

John Brummett is returning

Columnist will appear on Voices Page, Arkansas Online. — Arkansas, 1B



What the doctor ordered?

UAMS BioVentures Roundtable draws innovators, investors to LR. — Business, 1D

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In the news

■ **Prince Harry** will take a two-month military helicopter training course at the Naval Air Facility at El Centro, Calif., where allied troops train throughout the year because of the desert's similarity to Afghanistan's harsh environment.

■ **Robert Young**, 43, said he thought his friend Jeffrey Jarrett was passed out drunk in the back of his car, not dead, as he and a third man, 25-year-old Mark Rubinson, drove around town and visited bars, adding, "I didn't want to believe he was dead."

■ **Robert Mugabe**, the president of Zimbabwe, said he wants to hold elections next year to end a troubled coalition government but lamented that he's "not in control of the mechanism" that would allow a vote.

■ **Jacqueline Kasha**, the owner of Uganda's first openly gay bar, says her establishment has been padlocked by the landlord, who said the bar was noisy and attracted "strange" people.

■ **Tom Hartshorne** of Ithaca, N.Y., said he had to use a shovel to beat a deer to death after the startled animal jumped through a window into his workshop and then attacked him every time he tried to steer the buck toward a door, telling the *Ithaca Journal*: "After it lunged at me, I swatted it in the head and the battle was on."

■ **Michael Wayne Aurilio**, 27, is accused of trying to steal a jar of money intended for a charity and of hurting an off-duty Marion County, Fla., sheriff's deputy who had been standing behind him and tried to take him into custody.

■ **Ritch Workman**, a GOP lawmaker in Florida, has introduced legislation to undo the state's ban on "dwarf-tossing," an event in which bar patrons throw dwarfs in protective gear across bars onto mattresses, telling the *Palm Beach Post* that while he agrees the practice is "repulsive" and "stupid," all the ban "does is prevent some dwarfs from getting jobs they would be happy to get."

■ **Otho Eyster**, a judge in Ohio, upheld the firing of John Freshwater, a public school science teacher who was accused of preaching religious beliefs in class and of keeping a Bible on his desk.

■ **The Duchess of Alba**, an 85-year-old Spanish noble whose full name is Maria del Rosario Cayetana Alfonsa Victoria Eugenia Francisca Fitz-James Stuart y de Silva, has married Alfonso Diez, a civil servant 25 years her junior, in Seville, months after she divvied up chunks of her fortune to assuage her six children's concerns over her marriage.

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK
Today Sunny and warm.
High 88,
southeast winds at 5 to 15 mph.
Tonight Clear.
Low 59.



INDEX

Arkansas	1B	Movies	6E
Business	1D	MovieStyle	1E
Classifieds	1G	Sports	1C
Comics	4E	Stocks	3D
Crossword	4E	Television	2E
Deaths	4B	Voices	7B
Editorials	6B	Weather	6D

Lottery VP fired, 3rd exit in week

Chief, executive of gambling quit

MICHAEL R. WICKLINE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

For the third time this week, an Arkansas lottery executive is off the payroll. The three, all formerly employed by South Carolina's lottery, were being paid Arkansas salaries that added up to nearly \$780,000 a year.

The latest to go is Ernestine Middleton, vice president of administration.



Middleton



Baldrige

Interim Director Julie Baldrige fired her, lottery attorney Bishop Woosley said Thursday.

Middleton follows former Arkansas lottery Director Ernie Passailaigue and former Vice President for Gaming Operations David Barden. Passailaigue and Barden recently handed in resignation letters that gave no reasons. Both went off the payroll Tuesday.

Passailaigue, a former director of South Carolina's lottery, had a \$326,832-a-year salary as Arkansas' director. Middleton and Barden each were making \$225,655 a year at the Arkansas lottery.

Baldrige wouldn't say anything Thursday about what she'd done. She referred questions about why Middleton was fired to Woosley.

"I don't discuss personnel matters or employment matters," Baldrige said. "I leave that to our attorney."

Woosley had little to say, See **LOTTERY**, Page 8A



Christine Lagarde (left), head of the International Monetary Fund, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discuss the European Central Bank's move to support the economy Thursday in Berlin.

EU taps cash to prop banks

Unlimited 1-year loans set

COMPILED BY
DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF
FROM WIRE REPORTS

BERLIN — The European Central Bank is opening its money taps wide to prop up a shaky banking sector and keep the region's debt crisis from spawning the type of credit crunch that led to a global recession two years ago.

In the move announced Thursday, the top monetary authority for the 17 euro nations offered to flood banks

with any amount of one-year loans through 2013. The hope is that will shield them from malfunctioning credit markets, in which banks are becoming too worried to lend to one another, and keep loans flowing to businesses and households.

But outgoing European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet resisted calls for an interest-rate cut to spur growth despite fears that the eurozone economy

See **EUROPE**, Page 7A

Libyan struggle wears on



AP/MANU BRABO

A Libyan revolutionary fighter fires at a loyalist position Thursday in Moammar Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte, where fighting remains fierce. In a new, poor-quality audio recording, Gadhafi urged a campaign of civil disobedience against the country's new leaders.

Article, 6A

Obama urges fast jobs-bill passage

Millionaire tax gets his backing

COMPILED BY
DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF
FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Thursday said Congress should pass his \$447 billion jobs bill quickly to "guard against another downturn" in the U.S. economy if the European debt crisis worsens.

"Our economy really needs a jolt right now," Obama said in remarks at a White House news conference. He endorsed a proposal by Senate Democrats to impose a surtax of 5.6 percent on people earning at least \$1 million to generate about \$450 billion to pay for his plan.

WALL STREET
protest spills into Washington. Page 3A.

APPLICATIONS
for jobless benefits rise slightly. Page 1D.

"I'm fine with the approach that they're taking," the president said. "We've always said that we would be open to a variety of ways to pay for it."

Obama, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and other Democratic senators plan to meet today at the White House to discuss strategy for bringing the jobs plan up for a vote next week. The session, originally scheduled for Thursday night, was postponed because of votes being taken in the Senate, according to an administration official who wasn't authorized to discuss the matter.

"There's no doubt the economy is weaker now than it was at the beginning of the year," Obama said. He cited economists who argue a jobs bill is like an "insurance policy against a double-dip recession" and could boost consumer confidence, cut taxes and put money into consumer pockets and people back to work.

He cited Japan's earthquake. See **OBAMA**, Page 5A

Plea scratches trial in 5 Percy deaths

50-year sentence is not for murders

CLAUDIA LAUER
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

HOT SPRINGS — Capital-murder charges against the second suspect waiting to stand trial in the November 2009 killings of five people in Percy were dropped Thursday during a plea agreement in Garland County Circuit Court.

Jeremy Pickney, 25, of Hot Springs entered the courtroom of Circuit Judge Homer Wright on Thursday dressed in an orange prison uniform with shackles on his ankles and pleaded guilty to a charge of conspiracy to commit aggravated residential burglary and one count of theft by receiving more than \$2,500.

Wright sentenced Pickney to a total of 50 years in prison — 30 years for the conspir-

acy charge and 20 years for the theft charge.

Pickney had been facing a jury trial next week on five counts of capital murder, three counts of theft of property and two counts of aggravated burglary in the shooting deaths of five people, including four family members. Prosecutors had already taken the death penalty off the table for the trial.

Pickney's co-defendant, Samuel Conway, 25, was convicted by a jury in June on five counts of capital murder, three counts of theft of property and two counts of aggravated robbery.

Conway was sentenced to serve five consecutive life sentences without parole for each of the deaths, as well as See **PLEA**, Page 3A



The Sentinel-Record/RICHARD RASMUSSEN

Jeremy Pickney enters the Garland County Circuit Court in Hot Springs on Thursday before pleading guilty to reduced charges in the 2009 killings of five people in Percy.

Homeownership in decade falls at quickest pace since 1930s

CHAD DAY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The proportion of homeowners in the United States fell over the past decade at a rate not seen in more than 70 years, and Arkansas was among the states that saw the biggest drops, the Census Bu-

reau reported Thursday.

The national drop of 1.1 percentage points was the first since 1990 and the largest since the percentage of homeownership fell 4.2 points between 1930 and 1940.

Despite the decline, the country still has more home-

owners than renters, the numbers show.

In 2010, 76 million, or 65.1 percent, of the nation's 116.7 million occupied housing units were dwellings for their owners, the 2010 Census figures show. That was down from 66.2 percent in 2000,

which had been the highest rate of owner-occupied housing since the bureau began tracking it in 1890.

Kathy Deck, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, said the past decade's

drop in homeownership was a necessary correction to a period in which low interest rates, subprime mortgages and loose lending practices led to a housing bubble that devastatingly burst.

"Homeownership is obvious. See **HOMES**, Page 8A

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