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Sunday, October 26, 2003

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Brown named executive director of art center

Paula M. Brown has been named executive director of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, according to Mary Gooding, chairman of the Lowndes Valdosta Arts Commission (LVAC).

As executive director, Brown will oversee operations in the five galleries at the Turner Center, offering more than 60 exhibits annually, as well as a variety of LVAC programs in the visual, performing and literary arts.

Brown comes to the Turner Center from the Lowndes Valdosta Chamber of Commerce, where she served as the Membership Development Coordinator and as the Community Affairs Coordinator. She moved to Valdosta from Fayetteville, N.C., where she planned the Festival of Flight, a \$3 million centennial celebration of the Wright Brothers' first powered flight. Brown's credentials also include extensive experience in hotel and convention sales and management.

A graduate of the University of Mississippi, Brown is married to Martin Brown, executive director of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Brown joins Elaine Kent, Assistant Director, and Adann-Kennn Alexandar, Curator, at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

Regal recognizes two employees

Regal Marine Industries named Donnie Howell and Melvin Wright as the first two employees to be recognized as Master Boat-builders.



HOWELL



WRIGHT

To be selected as a Master Boat-builder, an employee has to have worked as a boat builder for at least five years and have the technical depth to work in different areas. They are role models, trainers and mentors. In addition to the rate increase this brings, Donnie and Melvin received Master-builder apparel and each month they will receive a double monthly bonus.

Howell and Wright both joined Regal's workforce in June of 2001 within weeks of the plant opening in Valdosta. They both have a terrific attitude and a willingness to do whatever is needed to make the Regal plant successful.

Music recently elected to Board of Directors

The Academy of Graduate Embalmers of Georgia, Inc. is pleased to announce the election of Casey Music of Music Funeral Services as the newest board member to its Board of Directors.

Music is a third-generation funeral director. His family owns Music Funeral Services, which opened in

Please see BRIEFS, page 2C

CONTACT US

Business editor Kay Harris would like to hear your comments about The Valdosta Daily Times business section. She also welcomes story ideas. Call Kay at 244-3400, ext. 280, or e-mail her at kay.harris@gafnews.com

Welcome to Moe's!

Fun, festive restaurant comes to town

By Kay Harris
kay.harris@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — In the mood for a Billy Barou? Or maybe this time you want to try a Pinky Tuscadero, Ugly Naked Guy or an Art Vandalay?

For those who are movie and television trivia buffs, the unusually named menu items at Moe's Southwest Grill make sense. For those who aren't, you don't have to get the bad puns to enjoy the good food.

The restaurant, located at 1525 Baytree Road, serves up hot and fresh southwest cuisine in a cafeteria-style line, with enormous burritos, tacos, nachos, fajitas and more. One of the restaurant's trademarks is the fact that there are no freezers, only refrigerators, and all of the food has to be cooked and prepared fresh throughout the day.

Walking in the door, it's customary for customers to get a hearty "Welcome to Moe's" greeting from the staff. But on some nights, the staff doesn't quite get around to greeting everyone as the month-old restaurant has exceeded all expectations for sales.

"The company is amazed at Valdosta. We were No. 1 in sales our first week and have doubled all of our sales expectations. They told us to expect 260 customers a day and we are averaging 480," said Randy Bridges, co-owner of the franchised restaurant with his wife, Aras.

The couple are from Cordele and have owned a Town Craft cookware franchise for nearly 20 years, doing home sales and cooking demonstrations. Their daughter, Christy, has been attending Valdosta State University for the past four years and the Bridges got to know and love the community. When they decided to purchase a restaurant franchise and chose Moe's, it seemed only natural to them to buy the rights to the Valdosta market.

"We were the 75th store the company has opened. They've sold 530 franchises so far with another 130 pending and hope to have a total of 100 open by the end of the year," he said.

Moe's Southwest Grill is a private company based in Atlanta. At less than three years old, it has enjoyed phenomenal success, tapping into the fast



Mike Tanner/The Valdosta Daily Times

ENTREPRENEURS: Aras and Randy Bridges, owners of Moe's Southwest Grill franchise in Valdosta, stand in the dining room of the newly opened restaurant.

casual market, with counter service, comfortable seating and an atmosphere not found in most fast food restaurants.

The eclectic atmosphere is the same in all Moe's restaurants, and includes artwork which pays homage to musical heroes of the company's founder, Martin Sprock. All are deceased and include Jim Morrison, Elvis, Sinatra and Bob Marley, and Moe's also only plays their music.

The food and the atmosphere combined are what attracted VSU college students Ben Gerade and David Huseman for their second and fourth visits respectively.

They both ordered the Homewrecker — a burrito with rice, beans, meat, etc., and said it was a challenge to finish the entire meal. "We will definitely come back. It's good food for a good price," said Gerade.

"We also like the atmosphere," said Huseman. "We like the bad jokes. We're very musical and like all the dead people like Jerry Garcia whose music they play."



Mike Tanner/The Valdosta Daily Times

TEAMWORK: Christy Thompson, left, and LaKeya Daniels freshly prepare a 'Homewrecker' burrito at the recently opened Moe's Southwest Grill.

Please see MOE'S, page 3C

English company to buy Saft

By Kay Harris
kay.harris@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — The European company of Doughty Hanson has reached an agreement to acquire Saft from France-based Alcatel for 390 million Euros, the equivalent of \$462 million dollars.

The acquisition includes the Saft plant in Valdosta, a battery manufacturer located in the Azalea City Industrial Park for 28 years. The company was recently awarded a \$6 million contract with a \$3 million qualifying fee from the U.S. Air Force to supply batteries for spy planes, one of several government contracts the manufacturer has received.

Local officials at Saft were not allowed to comment on the pending sale and public relations representatives for Alcatel and Doughty Hanson also did not return inquiries, so it is not known at this time what, if any, effect the sale will have on the local plant.

Doughty Hanson is one of the largest, independent, private equity firms in Europe. The Saft acquisition is the company's first in France and, according to the company's Web site, is a "reaffirmation of Doughty Hanson's strategy to acquire market-leading, mid-to large-sized European businesses."

Please see SAFT, page 2C



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

ASSEMBLY LINE: A worker assembles batteries at the Saft facility in Valdosta.

Repeat Boutique reopens after recent expansion

By Tameika Carson
tameika.carson@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — In addition to extending a helping hand to the community, the Pregnancy Support Clinic of Valdosta is reopening the Repeat Boutique at 900 N. Oak St. following extensive renovations.

A grand opening for the boutique was held this weekend to celebrate the new look of the newly remodeled store.

Construction began in late June 2003 to expand the Boutique as the small space could no longer accommodate the growth in business and the large amount of donations from the community.

"In the past, we haven't been able to accept large items because we were limited in space," said Gene Crawford, secretary of the Board of Directors for the Pregnancy Support Clinic and project overseer. "But with the new addition, we can accept furniture, appliances and other large item donations that will help increase business."

The 800-square-foot room added to the back of the boutique will be used for sorting donations and storage. Local companies and members of the community donated labor, services and products for the construction. According to Crawford, at least 25 volunteers have helped in different ways on the project.

"We are truly blessed to have so many people help our organization bless others," Crawford said. "We cannot thank them enough."

Becky Deas, executive director of the Pregnancy Support Clinic, said the boutique's business has sky-rocketed since announcing the remodeling project.

"We've been bursting at the seams as far as donations," Deas said. "We are so grateful for the donors."

Please see BOUTIQUE, page 2C

Continued from Page 1C

Briefs

Lakeland in 1955, followed by the Valdosta location, which opened in August 2001.

The Academy will be celebrating its 49th year in educating and networking opportunities across the state of Georgia and welcomes Music to the Board of Directors.

Attorney Coggins moves office

Attorney Trent Coggins has moved his law practice from Remerton to a historic home at 706 N. Patterson St., near downtown Valdosta.

The home, built in 1896, was previously a private residence, and Coggins has kept the architectural integrity of the home intact, arranging the office furniture to complement the home's decor.

Coggins is a 2001 graduate of Mercer University Law School and is a sole practitioner, specializing in real estate law.

Richardson takes part in program

Georgia's first Leadership Institute for local Board of Health members was held Sept. 3-5 in Augusta. Participating from Lowndes County was Dr. Mary-Margaret Richardson, professor of nursing at Valdosta State University, who has served on the Lowndes County Board of Health for the past 22 years.

Board members from across the state were selected to participate in the initial program which is sponsored by the Georgia Public Health Association through funding by a grant from the Healthcare Georgia Foundation.

The institute provides board members with the latest information concerning public health issues, the roles and responsibilities of board members, and planning for the future of the public's health.

New restaurant's sudden success is no surprise

In the story I have today about Moe's Southwest-Grill, the owners are quoted and we discussed how their corporate office was astonished at the sudden success of the restaurant, as they surpassed all sales' goals.

Gee, we could have told them that. There isn't a restaurant that's opened in this city since I've been here that hasn't done as well as the owner's wanted it to. It's hard work but if you're willing to work hard, and you have a good location, good prices and good food, you should be able to succeed.

I realize that some folks

may not get the quirky pop culture references on the restaurant's menu mentioned in my story, so to enlighten you, if you're interested, Billy Barou is the name of the Judge's putter in Cad-dyshack, Pinky Tuscadero was a singer on Happy Days, the Ugly Naked Guy lived across the alleyway from Monica in



Week in Business Kay Harris

singer on Happy Days, the Ugly Naked Guy lived across the alleyway from Monica in

Friends' early seasons before Ross moved into his apartment and Art Vandelay was the fictitious owner of Vandelay Industries, the alias name George used on Seinfeld when he was trying to impress some-

There are quite a few more on their menu, but I'll let you figure those out on your own.

But the big question remains — if it's a proven fact that restaurants in Valdosta do unusually good business for a community this size, why isn't Olive Garden here yet??

MALL TRAFFIC

Thank you to those folks

Belk will host charity days

By Kay Harris kay.harris@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — You can indulge yourself by shopping and also help a local charity at the same time Saturday by visiting Belk during its Charity Shopping Day.

The department store in Colonial Mall is offering an Early Bird Special from 7 to 10 a.m. Nov. 1 to customers who purchase a \$5 discount card from one of the 11 participating charities. Although the discounts of 20 percent off items throughout the store on merchandise, with a 10 percent discount in the Home Department,

apply all day, customers who shop before 10 a.m. can redeem their \$5 ticket with their first purchase of \$25 or more.

Belk Store Manager M.F. "Bubba" Campbell said the store is excited to be hosting another Charity Day. "We do this for two reasons. One is to work with the local charities to help them and be a part of their fundraising efforts and we can do that by offering this day, and two, it's also good for us and our business."

The eleven participating charities are: Humane Society Food Bank, Girl Scouts, Children's Advocacy, Zeta Tau Alpha (charity is breast cancer),

United Way, Methodist Children's Home, Azalea City Prison Ministry, Lanier County Board of Education, Lowndes High School fast pitch softball team and Pregnancy Support Group.

Customers can purchase a ticket from any of the charity or from the store. They will also be able to register for an opportunity to have their Belk charge card paid off, up to \$1,000.

The \$5 paid for the card goes directly to the charity it was purchased from.

To contact Business Editor Kay Harris, please call 244-3400, ext. 280.



Mike Tanner/The Valdosta Daily Times

GOOD DEALS: Lillie Carnegie, left, and her sister, Marie Mills, shop for bargains Friday at 'Repeat Boutique' located at 900 N. Oak St.

Continued from Page 1C

Boutique

People are still encouraged to donate "gently used" items as well as help with sorting and placing merchandise on the sales floor. All of the Repeat

Boutique's profits and funding goes to the Pregnancy Support Clinic, a non-profit organization, located at 206 W. Gordon St. The boutique also assists the clinic with helping mothers in need during and after pregnancies.

Anne Baxter, Repeat Boutique store manager said, "We're very blessed with the

donations that are allowing us to pass savings and blessings to the community."

The Repeat Boutique is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. For more information about donations and volunteer opportunities, call the store at 333-0063.

Continued from Page 1C

Saft

Yann Duchesne, managing director of Doughty Hanson in France said in a press release, "Saft is a high-quality business with excellent growth and earnings potential. We are pleased to have acquired the business from a blue-chip French corporate and to have agreed our first acquisition in France, which we believe is a private equity market set to grow very strongly. This acquisition is one of the few non-secondary LBOs in France this year. We look forward to working with Saft management to develop the business further."

The acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals and is expected to close by the end of 2003.

The Web site describes Saft as being involved in the manufacture of high-end batteries for a range of niche markets, including the energy, railway, aviation, telecom and defense sectors. Its batteries are incorporated in almost every plane produced by Airbus and Boeing, in batteries for high-speed trains and in the new Segway Human Transporter.

Saft is a global business with major facilities in Europe, North America and Israel.

Reasons given for the acquisition are that Saft is a market leader with a strong financial performance, strong earnings potential and represents opportunities for growth both organically and through acquisition.

In Valdosta, Saft employs more than 250. Alcatel, headquartered in Egnolet, France, opened Saft in the Azalea City Industrial Park in 1975 to be closer to its American customers.

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who called in Rant and Raves about the stop signs at the mall. Every time I drive there, I feel like I'm taking chances with my life as people don't stop at the stop signs that really ARE there but DO stop at the stop signs which are no longer there.

I would caution anyone to be careful and alert on those entrances and exits, however, because being right and following directions seem to mean very little when it comes to drivers in this town.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

The Citgo in Naylor is coming along nicely and should be

opening soon. You can't miss it if you're driving toward Homerville on Highway 84 East. It's right at the main intersection in town and will be a welcome addition to that community.

Someone told me that Flowers Bakery is opening a new outlet in the old Winn Dixie marketplace on Northside Drive. Is that true?

And it looks like the former home of El Toreo on North Ashley Street has sold, but the burning question is, to who?

If you know, please let me know.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Dow Jones industrials

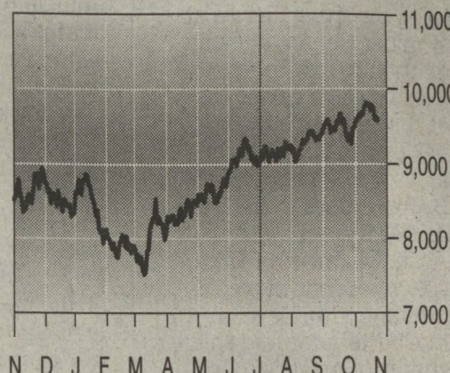
For the week ending Friday, Oct. 24

-139.33

9,582.46

Record high: 11,722.98

Jan. 14, 2000



WEEKLY STOCK MARKET INDEXES table with columns: 52-Week High/Low, Name, Last, Wk Chg, Wk %Chg, YTD %Chg, 12-mo %Chg. Includes Dow Jones Industrials, S&P 500, etc.

WEEKLY STOCK EXCHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

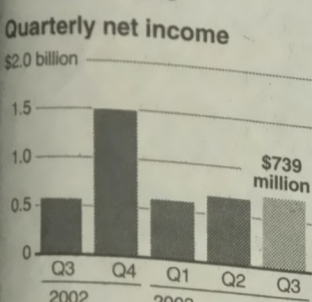
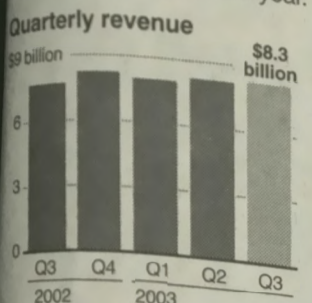
Summary table for NYSE (5,851.14 -55.98), AMEX (1,020.77 +2.40), NASDAQ (1,865.59 -46.77)

Stock market highlights table with columns: GAINERS (\$2 OR MORE), LOSERS (\$2 OR MORE), MONEY RATES, CURRENCIES. Includes lists of stock names and their price changes.

STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST table listing local stocks with columns: Name, Ex, Div, Last, Wk Chg, Wk %Chg, YTD %Chg. Includes ABC Bop, AFLAC, AGCO, etc.

UPS delivers strong quarter

United Parcel Service reported a nearly 28 percent increase in third-quarter profit over last year.



SOURCE: UPS

UPS reports nearly 28 percent jump

ATLANTA (AP) — A surge in the volume of letters and packages it delivers by air for next-day service and improvements in its domestic business helped United Parcel Service post a nearly 28 percent jump in third-quarter profit, beating Wall Street expectations.

The news Tuesday from the world's largest shipping carrier was especially positive because the July-September period is usually slow for the industry, and the economy has only recently started to show signs of a recovery, the company and analysts said.

"Once the domestic economy rebounds, that's when you'll see the real leverage of the company," said Kirk Schmitt, an analyst with Victory Capital Management in Cleveland.

While overall next-day air volume was up about 10 percent, the revenue generated per piece shipped was down because more letters were being delivered than packages, which cost more to send. UPS also noted that health and

pension costs, which increased \$100 million in the quarter, continue to weigh on the company.

Atlanta-based UPS said it earned \$739 million, or 65 cents a share, for the three months ending Sept. 30, compared with a profit of \$578 million, or 51 cents a share, for the same period a year ago.

Excluding one-time items — a \$15 million after-tax gain due to the sale of an aviation technology unit and a \$22 million gain due to a favorable tax ruling regarding the expensing of aircraft maintenance costs — UPS said it earned \$702 million, or 62 cents a share, for the July-September quarter. Analysts surveyed by Thomson First Call were expecting earnings of 60 cents a share excluding one-time items.

Revenue rose 7 percent to \$8.31 billion from \$7.75 billion for the same quarter a year ago.

The company's U.S. package business grew 3.2 percent, or 374,000 packages

in the quarter compared to the prior-year period.

"The beauty of this thing is you saw all three segments of the business with improved operating profit," chief financial officer Scott Davis said in an interview.

In a conference call with analysts, Davis said the continuing economic recovery will help UPS post further profits in the future.

"Bottom line, we're very pleased with the progress being made," he said. "The pickup in the economy is real and will be sustained going forward."

He said that besides the growth in domestic business, there was also continued growth internationally, particularly in Canada and Europe. International export volume increased 8 percent in the quarter, the unit's most profitable quarter in company history.

"We think that's just the beginning," Davis said during the call.

Shares of UPS rose 22 cents to close

at \$68.97 on the New York Stock Exchange.

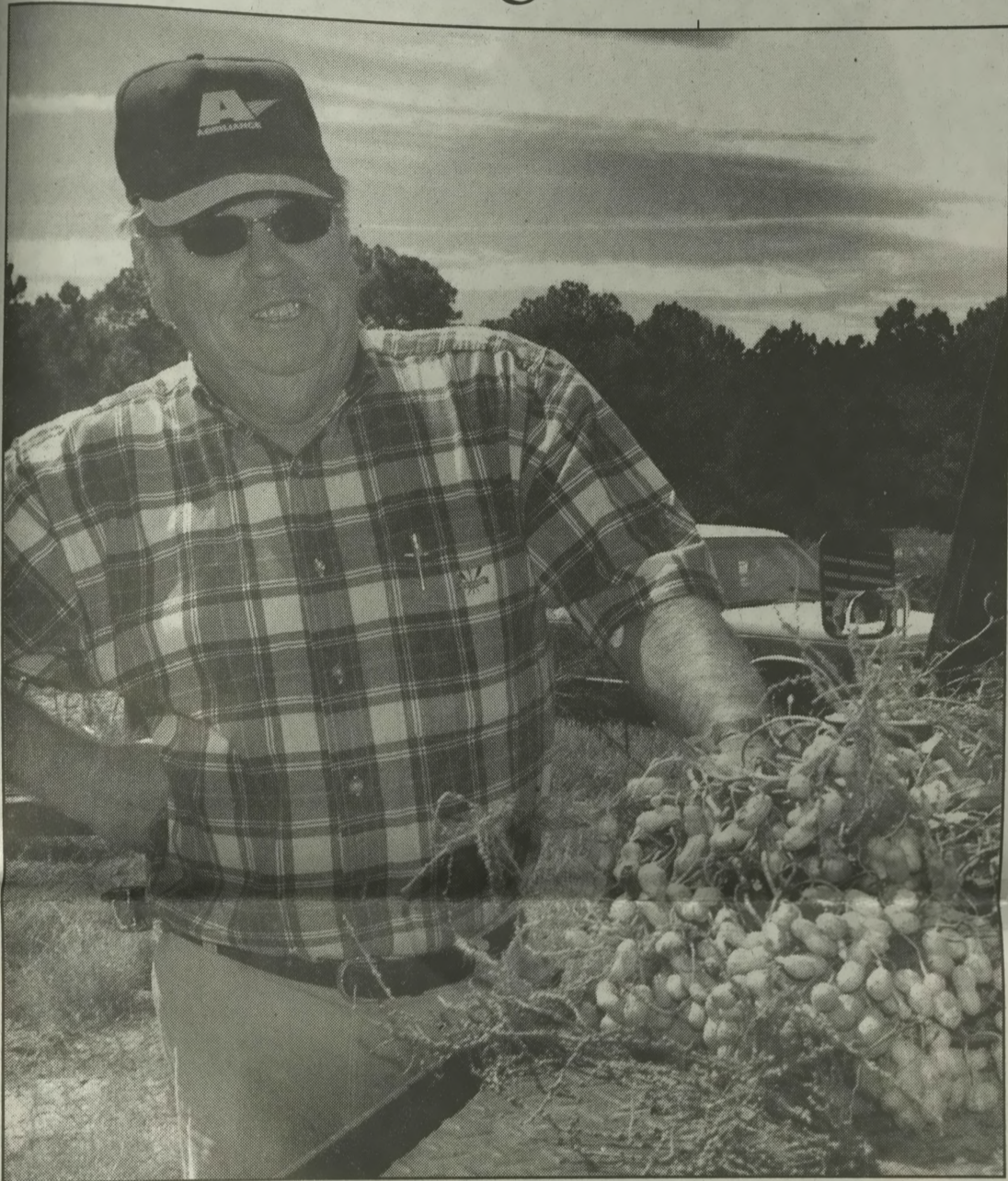
The earnings news comes as UPS continues efforts to branch out beyond its traditional package delivery service.

UPS and rival FedEx are scrambling to embed their online shipping tools into the business software and Web sites their customers use most.

UPS says the volume of packages the company has delivered for people using third-party software has doubled since 2001, and more than 60,000 businesses have now licensed the company's online tools and integrated them into their Web sites.

Earlier this year, UPS unveiled a new look to its logo that got rid of the familiar string-tied box that has adorned the corporate logo since 1961 in favor of a simpler brown and gold shield. The company also added the slogan "Synchronizing the World of Commerce" to its aircraft, its brown package trucks and new retail stores.

Gathering Peanuts



Associated Press

REAPING THE HARVEST: Jerald Carter smiles as he shows off some of his peanuts near Sylvester. After five years of drought and other weather adversities, farmers expect a good crop this year and excellent yields.

Southern farmers bringing in their best peanut crop in years

SYLVESTER (AP) — After years of drought, a shift to a new farm program and a disastrously wet harvest season last fall, Jerald Carter is working dawn to dusk on his best peanut crop in five years.

"It's been easier to make because we've had adequate rainfall," he said. "We've had to irrigate a lot less. The fuel and electric bills are a lot less. Therefore, the profit margin ought to be a little better."

The Agriculture Department rates the 2003 crop 96 percent fair to excellent in seven of the top producing states: Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia.

Even so, farmers are careful not to boast because a lot could happen during the remaining weeks of the harvest. After pulling the crop through a dry summer last year, Georgia growers got hammered with torrential rain at harvest time that drastically reduced yields and quality.

"I feel like I lost half of them," Carter said. "It's hard to get over that, and that's why we need a good crop this year."

Georgia, the top peanut-producing state, supplies about 38 percent of the nation's peanuts. The elimination of the Depression-era peanut quota system last year has opened new growing areas and created opportunities for farmers who had never cultivated peanuts.

South Carolina has added 9,300 acres since last year, bringing its total to 18,000 acres for harvest; Alabama has added 4,000 for a total of 189,000 acres; and Florida has added 21,000 acres for a total of 107,000 acres

On the Net:

Georgia Peanut Commission
http://www.gapeanuts.com

Farmers have cut back in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia and kept about the same production in North Carolina.

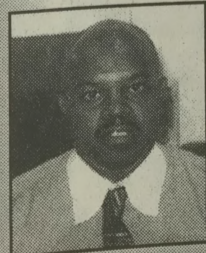
Still, this year's U.S. crop should total nearly 4 billion pounds — or 600 million more than last year.

With lots of mild, sunny days in south Georgia, growers have about 60 percent of the crop harvested.

Driving through the countryside, there's an earthy smell of freshly dug peanuts, with plants flipped upside down in the fields so sunshine and fresh air can provide initial drying for the pods that manufacturers transform into snack nuts, peanut butter and candy.

After digging, farmers return to the fields with machines that separate the pods from the roots. Then they head to one of the peanut buying points, pulling peanut wagons almost as large as box cars behind their pickups or tractors. Workers at the buying points weigh, clean, grade and dry the peanuts before shipping them to shelling plants or warehouses.

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Continued from Page 1C

Moe's

One of the things that has taken the Bridges by surprise is the number of people who are looking for vegetarian items. Customers have a choice of steak, chicken or tofu, and the tofu has proven so popular, they ran short of the bean curd product the first week, but have since upped their order to accommodate the requests.

Although a bit over-

whelmed at the tremendous response the restaurant has seen so far from the community, the Bridges are excited to be in Valdosta. They currently have 24 employees, including their daughter, and have already rearranged the seating area to accommodate more customers, with seating for 100 inside and an additional 38 outside.

The restaurant also has a private room available for parties and will have its catering operation open in November. "We're also adding a Happy Hour on Wednesdays from 4 to 7 p.m.," said Mr. Bridges, offering specials on the domestic

and import bottled beer as well as the Moe-Rita margaritas they sell, which are aptly named the Blabbermouth and Village Idiot.

The Bridges are hoping to open three Moe's in the Valdosta area in the next year or two, and are considering property both north and south of the city.

Moe's is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

To contact Business Editor Kay Harris, call 244-3400, ext. 280.

BellSouth posts huge jump

ATLANTA (AP) — Growth in its Latin America division and its long-distance and high-speed Internet services helped BellSouth Corp. post a 46 percent jump in third-quarter profit, welcome news for the company battling fierce competition in the telecom sector.

As phone companies increasingly fight over customers looking for lower rates and more options, BellSouth has focused on its bundled packages of services that offer a one-stop communications shop. The strategy spurred the

strong results announced Wednesday.

"This was a surprise," analyst Patrick Comack at Guzman & Co. in Miami said of the earnings news. "The question is, can they sustain it? I doubt it, but we'll see."

Shares of Atlanta-based BellSouth rose more than 5 percent on the news.

BellSouth said it earned \$936 million, or 51 cents a share, for the three months ending Sept. 30, compared to \$640 million, or 34 cents a share, a year earlier in a peri-

od that included hefty charges related to job and service cuts.

Excluding one-time items — charges related to asset impairment and foreign currency transaction losses — BellSouth said it earned \$980 million, or 53 cents a share.

Analysts surveyed by Thomson First Call were expecting earnings of 50 cents a share excluding one-time items.

Revenue for the July-September quarter rose 5 percent to \$5.72 billion, from \$5.43 billion in the year-ago period.

Lawsuits against Mirant officers halted

ATLANTA (AP) — A bankruptcy judge Thursday temporarily halted dozens of lawsuits filed by investors and customers against current and former officers of Mirant Corp. and gave the go-ahead to insurance companies to pay the energy supplier millions of dollars to fight the claims.

The order staying the law-

suits is good until Nov. 5, after which U.S. Bankruptcy Judge D. Michael Lynn in Fort Worth, Texas, will make a final decision. The order on three sets of insurance policies covering Mirant and former parent Southern Co. for \$570 million is final.

Prior to Mirant's bankruptcy filing July 14, it was facing more than 100 lawsuits over

possible securities violations, ratepayer disputes and investor and employee claims against the company, its current and former officers, some of its affiliates and third parties it may be responsible for.

The order lists 98 lawsuits, though some of them are consolidated suits covering multiple plaintiffs.

Georgia unemployment dips slightly

ATLANTA (AP) — For the second straight month, the number of jobless Georgians dipped slightly in September, the state's Labor Department reported Tuesday.

The unemployment rate de-

clined .1 percent in September, from 4.7 percent in August to 4.6 percent. That followed a more substantial .6 percent drop from July's rate of 5.3 percent.

The decline in unemploy-

ment was aided by the addition of 17,300 jobs.

Even so, the number of unemployed Georgians, now at 203,523, has remained about 200,000 for 18 of the past 21 months.

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Wednesday, December 24, 2003

COMING THURSDAY



Enjoy Christmas Day taking a journey through the year in local arts 2003 in Valdosta Preview with Thursday's edition of The Valdosta Daily Times.

USAGE OF TURNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

MONTH OF DECEMBER 2003

THE COUNT OF GUEST AT THE TURNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, 2003 IS AS FOLLOWS:

MEETINGS	24
CLASSES	30
TOURS	0
RECEPTIONS	205
VISITORS	378
OTHERS	100
TOTAL	737

THE TURNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS WAS CLOSED EIGHT DAYS FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.



CITY of VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

James H. Rainwater
Mayor

September 11, 2003

Ms. Mary Gooding
Chairman
Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission
527 North Patterson Street
Valdosta, GA 31601

Dear Mary:

I just wanted to send a note of thanks for the Presenter Series tickets. For all you have done for the Arts Center I feel like I need to send you tickets. I think the best plan is to keep supporting the arts. We do have a beautiful Center. Thanks to all of you and especially your leadership for a Center our community and region can be proud of.

I look forward to enjoying the performances. Please let me know if I can ever help you or the Center.

Sincerely,

James H. Rainwater
Mayor

tsb

Ronald M. Zaccari

Office of the President

Address 1500 N. Patterson St. • Valdosta, Ga. 31698-0180

Phone 229-333-5952 • **Fax** 229-333-7400

Web www.valdosta.edu • **E-mail** rzaccari@valdosta.edu

**Valdosta State
University®**



September 8, 2003

**Ms. Mary Gooding
Chairman
Valdosta/Lowndes Arts Commission
527 North Patterson Street
Valdosta, Georgia 31601**

Dear Ms. Gooding:

Thank you for the tickets to the 2003-2004 Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission's national touring shows. Nancy and I appreciate your generosity and look forward to attending each event.

I know you and others are extremely proud of the new Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts and its cultural impact to this region. It is truly an honor to be associated with such an outstanding group of individuals.

Sincerely,

**Ronald M. Zaccari
President**



122 NORTH ASHLEY STREET
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31601
24-STAGE

POST OFFICE BOX 2831
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31604

PRESS RELEASE: July 28, 2003

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Jill Lovern 333-0840 Email: lijwrench@hotmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Theatre Guild Valdosta announces New Board Members for the 2003/2004 Season

President Mary Helen Watson held the first TGV board meeting of the new season recently.

Attending were Vice President Jerry Ellis, Treasurer Mary Ann Green, Member at Large Donna Joyner, Play Reading Chair Pauline Player, Membership Chair Jack Pruden, Publicity Chair Jill Lovern, Secretary Teresa Rathkamp and House Manager Mike Glasscock.

Board Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month at the 'Dosta Playhouse. General membership meetings are at 7:30 following the board meetings in the theater. All members and anyone interested in the theater are invited to attend.

Board members are volunteers who give their time freely to keep TGV equipped to offer live stage performances year after year.

TGV invites all interested to join us on the stage, behind the stage, in the audience! Membership is only \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a whole family. Call 24-STAGE (247-8243) for more information.

CHOOSE THEATER!

The Valdosta Daily Times

ALDOSTA

preView

Issue No. 56

Thursday, November 27, 2003

New Face in Art

Paula Brown, the arts center's
recently hired executive director

PHOTO: Paul Leavy/VDT

COMING SOON

A look at upcoming local arts events

Jo Dee Messina in Concert, Wild Adventures Super Park, Old Clyattville Road: Country star performs Christmas classics and her hits. Run date: 7 p.m. Saturday. Concert included in the park's regular admission: \$34.95 (plus tax), adults; \$28.95 (plus tax), seniors (ages 55-up), juniors (ages 3-9); free, children under 3. More information: 219-7080.

"Yuletide Pops," Whitehead Auditorium, first floor, Valdosta State University Fine Arts Building, corner of Oak and Brookwood: Valdosta Symphony Orchestra presents its annual holiday concert and is joined by the Valdosta Symphony Children's Honor Chorus of approximately 100 local youngsters. Run dates: 8 p.m., Dec. 6; 3 p.m., Dec. 7. Admission: \$17.50. More information: Call ArtSouth, 333-2150. (See next week's Valdosta Preview for more on this concert.)

"Nutcracker," Mathis City Auditorium, 2300 N. Ashley St.: Dance Arts & Linda Chase present the 31st annual local production of Tchaikovsky's famed holiday ballet. Run dates: 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Dec. 6; 2:30 p.m., Dec. 7; 7:30 p.m., Dec. 8. Tickets: (advance), \$6, adults; \$5, students and seniors, available at American Music; IT&T Office, Moody Air Force Base; Jan's Hallmark, Colonial Mall; Commercial Banking Company; Betty Webb Limited; the Sugar Plum Fairy; (at the door), \$7, adults; \$6, students and seniors; \$4, for 1 p.m., Dec. 6 performance. More information: Call 244-4443. (See next week's Valdosta Preview for more on this show.)

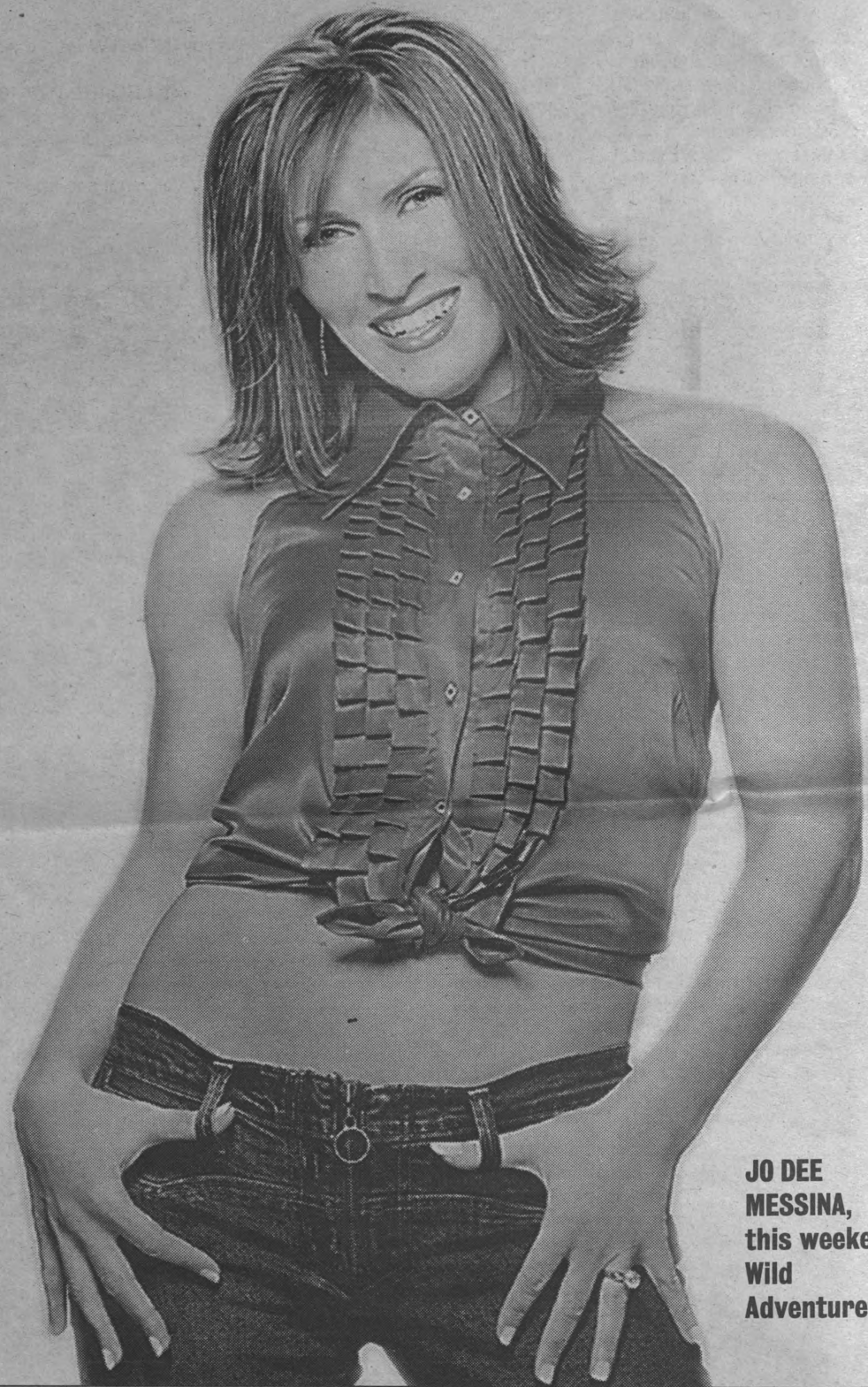
"The Rented Christmas," The Dosta Playhouse, 122 N. Ashley St.: Theatre Guild Valdosta presents its annual Children's Christmas play. Run dates: Dec. 5-7. More information: Call 24-STAGE. (See next week's Valdosta Preview for more on this show.)

"Invitational Regional High School Art Show," the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: Dozens of works by South Georgia high school art students. Run dates: Opens with a free, public reception, 5-7 p.m. Dec. 8, and the show continues through Jan. 2. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information: Call 247-2787.

Marilyn Bechler's Pine Grove Elementary School art students, Roberta George Children's Gallery, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: Works by elementary school art students. Run dates: Opens with a free, public reception, 5-7 p.m. Dec. 8, and the show continues through Jan. 2. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information: Call 247-2787.

Junko Liesfeld's "Anime Dolls," the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: A striking collection of Asian dolls. Run dates: Opens with a free, public reception, 5-7 p.m. Dec. 8, and the show continues through Feb. 6. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information: Call 247-2787.

"Journey to the Center of the Earth," Mathis City Auditorium, 2300 N. Ashley St.: Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission presents this professional play by GMT Productions based on Jules Verne's classic tale; part of LVAC's children's theater series. Run date: 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., Dec. 12. Admission: \$3, school group rates. More information: Call 247-2787.



JO DEE MESSINA, this weekend, Wild Adventures.

NOW SHOWING

A look at current art events

Exhibit, Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: Artist Lian Zhen presents Chinese art. Run dates: Now through Dec. 4. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information: Call 247-2787.

"Tree-mendous" exhibit, Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: Southern Artists League hosts this tree-themed juried show. Run date: Now through Dec. 4. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information: 247-2787.

"Illusions & Reality" exhibit, Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: Richard Barrenechea, Maria Anguiano, regional Hispanic artists, present a joint exhibit. Run date: Now through Dec. 4. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information: 247-2787.

Lanier County High School exhibit, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.: Teacher Deborah Raines' Lanier County High School students exhibit their works. Run date: Now through Dec. 4. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission: Free. More information:

247-2787.

"Space for Rent: VSU's Annual Fall Seniors Art Exhibit," VSU Art Gallery, VSU Fine Arts Building, Oak and Brookwood: Fall graduating seniors display work. Run dates: Now through Dec. 7. Gallery hours vary. More information: Call 333-5835.

Wild Adventures Christmas Wonderland, Wild Adventures Super Park, Old Clyattville Road: Numerous Christmas-related shows and attractions throughout the holiday season. Wonderland events included in the park's regular admission price: \$34.95 (plus tax), adults; \$28.95 (plus tax), seniors (ages 55-up), juniors (ages 3-9); free, children under 3. More information: 291-7080.

BILLBOARD TOP 15 SINGLES

1. "Shake Ya Tailfeather," Nelly, P. Diddy & Murphy Lee.
2. "Right Thurr," Chingy. Disturbing tha Peace.
3. "Crazy in Love," Beyonce (feat. Jay-Z). Music World.
4. "Baby Boy," Beyonce (feat. Sean Paul). Columbia.
5. "Get Low," Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz feat. Ying Yang Twins.
6. "Into You," Fabolous (feat. Tamia Or Ashanti). Desert Storm.
7. "Frontin'," Pharrell featuring Jay-Z. Star Trak/Arista.
8. "P.I.M.P.," 50 Cent. Shady.
9. "Where is the Love?" Black Eyed Peas. A&M.
10. "Unwell," matchbox twenty. Atlantic.

11. "Never Leave You — Uh Ooh, Uh Ooh!," Lumidee. Universal.
12. "Can't Hold Us Down," Christina Aguilera (feat. Lil' Kim). RCA.
13. "My Love is Like... Wo," Mya. A&M.
14. "Drift Away," Uncle Kracker (feat. Dobie Gray). Lava.
15. "The Remedy (I Won't Worry)," Jason Mraz. Elektra.

BILLBOARD TOP 15 ALBUMS

1. "Love & Life," Mary J. Blige. Geffen.
2. "Metamorphosis," Hilary Duff. Buena Vista.
3. "The Neptunes Present... Clones," Various Artists. Star Trak.
4. "Greatest Hits Volume II and Some Other Stuff," Alan Jackson.
5. "Drankin' Patnaz," YoungBloodZ. So So Def.
6. "Dangerously in Love," Beyonce. Music World. (Platinum)
7. "Fallen," Evanescence. Wind-up. (Platinum)
8. Soundtrack: "Bad Boys II." Bad Boy/UMRG. (Platinum)
9. "Jackpot," Chingy. Disturbing tha Peace/Capitol. (Gold)
10. "A Rush of Blood to the Head," Coldplay. Capitol.
11. "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," 50 Cent. Shady. (Platinum)
12. "Wooden Leather," Nappy Roots. Atlantic.
13. "Bow Wow: Unleashed," Bow Wow. Columbia.
14. "Come Away With Me," Norah Jones. Blue Note. (Platinum)
15. "Trap Muzik," T.I. Grand Hustle.

Dining Directory

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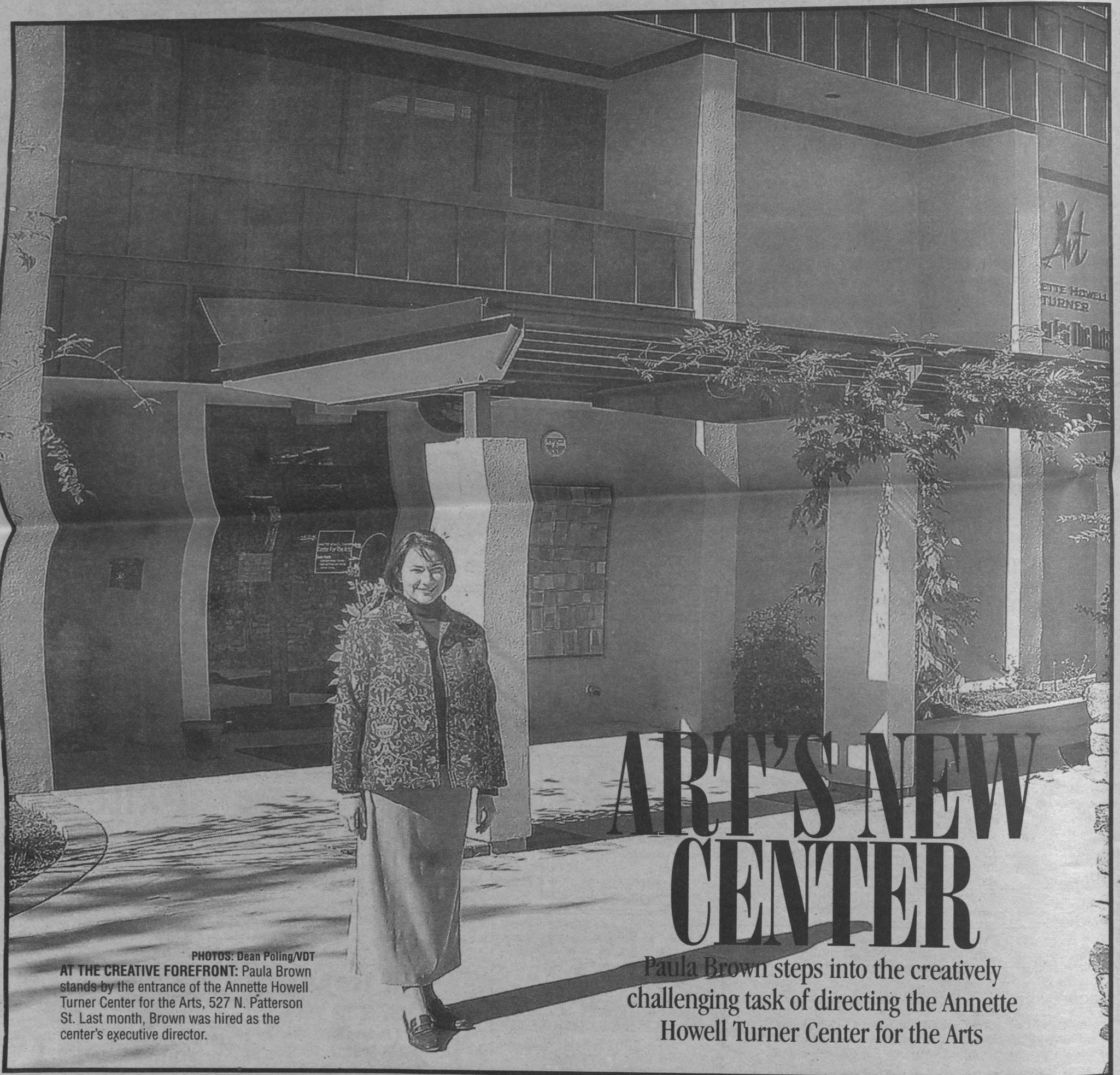
State, Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Drawings will be held every Tuesday. Winners to be announced the following Thursday. Mail official entry forms to: P.O. Box 968, Valdosta, Ga, 31601, ATTN: Dining. NO PHOTOCOPIES.

<p>El Torero THE BEST MEXICAN FOOD</p> <p>1713 Gornto Rd. 259-0444</p>	<p>FIREHOUSE SUBS</p> <p>1525 Baytree Rd. Unit B 253-0515</p> <p>2525 N. Ashley Street 253-1495</p>	<p>Lucky's Italian DINING FINE Think Italian - Think Lucky's</p> <p>2028 Marion St. Castle Park 247-8700 (across from Family Dollar)</p>	<p>HOOTERS OF VALDOSTA</p> <p>1854 Clubhouse Dr. 241-9377</p>
<p>Las Banderas COSINA AUTHENTICA</p> <p>904 Baytree Road 245-9797 www.lasbanderas.com</p>	<p>LONGHORN STEAKHOUSE</p> <p>1110 N Augustine Rd 333-0100</p>	<p>MARCO POLO</p> <p>1550 Baytree Rd. 253-1119 (Next to Office Max)</p>	<p>MELLOW MUSHROOM</p> <p>1905 Baytree Place 293-9503</p>
<p>Michael's DELI & Seafood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oven Baked Subs • • Jumbo Salads • • Hand-Breaded Seafood • <p>1307 N Ashley St. 293-9905</p>	<p>OLE TIMES COUNTRY BUFFET</p> <p>1193 N. St. Augustine Rd. 253-1600</p>	<p>Red Lobster</p> <p>1179 N. St. Augustine Rd. 244-7587</p>	<p>IRISH RILEY'S PUB</p> <p>(inside Denny's)</p> <p>1328 St. Augustine Rd. 253-9388</p>
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★ THIS WEEK'S WINNER: Venezia Hargett FEATURED RESTAURANT: Rodeo ★



PHOTOS: Dean Poling/VDT

AT THE CREATIVE FOREFRONT: Paula Brown stands by the entrance of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St. Last month, Brown was hired as the center's executive director.

ART'S NEW CENTER

Paula Brown steps into the creatively challenging task of directing the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts

By Dean Poling
dean.poling@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA

Paula Brown's office in the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts isn't exactly how she wants it. Not yet, anyway.

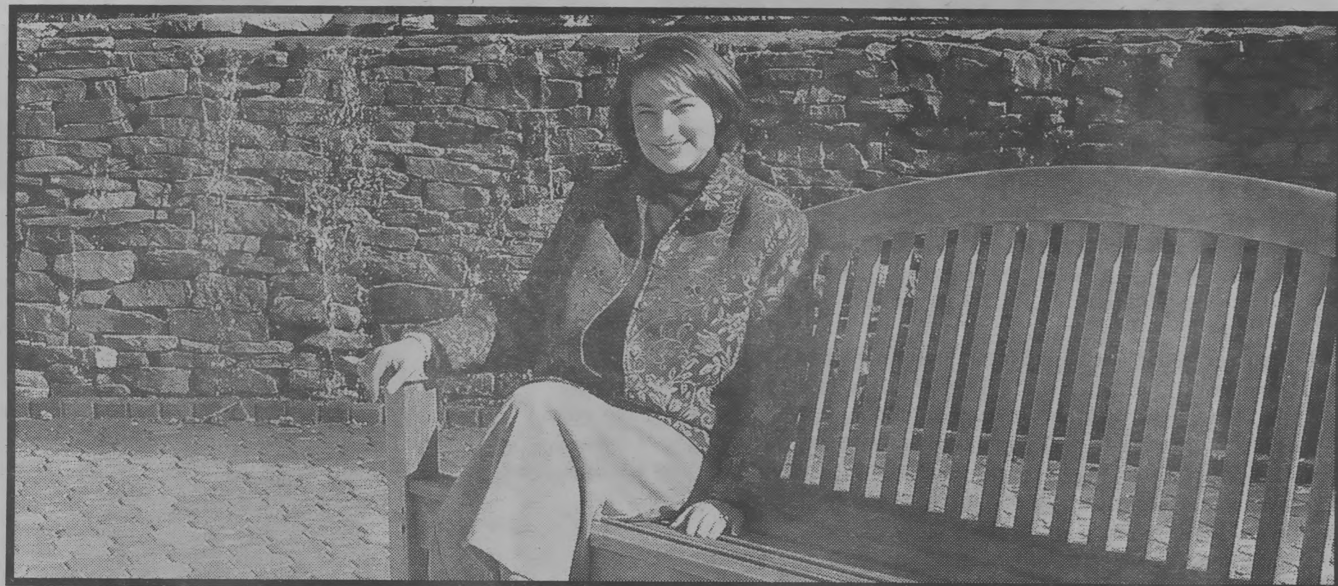
Since taking the job as the arts center's executive director a little more than a month ago, she has been acquainting herself with the Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission's numerous programs at the Annette Howell Turner as well as its many projects throughout the community. Paula Brown has been meeting with the region's many artists, musicians, writers and local arts supporters. She's been listening to ideas, suggestions and comments from visitors for everything from possible future exhibits and shows to ways to raise additional support for the relatively new arts center.

Brown has kicked off the center's holiday gift shop, a pilot program for a more expanded in-house store promoting area artists and supporting the arts center for sometime in 2004. She has been involved with developing ideas to raise funds for the center's non-stop operation, maintenance and services. LVAC's board has charged her with promoting the center as a spot for wedding receptions, anniversary parties and other social functions, as well as a hub for the cultural arts. And she is developing other venues of cultural programs with upcoming classes utilizing the center's kitchen space for courses in the culinary arts, early in 2004.

So, her office within the 527 N. Patterson St. center has been the least of Paula Brown's concerns. The desk is ready for work; the office is practical to the demands of the job, but the center's busy schedule hasn't afforded her the opportunity to add too many personal touches. And that's OK. She's thrilled with the excitement of the job and the enthusiasm of the center's staff, board, volunteers, visitors and the region's artists.

"I'm amazed at the amount of diverse talents in our community," Brown says. "From the visual arts to performing and literary arts, we have so many talented people in the region. And the amount of input and suggestions is wonderful. The people in the community have been helpful in letting us know about different things."

TWO YEARS AGO, SHE AND HER HUSBAND, Marty Brown, who is the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority executive director, moved to Valdosta. Here, Paula Brown, a University of Mississippi graduate, worked with the Lowndes/Valdosta Chamber of Commerce, serving as the membership



PAULA BROWN seated by the waterfall outside of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

development coordinator and as community affairs coordinator.

Yet, prior to the Browns' move to Valdosta, she planned the Festival of Flight, a \$3 million celebration marking the 100-year anniversary of the Wright brothers' historic flight. She has also worked in hotel and convention sales and management. In organizing these past events, Brown says she often met with numerous artists.

These experiences have helped Brown in her transition into a new job and the center's transition to a new director. Brown stepped into the position several weeks after the retirement of Roberta George, who shepherded tremendous growth in the area's arts community as well as the move earlier this year into the new arts center during nearly a decade serving as LVAC's executive director.

As current director, Brown sees one of her roles as continuing LVAC's long-running traditions of supporting and providing gallery space for local and area artists, while creating an arts center that reflects a growing city and region.

"As we move into being a metropolitan area, we hope to develop an arts center that grows with the city," Brown says.

Brown and LVAC hope to attract more national-level exhibits to the center in coming years, while still presenting shows featuring local artists. There is plenty of space to accommodate a balance of both, as well as shows that fall into categories in between. The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts has five exhibit galleries within its Downtown Valdosta building (four for varying series of exhibits and one to display items from LVAC's permanent collection). Since opening this past spring, the center has featured an eclectic mix of exhibits featuring artists from near and far, with varying degrees of prominence. Already, prior to Brown's arrival at the center, Adann-Kennn Alexandar, the center's curator of galleries, had scheduled visual-arts exhibits into 2005, and his schedule reflects a wide range of local, regional, state, national and international artists. In a few years, though, as the center's reputation grows, Brown sees LVAC attracting more prominent exhibits to the center — "big name" shows, if you will — that are often featured in larger cities' galleries, centers and museums.

Remaining a showplace for local arts while pursuing national exhibits will be a balancing act, Brown admits, but one she and LVAC are dedicated to fulfill.

ANOTHER BALANCING ACT IS COORDINATING and promoting the center's and LVAC's many programs.

Since, the Annette Howell Turner features regular rotations of paintings, sculptures, photography, etc., in its multiple galleries, some people may think that art exhibits are the center's sole function. But exhibiting the visual arts is only one aspect of LVAC's many programs. Notice the name is the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, not Center for Art.

LVAC also sponsors its annual Presenter Series, a seasonal collection of four, usually Broadway-caliber, touring performances. It introduces regional youngsters to plays, history, culture and ideas through its youth theater series. The arts center hosts writing and literature symposiums; musical events, poetry and literary readings, etc., through programs such as its monthly Open Mic Night. The center also provides in-house courses in visual arts, crafts, writing, and other creative pursuits, with classes for all ages. It serves as a meeting place for several local artistic groups, and often features free movie nights to the public.

Part of Brown's job as director will be to coordinate this multitude of events and interests. She will also promote the center as a site for hosting wedding receptions, parties and other social functions, which will serve as both premiering the arts and financially supporting the center. If becoming a spot for wedding receptions and other social activities does not sound like a creative endeavor for an arts center, think of it this way: the more people who visit the arts center, no matter the primary reason, the more people are exposed to the region's art and artists. Brown mentions a recent wedding reception which hosted several guests, many of whom had never before visited the center. "They came for a wedding reception, but they spent time viewing the exhibits," Brown says. "They had an opportunity to see what we have to offer and likely many of them will return to the center to see future exhibits."

Brown sees expanding the Annette Howell Turner's role as a site for social receptions, as well as a hub for the region's arts, as creating a community center — a place where the community comes to celebrate the arts and life.

Attendance records for the past two months suggest that the arts center is on its way to reaching that community goal. The center has had a record-setting 2,200 visitors during the past two months, and hopes to attract increasing numbers in the months to come.

The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St., is regularly open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 1-4 p.m. Sundays. The arts center is closed today and Friday for Thanksgiving. Admission: Free. More information: Call 247-2787. □

OUT-OF-TOWNERS

A look at arts events in Georgia and North Florida

"Gone With The Girdle: Freedom, Restraint and Power in Women's Dress," Atlanta History Center, 130 W. Paces Ferry Road, Atlanta: A look at women's fashions through the years. Run date: Now through April 18. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays; noon-5:30 p.m. Sundays. More information: Call (404) 814-4000, or visit www.AtlantaHistoryCenter.com

Shirim Klezmer Orchestra: Klezmer Nutcracker, Rialto Center for the Performing Arts, 80 Forsyth St. NW, Atlanta: Performance of classical Christmas music. Run date: 8 p.m., Dec. 13. Tickets: \$20-\$45. More information: Call (404) 651-1234 or visit www.rialtocenter.org

"The Undiscovered Richard Meier: The Architect as Designer and Artist," High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta: The High presents the works of the man who designed its building 20 years ago. Run dates: Now through April 4. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays; closed Mondays. Admission: \$8-\$4; free, children under 6. More information: Call (404) 733-4450.

"The Music Man," Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center, 505 W. Pensacola St., Tallahassee, Fla.: Meredith Wilson's hit musical of con man Harold Hill. Run dates: Dec. 4-5. Tickets: \$46, \$41, \$31. More information: Call (800) 322-3602, or visit www.tlccc.org

"The Music Man," Bill Heard Theatre, RiverCenter, 10th Street & Broadway, Columbus, Ga.: Meredith Wilson's hit musical of con man Harold Hill. Run date: 7:30 p.m., Dec. 7. More information: Call (888) 332-5200, or visit www.columbusga.com

Lee Greenwood in concert, Bill Heard Theatre, RiverCenter, 10th Street & Broadway, Columbus, Ga.: Greenwood presents his hits and holiday tunes. Run date: 7:30 p.m., Dec. 13. More information: Call (888) 332-5200, or visit www.columbusga.com

Atlanta Brass with Canton Columbus in concert, Bill Heard Theatre, RiverCenter, 10th Street & Broadway, Columbus, Ga. Run date: 7:30 p.m., Dec. 15. More information: Call (888) 332-5200, or visit www.columbusga.com

"Baby-Boom Daydreams: The Art of Douglas Bourgeois," Morris Museum of Art, 1 Tenth St., Augusta, Ga.: Figurative artists works on display. Run dates: Now through Feb. 15. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays. More information: Call (706) 828-3805, or visit www.themorris.org

"Edward Rice: Recent Monotypes," Morris Museum of Art, 1 Tenth St., Augusta, Ga.: Noted South Carolina artist's works of Europe and North America. Run dates: Now through Jan. 4. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays. More information: Call (706) 828-3805, or visit www.themorris.org

"After Whistler: The Artist and His Influence on American Painting," High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta: How Whistler affected the U.S. art scene. Run dates: Now through Feb. 8. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays; closed Mondays. Admission: \$8-\$4; free, children under 6. More information: Call (404) 733-4450.

"Verrocchio's David Restored: A Renaissance Bronze from the National Museum of the Bergello, Florence," High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta: Spotlights a Renaissance sculpture masterpiece. Run dates: Now through Feb. 8. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays; closed Mondays. Admission: \$8-\$4; free, children under 6. More information: Call (404) 733-4450.

"LaGrange Collects," Chattahoochee Valley Art Museum, 112 Lafayette Parkway, LaGrange, Ga.: Show featuring numerous works from LaGrange art collections. Run date: Now through Dec. 27. Gallery hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays. Free.



**GONE WITH THE GIRDLE,
Atlanta History Center.**



**VERROCCHIO'S DAVID RESTORED,
High Museum of Art, Atlanta**

'Elf' is a wee bit of spritely fun

Movie Reviews

"Elf" (Comedy/Fantasy: 1 hour, 36 minutes); **Starring:** Will Ferrell, James Caan, Bob Newhart, Edward Asner, Mary Steenburgen, Zooey Deschanel; **Director:** Jon Favreau; **Rated:** PG



Adann-Kennn
Alexxandar

Movie Review: Buddy the Elf (Ferrell) came of age at the North Pole. He was raised by Papa Elf (Newhart), an older ELF, who works for Santa Claus (Asner). Now, approximately 30 years later, Buddy sets off to the big, big city of New York to find his long lost father, Walter Hobbs (played by Caan and not the well-known art instructor at Hahira Middle School). Well when Buddy finds Walter, he is virtually told to get lost. Buddy sticks around and is determined, no matter how pleasantly and nit-wittingly naive, to make Walter love him. But how can Walter love a 30-something-year-old male walking around in New York City wearing an elf costume? Well, I guess

we have seen worst things in New York City.

Will Ferrell, like actors Jim Carrey and Mike Meyers, continuously plays silly characters in films. In "Elf", Ferrell remains zany, but he plays Buddy the Elf with compassion, and you cannot help but feel bad for him. "Elf" is a fantastical movie that delivers little but gives the impression there is much to be seen, making it another typical, albeit laughable, Christmas movie. If one has seen "The Santa Clause 2" that starred Tim Allen in 2002, "Elf" is similar — enjoyable as it is passable. On the good side, we are able to see Asner as Santa and Newhart as an older elf.

Grade: C+ (Gratifying, but a miniature effort.)

"Brother Bear" (Animation/Adventure: 1 hour, 23 minutes); **Starring Voices:** Joaquin Phoenix, Jeremy Suarez, D.B. Sweeney, Michael Clarke Duncan, and Rick Moranis; **Directors:** Aaron Blaise and Robert Walker; **Rated:** G

Movie Review: Kenai tells a Native American tale of a young man who watches his older brother die from a bear attack and seeks revenge. But, Kenai is transformed into a bear after killing the bear that mauled his brother. His life really changes when a smaller, younger bear named Koda (Suarez) becomes attached to Kenai.

"Finding Nemo" was a great animated film, and Disney

is now forced to compete against itself with "Brother Bear," a movie that uses Disney's tried-and-true template of recycling old screenplays by adding a new setting. Here, just as with other films, the parents are AWOL; usually the mother is the parent killed. "Brother Bear," while adventurous, is typical and less funny than other animated films. For parents, the movie is nice for children, besides your small fries will not realize this a reused screenplay. Even the music sounds as if you have heard it before. Yet, the film does have young men hunting animals, so it does become intense at times.

Grade: C (Different storyboard, same story template.)

"Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" (Drama: 2 hours, 18 minutes); **Starring:** Russell Crowe, Paul Bettany, James D'Arcy, Edward Woodall, and Chris Larkin; **Director:** Peter Weir; **Rated:** PG-13

Movie Review: During the reign of Emperor Napoleon in 1805, Captain J. Aubrey (Crowe), known as "Lucky Jack," and his crew of 197 men set sail aboard the H.M.S. Surprise to intercept the French vessel Acheron and take her as a prize for England. However, it is Aubrey and his men whom are surprised when the Acheron strikes first, nearly destroying their vessel. Aubrey and his crew's voyage takes them near the Galapagos Island, where they find they are no match for the newer and more equipped Acheron. Despite the advice of the crew to return to dock and the words his good friend, Dr. Stephen Maturin (Bettany), the ship's surgeon, Capt. Aubrey believes he must repair the Surprise and defeat the Acheron because those are his orders.

A period production set during the Napoleonic Wars, "Master and Commander" is great in that it captures the agony and glory of naval warfare, while simultaneously

showing you a unique side of a crew's life, just not as detailed as it could have been. The movie jumps right into the thick of its story by starting off with a very dramatic battle scene. After that, the screenplay tries to develop characters when you are stuck on the action that just took place. Other than Crowe and Bettany, there are no great performances. Crowe is one of the best actors, but he does not give the type of powerhouse performance we have come to expect from him. Bettany, on the other hand, has the bulk of the dramatics on his shoulders. His character seems to be the most human member of the crew. The rest of the crew is totally low-key, supporting figures that keep the background of shots busy.

While intriguingly captivating, Director Peter Weir does what he does best, directing films that take you to new worlds while giving you grand cinematographic visualizations. Weir who wrote the screenplay for "Master and Commander," which is based on the novels by Patrick O'Brian, has directed great films such as "The Truman Show" (1998) and "Dead Poets Society" (1989). In this outing, he concentrates on the battle more than character development. He forgot that it is hard to feel sympathy for characters one barely knows exists. Still, the film has gallantry, shows bravery, and gives its viewers a grand ocean adventure. Who said chivalry is dead in film?

Grade: B- (The good side of films.)

Adann-Kennn Alexxandar is the curator of galleries for the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

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The Shins just get better and better

The Shins' second album, "Chutes Too Narrow," is the perfect follow-up to their 2001 debut, "Oh, Inverted World," which caught the attention of the indie-rock world and critics alike. The band has a truly unique sound of indie-folk rock with hints of '60s-style pop that creates a wonderland of swooshing melodies that are often both sprightly and melancholy at once. While "Oh, Inverted World" carried a somewhat airy, whimsical tone throughout; the newer release has a more diverse and often solid sound which allows it to eclipse its predecessor. The group was formed in 1997 as a side project of the group, Flake Music, which eventually dissolved, making



Matt Walker
Columnist

The Shins the members' primary focus. With "Chutes Too Narrow" The Shins prove they are a gifted band that can deliver more than just one great album.

From start to finish this album never grows dull, with a good mixture of acoustic and electric guitars providing an abundant landscape for Mercer's captivating lyrics. Mercer intertwines the

mundane with the poetic on songs like "So Says I," about the disappointment that can accompany idealism, where he sings, "Tell Sir Thomas More we've got another failed attempt / 'cause if it makes them money they might just give you life." Perhaps the best song on the album, the acoustic "Young Pilgrims," where Mercer seemingly battles with himself about his philosophy on life offers the advice: "I was raised on those lofty tales so tried and true / and if you're able I'd suggest it / 'cause this modern thought can get the best of you." If someone only heard the pedal steel guitar and country twang of the excellent "Gone for Good," he or she might be surprised to

learn that The Shins play anything different from this style. With more rocking tracks like "Fighting in a Sack" and "Turn a Square" and the great melodies of "Mine's Not a High Horse," it is hard to find a disappointing song in this collection.

The Shins' catchy hooks and refreshing sound make this album a great choice that would appeal to fans of indie rock as well as The Beach Boys, who were often mentioned in reviews of their first album. "Chutes Too Narrow" shows an already great indie band growing into something even better.

Matt Walker is a contributing writer with Valdosta Preview. He may be reached by e-mailing (matthiasw2@hotmail.com).

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