

Editorials

Businesses need to support science lab

North Augusta businesses have a great opportunity to take an important role in the future of our children with the announcement that North Augusta Middle School will receive the next Synergistic Modules Lab in Aiken County.

The lab, designed to enhance math and science classes, gives students hands-on experiences that make education "real" for them through state-of-the-art equipment

provided by the business community.

Dr. Cecelia Davidson noted in such a lab every student is engaged — and doesn't have to be enticed. Area 2 Assistant Superintendent Rosie Berry called the lab "another effort to redesign the educational process."

She called it an "opportunity for all students to be prepared for the future."

Diane Mangiante, executive director of Public Educa-

tion Partners, reported Aiken County's experience with the first two labs (at LBC Middle School and Schofield Middle School) indicates the "real" approach to a variety of occupational experiences has made great strides in improving the attitude of students toward science and math and has made it possible for students to make informed decisions about where they are headed — in high school and in life. The funding for the lab at

NAMS is being coordinated by PEP; however, such a lab is generally underwritten by businesses, whose names are then prominently displayed on the module sponsored by them.

The price tag is upwards of \$130,000. So far about 40 percent of that money has been committed.

Among those that have already stepped up to give support are WSRC, City of North Augusta, Rep. Don

Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Fleming, Wachovia, Homebuilders Association of Aiken County, Glaxo SmithKline and Aiken Regional Medical Centers.

Mike Rose, plant manager of Bridgestone/Firestone, has said, "I encourage anyone who believes in the future to invest in something like this." He added, "If we don't do it, who will?"

The challenge has been issued to the North Augusta

business community to step forward and make a real difference in the lives of local students.

The ball is now in our court. If you would like more information or would like to sign up to be a module sponsor, call Mangiante at 649-9040 or e-mail PublicEd@bellsouth.net.

If you would like more information about the synergistic lab, visit www.PublicEdPartners.org.



What's your opinion on immigration?

Immigration is definitely a complicated issue, as is evidenced by the vote last week to defeat a broad immigration bill that would have legalized millions of people in the U.S.

The vote was 45-50 against limiting debate on the bill. Most Republicans voted to block efforts to bring the bill to a final vote.

Endorsed by President Bush, the legislation would tighten borders and put in place new systems to keep employers from hiring undocumented workers while opening the door to 12 million illegal immigrants' gaining legal status.

S.C. Sen. Jim DeMint has been hopeful that the bill could be worked out to be fair and equitable; however,

he has said, "This bill still unfairly burdens taxpayers, doesn't ensure secure borders, and guarantees amnesty. We tried a last-ditch effort to at least make these security triggers serious, but it failed. I'm thankful that a bipartisan majority agrees this legislation is fundamentally flawed and voted to filibuster it today. It's time to scrap this mess of a bill."

Interestingly, DeMint's office recently conducted a poll, which indicated that the vast majority of Americans, 97 percent, don't foresee the current Immigration Bill solving the problem.

The survey was emailed to more than 10,967 South Carolina voters and more than 2,500 responded.

Of those, 96 percent do not support amnesty for illegal immigrants, 98 percent see a need to secure our borders, 96 percent would like to see legislation making English the national language, 96 percent want an employment verification system to make companies accountable for whom they hire, 97 percent do not believe taxpayers should be paying for social security, Medicare or welfare for illegal immigrants.

DeMint admitted the survey is far from scientific.

But the numbers are staggering. Let's hope Washington is listening.

Anyone wishing to participate in the online survey may still do so at JimDeMint.com — click on the link for 2007 Immigration Survey.

The gifts of fatherhood

My two siblings — Thomas and Cheryl — and I caught a break when the man who happened to be our biological father also was a man who was determined that he would be more than just the sperm donor; he would be a real father to his children.



Irvin

We would know who he was, and he would know who we were. From the beginning of our lives, his presence loomed large over our tiny existence. He and mother were the parents in our home. Mother had a role to play, and Daddy had a role to play. We were the children. They were the adults.

It was their responsibility to care for us. They would protect us. They would provide food and shelter. If we got sick, they made sure that we got well. They would teach us right from wrong and would physically remind us when we got the two mixed up. They would make sure that we understood the need to get a good education. They set high expectations, and early on we learned to look toward college. We were to respect all people, and while we were no better than anybody else, we were also just as good as anybody else.

And since my father was an educator and a Baptist preacher, we also learned the importance of looking beyond our little selves to the heavens, from whence would come even greater help. In other words, we went to church at least once every Sunday.

None of this made any difference to me when I was a kid growing up in North Augusta. It was the way things were. I thought my family life was pretty typical for kids growing up in the 1950s and '60s. We were certainly not rich, but we had what we needed. Fine.

Only later in life did I come to understand that the man whom I saw as all-knowing and all-powerful (until I became a teenager) was just



Submitted photo

Nathaniel Irvin Sr.

making it all up as he went along; that he was learning on the job, pretending that he knew what it took to be a good father to his three children. It never occurred to me that the man whom I, as a child, looked up to didn't know what he was doing; that he had not had a role model to emulate when he became a father. I didn't know that he had grown up in a home with an absent father.

What I came to understand was that instead of using that as an excuse, my dad determined early in his life that things would be different with his family. With the help of his wife — our mother Eugenia — and of God, he would strive to be a good father in the lives of his three children. It didn't matter what had happened in the past. And my father didn't just end the absent-father syndrome in one generation; he also replaced it with something that has accrued to me: Being a good father to your child can be one of the greatest joys in a man's life. Indeed, he was right.

There is nothing like receiving a phone call from my daughter who lives New York,

asking me for advice about attending MBA school.

There is no greater joy than to have a son who just returned from studying in Spain to ask for my opinion as he considers options for medical school.

Or to have a son call and just want me to talk with him and his friends about a business idea they are considering.

On this Father's Day I am thankful that I had and still have a father who understands that being a father is more than just some kind of biological accident.

It is a profound lifelong statement of commitment to your children — and if you stay with it, they will bring a lifetime of happiness.

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Ah, food, glorious food PHRAGMENTS FROM PHYLLIS

Food. It's a life controller. As many of you know I have been working hard to lose some weight, so I rarely indulge anymore. But we had an opportunity to go to the Verandah Grille at the Partridge Inn last week. So Tom and Cat and I all trekked over on a Wednesday to check out the new menu and to chat with the executive chef — Bradley Czajka. He was very attentive. He took time to chat with every table of patrons who came in.

He explained that he was a partner in Walton Way LLC, which now owns the Partridge Inn. The parent company used to manage the Ritz-Carlton group.

I must tell you, we were all very impressed. I have not eaten that much food at one time in many months.

First, due to my current desire to lose the weight I have slowly accumulated over the last 20 years, I have given up the Creme Brulee tour of the world — As many of you may recall, for the longest time I was checking out every restaurant that serves creme brulee and looking for the best out there. Well, I decided I could stop once my husband started making creme brulee. I can honestly say his is by far the absolute best I've ever eaten.

But of late, my daughter Cat and I have been on the "fried green tomato" tour of the world's restaurants. Everywhere we go we try the fried green tomatoes. It's amazing how many variations there are on the theme. I've eaten them at Hyman's in Charleston, at Fatz Cafe, at Up Your Alley ... the list goes on. They are good everywhere, but at Verandah Grille, they were truly the best I've ever eaten. Chef Bradley serves them up with dollops of goat cheese, candied pecans, fresh spinach and a drizzle of balsamic vinaigrette. Delicious.

Tom, on the other hand, is on the calamari tour of the world. And he too felt the Verandah's offering

was to die for. Chef Bradley serves these little squid parts (sorry, calamari is definitely not my favorite seafood) with roasted tomatoes, capers, olives and lemon aioli. Tom, who is not a real fan of condiments, said the calamari were great with and without the lemon aioli.

A neighboring table ordered an appetizer called a "tomato tower," which was layers of tomato, mozzarella and basil. The secret to this dish is that at Verandah Grille they make the mozzarella in house. (Who does that? I thought cheese was something that comes from factories out there somewhere — Wisconsin, maybe.)

Cat opted for a spinach salad (with goat cheese, strawberries and more of those incredible candied pecans) and the she crab soup. Both were delicious, but don't expect traditional she crab soup — It was pureed with a hint of something I couldn't quite identify (maybe cinnamon).

Tom, ever the adventuresome one, got "seared medallions of venison served on butter bean and country ham ragout and with collard and Tasso raviolis." I opted for a dish the chef said has been very popular — and I can see why. It had sweet potato crusted Georgia trout on wilted spinach, red onions and pears. It was so-o-o good.

Being a big night out, we got dessert — even Tom, who NEVER gets dessert, opted for a meal-finishing treat. He had a caramelized banana tart with pastry creme, garnished with fruit. I chose the peach bread pudding over bourbon Anglaise — really tasty. And Cat enjoyed the vanilla bean creme brulee with almond tuile and vanilla bean pineapple salsa. She pronounced the creme brulee "as good as dad's" — high praise since we've been very critical since discovering my husband's hidden talent. Interestingly, the salsa was also delicious, though we found ourselves eating the salsa separate

from the creme brulee — which needed no adornments save the crispy caramelized sugar glaze.

And all the while, we had this great waitperson, Jekia, who is, as it turns out, a communications major at Augusta State. She has spent some time in Senegal and then returned to write a story about it in one of her classes. She was a bit discouraged about her writing skills — but I assured her it was not time to give up. She does, however, have a face for TV.

Chef Bradley reported he was working on a lighter menu for summer — likely to be introduced in the next couple of weeks. (There is already a Caesar salad along with the spinach salad and even a sorbet sampler for dessert.) He also said he was working on a variation of the Great Chefs of the South series the Partridge Inn did a couple of years ago. He's hoping to offer a flat rate wine dinner about once a month. So watch for that.

We all returned home from our evening out fat and sassy — and me determined to get on the treadmill and work some of it off. Tom did note that we have an anniversary coming up and the new and improved Verandah Grille looks like a great place to go.

And ask for Jekia. She'll take care of you.

P.S. A happy Fathers Day to the wonderful men in my life — my father, my father-in-law and the father of my children.



PHYLLIS BRITT

Letter to the editor

Heartfelt thanks from NAHS baseball coach

I would like to thank the North Augusta Community for all the support you have

shown the North Augusta High School baseball program during the 2007 season. We were truly overwhelmed with the generosity from churches, businesses, and individuals who are a part of this great city.

Along with the exceptional talent and hard work, community support is what makes our baseball program so successful.

Thanks to all who came out and fed us, cheered for us and gave us words of encouragement during the state playoff games. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful community.

Thank you again and God bless you all.

Victor Radcliff
North Augusta High School Head Baseball Coach