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To:
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Subject: Afternoon Clips – Thursday, September 8, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Easley Progress: Students will be connected

<http://theeasleyprogress.com/news/6078/students-will-be-connected>

D.C. Moody

Gettys Middle School was the site for a School District of Pickens County announcement of a major technology coup that will enable students and teachers at the district's five middle schools to continue learning away from classrooms no matter the time of year. Students and teachers at Dacusville Middle School, R.C. Edwards Middle School, R.H. Gettys Middle School, Liberty Middle School, and Pickens Middle School will receive 2,500 Galaxy tablets, donated by Samsung. AT&T Aspire — the communications giant's philanthropic arm — will provide 4G connectivity for the tablets for the next three years through a \$5 million grant. Superintendent Dr. Danny Merck said the initiative will make an immediate impact for some 2,500 students and teachers.

NOTE: Merck also shared a message from Gov. Nikki Haley, who sent her congratulations to share. The letter from the governor's office read in part: "It's a great day in Pickens County as you celebrate this announcement of this national award that will impact the schools, students, and families throughout your district. The Palmetto State is competing in a 21st century economy, and investing in technology both in and outside of the classroom plays a vital role in ensuring we are teaching for the future, not the past. Your accomplishment in receiving this grant is a testament to your commitment to excellence in education, and I thank you for setting a high standard for other districts across our state."

SC Political News:

Post and Courier : S.C. lawmakers pressure Congressional leaders to fund Charleston Harbor dredging

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160908/160909524/sc-lawmakers-pressure-congressional-leaders-to-fund-charleston-harbor-dredging>

Emma Dumain

U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., is spearheading an effort to pressure House Republican leaders to prioritize passage of a pending water infrastructure bill by the end of this month. A failure to send the so-called Water Resources and Development Act, or WRDA, to the president's desk before the end of the fiscal year could jeopardize progress on deepening the Charleston Harbor. Funding for the \$509 million dredging project is included in the bill. Sanford, with U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel, D-Fla., is currently circulating among House colleagues a draft letter to leadership. As of Thursday afternoon, 113 lawmakers from both sides of the aisle had committed their signatures, including South Carolina Republicans Jeff Duncan and Tom Rice. U.S. Rep. Mick Mulvaney, R-S.C., plans to sign it, too.

"Allocating floor time for the Water Resources Development Act would ... reflect a bipartisan commitment to invest in our water infrastructure and promote environmental restoration," reads draft language, obtained by The Post and Courier.

McClatchy DC : Graham says Trump's praise of Putin 'unnerves me to my core'

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/article100654677.html#storylink=cpy>

Vera Bergengruen

An openly exasperated Sen. Lindsey Graham slammed Donald Trump on Thursday for saying that Russian President Vladimir Putin is a better leader than President Barack Obama. "Vladimir Putin is a thug, a dictator, an autocratic ruler who has his opposition killed in the streets in Russia," the South Carolina Republican told reporters on Capitol Hill. "If you are running to be leader of the free world and you find admiration for Putin, well, then, you're losing me." The Republican presidential nominee made his latest comments about Putin at a forum on military and national security issues hosted by NBC on Wednesday evening, but his stance isn't new. Trump has often expressed admiration for Putin's leadership, describing him as strong and resolute in contrast to Obama, whom he has painted as a weak and ineffective leader. Graham said that while he agreed that Obama had failed to stand up to Putin, Trump's comment crossed the line and "unnerves me to my core."

Associated Press : Some SC lawmakers say Hermine showed dam rules not needed

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=rXGnrnGf

Jeffrey Collins

Nearly a year after 2 feet of rain caused 50 dams to fail across South Carolina, regulators want lawmakers to pass new rules for the dams they are responsible for. But some lawmakers - after giving the Department of Health and Environmental Control more money - think just doubling the number of people inspecting dams may have been enough. DHEC is asking for three things when the Legislature returns in January. The agency wants to require the owners of the 2,500 dams it regulates to register contact information and an emergency plan yearly and to require smaller dams not normally under DHEC's responsibility to be inspected if their failure would damage roads or utilities. Regulators also want the 160 dams that are the biggest threat to people inspected by an independent engineer every five years and 460 dams with a significant threat every 10 years. The new rules would only affect dams in South Carolina big enough to fall under DHEC's rules. The agency has no idea how many small, mostly earthen dams there are in South Carolina, roughly estimating the number at over 10,000.

Post and Courier: Treasurer Loftis before the State Ethics Commission

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160908/160909543/treasurer-loftis-before-the-state-ethics-commission>

Gavin Jackson

State Treasurer Curtis Loftis is meeting behind closed doors with the State Ethics Commission today after a 2014 complaint alleged he helped a friend get hired to represent his office in a lawsuit three years ago. The hearing began at 9:30 a.m. and continued into the afternoon. When Loftis left with others for a 1:30 p.m. lunch break he did not say whether he testified before the commission. The hearing resumed an hour later and remains ongoing. In late June the commission denied Loftis' request to dismiss the complaint that accused him of asking S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson to hire Michael Montgomery, a longtime friend who served as Loftis' personal attorney, to represent the Treasurer's Office against the Bank of New York Mellon. Montgomery was paid \$2 million in 2013 when the case was settled against BNY Mellon, which was suspected of violating a securities lending agreement with the treasurer involving state pension funds, among others. The following year the state renewed its contract with the custody bank which holds more than \$40 billion in state assets.

The State: SC ethics watchdogs to hear case against state treasurer

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article100490347.html>

Jamie Self

State ethics watchdogs will hold a private hearing Thursday on whether state Treasurer Curtis Loftis violated the law by helping a longtime friend land a lucrative job representing the state in a lawsuit. State law says ethics hearings must be held in secret unless the defendant requests they be open. Republican Loftis, who campaigned on making state government more transparent, has not asked to make his hearing public. Reached Wednesday, Loftis declined to comment. Loftis is accused of using his position to profit Michael Montgomery, an attorney hired to help represent the treasurer's office in a lawsuit against the Bank of New York Mellon. That lawsuit was filed shortly after Loftis took office in 2011. Montgomery earned \$2 million when the suit was settled.

Associated Press: Democratic, GOP chairmen hosting symposium on party ideology

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=GuhhqCIA

SC State Wire

Election years are always full of rhetoric, but some of South Carolina's top political dogs are trying to help voters cut through it. State GOP Chairman Matt Moore and Democratic Chairman Jaime Harrison are taking part in a Voter Education Symposium on Thursday at the Poyner School Auditorium in Florence. Organizers say the nonpartisan event is designed to help voters learn more about the political system and the issues at the center of this year's elections. Harrison and Moore may be political opponents, but they have teamed up several times in this election cycle to highlight the importance of the process, regardless of party affiliation. Last fall, the pair served as co-teachers of a course on political parties at the University of South Carolina.

SC Agency News:

Post and Courier: 12 children with ties to DSS have died in South Carolina so far this year

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160907/160909577/12-children-with-ties-to-dss-have-died-in-south-carolina-so-far-this-year>

Maya T. Prabhu

Twelve children who've had interactions with the S.C. Department of Social Services have died due to abuse and neglect through July, officials report. DSS Director Susan Alford said she expects the number of child fatalities would drop from a spike seen last year. "One is too many," Sen. Tom Young, R-Aiken, said during a hearing Wednesday. "The fact that it went up is disconcerting and disturbing to me as a member of this panel and I'm sure to you as a director." In 2015, DSS reported 28 children with links to the department died from abuse or neglect. While that number is up from the 22 deaths recorded in 2014, the agency has added 4,000 children to its review rolls during the same time. DSS reports deaths of children who have had contact with the department within the past five years. Officials pay special attention to those children who have been involved with DSS within the past year.

WIS: South Carolina prisons operating understaffed

<http://www.wistv.com/story/33043692/south-carolina-prisons-operating-understaffed>

South Carolina state prisons are taking special precautions as they continue to operate under-staffed. The SC Department of Corrections says it's upping its recruiting game as it tries to fill hundreds of positions, including openings for prison guards. Recruiting officers say the challenge comes down to raising pay. Right now, the starting salary for a guard is less than \$30,000 a year. But raises mean asking for more state funds at a time the Governor warns the Department of Corrections to prepare for cuts. The day-to-day happenings inside South Carolina prison walls can be limited for lack of staff.

"You know, it makes it very difficult to operate the institution, but sometimes because of staffing levels, we have to make the call to do that," says Director Bryan Stirling. For safety, this plan can mean inmates stay in place with no visitors when SCDC must operate with about 500 openings state-wide. "You know, it affects all aspects of our operations," Stirling said. Their answer is better recruiting.

Associated Press: Traffic Jam: Widening 3 miles of Lowcountry road takes years

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=NK3kYoWJ

SC State Wire

It seems the wheels of government move slowly, even more slowly than traffic on a congested 3-mile stretch of state Highway 165 in Dorchester County which officials have wanted to widen for years. There have been more than 250 accidents on the highway near Ashley Ridge High School during the past five years. The Post and Courier of Charleston reports (<http://bit.ly/2cpQKIs>) that in 2012, the state Infrastructure Bank pledged \$13 million for project. But when bids came in last year, the lowest was \$4 million over budget. This week the county agreed to earmark additional money to get the widening work done. But that won't be anytime soon. The work must be advertised and new bids received. When a contract is awarded construction will still take almost two more years.

Michael Slager Case:

Post and Courier: Without evidence, Hanahan police close probe into arson fire at Michael Slager's former home

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160908/160909537/without-evidence-hanahan-police-close-probe-into-arson-fire-at-michael-slagers-former-home>

Andrew Knapp

Without evidence pointing to an arsonist, investigators this week closed their probe into a small fire set at the Hanahan home once rented by former North Charleston officer Michael Slager. Someone threw Molotov cocktails at the house in January, three days after Slager was bailed out of jail in Walter Scott's shooting death. Slager had not been living there since his arrest on a murder charge. A neighbor reported seeing a shadowy suspect in the night. But authorities could not identify anyone from the description, and a state lab report revealed no forensic evidence on the four crude grenades that officers found, a police spokesman said Thursday. "The (State Law Enforcement Division) report came back inconclusive," said Capt. Michael Fowler of the Hanahan Police Department. "We didn't get any fingerprints. We didn't get any DNA. We were looking for ... anything on there we could try to match."

SC After Recent Violence:

The State: If you travel Forest Drive now you'll see this to honor fallen officer

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article100593507.html>

Glen Luke Flanagan

Almost a year after Forest Acres police officer Greg Alia was gunned down, his family, friends and fellow officers gathered to witness the unveiling of a new road sign in his honor. Alia was killed responding to a call at the Richland Mall early Sept. 30. Now, a sign at the intersection of Forest Drive and Beltline Boulevard – right next to the police department – will bear his name. The police department was packed Thursday morning for the unveiling of the new sign, with attendees including family members, lawmakers and numerous first responders and law enforcement officers from local and state agencies. Kassy Alia, Greg's wife, spoke tearfully to those gathered. "There have been so many beautiful demonstrations of love that really help mend your heart," she said.

Associated Press : Fired Greenville police officer sues the city, police chief

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=ESp0yOgP

SC State Wire

A former Greenville police officer has sued Police Chief Ken Miller and the city in U.S. District Court. Local media report that Joshua Pratt says in the lawsuit that he was improperly suspended and fired for a mistake in an affidavit. Pratt's lawsuit says he thinks he was really fired because he spoke out about a lack of leadership as Greenville police confronted Black Lives Matter protesters in July. Pratt says the paperwork mistake was used as an excuse to get rid of him. Miller issued a written response. "This lawsuit lacks any merit whatsoever, and the city and I intend to vigorously defend against it," Miller said. "There will be no further comment, as the matter is pending in litigation."

Savannah River Site/MOX News:

The State: MOX plant at Savannah River Site will cost \$12 billion more than initially thought

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article100635952.html>

Sammy Fretwell

The long delayed mixed oxide fuel plant at the Savannah River Site will cost about \$12 billion more to build than originally anticipated — and that's another reason the government should consider scrapping the project, federal officials said Thursday. During a briefing for reporters, U.S. Department of Energy officials said the MOX project was supposed to cost under \$5 billion. But since work started in 2007, the estimated cost has risen to \$17 billion. The latest estimate is based on a soon-to-be released study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. John MacWilliams, an associate deputy energy secretary, said it would cost about \$1 billion a year and could take until 2048 to complete the project. The project was supposed to be done in 2016 but has been beset by cost overruns related to design questions and problems with contractors. "It is simply not conceivable to us that there is \$1 billion a year starting now and going out for decades to be able to accomplish this," he said.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: Marines: Recruit killed himself amid culture of abuse

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=pGluluCT

Susanne M. Schafer

A Marine recruit committed suicide in March amid a widespread culture of hazing and abuse in his battalion at Parris Island that could lead to punishments for as many as 20 officers and enlisted leaders, the Marine Corps said Thursday. Some of those 20 commanders and senior enlisted leaders have already been fired, including the three most senior Marines in charge of the recruit's unit. The Marines also ordered that the rest be temporarily relieved, according to a statement sent to The Associated Press. Their punishments could range from administrative punishments, such as counseling, to the most severe action of military charges and a court-martial. However, that process could take months, and the leaders would not be identified unless they are formally charged.

Island Packet : USMC: Recruit's death a suicide; 20 training personnel face possible action in 3 investigations

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/community/beaufort-news/bg-military/article100646907.html>

Wade Livingston

The Marine Corps says the death of recruit Raheel Siddiqui was a suicide, and three command investigations at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island have revealed troubling behaviors and

lapses there. "Currently, twenty Recruit Training Regiment personnel have been identified for possible military justice or administrative action," according to a statement from Marine Corps Headquarters released Thursday afternoon. There are no official charges yet, according to a Marine Corps official speaking on background. The findings of the investigations have been endorsed by Maj. Gen. James W. Lukeman, commanding general, Training and Education Command, but must be reviewed by the Corps' legal affairs division before any charges are recommended. That process "could take months," according to the official, who said the charges would then be submitted to Lukeman for his review and endorsement. One of the investigations was a "red dot" investigation, according to the official. That type is initiated by a letter of inquiry from the White House.

Associated Press : Study: Latino population growth slips behind Asian Americans

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=CbkpX2Yy

Russell Contreras

The growth of the U.S. Latino population - once the nation's fastest growing - slowed considerably over the past seven years and slipped behind that of Asian Americans amid declining Hispanic immigration and birthrates, a study released Thursday found. The Pew Research Center study, which analyzed U.S. Census Bureau data, found that the U.S. Hispanic population grew annually on average by 2.8 percent between 2007 and 2014. That's down from the 4.4 percent annual growth from 2000 to 2007, before the Great Recession. By comparison, the Asian American population grew around 3.4 percent on average annually during the same period.

NOTE: Though the growth has slowed in the last seven years, the Latino population in the South has exploded when examined over 14 years. From 2000 to 2014, Latino populations in Tennessee and South Carolina, for example, nearly tripled.

Island Packet: Mosquito illnesses on the rise in SC: 4 reported cases of West Nile, more Zika

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/state/south-carolina/article100575197.html>

Mandy Matney

South Carolina health officials are warning residents that four people across the state have contracted West Nile virus. West Nile virus has been detected in mosquitoes in multiple locations throughout the state, although Beaufort County has not reported any cases as of Sept. 7, according to the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control. Two of the four cases were in Richland County, one was in Dorchester County and one was in Horry County, state health officials said. Although rarely fatal, about one in five people infected with West Nile will become ill anywhere from two days to two weeks after the bite. Common symptoms include fever, headache, joint pain, muscle pain and occasionally nausea and vomiting. Symptoms of the more severe form of illness include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, seizures or paralysis.

Local News:

Post and Courier: College of Charleston student charged with sexually exploiting 17-year-old student, fraternity shut down

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160908/160909539/college-of-charleston-student-charged-with-sexually-exploiting-17-year-old-student-fraternity-shut-down>

Deanna Pan

Three days before the College of Charleston announced a crackdown on excessive drinking and risky behavior among fraternity and sorority members, a 17-year-old college student told police she was raped at an off-campus party. A week later, a 21-year-old College of Charleston fraternity brother was charged with first- and third-degree sexual exploitation of a minor. The campus chapter of his

fraternity was closed on the same day the college instituted an alcohol ban at fraternity and sorority events. Timothy Eli Seppi, from Rockville, Maryland, was arrested Saturday after Charleston police found a photograph of the teen on his iPhone, "engaged in an act or simulation of sexual activity," according to his arrest affidavit. The photograph showed the young woman undressed and sitting on a bed with a naked male standing in front of her. Charleston police Detective Doug Galluccio said the photo wasn't posted online or on social media.

Post and Courier: Charleston DEA and parents team up to fight growing epidemic of heroin, prescription opioid deaths

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160908/160909522/charleston-dea-and-parents-team-up-to-fight-growing-epidemic-of-heroin-prescription-opioid-deaths>

Gregory Yee

Nanci Shipman stood at the front of the small, crowded room Thursday morning, the first of three mothers united in tragedy. The Mount Pleasant resident shared the story of Creighton, her 19-year-old son who died from a heroin overdose July 17. He was a good student and a talented lacrosse player, Shipman said. He was set to begin his sophomore year at Mars Hill University in North Carolina, far from the common perception of a heroin addict in popular culture. Shipman was among roughly 40 people who gathered at the Marina Variety Store Restaurant to launch Wake Up, a Drug Enforcement Administration campaign that's part of a new approach aimed at leveraging community engagement to end heroin and opioid deaths and abuse. Creighton Shipman's fatal journey began after he was injured at a December 2011 lacrosse tournament, his mother said. An abscess developed in the Mount Pleasant native's leg where he had been "cleated." He was prescribed opioid painkillers after emergency surgery.

Sun News: Decision on Sidney Moorer change of venue to come later

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/crime/article100480682.html>

Emily Weaver

A judge said Wednesday he would consider a request to move the new trial for Sidney Moorer, accused of kidnapping a young woman who disappeared three years ago, to a new venue. But his decision will be announced at a later date. Terry and Debbi Elvis sat quietly inside an Horry County courtroom as the man accused of kidnapping their daughter, Heather Elvis, was led into the room minutes after 4 p.m. Moorer was dressed in an orange jumpsuit and had shackled wrists as he walked in behind his new counsel. Heather Elvis was last seen and heard from in December 2013. Moorer has been jailed at the J. Reuben Long Detention Center since July 29 when the judge found him guilty of contempt for violating a gag order by talking to a media outlet during his trial in June — a trial that ended in a deadlocked jury.

Associated Press: Judge considers moving trial in kidnapping case of teen

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=fE26rAcM

SC State Wire

A state judge is considering moving the retrial of a man charged in the kidnapping of a teenager in Horry County who has not been seen in almost three years. News outlets report that Circuit Judge R. Markley Dennis said during a hearing Wednesday that he has not made a decision on moving the trial of Sidney Moorer. The defense says pretrial publicity makes it impossible for Moorer to get a fair trial in Horry County. Moorer's first trial ended in a mistrial in June when a jury deadlocked after deliberating nine hours over two days. Sidney Moorer was initially charged with murder, but prosecutors dropped that charge while keeping a kidnapping count in the 2013 disappearance of then 19-year-old Heather Elvis.

Associated Press : Murder charged against man in Lowcountry slaying dropped

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=RTSeO3en

SC State Wire

Authorities have dropped a murder charge against a Beaufort man in connection with the slayings of two people in the Lowcountry. Prosecutors say 29-year-old Olin Brown had been charged with murder in the death of 28-year-old Titus Singleton, whose burned body was found in a car in Yemassee last December. The Island Packet of Hilton Head reports (<http://bit.ly/2cvHATi>) that after reviewing the evidence, prosecutors dropped the murder charge. A grand jury last month indicted Brown on a charge of accessory to murder. He also faces an accessory charge in the death of 25-year-old Katherine Collier, whose body was found in a shallow grave in Burton in January. Brown's brother, Charles Brown is charged with murder in both deaths. The defendants' mother, Nancy Kennedy, is charged with accessory in both cases.

Associated Press: SLED, police investigating fatal Dillon shooting

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=tUGksWgO

SC State Wire

The State Law Enforcement Division and local police are investigating a shooting death in Dillon. Police Chief David Lane tells local media outlets that police were called to the scene about 1 p.m. on Wednesday and the victim was found in a building behind a house in town. The name of the victim and other details were not immediately released. No arrests have been reported.

Associated Press : Deputies: Charleston County school bus in hit-and-run

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=xjitRDWX

SC State Wire

Charleston County deputies are investigating after a school bus was involved in a hit-and-run accident. Sheriff's spokesman Major Eric Watson says the bus was taking students to West Ashley High School about 7 a.m. on Thursday when the bus was sideswiped by a dump truck that left the scene. None of seven students on board the bus were injured but the driver was cut by broken glass. A second bus took the students on to the high school. No arrests have been made in the incident.

Sun News: International Drive taking shape despite bumps in the road

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article100653572.html>

Audrey Hudson

International Drive, once an impassible single-lane path full of mud bogs and ruts that could swallow a four-wheel drive vehicle, is now a 10-minute trip through ongoing construction work that offers a glimpse of how the picturesque future highway will flow. Where the pavement ends abruptly on International Drive by a Carolina Forest elementary school, a smoothly packed, widened and raised dirt road lined by towering pine trees now makes for a clear shot all the way to Highway 90 near Conway. Before construction began three weeks ago, it would have been impossible for emergency vehicles to reach a wildfire in this dry timber area. Now a ladder truck could easily make its way across the road at a respectable 30 mph. But there's still one major roadblock county officials must clear before paving is expected to commence — a new legal challenge by environmentalists to halt all construction work.

Associated Press: Horry County bulldozes plan to tear down dilapidated houses

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=6ww8zabu

SC State Wire

Horry County Council has bulldozed a proposal that would have required dilapidated houses in the county to be removed. The Sun News of Myrtle Beach reports (<http://bit.ly/2cvPxYL>) some council members this week objected that requiring the removal of such structures was government overreach. Others said any such proposal should include commercial as well as private property. Under the plan, county workers would not have targeted structures to be removed but would have identified them based on neighbors' complaints. The ordinance would have allowed the county to use its police powers to make repairs or demolish the buildings and put a lien on the property for payment. Councilman Al Allen said the ordinance could have been used as a way for squabbling neighbors to get back at each other.

Associated Press: Heading Abroad: USC Upstate starts Peace Corps prep program

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=S3unwMSM

SC State Wire

A new program at the University of South Carolina Upstate is helping students prepare for service in the Peace Corps. The university announced on Thursday that it is becoming one of about two dozen institutions in the nation with a Peace Corps Prep Program. The program helps students become more competitive in applying to the Peace Corps by increasing their foreign language skills, providing training in foreign cultures and learning about leadership. Several USC Upstate professors have served in the Peace Corps and three students are now serving in Costa Rica, Guyana and Tonga. Twelve USC-Upstate graduates have served since the Peace Corps was founded more than 50 years ago.

The State: Tim Tebow to the Columbia Fireflies? It could happen

<http://www.thestate.com/sports/mlb/article100573292.html>

Kou Bezzak

Tim Tebow playing baseball in Columbia? That idea might not be far-fetched. The New York Mets signed the former Heisman Trophy winner to a minor-league deal Thursday. The Columbia Fireflies are a Class A affiliate of the Mets and could be a starting spot for Tebow if things go well this fall for the former quarterback. Fireflies executive vice president Brad Shank was excited about that possibility and tweeted a picture of Tebow in a Fireflies jersey and hat Thursday morning. "He would be welcomed with open arms," Shank posted. Tim Tebow playing baseball in Columbia? That idea might not be far-fetched. The New York Mets signed the former Heisman Trophy winner to a minor-league deal Thursday. The Columbia Fireflies are a Class A affiliate of the Mets and could be a starting spot for Tebow if things go well this fall for the former quarterback. Fireflies executive vice president Brad Shank was excited about that possibility and tweeted a picture of Tebow in a Fireflies jersey and hat Thursday morning. "He would be welcomed with open arms," Shank posted.

Presidential Election 2016:

Associated Press: Obama: Americans will reject Trump's 'wacky' ideas

<http://bigstory.ap.org/70f789357bf44e2385a3df9420053bbe>

Josh Lederman and Kathleen Hennessey

President Barack Obama said Thursday that Republican Donald Trump proves he isn't qualified to be president "every time he speaks," adding that he was confident Americans would ultimately reject the brash billionaire on Election Day. Obama, closing out his final presidential trip to Asia, said his meetings with foreign leaders during the trip had illustrated that governing is "serious business" requiring knowledge, preparation and thought-out policies that can actually be implemented. He urged Americans not to allow the "outrageous behavior" seen amid the campaign-season din to

become the new normal."The most important thing for the public and the press is to just listen to what he says and follow up and ask questions to what appear to be either contradictory or uninformed or outright whacky ideas," Obama said. Throughout the campaign, Obama has repeatedly denounced Trump and deemed him "unfit" to serve as commander in chief, arguing that he's pulling the Republican Party in a dangerous and unprecedented direction. Obama has endorsed Hillary Clinton and has said he plans to campaign full-force for the Democrat ahead of the November election.

Associated Press: Clinton blasts Trump's comments on military generals, Putin

<http://bigstory.ap.org/8296bfca230040efbbed05bfe1bc1094>

Catherine Lucey and Steve Peoples

Hillary Clinton blasted Donald Trump Thursday for his condemnation of American military generals and his praise for Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying her Republican opponent had "failed" at proving he can be commander in chief. "Every Republican holding or seeking office in this country should be asked if they agree with Donald Trump about these statements," Clinton said in a news conference. The government's most senior Republican, for one, says he does not share Trump's complimentary view of the Russian leader. Speaking to reporters on Thursday, House Speaker Paul Ryan called Putin "an aggressor that does not share our interests." Asked whether he'd be comfortable with Trump as president, Ryan demurred, "I'll leave it at that." The discussion followed a Wednesday night national security forum in which the presidential candidates made back-to-back appearances. Clinton was repeatedly challenged on her controversial email use at the State Department and her vote as a senator for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. She also fleshed out several national security priorities if she is elected, including trying to take out the leader of the Islamic State and vowing to defeat the extremist group without putting U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq or Syria.

Associated Press: The Latest: Trump insists, falsely, that he opposed Iraq war

<http://bigstory.ap.org/1b809515516241f2ba9adfc6d3b7db81>

Donald Trump is insisting he opposed the war in Iraq from the beginning, even though fact checkers have repeatedly said that claim is false. Radio host Howard Stern in 2002 asked Trump if he supported the looming invasion. Trump responded, "I guess so." The Republican presidential nominee also said Thursday that if had been in the Congress at the time, he would have voted against authorizing the military conflict. Trump made the comments while visiting a Cleveland-area charter school. His position on the war is coming under increasing scrutiny as he attacks Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton for voting to authorize the war while she was in the Senate. He called his opponent "trigger-happy Hillary" on Thursday and repeated his defense that he always opposed the war.

Associated Press: Young voters from newer immigrant families lean more liberal

<http://bigstory.ap.org/9a0a2acef90d4eed818663d9b7f5e130>

Kathleen Ronayne and Emily Swanson

Young Hispanic and Asian-Americans who are immigrants or have an immigrant parent are more likely to be liberal in their views on politics and immigration than those with families who have been in United States longer, a new GenForward poll shows. Eighty-seven percent of those age 18 to 30 who are immigrants or who have parents who are immigrants support allowing those who were brought to the United States illegally as children to stay legally, while 72 percent of those whose families have been in the U.S. longer agree. Eighty-five percent of first and second generation Latino and Asian immigrants and 74 percent of those who are third generation or greater oppose building a border wall. "Having some sort of program that allows the illegal citizens to become legal citizens, I think it gives the viewpoint that the U.S. cares," said Juan Tavares, a 24-year-old from California whose parents

were born in Mexico. "You're going to have people who are illegal who will prove that they're loyal or they care about what this country has given to them and they would like a chance to give back."

National News:

Associated Press : Hawaiian seafood caught by foreign crews confined on boats

<http://bigstory.ap.org/39ae05f117c64a929f0f8fab091c4ee1>

Martha Mendoza and Margie Mason

ier 17 doesn't even show up on most Honolulu maps. Cars whiz past it on their way to Waikiki's famous white sand beaches. Yet few locals, let alone passing tourists, are aware that just behind a guarded gate, another world exists: foreign fishermen confined to American boats for years at a time. Hundreds of undocumented men are employed in this unique U.S. fishing fleet, due to a federal loophole that allows them to work but exempts them from most basic labor protections. Many come from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific nations to take the dangerous jobs, which can pay as little as 70 cents an hour. With no legal standing on U.S. soil, the men are at the mercy of their American captains on American-flagged, American-owned vessels, catching prized swordfish and ahi tuna. Since they don't have visas, they are not allowed to set foot on shore. The entire system, which contradicts other state and federal laws, operates with the blessing of high-ranking U.S. lawmakers and officials, an Associated Press investigation found.

Associated Press: Consumer borrowing grows by \$17.7 billion in July

<http://bigstory.ap.org/647254cf8b554e3e93b2f31779bcc5bc>

Paul Wiseman

American consumers increased their borrowing in July, though the category that includes credit cards grew at the slowest pace since February. The Federal Reserve says consumer borrowing rose by \$17.7 billion in July, up from a \$14.5 billion increase in June. Revolving credit, which covers credit cards, rose by \$2.8 billion, down from \$9.2 billion in June and least since February's \$2.2 billion. The category that includes auto and student loans increased by \$14.9 billion. Consumer spending accounts for about 70 percent of U.S. economic activity and was one of the few sources of strength in the first quarter, when the economy expanded at a lackluster 1.1 percent annual pace. Consumers have been encouraged by a solid labor market. Employers have added 204,000 jobs a month over the past year.

World News:

Associated Press : Iranian faction among Kurds trained by US against militants

<http://bigstory.ap.org/5115dc14753248128fe788d7512678a5>

Balint Szlanko

An Iranian Kurdish rebel group received military training in weapons and explosives from U.S. and European advisers as part of the international program backing Kurds in the war against the Islamic State group in Iraq, the group's commander told The Associated Press. The group, called the Kurdistan Freedom Party, is one of several Iranian Kurdish factions that have carried out attacks this year inside Iran, sparking a crackdown by security forces. At the same time, the group has been fighting alongside Iraqi Kurds against Islamic State group militants in northern Iraq. The training is a further twist in the complex web of alliances and enmities swirling around the wars in Iraq and Syria. Iran is a powerful backer of the Iraqi government and Iraqi Shiite militias against the Islamic State group. It appeared that the Iranian faction made its way into the training because it is officially under the umbrella of the Iraqi Kurdish forces. But any training of Iranian insurgents, even indirectly through

the anti-IS campaign, could alarm Tehran, which remains a top rival of Washington and U.S. allies in the region despite their common cause in fighting the militants in Iraq and despite last year's nuclear deal.

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