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SWEET AND SAVORY

Valentine Bites

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Area Showdown



» Fort Payne girls get ready for postseason play with a game against Madison County | Sports, 5

Attorneys narrow jury pool

Prosecutors, defense question jurors; trial Wednesday

By **Lindsay Slater** | lslater@times-journal.com

Both prosecutors and defense attorneys questioned potential jurors Tuesday in an effort to whittle down the more than 100 prospects to 15.

Groups of 25 potential jurors were questioned at a time, with the exception of the last panel when about 27 were questioned.

Because the potential jurors filled out questionnaires Monday, the panel process was completed significantly quicker than had the potential jurors not filled out the questionnaires.

The questionnaires provided both state and defense attorneys with more than enough information, according to both Deputy District Attorney Bob Johnston and defense attorney Bruce Gardner, but there were several points that each attorney hit on, consistently, with each panel.

The first was asking the potential jurors if they had media exposure about the case.

Several in each panel raised their hands. Some said they had heard nothing.

Of those who answered yes, Johnston asked them if they would be able to put what they've read or heard out of their minds and be impartial in the process.

While most answered yes, some, through personal relationships with members of Willoughby's family and with members of law enforcement, weren't sure if they would be able to be completely impartial.

Those potential jurors were dismissed, and others were dismissed for various reasons such as work or "hardship" reasons, such as illness or caring for sick relatives.

A second significant question was, "Regardless of what the law says, should a person who is accused of a crime be required to prove his or her innocence?"

Gardner said in constructing the questionnaire with Johnston, he felt that question was probably confusing to many of the potential jurors because many answered, "I strongly agree" or "I agree."

"The state must prove their case," Gardner

See **Trial** | Page 2

The State v. Karri Willoughby

The following is information on both prosecutors and defense attorneys in the Karri Willoughby capital murder trial.

The State

DeKalb District Attorney Mike O'Dell has been an attorney since 1977. He was appointed district attorney in 1996 elected to his first full term in 1998 and is serving his third term. He has been a prosecutor in the DeKalb DA's office since 1981. In 2010, he was re-elected to serve a six-year term as a state's prosecutor without opposition running as a Democrat. He has been involved in numerous capital murder trials, and of those, many defendants were convicted.



Mike O'Dell

DeKalb Deputy District Attorney Bob Johnston has been an attorney since 1994 and has served as assistant district attorney from 1997-2007 and deputy DA since 2007. In 2002, he ran an unsuccessful campaign for district judge. This is his third capital murder trial to be involved with, and of those, all defendants were convicted.



Bob Johnston

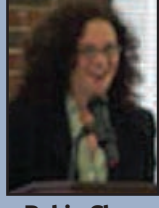
The Defense

Defense attorney Bruce Gardner served as assistant district attorney in Madison County from 1980-89. While in that position, he prosecuted many cases, from misdemeanors to capital murders. In 1989, he entered private practice, continues to specialize in criminal defense and maintains a caseload of federal criminal cases in U.S. district courts and the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. In 1998, he gained acquittal for Heather McGill, who was charged with murdering her three children by setting fire to her home. He also gained an acquittal for Walter Lamont Perry, accused of capital murder.



Bruce Gardner

Defense attorney Robin Carter Clem has been in private practice for 12 years and works mostly in criminal defense, but also in family law. She doesn't share a practice with Bruce Gardner, but she is working on several cases with him, including the Willoughby trial, an upcoming capital murder trial in Marshall County and the Discovery Middle School shooting trial in Huntsville that begins in June.



Robin Clem

Peers remove Greeson

Leader lawmaker taken off House Rules Committee

Staff and Wire Reports
MONTGOMERY — Rep. Todd Greeson said a disagreement over charter schools is the main reason he's no longer on the House Rules Committee.

The state Legislature opened its 2012 session Tuesday and the Ider Republican found himself locked out of the group that sets the daily agenda for the House.

"It all boils down to the way I vote," Greeson said. "It's almost a dictatorship down there. If you don't vote the way they want you to, they kick you off."

Greeson said Rep. Elwin Thomas, R-Oneonta, also was removed from the committee.

House Speaker Mike Hubbard makes committee assignments and announced the changes

See **Greeson** | Page 3



Todd Greeson

PUTTING EVERYTHING IN PLACE



Melissa Smith | Times-Journal

Workers use a crane to move steel beams in place Tuesday at Plainview School as work continued on a safe room that arrived in pieces on Monday.

Safe room reality

Delivery of Plainview facility soon to be in place

By **Huck Treadwell**

htreadwell@times-journal.com

RAINSVILLE — Construction on a safe room at Plainview finally got under way this week.

DeKalb County schools Superintendent Charles Warren said construction on the campus was a welcome site.

"It's been an ordeal getting this approved on a permanent basis," Warren

said. "At first we thought we were going to have to demolish it. There were a lot of delays with the foundation. Weather delayed it, and then we had to move utilities."

"A firm in Bessemer built the safe room off site and began trucking it in [Monday]. Hopefully, all of the sections

See **Plainview** | Page 3

Officers respond to mayor

Fyffe cops dispute disciplinary actions taken against them

By **Huck Treadwell**

htreadwell@times-journal.com

FYFFE — Two Fyffe police officers broke their silence regarding disciplinary actions taken against them in November.

Mayor Katy Woodall took written disciplinary action against Officer Brian Warren on Nov. 23, and Officer Anthony Majusiak on Nov. 25. Warren wrote on the written disciplinary action "signed under protest and duress." Majusiak wrote "These are fabricated charges based for retaliation against me to discredit me because [a Fyffe officer] voluntarily resigned to take a promotion. This is signed under duress/protest."

Fort Payne attorney Jeffrey B. McCurdy is representing the two officers and said they have documented evidence that clearly proves the charges Woodall levied against the two officers are baseless.

"There are some issues the mayor brought up, and we want to clarify their side of the story," McCurdy said.

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Katy Woodall

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05105347554

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Weather
Partly cloudy today with winds at 10-15 mph.
High Today **82** Low Tonight **48**
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Markets
Dow Jones industrial average:
▲33.07
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People's Agenda
The **Fyffe Town Council** will meet Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.
The **Henagar City Council** will meet Monday at 5 p.m. at City Hall.

The **Mentone Town Council** will meet Monday at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.
The **DeKalb County Commission** will meet Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Activities Building.

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