

The Augusta Chronicle

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THE SOUTH'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER — ESTABLISHED 1785

Saturday, September 10, 2011

Friday night FOOTBALL

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

Watch highlights of Silver Bluff at South Aiken and Greenbrier at Hephzibah at augustachronicle.com.

HIGH SCHOOL SCOREBOARD

Complete coverage/Sports, 1C

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Daily Deal: Get half off pizza, pasta and subs. Details, 2A



Coming Sunday:

On the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, local people share how their lives were affected.

SEE MORE PHOTOS AND COVERAGE of events on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks at augustachronicle.com.



Boss, a 4-year-old bulldog, hangs out at the 18th annual Border Bash.

Battle begins on the border



Stephanie Weeks and Gene Herrin cheer during Border Bash, held this year at the old train depot at Sixth and Reynolds Street.

Gamecock, Bulldog fans turn out to show their spirit

By Bianca Cain and Meg Mirshak
Staff Writers

Charles Purcell is under contract to say the University of Georgia will pull out a win over its neighbor today when the Bulldogs and the University of South Carolina battle on the football field.

A junior at UGA, Purcell would root for his team even if he didn't dress as one of its two official Hairy Dog mascots.

"You're a 6-foot-5 dog," Purcell said Friday night at the 18th annual Border Bash. "You can't be afraid of embarrassing yourself."

More than 10,000 fans from schools on both sides of the river showed up for the rally. Strangers could quickly become enemies strictly because of red or garnet clothes.

Though born and reared in North Augusta, Michael Myers was indoctrinated since birth as a Georgia fan by his aunt. He stood next to his friend Jamie Ussery, who proudly displayed his USC tattoo.

"Two teams coming together. It's fun, and Border Bash is good for the

SEC," Myers said. Families arrived early in the afternoon, and large crowds went through the gates at the old train depot at Sixth and Reynolds Street by sunset. Before a concert by band Sister Hazel, cheerleaders from both teams took the stage to show the other side which fans can scream louder.

For Purcell, helping the UGA cheerleaders wake up fans was a calling he started practicing as a student at Aquinas High School in Augusta. Sporting events from his high school days taught him a few things about crowd interaction as the face of UGA athletics.

"I was always up in the stands just cheering," he said.

Before arriving at the Border Bash, where Parker Moore wore the Hairy Dog suit, Purcell visited the Medical College of Georgia Children's Medical Center in the disguise.

"By far, that's the most beneficial and best thing I've done as mascot of UGA," he said.

Please see **BASH** on **PAGE 8A**



The South Carolina cheerleaders perform. More than 10,000 fans turned to the prelude to today's 4:30 p.m. clash.

ONLINE EXTRAS

VIDEO: Watch video of Charles Purcell describing his role as the Hairy Dog mascot at augustachronicle.com.

VIDEO: Watch video of the cheerleaders at Border Bash at augustachronicle.com.

SPOTTED: Browse photos at spotted.augusta.com.

MORE ON TODAY'S MATCHUP

► Gamecock, Bulldogs vie for leg up in **SEC/1C**

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE

Radiation on clothes traced to floor mats

Strontium-90 present from previous activity

By Rob Pavey
Staff Writer

Savannah River National Laboratory has solved the mystery behind an unusual incident last month in which contamination was detected on the clothing of two workers.

The employees, who had been checking serial numbers on sealed bottles of waste, triggered radiation alarms as they left their work area, according to a declassified report from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

The waste containers, from the Department of Energy's Hanford Site, were found to be intact, and the material on the workers' clothing — strontium-90 — was determined to have originated at Savannah River Site, not Hanford.

The investigation then focused on floor mats in the area, where much higher levels of contamination were found, said Paul Deason, the associate lab director.

"These were cushiony mats, about an inch thick, that people stand on," he said. "They had been moved out of the way to bring in a large drum, and when they checked out, there was contamination on their pants' legs. It was a surprise."

The strontium-90 appears to have been present in the floor mats from previous activity and found its way onto workers' clothing after the mats were disturbed, he said.

Though radiation levels were not high enough to create a health hazard, the incident still triggered an extensive inquiry that resulted in removing the mats and adding layers of protective clothing for workers, said Mike Conaway, the lab's health and safety director.

The lab employs about 1,000 scientists and workers who test hundreds of thousands of radiological samples each year associated with projects such as nuclear waste transportation and disposal, defense technology, homeland security and other nuclear issues.

Contamination incidents have declined significantly since March 2010, when Deason called for a three-week "timeout" for nuclear workers after seven incidents during a six-month period.

Historically, the lab had averaged four to six incidents a year.

Since the timeout 18 months ago, which resulted in a re-evaluation of procedures for handling radioactive materials, there have been just two minor incidents, including the one last month.

The other occurred in December. "We spend a lot of time trying to understand even a small incident," Deason said.

"From a health standpoint, these are not significant, but it's important to fully investigate causes and factors, even if it takes hundreds of hours, to avoid other things in the future."

The lab, established in 1951, is known for its work with tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen used in nuclear bombs, and conducts nonnuclear research including the cleanup of chemicals in soil and water, energy innovation, hydrogen, biofuels and wind energy.

Reach Rob Pavey at (706) 868-1222, ext. 119, or rob.pavey@augustachronicle.com.

WEATHER



Mostly sunny
High: 89 Low: 57
More weather on **Page 8D**

DEATHS

- Ms. Ella S. Bell Graniteville
- Mrs. Helen Crawford Augusta
- Mrs. Vallie Darion Waynesboro, Ga.
- Mr. Clement T. Davenport Augusta
- Mrs. Essie H. Dunbar Beech Island
- Mrs. Shirley Gavin Perkins, Ga.
- Mrs. Evelyn W. Gay Waynesboro, Ga.
- Mrs. Barbara A. Lang Augusta
- Mr. David H. Livingston Young Harris, Ga.
- Mr. John R. Mitchell Aiken
- Mr. Robert T. Morris Statesboro, Ga.
- Mrs. Betty J. Reese North Augusta
- Mr. Jimmie D. Siple Martinez
- Mrs. Eva Stallworth Statesboro, Ga.
- Mr. Richard A. Swift Covington, Ga.

See it now



FOR THE WEEK of Aug. 31, a total of 202 crimes occurred in the city's neighborhoods. See our weekly crime map for more stats at augustachronicle.com.

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INSIDE TODAY

Sand Gnats force Game 3 vs. Augusta

Thanks to the efforts of New York Mets pitcher Johan Santana in a rehab start against the Augusta GreenJackets, fans of the Savannah Sand Gnats can come back for another game tonight. Blake Forsythe hit a pinch-hit double in the eighth inning to score Albert Cordero from first base and break a late tie, and the Savannah Sand Gnats claimed a 3-2 win, evening the series at 1 and forcing a deciding Game 3 tonight in Savannah. **SPORTS, 1C**

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