

TALKBACK
803-644-2384
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Where's the outrage?

Where is the nationwide news media's outrage over the "for fun" murder of the white Australian by the three young black men? Is it OK to kill a white person? This is a double standard for the media it seems. The explosive, sometimes opinion, in the Martin case served to drive a wedge between races and was wrong.

Paid meal

We want to thank the older couple who paid for our meal at Golden Corral on Wednesday. It was very nice of you and it was greatly appreciated.

By law

By law Aiken County has to reappraise properties every 5 years. Most of the time citizens do see an increase in their property values, however it is not because of the city raising taxes; as a matter of fact, the city has reduced the city millage rate at least 3 times in recent years.

Projects

I have never seen or heard of any project that the leaders and citizens took on that did not succeed. It will be a success because they will support it. It will be clean, safe and fun because that's the way it is in North Augusta.

Stray kitten

I'd like to thank the Aiken County Animal Shelter for coming quickly to pick up the stray kitten someone dropped off in my yard.

On the ballot

Project Jackson should be put on the ballot so all of Aiken County can decide on it.

Build more

Why don't companies build more on the Westside so we don't have to travel to the Southside.

Bushes

Cut the bushes at Union and Richland. There has been an accident.

A raise

The Aiken should be ashamed about looking at ways to spend money that don't include giving our police officers a raise. They should receive a 10 percent increase. Something should be done about that.

The public

When was the last time County Council cared about what the public thinks? The public hearing and public input all say we shouldn't give our money to a private entity. The school board held public hearings and look what happened.

An overpass

An overpass should be built over Hitchcock Parkway so people can't build things along it and it could be a true bypass like it was originally planned to be.

Call our TalkBack hot line at 803-644-2384 and leave your message, or email it to us at editorial@aikenstandard.com. Readers' names are not necessary to make a comment and will not be published in the newspaper. Comments should be brief and to the point, and the Aiken Standard reserves the right to edit for space and content.

New principal appreciates historic school

BY ROB NOVIT
rnovit@aikenstandard.com

For many years, Johnny Spears and his wife Erin have shared their careers in education.

His wife loves her work at Gloverville Elementary School, he said and now, Spears is enjoying a positive and exciting experience as a first-time principal at Leavelle McCampbell Middle School in Graniteville.

"The teachers have been accepting of me as a new person coming in," Spears said. "The kids have been wonderful."

An Aiken native, he attended Schofield Middle School, where he especially appreciated social studies teacher Bill Thompkins. Years later, when Spears returned to Schofield as a student-teacher, Thompkins became his mentor.

Spears found other valued teachers, among them Aubrey Pompey and Jim Sheehan, at Aiken High. He went on to USC Aiken and in history pro-

fessors Bill Brockington and Calvin Smith, he appreciated the way they brought history to life. Spears entertained the idea of teaching at the time, but received his undergraduate degree in business management with a minor in history.

A few years later, "I realized I should have stuck with education," Spears said. "The interest was still there and I got certified."

After his Schofield internship, he returned there as a science and social studies teacher. Spears spent 12 years there and along the way, earned a master's degree in natural science from the University of South Carolina and returned to earn a master's in education administration in 2009.

Almost immediately, Spears was appointed to Kennedy Middle School, dividing his time as an assistant principal and teacher. Before his recent appointment, he spent four years there, the past three with veteran Principal Kyle Smith.

"He and (assistant principal)



I had heard nothing but good things about the teachers and staff. It's such a historic school and such a big part of the Graniteville community. I feel truly honored to be there.

Johnny Spears, Leavelle McCampbell Middle School Principal

Jamie Byrne taught me a lot," Spears said. "It was a very positive experience and a different role for me. I really enjoyed the interaction with parents and the community."

Dr. Lloydette Young, the previous Leavelle principal, moved to the same position at Schofield last month. Spears was excited when he got the call from Aiken County School District administrators to serve as Young's successor at Leavelle.

"I had heard nothing but good things about the teachers and the staff," Spears said. "It's such a historic school and such a big part of the Graniteville community. I feel truly

honored to be there."

He acknowledges the school building has issues. The Board of Education has agreed to replace it with a new facility in a few years, but the 92-year-old building will remain a part of the community. Spears had met a lot of Graniteville residents when he was in high school and understood the respect they have for the school. "It's a neat building to be in," Spears said. "Walking around it, I have the sense that you can't build schools like it anymore."

He has enjoyed meeting the kids and the faculty in recent weeks, as well as assistant principal Kela Sharpton.

What do you think?

Comment on this story at www.aikenstandard.com, write to Opinions, Aiken Standard, Box 456, Aiken, S.C. 29802 or send an email to editorial@aikenstandard.com.

Like two other first-time principals, Spears received the appointment just three days before the first day of school.

"Kela has provided great support," he said, "helping me get oriented and up to speed real quick."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Southern Thunder Cloggers recently performed at Disney World. Pictured, top row, from left, are Kaitlynn Haney, Tori Reeves, Kristle Banks, Miranda Nawlin, Toni Byrd; second row, from left, are Kaylee Westbrook, Madeline Webster, Macey Barton, Michelle Baker, Madisyn Hurt, Morgan Acord, Klaire Gregory; third row, from left, are Hailee Baughman, Ashton Adams, Victoria Warner, Amanda Baker, Abby Khakee; and bottom row, from left, are Kaley Clark, Kendall Hartley, Avian Jackson, Savannah Fulmer, Saylor Barton, Skylar Barton and Brianna Lovett.

Southern Thunder Cloggers dance at Disney World

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

On June 19, the Southern Thunder Cloggers were no longer in Aiken. They were living out a dream by dancing in Orlando, Fla. at Disney World.

The director, Kristle Banks, received an email in 2012 asking if it was something that the team would be interested in. Right away she knew it was an opportunity that she did not want her team to miss out on. It was many of the dancers first time going to Disney, as well as some of the parents, family and friends that made the trip to support Southern Thunder.

Banks said the group performed a 30-minute show at an outside staging area in front of the largest Disney store in the United States at Downtown Disney.

The girls performed at their absolute best and were given a standing ovation from the audience at the end of their performance, she added.

Abby Khakee, who has been clogging for three years, said, "I loved clogging at Disney. It was really cool feeling famous and having lots of people take our pictures."

Klaire Gregory, who has been clogging for six years agreed with Abby, and

added, "We even got our own private bus. It picked us up from our hotel and took us to a special location to go and dance and we had an escort. It was really cool."

Twin sisters Saylor and Skylar Barton, who have been clogging for six years, stated, "Entertaining all of those people was so fun. That was a lot of people, and then Disney gave us all Mickey Mouse bags that are really cute since we did such a great job."

Clogging at Disney truly was a dream come true, according to Banks.

Banks, who has been clogging for 25 years, said, "Dancing the finale and knowing what we accomplished to get there left a feeling of complete satisfaction. Walking off that stage and having the director of the Disney on Stage productions immediately ask when the cloggers could come back made me realize we truly did an amazing job. We can't wait to go back in two years and perform again."

The Southern Thunder Cloggers are located at 848 Aiken Mall Drive in the Xtreme Audio building, and they have open enrollment.

For more information, call Kristle Banks at 803-645-5453.

Will Frei celebrating his journey toward priesthood



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Aiken native Will Frei, left, in pursuing studies to become a priest. Above, he is pictured with Peruvian men, helping them and others repair their homes through a program called Home Works.

BY ROB NOVIT
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Following Will Frei's junior year at Aiken High School, he participated in a summer pilgrimage that began with a trip to Rome, which he described as the spiritual home of the Catholic faith.

He celebrated the opportunity to see and experience the history of the Church as it became more alive to him. Frei also attended a convocation for many young seminarians.

"It was a wonderful experience," he said. "Being young myself, it was huge for me, seeing these young men studying for the priesthood. It was something I would be interested in as well." Since then, Frei continues to pursue that journey. He recently completed two years at the Holy Trinity Seminary - located with the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas.

In the past summer, Frei returned to Rome to participate in a world gathering of those studying the priesthood, along with those seeking to serve as nuns or monks. Others included those discerning a certain religious vocation. Pope Francis spoke with them, explaining he had written a speech, but had something else to say.

"It was truly incredible to see people from all over the world - 3,000 to 4,000 of us," Frei said. "The conference was a testament to the universality of the Church, that I was not alone. It was inspiring to see these young people taking the same path."

Later in the summer, Frei spent two weeks in Peru through the Columbia-based program Home Works. He and four other seminarians provided service to families that needed substantial repairs on their residences.

About two weeks ago, Frei



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Will Frei, right, joins Father Jeffrey Kirby - his friend and mentor - at a service in Charleston. Frei, who is moving toward the priesthood, is now enrolled at the Theological College in Washington, D.C as a recipient of the prestigious Basselin Scholars award.

arrived in Washington, D.C. to begin studies at the Theological College - the national seminary of The Catholic University of America. Frei had been accepted as a Basselin Scholar - just one of eight students this year to earn the prestigious award and scholarship. He won't turn 21 until October.

A son of Wayne and Mary Frei, Will credits his parents for their dedication to their faith through tireless involvement with St. Mary Help of Christians Church - actions that contributed to his own devotion at young age.

"The Catholic Church was always a part of my upbringing," Frei said. "Throughout high school, I had some great friends - all of them interested in living good, virtuous lives. We would all pray together."

He also found a positive influence in Father Jeffrey Kirby, who arrived at St. Mary in 2008 as the parochial vicar. For the past three years, Kirby has served as the Vicar of Vocations with the Diocese of Charleston and has continued his support of the younger man.

At the invitation of Bishop Robert Guglielmo, Frei spent

parts of two summers to live with other young men at the Drexel House, a Catholic residence. They established a Christian community to have a different experience with the Church. The men took part in the worship service each week, and last year, Frei also worked as a writer and videographer for the Catholic Miscellany, the Diocese's official newspaper.

Bishop Guglielmo also encouraged Frei to apply for the Basselin Scholars program. He will remain for three years, earning a bachelor's degree in Licentiate, the Roman Catholic equivalent of a master's degree.

Frei will take core curriculum classes as well while living at the Theological College seminary to study philosophy, spiritual formation and much more.

He understands the opportunity he has received - both the gift and the responsibility of moving forward with that gift. Frei seeks to have a strong foundation in philosophy and a better understanding of theology.

Senior writer Rob Novit is the Aiken Standard's education reporter.

Aiken Standard

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Call the newsroom at 803-644-2401. If no one answers, please leave a message. We're good about returning calls.

SUBMISSIONS

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CITY OF CHARACTER

Aiken's character trait for the month of September is Responsibility.

FEEDBACK

If you have a question about a story or photo in Aiken Standard, email editorial@aikenstandard.com.

TO PURCHASE PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs published in galleries online at focusyou.aikenstandard.com are available for purchase.

LOTTERY

South Carolina
Pick 3 midday: 6-0-0
Pick 4 midday: 9-1-0-6
Pick 3 evening: 3-9-5
Pick 4 evening: 1-0-9-6
Palmetto Cash 5: 6-14-18-27-33
Power-Up: 2
Cash 6: 8-16-17-32-34-38

Georgia
Cash 3 midday: 3-3-1
Cash 4 midday: 1-3-9-5
FIVE midday: 6-8-4-2-4
Cash 3 evening: 4-2-2
Cash 4 evening: 0-9-8-0
FIVE evening: 0-5-0-3-4
Fantasy 5: 17-10-32-6-14
Decades of dollars: 4-14-26-29-33-40