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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2013

Stafford probes gang activity

TEENAGER SAYS HE WAS BEATEN AFTER HE REFUSED TO BREAK INTO THE HOME OF A COUNTY DEPUTY

BY KEITH EPPS
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Stafford detectives are investigating a teenager's claims about criminal activity involving his gang, including plans to burglarize a county deputy's home.

In affidavits for search warrants filed in Stafford Circuit Court, police said the Stafford juvenile contacted them because he was angry with fellow gang members. His anger stemmed from a beating he took as a disciplinary measure, according to court records.

No arrests have been announced as the result of information gathered from the boy, sources said, but police are looking into his allegations.

The teen, who is currently in the Rappahannock Juvenile Detention Center, told Detective A.M. Irizarry that he joined the "Black P Stones" last summer after running away from home.

He said the Black P Stones are a part of the Bloods, and he was beaten for 31 seconds as part of his gang initiation.

He was punched and kicked all over his body during the 31-second beating, which court records state that the Bloods refer to as "31 in a box."

However, the beating that caused the boy to contact police came earlier this

SEE GANG, BACK PAGE

RESCUE >> WOMAN HAD HEART SET ON HELPING DOG



Michael Owens (left), of the Sighthound Underground rescue group, cradles Calina, a Spanish greyhound who was rescued by April Lamb (right). Lamb is holding Calina's sister Mariposa, who is available for adoption.

SUZANNE CARR ROSSI / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Persecuted pup gets new home in Stafford

BY KATIE THISDELL
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Little Calina snuggled up with blankets on the couch behind her new mom, already comfortable in her Stafford County home.

She was napping the morning away before new pals would be over for a doggie play date.

"You don't know how lucky you've got it, little girl," said April Lamb, sharing the story of her family's new addition.

Life didn't always look so plush for the 12-week-old puppy, a Spanish Galgo recently transported across the world.

In Spain, the ancient breed—which is related to the greyhound—is used for hunting. When the dogs are

DOG RESCUE

The Galgo, or Spanish greyhound, is used for hunting in Spain. But at the end of the hunting season, the dogs are often abandoned or killed, rescue groups say. For more information, visit galgorescue.org or sighthoundunderground.com.

no longer needed, they're brutally disposed of, according to several rescue organizations.

Adoption coordinator Telma Shaw, of Galgo Rescue International Network, said the dogs aren't viewed as living creatures, but rather as tools of the trade.

"What do you do with a tool? You stick it in the shed until you need it again. That's the exact mentality of these hunters," Shaw said by phone from her Oceanside, Calif., home.

Already the owner of three Italian greyhound rescues, Lamb, 53, learned about Galgos just a year ago when pondering fostering another dog.

Barbaric images posted online haunted her for days, and she made a promise that she'd share her love with one of the dogs.

She found GRIN, emailed with Shaw for months and finalized the puppy's adoption in December.

Calina—known as Lola back in Spain—made her big journey earlier this month. She and her sister,

SEE GALGO, BACK PAGE

Shopping district engulfed in flames

KANSAS CITY OFFICIAL SAYS AT LEAST 14 PEOPLE INJURED IN BLAST, FIRE

BY MARIA SUDEKUM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—A gas explosion that sparked a massive, block-engulfing blaze in an upscale Kansas City shopping district injured 14 people, a city official said Tuesday evening, adding it is believed that an accident by a utility contractor may have caused the blast.

City Manager Troy Schulte said he did not know of anyone being reported missing and had not heard of any fatalities.

Earlier Kansas City police had said the blast was caused by a car crashing into a gas main just after 6 p.m. Fire officials said later they were not aware of a crash being involved in the blast.

Other witnesses noted street signs in the area indicated utility work was being done in the area, and a worker at a restaurant destroyed in the fire said the facility was being renovated at the time.

Police Sgt. Tony Sanders said the manager of JJ's restaurant was unable to account for three people, but it was unclear whether they were caught in the blaze or had left earlier.

"The first thing we need to be concerned about is the people that are injured," said Mayor Sly James, who also praised the work of first responders. James said officials were in contact with Missouri Gas Energy.

The University of Kansas

SEE FLAMES, BACK PAGE

Lawmakers close in on transportation deal

REPRESENTATIVES FROM HOUSE AND SENATE HASH OUT LEGISLATIVE DETAILS

BY CHELYEN DAVIS
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

RICHMOND—A small group of state lawmakers hope to reach a transportation funding compromise today.

The group met into the evening Tuesday, finally adjourning to let money-committee staff work out the numbers of the last proposals exchanged by the House and Senate.

The House negotiators had proposed a package of taxes and fees that they said would generate about \$870 million a year statewide, plus regional packages for Northern

Virginia and Hampton Roads.

That House proposal would replace the cents-per-gallon tax on gas and diesel with a percentage sales tax at the rack. The House also proposed a lower amount of general fund money for transportation that the governor had proposed; a 1 percent increase in the titling tax; and to return the governor's \$100 alternative-fuel vehicle fee to the bill.

The Senate will come back with a return proposal in the morning.

"I think we made tremendous progress in three days. I'm going to hold out hope we're going to be able to get something tomorrow and meet our deadline," Del.

SEE TRANSPORTATION, BACK PAGE

INSIDE TODAY

nation/world

U.S. MAY COUNTER CHINA'S HACKING

Firm traces hackers to Chinese military. A3

OBAMA SAYS CUTS WILL COST JOBS

President warns of consequences if Republicans let automatic budget reductions be triggered. A4

INDEX _____ HOROSCOPE _____ D4
ADVICE _____ D5 LOTTERIES _____ B4
BUSINESS _____ C4 OBITUARIES _____ C2
CLASSIFIEDS _____ C8 REGION _____ C1
COMICS _____ D5 SPORTS _____ B1
EDITORIALS _____ A4 SUDOKU _____ D5
FOOD _____ D1 TV PAGE _____ D4

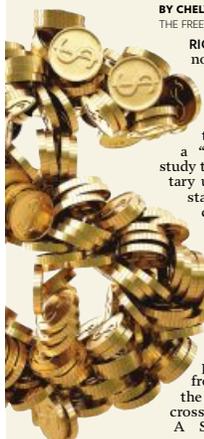
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ASSEMBLY >> SENATE SPIKES STATE CURRENCY IDEA

A STUDY AS USELESS AS \$3 BILL



BY CHELYEN DAVIS
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

RICHMOND—Virginia will not be studying the merits of minting its own currency.

The state Senate has rejected a resolution that originally called for a "joint subcommittee to study the feasibility of a monetary unit based on a metallic standard, in keeping with constitutional precepts and our nation's founding principles, to facilitate commerce in the event of a major breakdown of the Federal Reserve System or disruption of financial services."

The House had passed the resolution from Del. Bob Marshall in the late and punchy hours of crossover two weeks ago. A Senate committee had

amended it to take out the aim that most appealed to late-night comedians. The new language clarified that "nothing in this resolution shall be construed or interpreted as permitting the joint subcommittee to consider or develop the establishment of an alternative currency for Virginia."

But without that, several senators said, what was the point of passing the resolution at all?

"If we're not going to authorize this committee to look at creating an alternative form of currency, then why do we even have the committee?" asked Sen. Chap Petersen, D-Fairfax.

Sen. Ryan McDougle, R-Hanover, said some economists had made a persuasive argument to the Rules Committee that it would be worthwhile to look at issues of currency in the

SEE CURRENCY, BACK PAGE

TRANSPORTATION: Two sides are working on vastly different proposals

FROM PAGE A1

Chris Jones, R-Suffolk, told the group of negotiators. "The fact that we're even here is a dang miracle," added Del. Dave Albo, R-Fairfax, referring to the number of attempts at transportation funding reform in past years that didn't get this far.

Albo said the last House proposal meets the primary goal lawmakers started this process with—to create a transportation funding source that grows over time, rather than the current stagnant 17.5-cents-per-gallon gasoline tax that now buys less than half what it did when it was last increased in 1986.

The two sides are trying to bridge two vastly different transportation proposals: the House bill, which is similar to proposals from Gov. Bob McDonnell, and the Senate bill, which is not.

The House bill raises the sales tax and eliminates the gas tax for most drivers, while the Senate bill raises the cents-per-gallon gas tax and applies a sales tax to gas.

The House is reluctant to support larger tax increases, while Senate Democrats want a higher gas tax and are opposed to increasing the

amount of general fund money going to transportation—something House Republicans insist upon. Senators also don't want to eliminate the gas tax entirely, saying that it's a user fee.

Both sides sounded positive Tuesday evening about the progress of negotiations. They set a deadline of this evening to reach a compromise and were hopeful Tuesday that they could meet it. That would give other lawmakers time to understand it before Saturday's adjournment.

Albo said earlier in the day that he didn't want to get a deal, then "plop it in caucus and say you have an hour to read and vote."

But it's unclear whether the full Senate and House would agree to whatever negotiators agree to in the end.

Jones said he thinks that if lawmakers "continue to make the progress we have made," he thinks the votes in the full House and Senate will be there to back the compromise.

"We're in a better position than we were when we started," said Sen. Janet Howell, D-Fairfax. "Are we far enough to get votes, I don't know yet."

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GALGO: Woman's devotion, long flight bring Spanish greyhound to Stafford



Mariposa, a Spanish Galgo greyhound, is available for adoption. Her sister Calina found a new home in Stafford.

FROM PAGE A1

Mariposa, had been turned in to a shelter in Malaga, on Spain's southern coast, and Shaw saw them on a Facebook page.

Sharing a large travel crate, the pair of dogs flew from Madrid to Miami with two other dog parents-to-be, then were driven to Georgia to meet Lamb, and finally up to Virginia. When all is said and done, the process costs adoptive families about \$1,500.

Mariposa is still awaiting adoption. Calina, meanwhile, is getting used to her name, which means "mist" in Spanish. Lamb has high hopes that the brindle-patterned pup will be an ambassador for the breed, clearing the mist that she says has been hiding the fate of the Galgos.

Lamb's family had a fit when they learned of her plans, however. Why not adopt from a local shelter, where there are plenty of dogs that need homes?

But Lamb, who has worked at vet offices and as a nanny, set her heart on helping the breed. She described herself as the child who brought strays home—only to be told that she'd have to wait until she had her own house one day to do that. Now, she's

making good on that promise.

"She's been following the dogs for a while. She really, really wants to get this known in the United States," said Shaw, of GRIN, which has facilitated more than 40 adoptions in the past year.

A Virginia group, Sight-hound Underground, also facilitates adoptions. So does Save A Galgo Espanol, based in Pennsylvania.

Playing in her fenced backyard in North Stafford with her siblings and new pals recently, Calina hid behind a stack of firewood. Her bright purple coat gave her away though, and Lamb scooped her up to bring all the small dogs back inside.

Bigger paws indicate she'll grow larger than the adult Italian greyhounds, perhaps up to 50 pounds.

Friend Beth Gresko was excited to meet the puppy.

"I just love the look of her muzzle," she said about the long, narrow and dark face.

The calm puppy doesn't know she's been put on a mission here in America.

"She seems more content to lay down and watch," Lamb said.

Unlike her owner.

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CURRENCY: Senators deride need for study on minting state money

FROM PAGE A1

event of, say, cyberattacks.

"The discussion was more around what Virginia would do in case there were issues in the monetary system, not—I repeat, not—the creation of a new currency," McDougle said.

Petersen said since U.S. currency is handled by the Federal government, then he felt it could handle any such issues.

"It seems to me that the currency we use is vested with the United States government. ... I see no need to study this issue because we're not going to change it," he said.

Other lawmakers said they'd rather focus on

"I SEE NO NEED TO STUDY THIS ISSUE BECAUSE WE'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE IT."

—SEN. CHAP PETERSEN

other issues before the General Assembly, like Medicaid expansion, the budget and transportation funding.

"We've got a lot of issues that we're trying to deal with in this legislature, and this is not one of them," said Sen. John Watkins, R-Powhatan.

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Gen. Allen retires; command slot open

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama is looking for a new candidate to lead allied forces in Europe after his first choice, Marine Gen. John Allen, bowed out Tuesday and announced his intention to retire for what he called personal reasons.

After meeting with Allen at the White House, Obama issued a statement praising Allen's service. He called Allen, 57, "one of America's finest military leaders, a true patriot, and a man I have come to respect greatly."

Allen appeared to be a shoo-in as the next top commander of allied forces in Europe. Obama nominated him last Oct. 10, but in November, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta stunned many by announcing that Allen was being investigated for potentially inappropriate email exchanges with a Flori-

da socialite, Jill Kelley. Panetta put Allen's nomination on hold.

Last month, shortly before Allen completed a 19-month tour as the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, the Pentagon announced that Allen had been cleared of wrongdoing and the White House was prepared to re-nominate him for the Europe job.

Allen said retiring from the military was "the only choice I could make." He said "my primary concern is for the health of my wife, who had sacrificed so much for so long." He served 38 years in the Marine Corps.

Allen said he wants to focus on helping his wife, Kathy, cope with health issues. The Washington Post quoted Allen as saying his wife suffers from chronic health issues that include an autoimmune disorder.

Allen said his decision was not influenced by the probe of his email exchanges.

GANG: Stafford teen's allegations offer view into activities of gang members

FROM PAGE A1

month after he refused an order to break into the deputy's house.

The gang had been watching the deputy's home for about 10 months, according to the affidavit, and knew that he often left his back door unlocked.

The boy said the gang had information that the deputy had three firearms inside and he was assigned to go get them while the deputy was on duty at a county high school.

When he refused, the boy said, he was "disciplined" and the task was given to another gang member.

The deputy was named in the affidavit and his home has not been broken into so far.

The names and nicknames of some of the alleged gang members are also listed

in the affidavits, but are not being named in this story because they have not been charged in connection with the teen's claims.

The boy also told police about a number of shootings in the region that his fellow gang members are responsible for, including a recent one at Central Station in Fredericksburg.

The boy said shoplifting is the only crime he has committed for the gang. He said he could have "picked up rank" had he followed orders and gone into the deputy's home.

Stafford Capt. Billy Bowler said he was aware of the allegations, but said he could not discuss the ongoing investigation.

The Stafford Sheriff's Office has stepped up investigations into gang activity in recent years.

Two years ago, the Board of Supervi-

sors approved four new positions that would be focused exclusively on gang activity in the county.

The Sheriff's Office said at the time that gangs involve people as young as 12 and most are not affiliated with the national gangs.

In the fall of 2010, more than 60 charges were filed against 19 defendants, most of them in their teens. The charges involved robberies, assaults and brandishing firearms, authorities said at the time.

Even earlier, a member of the gang MS-13 was convicted in Stafford in 2007 of capital murder in the death of a 21-year-old woman. Jose Santos Portillo—Chicas was given life in prison for the slaying.

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FLAMES: Incident happened during peak of happy hour, bartender says

FROM PAGE A1

Hospital was treating five people injured in the blast, said spokesman Bob Hallinan. He said one person was in critical condition, two were in serious condition and two others were expected to be released. He said all the injuries were traumatic, such as broken bones, rather than burns or smoke inhalation.

Kerry O'Connor, a spokeswoman for St. Luke's Hospital, which is near the scene of the fire, said several patients were on the way to the hospital. She said they haven't been assessed yet but "they appear to be critical at this time."

Fire officials didn't immediately return a phone call seeking comment Tuesday evening.

The smell of gas remained very strong near the area long after the suspected explosion.

There were signs that utility work was being done in the area. A phone message left Tuesday seeking comment from Missouri Gas Energy was not immediately returned.

Jim Ligon, a bartender who has worked at JJ's restaurant for five years, wasn't working Tuesday night but said he started getting texts and calls from co-workers minutes after the explosion.

He said the incident happened during the peak of weekday happy hour, when



This image taken from video from KCTV shows firefighters battling a massive fire at Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Mo., Tuesday evening.

there is typically anywhere from 15 to 45 people in the bar area as well as three to five tables of diners at the restaurant.

"JJ's has a small staff, a family feel," said Ligon, 45, of Kansas City, Mo. "You see the same 100 people all the time—a bar and restaurant for regulars. We're just really hoping we come out of here OK in terms of injuries."

Ligon said he was on his way Tuesday night to meet up with co-workers at another bar in town to talk about the incident.

Video showed dozens of firefighters and other emergency responders battling a massive blaze that appeared to have engulfed an entire block, with flames burning through the roofs. Black smoke swirled in the air and debris littered surrounding streets.

The shopping area was established in 1922 by J.C. Nichols. Based on the architecture of Seville, Spain, it includes retail, restaurants, apartments and offices.

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