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COUPONS
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MORE THAN
\$105
SAVINGS THIS
YEAR: **\$3,586**



BATMAN, BACK IN BLACK

THE ACTOR:
Christian Bale shines
in 'Dark Knight' | **4G**

MOVIE REVIEW:
Ledger's Joker helps
film equal hype | **2A**

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SUNDAY

The Birmingham News

July 13, 2008

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SPORTS
Section D



JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION

Property tax boost possible in fight to ease sewer debt

Business license fees,
other options on table

By **BARNETT WRIGHT**
News staff writer

A proposal to raise property taxes to reduce Jefferson County's \$3.2 billion sewer debt is among options that county commissioners will consider in their latest efforts to

avoid bankruptcy.

The commissioners' new team of advisers is looking at plans that could raise property taxes, double business license fees and divert \$10 million a year that the county now gives to the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex to raise money for the sewer system, according to commissioners.

Several proposals — including a possible gambling component — have been discussed in preliminary conversations among the

county's new team of financial advisers, county commissioners and some Wall Street creditors.

County officials caution that no decisions have been made on ways to pay down the county's \$3.2 billion in sewer debt and avoid bankruptcy.

"I don't want to rule anything in or out," Commissioner George Bowman said. "I want

See **SEWER** | Page **8A**

'A graceful angel' at 112 years old

Frank Calloway's
art gains attention

By **LISA OSBURN**
News staff writer

Living quietly in a state geriatric mental hospital, 112-year-old Frank Calloway still spends most of his days drawing memories of his earlier years.

Using markers and crayons, he creates vivid renderings of rural Alabama during the 1920s and 1930s, capturing farm life with horses, buggies, tractors and large houses. A notebook often sits beside him, pages full of numbers that make little sense at first glance, but after careful study, show the workings of an intriguing mind.

In the past, Calloway's work has been displayed in the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts and in the state Capitol in Montgomery. But soon, a national audience will get a chance to view the folk art of one of the county's oldest residents, a man who has lived in state mental institutions for 60 years.

See **CALLOWAY** | Page **10A**



NEWS STAFF/BERNARD TRONCONE

Frank Calloway is believed to be 112 years old. He lives in Tuscaloosa on the Bryce Hospital campus and is a prolific folk artist. His art will be shown at the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore this fall.

INSIDE

Preview of Tuesday's primary runoff election

Polls across the state will be open Tuesday for party runoffs, but long lines of people waiting to vote are unlikely. The Democrats have no statewide runoff, but do have ballots in some counties for local races.

See more about the races
and the candidates on **PAGE 16A**

Now available: House with 8 bedrooms,
pool, 25 acres and mortgage in default



NEWS STAFF/JOCK SONGERS

Foreclosures hit area's high-dollar residences

By **MICHAEL TOMBERLIN**
News staff writer

The foreclosure scourge is creeping into the Birmingham area's high-dollar districts, months after hitting more modest neighborhoods.

Lenders and real estate agents said they have noticed a growing number of homes valued at \$500,000 or more ending up in mortgage default, a sign the sluggish economy and credit crisis are beginning to affect affluent households.

"We've never seen them before in the numbers that we are seeing them now. Never," said Robert Maddox, a real estate lawyer with Birmingham's Bradley Arant Rose & White law firm.

See **FORECLOSE** | Page **8A**

TRUSSVILLE

- ▶ Home address: 8109 Carrington Drive
- ▶ Asking price: \$1,325 million
- ▶ Bedrooms: 8
- ▶ Bathrooms: 7 1/2
- ▶ Year built: 2006
- ▶ Amenities: 25 acres with pasture, private pond and waterfall, heated swimming pool, five-car detached garage.
- ▶ Source: Birmingham Multiple Listing Service, Jefferson County Board of Equalization and Adjustments



MOUNTAIN BROOK

- ▶ Home address: 3504 Oakdale Drive
- ▶ Asking price: \$669,900
- ▶ Bedrooms: 4
- ▶ Bathrooms: 4 1/2
- ▶ Square feet: 4,705
- ▶ Year built: 2007
- ▶ Amenities: Tennis courts, two-car main garage and two-car basement garage.

U.S. troop reduction in Iraq may accelerate

Afghanistan duty
likely to increase

By **STEVEN LEE MYERS**

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration is considering the withdrawal of additional combat forces from Iraq beginning in September, according to administration and military officials, raising the prospect of a far more ambitious plan than expected only months ago.

Such a withdrawal would be a striking reversal from the tactic of the war in 2006 and 2007.

One factor in the consideration is the pressing need for additional American troops in Afghanistan, where the Taliban and other fighters have intensified their insurgency and inflicted a growing number of casualties on Afghans and American-led forces there.

More American and allied troops died in Afghanistan than in Iraq in May and June, a grim trend that has continued this month.

Although no decision has been made, by the time President Bush leaves office on Jan. 20, at least one and as many as three of the 15 combat brigades now in Iraq could be withdrawn or at least

See **IRAQ** | Page **8A**

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High: **90**
Low: **67**



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CALLOWAY: Artwork to be put on exhibit

From Page 1A

In October, the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore will display 18 of Calloway's scroll pieces along with one of his notebooks full of numbers, said Rebecca Hoffberger, founder and director of the museum. Hoffberger goes around the world searching for artists who do not follow other people's traditions, but invent their own, she said.

After hearing about Calloway's work, Hoffberger visited him in the Alice M. Kidd Nursing Facility on the historic Bryce Hospital campus in Tuscaloosa, where he now resides.

She was more than impressed by the man, his work and the peaceful aura surrounding him, she said.

"I see everything, all around the world all the time, and let me say we are very thrilled to have the honor of showing his work, to show a little bit of his essence," Hoffberger said. "The man radiates a grace and strength. He is like a graceful angel on this Earth."

And she believes he might be somewhat of a math genius.

'Genius intuition'

Hoffberger, a self-described math nerd, decided to take a closer look at Calloway's notebook of numbers during her visit. Although the columns — some as long as the page — are not traditional methods of multiplication and addition, they compute, she said.

"He has a very amazing, genius intuition about math," Hoffberger said.

She said she hopes Calloway, who looks far younger

than his 112 years and appears to be in good health, will be able to attend in Baltimore the opening of his exhibit in Baltimore.

If that happens, a man who dresses in overalls and prefers horses and buggies to any kind of motor vehicle will get his first ride in an airplane.

Meanwhile, his caregivers and legal guardians have stopped selling his artwork, which once went for \$50 a drawing if Calloway did not give it away first. They have been told by art experts that some pieces could be worth thousands of dollars, said Zandra Taylor Hutto, a Tuscaloosa lawyer appointed as his legal guardian.

Born in 1896

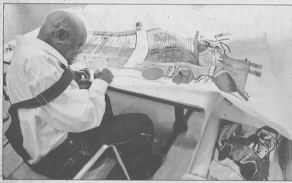
Much of Calloway's life remains a mystery. Hutto said she knows very little about Calloway before he was committed to a state mental institution at age 26. The diagnosis listed at the time was schizophrenia, and he was sent to live at Searcy Hospital in Mound Vernon, at the time an all-black institution.

Medical records document his birthday as July 2, 1896, but a birth certificate has not been found.

As with many Alabama mental patients during the 1950s and 1960s, Calloway worked on a farm crew and performed other manual labor jobs for the state. He often talks about working for the "boss man" and didn't want to retire when he reached his 70s, said John Ziegler, a spokesman for the state Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Caregivers made Calloway stop working.

"He would still walk to the bus stop every day," Ziegler said.

Alabama mental institutions during those times have been



NEWS STAFF/BERNARD TRONCALI



Above: Frank Calloway creates his art with markers on long rolls of butcher paper. Art experts have told his legal guardians and caregivers that some of his works could be worth thousands of dollars.

Left: Calloway keeps his supplies — along with a photo of himself — in a bin in his room at the Alice M. Kidd Nursing Facility.

compared to concentration camps, and conditions were dismal at best. By the time a federal lawsuit was filed in the 1970s, Bryce housed as many as 5,000 patients and employed only three psychiatrists. Searcy was said to be worse, and that is where Calloway lived before being transferred to Bryce.

The scars of what had to be a hard life are not apparent today. Calloway does not complain about his life before or after being committed. The only regret he voices is his lack of education.

A Bible sits on his work desk, but he can't read it.

"I didn't want to school. I wanted to," Calloway said. "They kept me in hard work."

"My daddy slapped me on that mule when I was little boy. I get scared. But I stayed on that mule."

He suffers now from dementia, and time seems lost to Calloway.

Nedra Moncraft-Craig, facility director, said she has asked him if he knows about the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. or Malcolm X. He doesn't.

"The television can be on all day," Moncraft-Craig said, pointing to a TV just to the left of Calloway's workplace. "But he never watches it."

Hutto said Calloway has a hard time comprehending that Moncraft-Craig, a black woman, is in charge of the facility. He laughs and views visiting white men as the "boss man."

"I never worked for a colored boss, always white," Calloway said. When he makes a statement, he often backs it up with, "That's what my daddy and white people told me."

'I'm an old man'

Calloway talks about growing up in Montgomery County, watching his mother

ruke quilts and admiring his father for his knowledge and his travels "up north." He said his parents' names were Estelle and Sam Calloway, and his father died "before I was grown."

His descriptions of Montgomery are from a different era. "All you could hear were wagons," he said about going to town. He talks often about the labor jobs he worked all over the state and at least once in Georgia, the only evidence that he ever left Alabama.

When asked how old he is, Calloway says, "I'm an old man, 115. I have been blessed. My granddaddy lived to be 125. I said people way back lived longer in the older days. He's black Creek Indian. His hair hung way down around his waist, coal-black hair."

There are no documents to confirm Calloway's story. His life in state care today is a far cry from what it once was in the days of segregation and poor care for the mentally ill. The staff of his nursing facility cares to him, bringing him markers, crayons, notebooks, rolls of butcher paper and anything else he wants.

Hoffberger, who worked in the mental health field and whose mother was in a mental health facility for 10 years, said Calloway's care was at a level she had never seen.

"I'm very high on Alabama — right now for the way they care for Mr. Calloway," she said.

Fascinated by the ocean, saying that it is so wide people can't see the side and that the fish are big enough to eat a person, Calloway got to see the Gulf of Mexico for the first time last year during a trip Moncraft-Craig arranged. He said he had been asking people his entire life to tell him how wide it was.

Now when he is asked about possibly visiting Baltimore in October, he just smiles.

"That is probably beyond his understanding," Moncraft-Craig said. "We really don't have any knowledge that he has been outside of this state."

E-MAIL: jsharr9@bnews.com

Have You

Lost A Loved One & Can't Sleep?

The University of Alabama Sleep Research Project is looking for volunteers, age 19 or older to take part in a treatment study for insomnia related to the loss of a loved one.

For details, please call (205) 348-6385

Exit 4

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Heart surgery pioneer dies at 99

DeBakey operated on presidents

By JOHN PORRETTA
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — When Dr. Michael DeBakey pushed forward with his groundbreaking research and maverick approach to medicine a half century ago, heart surgery was a medical marvel.

Today, in part because of his contributions, it routinely saves thousands of lives each day.

DeBakey, a world-famous cardiovascular surgeon who pioneered such now-common procedures as bypass surgery and invented a host of devices to help heart patients, died Friday night in Houston. He was 99.

According to a statement issued early Saturday by Baylor College of Medicine and Methodist Hospital, DeBakey died of "natural causes" shortly after arriving at the hospital. The hospital's heart and vascular center bears his name.

DeBakey, whose career spanned more than 70 years, counted world leaders among his patients and helped turn Baylor from a provincial school into one of the nation's great medical institutions.

"Dr. DeBakey's reputation brought many people into this institution, and he treated them all heads of state, entertainers, businessmen and presidents, as well as people with no titles and no means," said Ron Giroto, president of The Methodist Hospital System.

A tireless worker and stern taskmaster, DeBakey performed more than 60,000 heart surgeries during his career and had scores of patients under his care at any one time.

Among his patients were Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, the Shah of Iran, King Hussein of Jordan, Turkish President Turgut Ozal and Nicaraguan leader Violeta Chamorro.

But he said celebrities didn't get special treatment on the operating table. "Once you incise the skin, you find that they are all very similar,"