

The State

Henry B. Haitz III, President & Publisher

NEWS

Mark E. Lett, VP/Executive Editor
Tonnya Kennedy Kohn, Managing Editor
Steve Brook, Deputy Managing Editor
Eileen Waddell, Assistant Managing Editor

EDITORIAL

D. Bradley Warthen, VP/Editorial Page Editor
Warren S. Bolton, Associate Editor
Cindi Ross Scoppe, Associate Editor
Mike Fitts, Associate Editor

A8 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2006

OPINION

WWW.THESTATE.COM

Editorial

Carrigg, Banning in Lexington County

WHEN LEXINGTON County voters go to the polls for Tuesday's primary, they should select Republicans John Carrigg and Bill Banning for County Council.

■ District 7: **John Carrigg**, who has served for 12 years, faces former council member and auditor Art Guerry and newcomer Kirk Cox. Mr. Carrigg won the seat by defeating Mr. Guerry, who had also served 12 years.

Mr. Carrigg said he watches over taxpayers' money as he does his own. He touts his effort to bring a new library and fire station to his district. While not an inspiring innovator, he has been a solid councilman. One ongoing question he must contend with is whether he should vote on the budget and other issues that affect the clerk of court's office, run by his wife, Beth. He rightly removed himself from a debate between County Council and Mrs. Carrigg over her authority to move public funds to a bank of her choice. He characterized the standoff, which ended when Mrs. Carrigg wisely conceded, as a "battle of egos."

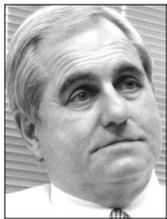


Carrigg

Mr. Guerry argues he would be more effective than Mr. Carrigg, but he has no new ideas that should persuade voters to reverse their decision of 12 years ago, or their more recent choice to replace him as auditor.

Mr. Cox is very likable but very green. He is bright, but isn't up on relevant issues and doesn't have a solid grasp of how the county works.

Mr. Carrigg should be re-elected. ■ District 8: Joe Owens unseated **Bill Banning** four years ago. That is a decision voters should reverse. Mr. Banning, a stalwart on regional cooperation, wants to bring cohesiveness back to the council, and get it to focus more on economic development and growth.



Banning

Mr. Owens, a single-issue candidate who lacks Mr. Banning's perspective on the issues, refused to be interviewed as to why voters should re-elect him. In that vacuum, we are unaware of any reasons why Mr. Banning — who has served well before and sincerely wants to do so again — should not return to the council.

■ District 2: Voters don't have much of a choice in this race, which pits R.L. Julius against Keith Bush in the Republican primary for the right to face Democratic incumbent Billy Derrick in November.

Mr. Bush, a BellSouth retiree and former county employee, has some unusual ideas about how public services should be funded. "I'm a great fan of user fees," he said. He wants users to bear the cost of libraries, recreation and other services — including schools. His list of things that would no longer be supported by taxes could grow long because, as he says, he is "radical" on this point.

We can't in good conscience endorse either Mr. Bush or Mr. Julius, who refused to visit our editorial board. It appears that at least for now, this district runs too strongly Democratic to produce a viable GOP option.

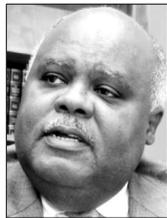
REMEMBER to vote Tuesday: Absentee voting runs through Monday. For other details, go to www.scvotes.org. For endorsements, click "Opinion" at www.thestate.com.

Re-elect Neal

REP. JOE NEAL must be doing something right. He has an opponent who agrees with him on taxes and schools and jobs and pretty much any other issue.

Billy G. Richardson doesn't even argue that he'd make a better representative. He says merely that he decided he'd like to represent the public.

Mr. Richardson strikes us as a sincere, hard-working person, and his motivation for running is noble. But District 70 voters already have a good representative, and there's no reason to replace him with someone who would vote the same, and might or might not do as good a job.

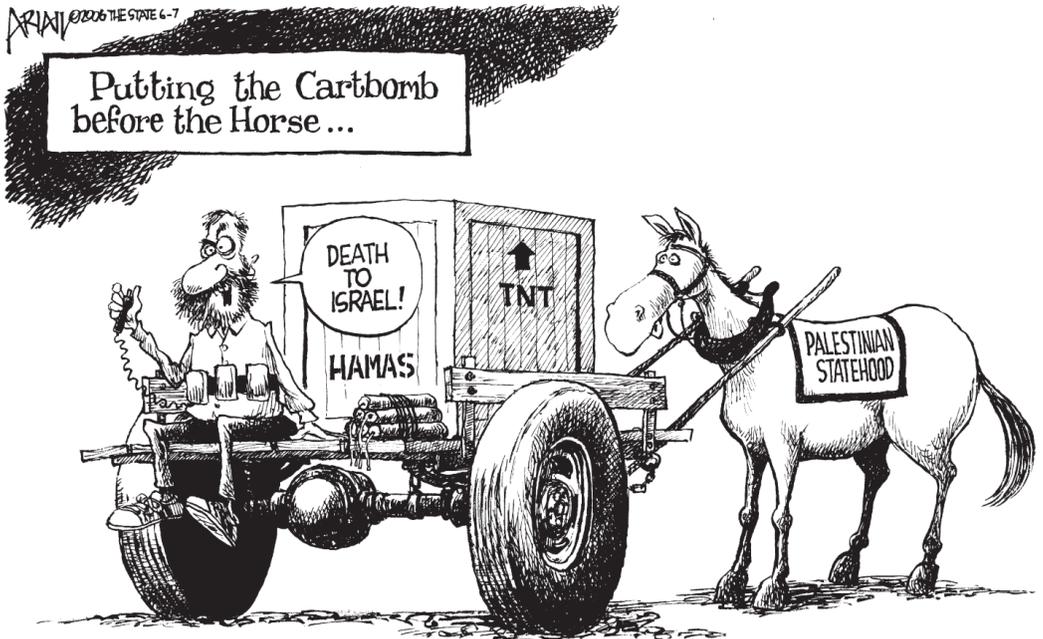


Neal

Mr. Neal is a big-picture guy who focuses not only on improving education and attracting jobs, but also on areas that others overlook, such as health disparities and environmental degradation. He is a passionate advocate. He doesn't often win big battles, but he pricks conscience as only a pastor can.

Even when we disagree with him, we respect his position, because he so clearly is looking out for what he believes are the best interests of the disaffected. That point of view is essential in any legislative body, and few do a better job presenting it than Mr. Neal. He needs to spend at least the next two years doing that.

Robert Ariail



Letters to the Editor

U.S. should reassure nations on nuke use

In his speech to this year's graduating class at West Point, President Bush again asserted his belief in pre-emptive war.

We should expect the leaders of Iran and North Korea to read his speech and take it as directed at them. We should expect that speech to strengthen their resolve to achieve nuclear-weapons capability.

With 60-plus years since Hiroshima, including two major wars without victory, there has not been even one military use of a nuclear weapon. This should convince us that they are useless as war-fighting weapons. They would kill untold numbers of innocents. To go nuclear would be a crime against humanity and may lead to full-scale nuclear war, possibly ending civilization as we know it. The only sane, legitimate use for a nuclear weapon is in retaliation against a nuclear attack.

It would cost us nothing to tell Iran and North Korea that we will not use a nuke against them unless they were first to use one against anyone. Were we to so assure nuclear wannabes that nukes are legitimate only in response to nuclear attack, nuclear proliferation would most likely be peacefully resolved.

VICTOR REILLY
Aiken

Bauer not relying on name to be re-elected

Mike Campbell ads have been flooding the airways, but they indicate we should vote for him based on his name being Campbell. I have not yet seen an ad for his candidacy that did not contain

a photo of his dad. Yes, Campbell is a well-known political name in South Carolina, and perhaps George Bush is a friend of the family, but are these reasons for us to believe Mike Campbell is qualified to be our lieutenant governor? What individual accomplishments can be attributed to him?

On the other hand, our present lieutenant governor, Andre Bauer, has worked tirelessly for the people of this state. He worked his way through college and then built a successful business without benefit of a powerful political name. He should be commended for his total commitment to his constituents and especially for his accomplishments with the Office on Aging.

J.N. WAUGH
West Columbia

Reader won't be fooled again

As the primary election approaches, I'm reminded of the old saying that "Only an idiot continues doing the same thing and expects a different result."

Someone recently remarked that Gov. Mark Sanford would act differently during a second term of office.

I voted for Sanford the first time, but I'm not an idiot, so I'll be voting for Oscar Lovelace on Tuesday.

LARRY SANDIFER
Chapin

Staton is focused on public schools

As a local school board member, a past president of the South Carolina Schools Boards Association and a current member of the

Election letters

Letters related to Tuesday's election must be received by 10 a.m. Friday to be considered for publication. Write to stateeditor@thestate.com or P.O. Box 1333, Columbia, S.C. 29202. We cannot guarantee publication, and all letters may be edited.

Board of Directors of the National School Boards Association, I want to express my unreserved endorsement of Bob Staton for state superintendent of education. Bob not only has a solid background in running a large business, he also has been involved from the beginning in setting high standards for South Carolina's children through involvement on the PASS Commission and as a member and chairman of the Education Oversight Committee.

Bob is not your typical politician. He doesn't have a personal agenda. Unlike his opponent Karen Floyd, he believes in strengthening our public schools, not abandoning them by supporting a voucher scheme. He does believe in public school choice, a system where your tax dollars can be accounted for.

I hope that you will seriously consider voting for the only candidate who has the experience, the knowledge and the sincere interest in public education to be effective as state superintendent.

LENI PATTERSON
Laurens

Reduction in bus service hurts us all

I live in Irmo and commute downtown most days by bus on

routes 36 (Crosstown) and 34 (St. Andrews). Under the current proposed service reduction plan, Route 36 would be eliminated completely, and Route 34 service would be significantly reduced.

Like thousands of citizens who commute to work, school and medical appointments in the Midlands each day, I have come to rely on the dependable and well-maintained bus system operated by the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority and its employees.

The CMRTA's service provides innumerable direct and indirect benefits to our city and its citizens. All of us — riders and non-riders alike — have a stake in the successful resolution of the budget challenges facing the CMRTA.

We must all urge our region's leadership to formulate a solution that will place the CMRTA on a stable footing.

ROBERT BRAME
Irmo

Scripture doesn't condone gay lifestyle

In reply to a letter that stated God makes persons gay, that is a total myth at best. The St. Augustine principle of hating the sin, not the sinner, applies. The church has always stated that from one end of Scripture to the other, there is zero justification for condoning the gay lifestyle. God makes absolutely no one gay, but hates the gay lifestyle. If gays want to again mislabel the above viewpoint as "hatred," so be it.

DANNY HOUSE
West Columbia

Richland comes together for all-America effort

HERE'S THE LINEUP: USC President Andrew Sorensen, Cocky, Ike McLeese of the Columbia Chamber, Richland County Council Chairman Tony Mizzell, a representative from Fort Jackson and other government, civic and community types.

That's the team heading to Anaheim, Calif., Thursday to represent Richland County in a contest for the All-America City Award.

To some, this may seem like simple boosterism, a congregation of communities out to toot their own horns for little gain.

But for Richland County, and other communities across the country competing for the recognition, there is far more at stake.

Interim county administrator Milton Pope said receiving the award would be "kind of a validation of all the positive things across our community."

"I think everybody sees the benefit of having this stamp of approval on our community," he said. This isn't just a token award,

Mr. Pope said. He said it has the potential to give the entire region invaluable exposure that could help boost economic development and tourism, lure new businesses and help USC and other colleges recruit faculty.

The award, among the nation's oldest community recognition efforts, is conducted by the National Civic League. Nine South Carolina communities have won the award since its inception in 1949. Georgetown and Orangeburg counties won last year. Columbia won in 1951 and 1964.

Hundreds of communities began the process this year, but many didn't finish what Richland officials termed a "rigorous" application process. Only 34 were named finalists. Charleston and North Augusta are among them.

Mr. Pope said that while Richland has challenges, just as any other community, it has made



Warren Bolton

Associate Editor

great strides. He said he and county staff were looking for ways to bring attention to the county's progress when the opportunity arose to apply for the All-America City Award, which is coveted by many communities. Any neighborhood, town, city, county or region can apply, despite the name of the award.

When the Richland contingent arrives in Anaheim, it must be prepared for several days of selling our community. It will make a presentation before a panel of judges on Sunday. Ten winners will be selected.

The presentation, which must be live and original, will be key. Among other things, the application highlights the community's embrace of Somali Bantu families and its extraordinary aid to Katrina victims. It also includes descriptions of regional projects, such as the convention center and the proposed plan to address

homelessness; USC's proposed research campus; the effort by the chamber and others to ensure Fort Jackson remains strong; and Palmetto Health's Richland Care Program, which provides health care to thousands of the poor.

The county will spend \$55,000 in hospitality tax revenue on the effort. Mr. McLeese said the business community was close to raising another \$40,000.

Mr. Pope said the county's contribution is a "small amount of seed money" compared to the potential return. He said it's laudable the county is a finalist. "I see our community as a winner already."

I agree. It took considerable commitment and cooperation for this community to undertake this effort. If participants maintain and expand relationships they've built, this community would indeed be all-America — win or lose.

But let's hope for the win.

Reach Mr. Bolton at (803) 771-8631 or wbolton@thestate.com.