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Marietta Daily Journal

SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2012

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Elections board agrees to Sunday alcohol revote

Issue now goes to Superior Court judge to decide on revote

By Jon Gillooly
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MARIETTA — The Cobb Board of Elections has unanimously agreed to call for a countywide revote on Sunday alcohol sales.

On Friday morning, the five-member board chose not to contest a legal challenge to the March 6 referendum that was brought by two people who live in Cobb cities last week.

It falls to a Superior Court judge to determine whether a revote will take place and when.

"Hopefully the judge will make a decision to put this on the ballot on July 31st," when voters will already be casting ballots on

the Transportation Investment Act referendum, said Beverly Smith, who chairs the Board of Elections. "This will save the taxpayers some money."

The county's referendum asked voters whether to allow Sunday sales of packaged liquor in unincorporated Cobb. But the county attorney, Dorothy Bishop, told Elections Director Janine Eveler that only residents who live in unincorporated Cobb

should vote on the question, not voters who live in one of the six cities. Residents of the cities pay county taxes and are governed by the county as well as their city, and so have the right to vote on county-related questions, according to the challenge. County Chairman Tim Lee has said that if voters approve the referendum on July 31, it will take effect as soon as possible, perhaps as early as Aug. 1.

One of the people to file suit, former state Rep. Roger Hines of Acworth, said he appreciates the board's decision.

"All I did was exercise the right to petition, which is something our wonderful legal system allows, and I'm just happy they ruled as they did," Hines said.

Lee said he believed the board made the right decision as well.

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'Woman of distinction'



Staff/Jon-Michael Sullivan

Becky Paden accepts the 2012 Woman of the Year award from the YWCA of Northwest Georgia at the 27th Annual Tribute to Women of Achievement presented by area YWCA on Friday night at the Cobb Galleria Centre. A writer and historic preservationist, Paden told attendees, 'This will be a great incentive to try to save more of the heritage for our children, grandchildren and beyond.' Paden was one of 16 Cobb women recognized for their contributions to family, community, charity and professions.

YWCA Woman of Year Paden is writer, historic preservationist

By Lindsay Field
lfield@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA — The YWCA of Northwest Georgia's 2012 Woman of the Year is freelance writer and historic preservationist Becky Paden.

"Needless to say, I'm stunned but so appreciative," Paden said upon receiving the award. "Cobb County means so much to me and to all of you, and I simply can't thank you enough. This will be a great

incentive to try to save more of the heritage for our children, grandchildren and beyond. Thank you so much."

Paden and 15 other Cobb County women were recognized at the 27th Annual Tribute to Women of Achievement hosted by the area YWCA on Friday night. The women were among 46 nominated for the top award for making extraordinary contributions to family, community, charity and their professions.

Last year's winner, Penny Warren, announced the award, saying that Paden has worked tirelessly to be the watchdog for historic preservation in the community for more than 30 years.

"She believes saving our heritage is vital to our community," Warren said. "She has saved three houses from deterioration, destruction or both. She has authored four books and co-chaired the first event The Strand (Theatre) sponsored

several years ago."

"She loves her community, and she makes an impression on everybody she meets," Warren said. "She is definitely a woman of distinction."

Warren said The Strand's director, Earl Reece, has often recognized Paden for her tireless efforts to make the Cobb and Marietta communities better.

Paden's award was one of four given out Friday night,

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'If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon.'



— President Obama

Obama laments Florida tragedy

President injects himself into highly-charged debate over fatal shooting of teen

By Ken Thomas
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Urging Americans to "do some soul searching," President Barack Obama injected himself into the emotional debate over the fatal shooting of a teenager in Florida, turning the racially charged case into a personal matter for the nation's first black president.

"If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon," Obama said Friday.

Obama's words also catapulted the death in Florida of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, already the focus of major national attention, into the presidential campaign. Three Republicans seeking Obama's job all used the word "tragedy" to describe the shooting, as the president did.

"I can only imagine what these parents are going through, and when I think about this boy, I think about my own kids," Obama said at the White House.

Obama said the parents of Martin, who was shot on Feb. 26 in Sanford, Fla., a suburb of Orlando, have a right to expect "that we're going to get to the bottom of exactly what happened."

Martin was shot by neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, who said he was acting in self-defense. Zimmerman's father is white, and his mother is Hispanic. The shooting has stoked debate over race as well as other issues. Obama did not mention Zimmerman in his comments.

Republican presidential candidates quickly weighed in after Obama spoke.

Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum called the shooting a "horrible case." Referring to Florida's "stand your ground" law, which gives people wide latitude to use deadly force rather than retreat during a fight, Santorum said:

See **Obama**, Page 3A

It could be years before Army sergeant charged in massacre enters courtroom

By Lolita C. Baldor and Deb Riechmann
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON — Charges filed Friday against Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales reflect the horror of the crime: 17 counts of premeditated murder, more than half of them children, during a shooting rampage in southern Afghanistan. But while Afghans are calling for swift and severe punishment, it will likely be months, even years, before the public ever gets to see Bales in a courtroom.

One only has to look at two

recent and similarly high-profile cases to see that the wheels of military justice turn slowly.

It's been nearly 29 months since an Army psychiatrist, Maj. Nidal Hasan, allegedly killed 13 and injured two dozen more at Fort Hood, Texas. His trial is scheduled to begin in June. And it's been 21 months since the military charged intelligence analyst Bradley Manning with leaking hundreds of thousands of pages of classified information. It took nine months before he was deemed competent to stand trial.

The Bales case is likely to be

equally complex, involving questions of his mental state and the role that the stresses of war and possible previous head injuries may have played in his alleged actions. Most of the eyewitnesses are the Afghan villagers and survivors who may be brought in for the trial.

The military on Friday charged Bales with 17 counts of murder, six counts of attempted murder and six counts of assault in the March 11 pre-dawn massacre in two southern Afghanistan villages near his base. The father of two from Lake Tapps,

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Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales is charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder, more than half of them children, during a shooting rampage in Afghanistan.

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OUTSIDE

Afternoon T-storm More on page 6D

75 HIGH 51 LOW



POLLEN COUNT

YESTERDAY INDEX

1,009 HIGH

0-14 = LOW
15-89 = MODERATE
90-1499 = HIGH
1500+ = EXTREME



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Staff/Jon-Michael Sullivan

Honorees at the 27th Annual Tribute to Women of Achievement presented by area YWCA on Friday night at the Cobb Galleria Centre include Detective Lisa Wells, **above**, receiving the Pat Head Dignity Award from district attorney Pat Head. **Right:** Kim Menefee accepts the Kathryn Woods Racial Justice Award on behalf of WellStar.



Woman

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with the others being the Pat Head Dignity Award, the Kathryn Woods Racial Justice Award and the Purple Ribbon Award.

Detective Lisa Wells with the Cobb County Police Department received the 2012 Pat Head Dignity Award, which is named after Cobb County's current district attorney.

"The nominator for this award said (Wells) is an asset to our department and our community as a whole," said Holly Comer, YWCA CEO and executive director. "She works hard to ensure that victims of domestic violence and other forms of abuse get the justice they deserve."

When she accepted her award, Wells said she was at a loss for words but thanked everyone for the recognition.

"I really appreciate it,"

"She believes saving our heritage is vital to our community. ... She loves her community and she makes an impression on everybody she meets. She is definitely a woman of distinction."

— Penny Warren,

2011 winner of the YWCA Woman of the Year award speaking about this year's recipient, Becky Paden

she said through tears. "Without the YWCA and the DA's office ... we couldn't do what we do. I really enjoy what I do. Thank you so much."

WellStar Health System received the Woods award, which is named after the first black YWCA board member, who served in the 1960s.

Juanita Carmichael, a member of the YWCA's Board of Directors, recognized the local health care provider, saying that they are the national leader in comprehensive care and diversity.

"WellStar talent is diverse," she said. "The workforce at WellStar is represented by a wide range of cultures, lan-

guages and backgrounds."

Kim Menefee, WellStar's senior vice president, accepted the award on behalf of the health care system.

"It is my honor to accept this award on behalf of the board and our entire team at WellStar," Menefee said. "As your health care system, we serve a very diverse community of patients and families, and we're very proud of the 12,000-member workforce that we have in that it reflects the diversity of community, and we really work on that each and every year, to build programs to continue that reflection. Thank you for this honor."

A young woman named

Crystal, whose last name was not released in order to protect her, received the Purple Ribbon Award. It is given annually to someone in the community who strides to combat domestic violence.

She was not in attendance, but Comer said she was recognized for making great strides to come out of an abusive relationship.

The event, conducted at the Cobb Galleria Centre, was led by Terri Bunten Guthrie, the executive vice president and chief lending officer of First Landmark Bank; Pedro Cherry, vice president of community and economic development for Georgia Power; and honorary co-chairs Shan Cooper, vice president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics and general manager of Lockheed's Marietta site, and her husband, Eddie Cooper, a local attorney.

Massacre

Continued from Page 1A

Wash., was officially informed of the 29 charges just before noon at the U.S. military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., where he is confined.

The maximum punishment for a premeditated murder conviction is death, dishonorable discharge from the armed forces, reduction to the lowest enlisted grade and total forfeiture of pay and allowances, according to Col. Gary Kolb, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The mandatory minimum sentence is life imprisonment with the chance of parole.

The charges offered few details of what happened that night. But the 38-year-old soldier is accused of

walking off his base with his 9mm pistol and M-4 rifle, which was outfitted with a grenade launcher, killing four men, four women, two boys and seven girls and burning some of the bodies. The ages of the children were not disclosed.

In the most detailed descriptions of the shootings to date, the charges say Bales shot a young girl in the head, a young boy in the thigh, a man in the neck and a woman in the chest and groin. The documents also say that he "shot at" another girl and boy, but apparently did not hit them.

The attack occurred in the Panjwai district of Kandahar Province, the spiritual birthplace of the Taliban. The dead bodies were found in Balandi and Alkozai villages — one north and one south of the base.

Obama

Continued from Page 1A

"Stand your ground is not doing what this man did."

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney said in a statement: "What happened to Trayvon Martin is a tragedy. There needs to be a thorough investigation that reassures the public that justice is carried out with impartiality and integrity."

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia also called it a tragedy and credited local authorities for empanelling a grand jury. "There's a point in there where there ought to be some kind of signal that's pretty clear that this is a guy who'd found a hobby that's very dangerous," Gingrich said of Zimmerman.

Florida is a large and diverse state that plays an influential role in presidential elections — it was a deciding factor in the 2000 election following a lengthy

recount. The Orlando area in central Florida is particularly important, acting as a bellwether for statewide elections.

The case resonates with many black Americans, a key voting group during Obama's 2008 election, who see it as an example of bias toward blacks. Civil rights groups have held rallies in Florida and New York, saying the shooting was unjustified. Of Sanford's 53,000 residents, 57 percent are white and 30 percent are black.

Obama directed his message to Martin's parents, saying, "I think they are right to expect that all of us as Americans take this with the seriousness that it deserves, and we're going to get to the bottom of what happened."

He said that "every parent in America should be able to understand why it is absolutely imperative that we investigate every aspect of this and everybody pulls together, federal state and local, to figure out exactly how this tragedy happened."

Agrees

Continued from Page 1A

"The most important component of what happened was to maintain confidence in the election process, and I'm pleased at the results," Lee said.

Lee said he wasn't aware of another county in Georgia that had the same problem with the election as Cobb did.

"I was embarrassed for the county that the mishap occurred," Lee said. "I will be doing a review of what occurred to ensure that in the future we don't duplicate the mistake."

The board met for about 45 minutes in executive session before coming out

to vote not to contest the lawsuit. In addition to Smith, board members include Rob Garcia, Patrick Gartland, Joe Ransbotham and Guy Drexinger.

Gregg Litchfield, attorney for the elections boards, said that while there were some doubts in his mind about the lawsuit, it was better not to contest the challenge rather than risk prolonging the decision and ending up having to hold a costly special election.

Hines' attorney, Justin O'Dell of the Marietta firm Cauthorn Nohr & O'Dell, said the next step is for a consent order to be presented to a Superior Court judge.

"That consent order will nullify the results of the

March 6 referendum on Cobb Sunday sales and order that a new election be held on July 31," O'Dell said.

The matter has no bearing on the green light voters in Cobb's six cities gave to Sunday sales at different times on March 6 and last November.



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