said Jaron Lawson, Rickards High School teacher.

As a survivor, Bogart bears witness to what hatred and prejudice can do. And, on behalf of the millions who were lost, she asks teachers to continue her work of promoting compassion and human rights and to never forget.

“Even at the elementary level it’s taught that they speak out for what’s correct, to be a good friend. And so it’s never really too early to start learning this,” said Rita Blank, Holocaust Education Resource Council.

“That’s one of the things we want to teach, we want to show them what can happen if you continue to follow the crowd, not take a stand and do the right thing it can end up with a disastrous effect,” said Allen.

To learn strategies for teaching young people about tolerance and justice and to learn more about the Holocaust log on to wtxl.tv and click on the Holocaust education resource council link operational starting next week.
Solar water-heating class starts Nov. 3

DEMOCRAT STAFF AND NEWS SERVICE

Tallahassee Community College's Economic & Workforce Development Center, which offers classes in renewable energy technologies, has scheduled an Introduction to Solar Thermal Hot Water for contractors beginning Nov. 3. The course meets for a total of 32 hours from 6 to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and costs $109, which includes all materials. For information or to register for the course, call 201-8760 or e-mail Trades@tcc.fl.edu.
TCC classes shed light on alternative energy

By Donna M. Riordan
SPECIAL TO BUSINESS MATTERS

In an era when energy conservation is becoming more than just a great idea, Tallahassee Community College’s Economic & Workforce Development Center is offering classes in renewable energy technologies. The first two courses offered were Photovoltaic Systems and Solar Thermal Hot Water.

Both classes are designed for building or skilled trade contractors, electricians, plumbers, HVAC mechanics, architects, engineers and others interested in learning more about renewable energy devices.

“Ultimately, these renewable technologies will help everyone conserve energy and decrease their utility bills,” stated Rick Frazier, Director of Economic and Workforce Development.

Alternative energy is becoming more critical as an option for consumers, however, training for professionals in these areas is just emerging.

To meet this challenge, TCC and the University of Central Florida have partnered to provide classes in both photovoltaic systems and solar thermal hot water to anyone in the Big Bend and Panhandle regions. Four classes have already been conducted in both fields and as enrollment was robust, the College will offer additional training sessions in winter/spring of 2009.

Ben Bloodworth, who co-owns Sol Verde Renewable Energy Solutions with his brother Michael, attended both classes with three Sol Verde team members. “Everyone can benefit from these classes,” Bloodworth said. “From a building contractor to a professional trades-person to a stay-at-home mom, if you’re curious about alternative energy, this is the class for you.”

Sol Verde is setting up a 30-acre farm for a customer who will grow organic produce to sell to area restaurants. This entire farm will use photovoltaic systems to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Another photovoltaic attendee, Maria Rodriguez, took the class to better understand how she and her husband can use some recycled solar panels they acquired. Rodriguez, who reviews architectural plans for the City of Tallahassee Building Inspections Department, also thinks this training will enable her to better understand the PV systems that are becoming commonplace in new buildings and add-ons.

“With the information I learned in class, I am better able to understand the limits and possibilities of the 20-year old panels my husband and I got from the medical building he works in,” said Rodriguez. “I am also better at creating checklists for the Inspection Department’s plan surveys.”

“TCC’s cutting edge approach to stay ahead of the curve in alternative energy deliveries will allow the workforce to train in emerging technologies so that our homes and businesses will be as energy efficient as possible,” stated Dr. John Chapin, Vice President for Economic and Workforce Development.

The next Introduction to Solar Thermal Hot Water course begins Nov. 3. The course meets for a total of 32 hours (two weeks consecutive) from 6 to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The cost of the course is $109 and includes all materials. For more information or to register for the course, call (850) 201.8760 or e-mail Trades@tcc.fl.edu.
There are Tallahassee residents doing their homework on Florida’s amendments. Tuesday night a non-profit organization called Village Square hosted “Constitutional Amendments 101.” The event featured a panel of experts on all the amendments—allowing a chance for voters to become informed.

The panel included Florida Taxation and Budget Reform, Florida Tax Watch, a representative for and against Amendment 2. Bill Law, President of Tallahassee Community College gave some insight into Amendment 8 addressing the local tax option for community colleges. He said, “Village Square is a group that’s been put together here in Tallahassee and it is just for these purposes, a chance for the community to come together, talk about hard issues, but do it in a respectful way where we can get to the issues rather than the personalities.”

Participants Tuesday night were encouraged to bring laptops so they could fact check the discussion. If you would like to learn more on the amendments—be sure to watch our series “Making Law” starting on Wednesday on Eyewitness News at 11:00 p.m.
Democrats Seek Turnout of Younger Voters

By Lloyd Dunkelberger
Ledger Tallahassee Bureau

TALLAHASSEE | With the outcome of the presidential race resting in part on Florida, vice presidential candidate Joe Biden swept across three college campuses Sunday, trying to rally young voters to the polls.

At Florida State University, Biden faced a crowd of about 2,000 in the shadow of the football stadium nearby a large statue of Chief Osceola on horseback waiving a feathered spear. “This is a great place to have this rally in front of the Seminole - unconquered,” Biden said. “You can’t approach this stadium without the smell of victory in the air.”

No doubt Biden modified his message when he appeared a few hours later at the University of Florida - the athletic rivals of the Seminoles - and when he finished the day on the campus of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach.

But while he had to shift his message slightly to fit the audience, Biden’s target remained the same all day: college students.

In many ways, Biden’s politicking in the final days before Tuesday’s election was defying conventional wisdom for a campaign in America’s grayest state.

Young voters heavily support Biden and his running mate, Barack Obama. And while the campaign has aggressively registered young voters, one of the biggest questions hanging over the Obama-Biden ticket is whether the Democrats can get those voters to the polls.

Some initial surveys suggest that the young voters - who now slightly outnumber their older counterparts in Florida - are not turning out in droves, which could help John McCain, who has more support among the state’s older voters, who are more reliable at the polls.

At the very least, the presidential election will test the theory that Obama has found a way to engage younger voters by embracing much of the technology that they are familiar with, ranging from text messaging to Facebook.

Through the end of September, the Democrats had registered 416,000 new voters since Jan. 1, with 202,000 of those voters younger than 35. In contrast, the Republicans had only registered 94,000 under-35 voters in the same period.

But an analysis by the Orlando Sentinel of 1.4 million ballots cast in the first nine days of early voting in Florida showed voters younger than 35 only accounted for 15 percent of the votes - although they represented 25 percent of the electorate. The young voters were the worst-performing age group in the survey.

In contrast, 29 percent of the early voters were older than 65 - exceeding their 24 percent share of the registered voters in the state, the Sentinel survey showed.

Tallahassee City Commissioner Allan Katz, who is on Obama’s national finance committee, said he think the young voters will make a difference in the end.

“I think you’re going to have a big turnout among young people,” he said. “I’m very, very pleased with what we’ve seen so far.”

Obama strategists also say the youth turnout is only part of a strategy that will also count on a heavy turnout by African-American voters - which appears to be on a record-setting pace - and a sophisticated turnout campaign that will target likely Democratic supporters and make sure they get to the polls.

University of South Florida political scientist Susan MacManus, whose research showed the younger voter cohort now slightly outnumber the older voters in Florida, said the question of youth turnout remains uncertain but there are signs that it could be changing.

“I’m not sure they’re as unreliable this time out,” MacManus said. “In the past when younger people got registered, that was the end of it. And nobody ever courted their vote. But with the new technology, the text messaging, the YouTube, social networking and Facebook, the campaigns have stayed in touch with the younger voters and when you put that together with the candidate visits, those two things are generating a lot more interest with the college students.”

MacManus also said college students are more likely to vote,
while younger voters not in school are less likely to participate.

At Biden’s rally, Seth Bassett, a 25-year-old FSU graduate student working toward a doctorate in geography, said he thinks most of the graduate students “are very conscientious” about voting, although he had less of a sense of it among the undergraduates.

Tallahassee Community College student Jada Jefferson, 20, who also attended the Biden rally, said she saw a lot of enthusiasm among the students. “Most of my friends will be voting for Obama,” she said.

Chelsea Brint, an FSU junior majoring in communications, said the Obama campaign has been aggressively courting students on campus through their own organization as well as college club for Democrats. The first aim was to make sure the students were registered, and now the groups are turning their attention to the election.

Technology has played a role in connecting with the students, Brint said.

“That’s a big part of it,” the 19-year-old said. “(Obama) has embraced technology in way that other people haven’t in the past. They’re Facebookers. Their Facebook is a big deal on a college campus.”

Brint also said Obama’s message was resonating with the students.

“He just has different ideals that people haven’t seen in a long time,” she said. “We’re tired of people who just go to Washington and do the regular thing that everybody else does. Students look at him as a role model and not just somebody there to get a paycheck.”

This story appeared in print on page A1
Tallahassee Film Festival Unveils Plans For 2009

News Release:

Tallahassee, Fla. - The Tallahassee Film Festival (TFF) has announced the dates for the 2009 festival. After a highly successful first year, festival organizers have broadened the festival from its original 3-day offering to a full 5-day festival that will be held April 15-19, 2009 with added After Parties and an extended timeframe for the 24-Hour Film Festival.

The additional dates and other new offerings are made possible in large part due to the generosity of the festival sponsors who have already lined up to support the 2009 festival. Most importantly, the Florida Commerce Credit Union has announced it will once again be the presenting sponsor. A commitment from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and agreements from all of last year’s media sponsors also have shored up the festival.

“Florida Commerce Credit Union is proud to serve as the presenting sponsor for an event that builds the arts community in Tallahassee,” said Samantha Strickland, director of Marketing at Florida Commerce Credit Union. “We believe TFF has the potential to foster incredible growth in arts and entertainment and attract the best of the best filmmakers to this area.”

The inaugural year of the festival surpassed expectations. The Tallahassee Film Festival seeks to double its attendance in the coming year and screen even higher quality films from across the globe. In 2008, more than 2,600 people attended one or more film festival events and 65 films were shown. In addition to expanded dates, TFF will host a series of “After Parties” at clubs and restaurants throughout the Tallahassee area. Sunday night, April 19, the festival will conclude with a new “Best of Fest” screening that will give festival attendees a second chance to watch the award-winning films at local venues.

Filmmakers interested in entering the Tallahassee Film Festival should go to www.withoutabox.com to register. The Early Entry deadline is October 31 and already, more than 22 entries have been received from filmmakers as far away as Singapore, Bosnia, Afghanistan, New Zealand and Canada. There are several other entry deadlines coming up with the final call for entries deadline on January 2, 2009.

Tallahassee Film Festival president, Robert Howard, believes TFF has a unique advantage over other film festivals in the country because of its connections with Florida State University, Florida A&M University and Tallahassee Community College.

“These schools bring to the table resources that include quality venues to screen films and talented professors and students with film industry know-how,” said Howard. “We want our focus to remain on growing the educational components of the festival to include more workshops and lectures given by our own local film experts and others from around the country.”

Last year, the festival included a popular 24-Hour Film Contest held two weeks prior to the festival. More than 15 amateur and professional filmmakers created their own mini-movies within a one day timeframe, each on a limited budget of $100. Films were voted online by the public at Tallahsasee.com and by a professional panel of judges. In 2009, expect the new 48-Hour Film Contest to attract more teams throughout the area.

To learn more about the Tallahassee Film Festival, please visit www.tallahasseefilmfestival.com.

The Tallahassee Film Festival is an outgrowth of Tallahassee’s Knight Creative Communities Initiative, and a project of the THE INTERNATIONAL CREATIVITY CENTER, INC. a non-profit tax exempt organization.
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Attend 2, 3 or 4 days a week
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Financial aid and scholarships available

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Apply Today!

www.GoToTCC.com
or 201-6200
Early returns have Vasilinda leading Boulware by a slim margin for House 9 seat

By Bill Cotterell
FLORIDA CAPITAL BUREAU POLITICAL EDITOR

The see-saw legislative race between former football star Peter Boulware and college law professor Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda appeared headed for sudden death overtime this morning.

“It may go to an automatic machine recount, and looks like it will,” said Leon County Elections Supervisor Ion Sancho. “It’s definitely not over. It’s within less than a half-percent, enough to require the recount.”

Republican Boulware, a former Florida State football star who spent nine seasons with the Baltimore Ravens, trailed Vasilinda by a razor-thin margin with a few hundred absentee ballots, early votes and provisional ballots to be counted.

In still-incomplete returns, Democrat Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda led with 48.6 percent. Boulware trailed with 48.1 percent. Here’s the count:

Vasilinda: 41,026
Boulware: 40,623

for comment were unsuccessful late Tuesday.

Boulware ran the most expensive non-incumbent House race in the state. He raised nearly $500,000 and drew another $79,000 worth of “in kind” support from the Republican Party and other supporters.

The District 9 seat, made up of eastern Leon County and a small sliver of Jefferson County, is overwhelmingly Democratic by registration and has elected a long succession of Democrats.

Rep. Loranne Ausley, D-Tallahassee, was term-limited out of the Legislature this year and rallied around Vasilinda with other Democratic members of the local delegation.

But House Speaker-designate Ray Sansom, R-Destin, and other top GOP leaders helped Boulware raise money. Only three House candidates, all incumbent Republicans, reported contributions more than the $486,641 Boulware took in through Oct. 30.

Vasilinda raised $194,377 and got another $14,095 in in-kind support.

Her race was handicapped by an intra-party rift. Former School Board member Fred Varn was running for the seat but failed to file his resignation on time, and Vasilinda went to court to remove him from the Aug. 26 primary ballot.

Boulware easily won a Republican primary over Jefferson County Commissioner Jerry Suthphin. In the general election, Varn campaigned

Peter Boulware and Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, candidates for House District 9, talk to members of the Tallahassee Democrat editorial board. AMANDA NALLEY/Democrat

Non-party candidate John Shaw, running on a platform of liberalizing marijuana laws, had 1,933 votes.

Repeated efforts to reach Vasilinda for comment were unsuccessful late Tuesday.

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But House Speaker-designate Ray Sansom, R-Destin, and other top GOP leaders helped Boulware raise money. Only three House candidates, all incumbent Republicans, reported contributions more than the $486,641 Boulware took in through Oct. 30.

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Her race was handicapped by an intra-party rift. Former School Board member Fred Varn was running for the seat but failed to file his resignation on time, and Vasilinda went to court to remove him from the Aug. 26 primary ballot.

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A friend of animals needs help herself

Bonnie Holub
Wakulla County

All of us have experienced chance encounters that change our lives. And more often than not we are unaware of the exact moment when the connection is made. Not true for Dr. Norm and Melody Griggs, formerly of Memphis, Tenn. They remember.

Five years ago the Griggses sold their veterinary practice in Memphis with plans to retire somewhere rural, peaceful and green. Somewhere like Wakulla County. On a visit last year, they enrolled in the Green Guide Program offered by Tallahassee Community College in Crawfordville. The program would provide an in-depth look at the area and an opportunity to meet people who live here. At TCC, Norm picked up a brochure about the Florida Wild Mammal Association. And that was when it happened. The defining moment.

Last month, the Griggses opened Shepherd Spring Animal Hospital, just west of the intersection of Highway 98 and Spring Creek Highway. “We started the practice here because of FWMA,” said Melody, and her husband concurred.

“When we moved to Wakulla, we did not plan to reopen the business, but as we got to know Chris Beatty and her work with FWMA, we fell in love with wildlife care,” said Norm. “To really make a difference for injured wildlife, it’s critical to have access to the services of a clinical facility. So we opened Shepherd Spring Animal Hospital, a regular small-animal veterinary practice, which allows us to serve pet owners as well as FWMA.”

Beatty is thrilled with the situation. She is quick to note that Dr. Hughes of Wakulla County Animal Hospital in Crawfordville and Dr. Guhrt, from Paws and Claws in Tallahassee, also have been supporters of FWMA. Guhrt and his wife, who too is a veterinarian, recently opened Crawfordville Animal Hospital, across from Azalea Park on Highway 319.

Before Beatty brought FWMA to Wakulla in 1995, rescuers were advised to take injured or orphaned wildlife to the St. Francis Wildlife Association near Tallahassee or the Big Bend Wildlife Sanctuary in Altha, both lengthy drives from the outer reaches of Wakulla. FWMA, which rescues, rehabilitates and releases sick, injured and orphaned wildlife, is more accessible to those in coastal counties.

“FWMA receives 1,000 to 1,200 animals a year,” Beatty said. “Most of the animals arrive at FWMA because of human causes, direct or indirect. We see very little natural illness.”

Animals that have been shot or hit by vehicles are often brought to FWMA. Baby animals abandoned because something has happened to the mother are common, too. About two-thirds of wildlife cared for at FWMA are eventually released, about a quarter have injuries so severe they cannot be saved, about 3 percent are transferred to other facilities, and the rest, those not able to fend for themselves in the wild, become permanent residents.

For the past 13 years, Beatty and FWMA have been aiding wildlife and their anxious human rescuers. And now, because of a traumatic event, Beatty and FWMA are the ones in need of assistance.

On the morning of Sept. 5, 2007, as Beatty was working outside, she heard an attention-getting noise. When she walked to the house to investigate, she didn’t see anything unusual. That is, until she opened the sliding glass doors and was confronted by an all-consuming inferno. Her family’s house burned to the ground, the result of a faulty dryer.

Beatty, husband Michael and daughter Jessica lost three beloved dogs to the fire as well as all their belongings. A rehabilitation pen was burned, some wildlife in residence had to be released to escape the fire, and the entire FWMA property became so hot it took months for many of the remaining animals to recover from the stress.

Since the fire, Beatty and her family have been trying to get their lives and FWMA back on track. FWMA, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, is supported entirely by donations and grants. The time and expense needed to deal with the consequences of the fire have severely affected the financial situation of FWMA. In addition, a major grant-funding source from South Florida recently changed its mission, and FWMA no longer qualifies for assistance.

Beatty said that the outpouring of support from the community has been overwhelming and that she was grateful “beyond words” to everyone who has given of their time, energy and money to help FWMA and her family. Still, keeping FWMA running is difficult, and she and her group of volunteers are doing “all we can” to keep the gates open.

FWMA expends about $1,200 per week for wildlife food and $1,200 per week for payroll, which covers nine part-time staff members. That doesn’t include what’s needed for cleaning products, blankets, bandages, facility maintenance and all
other supplies required to care for the animals.

To help with expenses, FWMA is planning a series of fundraising events. A yard sale is happening today at Nad’s Mini-Storage at Highway 61 and 319 in Crawfordville. An arts and crafts show will be held at the Inn at Wildwood on Nov. 22. Artist space is still available for that show.

A wish list of needed items is on the FWMA Web site (www.wakullawildlife.org), along with other ways community members can help. An array of photographs depicting FWMA’s wild creatures taken by Wakulla photographer and FWMA volunteer Judy Cooke is also on the Web site.

Take time to check it out. It takes only a moment.
Gadsden County: Did you hear?

Nikki Beare

• Joanie's Gourmet Market is holding its grand opening today from 10 a.m. until the “last call in the evening,” says owner Joanie Lauther. It's at 102 W. Eighth Ave., in the heart of the antique, furniture and art shops of Havana's business section. “We will have all sorts of goodies to test and hopefully purchase,” Lauther says. Wine-tasting includes Adelsheim Pinot Grigio, Gainey Vineyard Riesling and many other choices. Mark Bradley of Cairo, Ga., maker of Hot Tar hot sauces, will be there to share his specialty saucers. Call Joanie at 539-4433 for more information.

• Don't forget the Havana Garden Club's holiday season bake sale and crafts show. This is set for today from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Hazel Baker Community Center, next to the Havana Fire Department on East Seventh Avenue. Lots of handmade gifts will be there to tempt you while doing your holiday shopping. There also will be a silent auction for one-of-a-kind items, including a mosaic garden table and a handmade quilt.

• The Gadsden Arts Center is holding the 20th Annual Art in Gadsden, Friday through Dec. 27. This annual juried signature exhibit of fine art features more than 100 artists living within 300 miles of Quincy. Friday's reception is from 5:30 until 9 p.m.

For more information, go to Gadsden Arts Center, 13 N. Madison, or call (850) 875-4866.

• Don't forget Veterans Day on Tuesday, when Havana will honor its veterans beginning at 11 a.m. at the Havana Community Park. This special day is set aside to give tribute to those who have given of themselves to keep America safe. The speaker is Brig. Gen. Peter D. Hidalgo, who spent 31 years in the military, including in Vietnam and Europe. He retired from active duty in 1989 and later became a consultant to the private sector and government in chemical and bio-gas defense and chemical weapons disposal. Each year, the community comes to Havana Community Park to honor the men and women of the armed forces. Ernest Moore coordinates the event and was the key person to help generate support for Havana’s Price of Freedom Memorial near the Havana Public Library.

• The Gadsden County Health Department is holding a flu vaccine clinic at the Quincy clinic on a walk-in, first-come, first served basis on Nov. 15 and again on Nov. 24, from 8 until 11 a.m. The cost for the flu vaccine is $25, and a pneumonia vaccine is $30. For those with Medicare Part B coverage, it is free, but you must bring your Medicare Part B card with you. Shots for children under the age of 18 are also free. Call 875-7200 for more information.

• Havana Learning Center’s Voc-Ed Program through Tallahassee Community College is now offering free GED and GS financial literacy classes at the Havana Middle School starting Monday. Many are free. There also are several other courses. A new class, “Beginning Sign Language,” which has a small fee. Other classes include Spanish for students 16 or older; and upholstery and small engine repair, 18 years and older. There is a small fee for those two classes, and limited space. Contact Lillian Johnson at (850) 321-8512 or marvinj38@yahoo.com. Note: Classes other than GED or GS financial literacy classes begin in January. All classes are open to the public.
New TCC Readership Program

Reporter: Heather Biance
Email Address: heather.biance@wctv.tv

Newspapers are flying off the shelves at Tallahassee Community College, thanks to a new Student Government program.

This was the first week students can pick up a free copy of USA Today, The New York Times and the Tallahassee Democrat at six locations throughout campus.

SGA officials say their goal is to enhance the students experience on campus and to make sure students are educated and aware of what’s going on in the world around them.

“It has been absolutely successful. We’ve gotten rid of about 500 newspapers a day, which is from what I understand, exceeds a lot of other universities, even locally,” says Ishmael Mayhew, Student Government Secretary.

Organizers say that plans are in the works where students can swipe their ID’s in order to receive their free paper.
PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE

TCC’s QUICK JOB TRAINING PROGRAM
Get the skills for success in 90 days or less.

To be eligible for a scholarship you MUST attend an information session
Tuesday, November 18
10:30 a.m. – Noon or 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
at TCC’s EWD Building, Room 123

For more information (850) 201-8760
www.QuickJobTCC.com
Florida Prepaid College Plan Celebrates 20th Birthday

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., Nov. 10 / PRNewswire/ -- The habit of saving early for college with a plan financially guaranteed by the state(1) has caught on with thousands of Florida families over the past 20 years.

“We had the paperwork all filled out before they even came home,” said Sarah Henning, who enrolled her twins Harper and Granger right after they were born last February. “We knew that it was important to us because we wanted them to have the opportunities that we did.”

Governor Charlie Crist is scheduled to speak at the Florida Prepaid College Plan 20th Birthday celebration at Tallahassee Community College, which will be kicked off at 1:30 p.m. by the Florida A&M University Marching 100 Band. Governor Bob Martinez will be there accompanied by his twin granddaughters Emily and Lydia, for whom he purchased the first two Florida Prepaid College Plans in 1988 when they were two years old.

Prepaid families and the public are invited to attend the celebration, where there will be fun activities for kids. Children will get a chance to tell a videographer what they want to be when they grow up and to pose for pictures framed by life-size cutouts representing professions like teacher, doctor and astronaut.

“The Florida Prepaid College Plan is an example of government that works,” Chairman Ted Hoepner of the Florida Prepaid College Board said. “No taxpayers dollars are used in the Florida Prepaid College Plan which lets families save for college by prepaying for tuition and other college costs. With $8 billion in assets, the Florida Prepaid College Plan is financially strong and guaranteed by the state.”

-- The Florida Prepaid College Plan is the largest, most successful prepaid college plan in the nation. (College Savings Plan Network, Survey of States, June 30, 2006.)

-- 1 out of 10 Florida children from newborns to high school students has a Prepaid College Plan.

-- More than 206,000 students have used Florida Prepaid College Plan benefits in college. About 18% of students at the state’s public universities and community colleges have Florida Prepaid College Plans. The plan’s value, what would be paid to a Florida public college, is transferable to out-of-state and private schools.

-- Students with college savings have a better chance of avoiding debt at a time when two-thirds of U.S. college graduates accumulate an average $19,000 in student loans

-- Enroll online at www.myfloridaprepaid.com or call 1-800-552-GRAD (4723) to request an Enrollment Kit in English or Spanish and speak with a customer service representative.

(1) Financially guaranteed by the State of Florida, pursuant to Sections 1009.98 (7) and (8), Florida Statutes, stating “the state shall agree to meet the obligations of the board to qualified beneficiaries if monies in the fund fail to offset the obligations of the board. The Legislature shall appropriate to the Florida Prepaid College Trust Fund the amount necessary to meet the obligations of the board to qualified beneficiaries. In the event the state determines the prepaid program to be financially infeasible, the state may discontinue the program. Any qualified beneficiary who has been accepted by and is enrolled or is within 5 years of enrollment in an eligible independent college or university or state postsecondary institution shall be entitled to exercise the complete benefits for which he or she has contracted. All other contract holders shall receive a refund of the amount paid, and an additional amount in the nature of interest at a rate that corresponds, at a minimum, to the prevailing interest rates of savings accounts provided by banks and savings and loan associations.”
New TCC Program Provides Job Skills During these Tough Economic Times

Reporter: John Rogers
Email Address: john.rogers@wctv.tv

TCC’s Quick Job Training Program teaches displaced workers the skills needed for in-demand jobs in the area.

The courses take 90 days or less to complete, and prepare workers for fields in business, computers and even alternative energy.

But it also helps current workers get ahead.

The Vice President of TCC’s Economic and Workforce Development, Dr. John Chapin says, “What we're trying to do is give people an opportunity to upgrade their skills to make their employability stronger, perhaps to let them move within the company into other areas and in the event that they’re laid off, they will have some skill that’s sailable that we know is a job in demand.”

For more information, go to our website and click on the ‘As Seen on WCTV’ link.
Gadsden County’s largest business announced Thursday it will be closing its doors by the end of January, laying off 490 people in the process.

Mushroom producer Quincy Farms said it will phase out employees before closing completely early next year. Sylvan Inc., the company that owns Quincy Farms, said the decision was made because declining product demand and increased competition has undermined Quincy Farms’ profitability.

"With the economy going in the direction that it’s starting to go, there is no good time to do it and we didn’t see any turnaround in the economy," said Dan Lucovich, executive vice president of Quincy Farms. "We’ll close the farm in a manner that at least gets people through the holidays, and hopefully they will have some opportunities early next year. It’s been an extremely hard decision to make, extremely."

According to the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the announcement of 490 layoffs is the third largest in the state this year, following Space Gateway Support LLC and Albertsons.

Laura Phelps, president of the American Mushroom Institute, was quite surprised when informed of the closing. That leaves Monterey Mushrooms’ regional office in Zellwood, just north of Orlando, as the only producer of mushrooms in the state.

“If Quincy is closing, that’s the second significantly sized farm in the U.S. that has closed in the past few years,” Phelps said, referring to a Connecticut plant that closed in 2006. “There are only about 75 commercial farms in the country, and there (were) only two in Florida.” Pennsylvania and California account for 77 percent of mushrooms produced in the country, but Phelps said Florida was a major player in the industry because of the state’s two commercial facilities.

Jeannie Economos was also surprised that a farm that produces 15 to 20 million pounds of mushrooms annually would close like many smaller farms in the state. Economos, the health and safety project coordinator for the Farmworkers Association of Florida, said she thought farms like Quincy would be able to withstand business fluctuations.

“It’s already really tough for farm workers in Florida,” she said, citing how Central and South Florida growers have been affected this year.

Julia McMillian, an employee at the Meadows Convenience Store on State Road 12, said she sees many of the farm workers coming into her store after work to buy chips or cigarettes. She sympathizes with what they’re going through.

“That’s rough because people really need their jobs,” she said. “It’s really messed up.”

Earlier this year, Quincy Farms shut down three satellite mushroom growing facilities to take out excess production due to the economy and loss sales. The facilities were built in 2001.

Workforce Plus CEO Kim Moore met with Lucovich earlier Thursday to set in motion the transition plans for the nearly 500 men and women who will be laid off from Quincy Farms this winter.

Moore said she left that meeting with the impression there are some employees who possess skills that can be transferred to open jobs in the area. Others may have to be retrained. She was also told that while some employees will be laid off later this month, a majority will work right up to the January closing.

“Our process will be coordinating with educational institutions,” Moore said about providing new skills for impacted employees. “I have already received calls from Tallahassee Community College and others, so we will do an assessment of what those (training courses) need to be. The employer is on board, and they will be providing me all that information, hopefully, by tomorrow.”

Coordinating with Workforce Plus and other organizations will likely soften the transition for employees, Moore said.

The economic impact on the county will be lasting as tax revenues, consumer spending and consumer confidence will take a hit until some, if not all, of those employees laid off find jobs. noting the economic impact the closing will have on the county.

“Our organization is really concerned for the welfare of farmworker families across the state, because a lot of people can’t pay their mortgages or are unable to pay rent,” Economos said. “Those workers are going to be looking for jobs other places and there are not many places to absorb them.”
The primary reason the mushroom industry has not been as profitable of late is because of ballooning energy expenses. Phelps explained that mushrooms are grown indoors in climate-controlled facilities where heating and air conditioning are used extensively.

“The raw products that mushrooms grow in, one of the components is hay or straw,” Phelps added. “A lot of farmers who were growing hay have switched over to corn or soybeans because of the higher cost you can get for that.”

In August the National Agricultural Statistics Service reported that the mushroom crop produced during the 2007-08 growing season was down 2 percent from the 2006-07 season and 4 percent from two years ago.

The biggest factor for the lower production was that the overall growing area was down and the percentage of areas where mushrooms were produced was also smaller.

Staff writer Nic Corbett contributed to this report.

Additional Facts
HOW YOU CAN HELP

Efforts have begun to establish a food and toy drive for the Quincy Farms workers. Attorney Elizabeth Ricci of law firm Rambana & Ricci P.A. said canned goods and toys can be delivered to the firm’s office at 521 E. Tennessee St. For information, call 224-4529.
Manufacturing Job Fair

Thursday, November 20
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Tallahassee Community College EWD Building

Area manufacturing companies will be on-hand to fill positions with competitive pay and benefits.

For more information call
(850) 201-8760