Sealed Away

By Louis Goggans

Memphis Pink Palace employee returns from polar research trip

In January, Alex Eilers escaped the mild Memphis

winter in favor of a much, much colder environment. Eilers, manager of education for the Pink Palace Museum, recently returned from her six-month stint in Antarctica, where she researched Weddell seals. Eilers was one of 12 teachers selected from a

pool of 250 applicants from across the country to participate in PolarTREC (Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating), a program that pairs reachers with scientists in polar regions.

More than 8,000 miles away from home, Eilers spent her days retrieving data from the seals and relaying the information back to students and others via an online journal.

"One of my favorite things was getting up close and personal with an 'apex predator' and being able to interact with it on such an intimate level," Eilers said.
"I literally had the head of a 900-pound Weddell seal in my lap. If you could see the teeth on this creature, you'd be amazed."





Alex Eilers spent six months in Antarctica researching seals.

her Alaskan research partner, Jennifer Burns, will discuss their journey in the Pink Palace Museum's Imax Theater. The reception will begin at 6 p.m., with the lecture following at 6:30 p.m. On May 10th, Eilers, accompanied by

on the objective of the res she would provide some brief backgr the University of Alaska in Anchorage, sa Burns, professor of biological sciences

putting on them, what kind of information we are getting back from them, and why we should care," Burns said "I will show [them] how you touch a seal, what they look like, what we are

Over the six-week study, the group captured and sedated 21 Weddell seals. They attached satellite-linked computer tags on the seals that disclose their identity, where they're traveling, and what they're hair, blubber, and blood samples.
"We're basically tracking the seals and eating during the winter. The group also measured the sea mammals and collected

analyzing what they're eating," Eilers said. "All this stems from what's going on climate-wise and where the animals are

is a predator, but Eilers said most of them are far from aggressive.

are far from aggressive.
"I started to get a little bit nervous,
but these animals are very docile," Burns very surprised at how easily we could approach them and how close we could said. "Considering that these guys are near the top of the food chain, I was not expe get. It was just something that you would

Outside of the research, Eilers said that she got the chance to experience her first and her first helicopter and

snowmobile rides. She also experienced living day in and day out without darkness, since Antarctica experiences 24 hours of sunlight for part of the year.

"I thought that I would get tired of the sun, but it was the exact opposite," Eilers said. "You feel like you're more energized when the sun is out. We didn't sleep. It [didn't] give you a chance to miss any because you're constantly working."

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Vol. 35, Issue 19

Thursday, May 10, 2012

75 Cent

BPACC sponsors name the mother 0 oose



Mother's day 'name the goose' contest inspired by 'super mom' goose that took your at the entrance to BPACC. by Julie Ray

The mother honored by BPACC, in fact, had front row seating at the Pickin' Picric last weekend. The mother is a goose that might have performance aspirations for her goslings as she made her nest at the front entrance steps to BPACC. "People could learn a lesson from that goose," said Ron Jewell, director of BPACC. Mother's day this year is Sunday, May 13 and the Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center (BPACC) is honoring a very special

goose.

BPACC and the Bartlett
Express are partnering for a
'name the mother goose' contest in honor of Mother's
Day. To enter the contest,
email name suggestions to

by JULIE RAY Express Editor

"She sits on those eggs twenty four-seven. She's a great mother. And the male goose, if he feels the mother and eggs are threatened, will really get after that threat."

A barrier of bright yellow police tape and wooden barricades protect the goose and her family. On second thought, the barricades might be protection for onlookers that venture too close from being chased and bitten by the protective male

BPACC partners up with the Express for contest in honor of Mother's Day

the editor of the Bartlett Express at Julie.ray@journu inc.com by June 1. Ron Jewill select the winning na on June 4. The winner wireceive up to 8 tickets to to Missoula Children's Thea production of Little Red Riding Hood on June 16. There will be two perform ances, one at 2:30 p.m. an one at 7:00 p.m. Can't think of a name? Perhaps visiting the moth goose for inspiration befo Barefoot in the Park by N. Simon will run May 10-13. For more information, vis trouver, and www.cityofbartlett.org and click the BPACC link.

assists Antarctic

Bartlett woman

research team

by JULIE RAY Express Editor

Alex Eilers is a Bartlett resident, manager of education at the Pink Palace Museum, PolarTREC teacher and friend to the Antarctica

Barefootin 3 the park



All that might sound fairly normal until the Weddell seal friend description. Weddell seals live in the region surrounding Antarctica, and spend their time on sea ice and in the water.

The opportunity for the adventurous Bartlett resident came about through her education position at the Pink Palace and an application to be involved in the PolarTREC program.

Each year the National Science Board offers grant monies to fund research. Dr. Jenn Burns, a professor of biology at the University of Alaska-Anchorage, sent an application to the National Science Board for a grant to study the Weddell Seals in the Ross Sea located in

see ANTARCTICA, pg.3

Dress rehearsal for the cast of Barefoot in the Park put the performers in character. From left, Rob Aymet as Paul, Emily Burnett as Corie, Robbie Phillips as Ethel Banks (Mother), John Reed as Harry Pepper (the telephone repairman), and Fred Harpell as Victor Valasco.

BPACC closes with Neil Simon's 'Barefoot in the Park'

Express Editor
Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center ends the season with Barefoot in the Park by Neil Simon. The Bartlett Express was at dress rehearsal to get a sneak peek at the mayhem about to unfold on stage May 10-13. Mayhem experienced up close and personal by audience memhers

What looks like very low scaffolding on stage is actually stadium style seating. That is correct, the audience will be on stage with the performers. Seating will be limited for this production and early ticket

role vs. real life during

rehearsal.

"This is definitely not me," Robbie Phillips stated rather perfunctorily, as her character would.

Phillips' character as the muddled mother came

through loud and clear in

Bare inthe

The Weddell seal team, from left to right, Patrick, Kim, Chris, Dr. Kim Burns and Alex Eilers are dressed for zero and below temperatures. courtesy of Alex Eilers

Martin, cast and crew were delightfully chaotic, exhibiting the duality of The director, Daniel L.

(Head Coach AHS) of the Tigers success this year."Seated, left to right, Whit Sloane (father), T.J. Sloane. Back row, left to right, Shane Jackson (asst. coach AHS), Chris Ring Reyon des

ANTARTICA from pg

Only twelve grants are awarded. Once Burns was assist in the research study step was selecting awarded her grant, the next

each year is chosen to be a part of the research team. educator for the Weddell One informal educator year Eilers was that

Seal can weigh over 1000 pounds; so that the most obvious question is-how catch, tag and study indi-vidual seals. A Weddell in Antarctica the task is to Seal project Once the research team

does one actually catch a Weddell seal? "you just walk up "That is easy," says Eiler

reason to learn to fear the seals have never had a is a learned behavior and seals have no natural enemy in their environment. Fear Eilers explained that the

real time tracking can be viewed at www.seaturileorg.

A Weddell seal search on furtle tracking program, the website may be required diving. A website to see the and how deep the seals are showing where, how often, attached to the fur of the lite-linked dive recorder, is seal and will transmit data small tag, which is a satelan exam is conducted and a Once the seal is captured

about this project, please join Alex Eilers and Dr. Jenn Burns at the Pink Palace 6:30 p.m. There will be a Q & A at 7:30. Eilers also has a IMAX theatre, May 10 at 6:30 p.m. There will be a Q http://www.polartrec.com/expe detailed journal posted at though other animals are tracked through the site, such as bald eagles, alliga-For more information and, of course, seals. site is primarily a sea

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THURSDA)

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Baked Chicken w/ Roll,
Cheese Sticks w/ Marinnra,
Entree-Salad / Veggie Salad,
Turnip Greens, Whipped Pototoes,
Fresh Fruit, Chilled Fruit Cup, *Milk Entree Salad, Slaw, Baked Beans, Fresh Fruhs, Chilled Fruit Cup, "Milk WEDNESDAY

Letture, Tomato, Pickle, Fresh Fruit, Chilled Fruit Cup, "Milk Uvesadilla w/ Salsa, Hamburger, Entrée Salad, Over Browned Potatoes,

Fizza / Cheese Pizza Deli Sundwich, Entrée Salad Garden Salad, Lettuce, Tomato, Pickle, Fresh Fruit, Chilled Fruit Cup, "Milk

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Juvenile Court racial bias not a myth

AT NEARLY EVERY turn, black children are treated more harshly than white children by Juvenile Court simply because they're

Suspicion. The U.S. Department of Justice has declared this to be fact.

We know this to be true thanks to the dogged efforts of Shelby County
Commissioner Henri Brooks. It was her 2007 complaint that spurred the recent investigation by the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

Brooks, a former state representative, admits that her choice of words often isn't optimal and her approach tends to grate.

And Brooks, who is black, has drawn the ire of some white county commissioners, who

allow themselves to be distracted by her style, thus ignoring the substance of what she's said.

But when it comes to disparate treatment at Juvenile Court, Brooks was

right.

Don't expect her critics to apologize. She surely doesn't.

The former Juvenile
Court employee can declare victory in this
battle, but the war is far from over.

"I'm concerned about the reforms ...
especially in light of the fact that Judge
Person has said he doesn't agree with the
Justice Department's findings," Brooks said

Wednesday.

"If he doesn't agree with those findings, that kind of says to me that he's not going to be inclined to put any reforms in place."

Unfortunately, yet again, Brooks' concerns are valid.

"It's a subjective finding," Judge Curtis Person said late last month when the report was released.

Except it wasn't subjective at all. Read the 66-page report, examine the statistical analysis and the proof is crystal clear.

"I don't think race enters into the decision-making in Juvenile Court," he has said.

Except the Justice Department has concluded that unequivocally, it does.

Please see WENDI, B2

TRANSITION

Aug. 2 vote on

Municipal referendums once scheduled for today delayed

BY CLAY BAILEY

Today was supposed to be the day suburban voters went to the polls to decide if they wanted to start their own school districts.

Instead, outlying governments are preparing once again to rush through ordinances to allow school and local sales tax referendums on the ballot in August.

The timetable accelerated a bit Wednesday afternoon when Gov. Bill Haslam signed legislation allowing the suburbs to hold votes associated with the school systems and fundinations.

ing this year.

The legislation, passed in the final days of the General Assembly's session, will kickstart a whirlwind of public hearings, multiple readings of ordinances and deliberations in order to pass the enabling ordinances by the end of the month.

An approval process that normally takes as much as a month will be compressed into about 21 days as Arlington, Bartlett, Collierville, Germantown, Lakeland and Millington strive to meet a June 1 deadline to give notice to the Election Commission to include the referendums on the Aug. 2 bal-

Britlett Mayor Keith McDonald said earlier this week that if Haslam signed before next week, the suburb could move quicker than the current special meetings tentatively set for May 16, 22 and 31. McDonald said Wednesday afternoon that he will consider moving the dates after studying the matter today.

"The reason we have to wait so long is because you have to give 15 days notice under our ordinance for the public hearing," McDonald said. "That's what pushed us to the very edge.

The six Shelby County suburbs are hoping
Please see **VOTE**, **B2**

Security for controversy schools stirs

Transition planning team rejects handing issue to Sheriff's Office

ust add ice



Museum staffer chills in Antarctica

By LINDA A. MOORE / lm

Palace Museum. after another for Alex Eilers, education manager at the Pink SIX WEEKS IN ANTARCTICA was one amazing experience

There was that first sight of the glaciers.

She learned cold-weather survival skills and what to do in

And she won't forget the first time she held in her lap the head of 500- to 1,000-pound Weddell seal.

"This is an apex predator, at the top of food chain. Only Antarctic killer whales top this," Eilers said. "There's no way you can get that close to an animal like that. And then to look down and have this animal in your lap. It was unreal." Eilers went to Antarctica in Jan-

program for educators. It is managed by the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States and funded by the National Science

She'll share her story at 6 p.m. today at the Pink Palace. Eilers will be joined by researcher Dr. Jennifer Burns, a professor of biological sciences at the University of Alaska in Anchorage and an expert on the

the science that's going on. We're going to throw in the personal as-nects." Filars said "It will be good

Weddell seals such as this one are not endangered and are not seen at zoos.



Who will oversee school security in the consolidated Shelby County Schools district

or 400th

housing milestone Habitat celebrates

CHRISTOPHER WHITTEN

A crowd cheered for Canida Williams, who cried tears of joy Wednesday as she received the keys to her new home in Trinity Park, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Memphis' first fully planned development.

More than 480 Baptist Memorial Health Care employees helped build Williams' home, Baptist's third home in the Memphis area. Many present for the dedication had tears in their eyes as their president and CEO Stephen Reynolds presented Williams, 37, with the keys to her Oakhaven home.

Williams' new house marks the 400th home for Memphis Habitat and the 33rd in the Trinity Park development east of Memphis International Airport.

"It's definitely emotional," said Dwayne Spencer, executive director of Memphis Habitat. "When you hear stories about families with parents who have to sleep on the couch and give up their rooms for their children—that gets you."

Living in her mother's house with three children of her own, Williams had a vision. It began when she saw a television commercial for Memphis Habitat.

"I was in a situation where we'd outgrown our current living arrangement," Williams said. "I saw the commercial and thought,

because of credit sually a OI

Canida Williams cries for joy as she and her children, Brittny Williams, 14; Bradli Williams, 11, and Bryan Williams, 17, are welcomed Wednesday to their new home, the 400th built by Memphis Habitat. More than 480 Baptist Memorial Health Care employees helped build it.

Wow, that's an opportunity I want to look into."

Williams was selected by Habitat, which sees more than 500 applicants each year. She was required to complete 15 weeks in Memphis Habitat's Financial Peace University training and perform 350 hours of "sweat equity."

Working nights at UPS loading airplanes, sweat equity for Williams meant volunteering her days at the Mid-South Food Bank, as well as working on her own home. That took about eight days to build.

"I had to take a moment and walk off by myself this morning," Williams said. "It's so surreal. It started with a foundation and now it's done."

living a Williams said. commercial a

Habitat site supervisor Jimmie Holmes said Williams was always the first one there and the last to leave, working from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. "She's been out here every day of the build," Holmes said. "We had to run her out of here. Unlike some others, she was involved in every part of building this house. She put up siding, climbed up on the roof and even did some of the painting."

Jessica Hord, director of sponsorship and community relations for Memphis Habitat, said many people don't realize that Habitat homeowners are actually homebuyers. Williams' mortgage is owned by Memphis Habitat, Hord said. Habitat is for and families

An aerial photo shows McMurdo Station in Antarctica, where Alex Eilers helped research Weddell seals.

EILERS

lowing the blogs are interested in polar issues and will get a chance to see and ask about the work we're doing down there."

Eilers left Memphis for the McMurdo Station in early January, traveling to Chicago, Los Angeles and then to New Zealand. The last leg from New Zealand was a 14-hour flight.

And as the plane approached Antarctica, Eilers, the "newbie" on the flight, asked to sit in the cockpit.

"That was a real treat," she said. "What looks like a small tiny iceberg was a huge building-sized iceberg. You see all the mountains. I literally almost had tears in my eyes."

Before the team began scouting for seals, there was a week of training on how to use the cold-weather gear and learning how to stay warm. Pickle buckets over their heads simulated white-

"We were laughing at the beginning but quickly realized the point of the exercise," she said.

They also learned how to ride a snowmobile, find the seals and avoid falling through cracks in the ice.

"What's below you is not a continent. It is water," Ellers

income — usually a combination of both — could not qualify for a conventional mortgage. It exists to make it possible for these families to build and buy their first homes," Hord said.

Williams will celebrate another milestone Sunday when her oldest son, Bryan Williams, 17, graduates from Wooddale High School.

"It's an early graduation present," he said. "My mom's always been strict, but she's been on us more since she started working on this house. She's always tried to instill in us values that if you go for what you want, you can actually get it. I'm so proud of my mom."

said. "You definitely didn't want to slip and go underneath the ice."

The researchers attached transmitters to molting seals

transmitters to molting seals that will serve two purposes for researchers, Burns said.

Following the animals, who are not endangered and not on display at any zoo, gives researchers an opportunity to study a healthy marine population, she said.

The seals are also able to travel to depths in the ocean in winter where people can't go and they'll transmit information about temperatures and the movements of other animals.

Before her trip, Eilers did lots of her legwork, making, about 125 presentations at schools, libraries, senior centers and universities.

Hundreds of people followed her blog; she mailed more than 2,400 postcards to Mid-Southerners from Antarctica and fielded about 450 questions from this area. Eilers helped weigh, measure and tag 21 seals.

"We did do a lot of laughing. That was really important. Our team got along really well and that's what made everything so much fun," she said.

"When you spend 16 days with people, it's really nice that you get along and enjoy each other's company."

SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSION BRIEFS

Northaven fire station opening ceremony set for Tuesday

The Northaven community is getting a w fire station, and an opening ceremony is t for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday at 944 Northaven

The new station replaces an older one nearby and is twice as large. It took eight months to build and cost \$1.3 million, according to a news release from county spokesman Steve Shular.

Impact Baptist Church will lease the old station for an after-school program and mmunity center, Shular wrote.

Northaven is in northwest Shelby County, not far from Shelby Forest.

Delinquent taxpayers get guidance on Saturday

People who are at risk of losing their properties to foreclosure because of the county taxes they owe are invited to the next Project HOME Workshop on Saturday at the Ed Rice Community Center at 2907 N. Watkins in Frayser. The workshop is scheduled from 10 until 11:30 a.m. and will be followed by one-on-one meetings with the

until 2 p.m.

These workshops aim to help taxpayers budget their money and make a plan to pay off their back taxes.

The program is open to any delinquent taxpayer, said Terica Lamb, manager of community outreach and financial empowerment.

empowerment.
Those who complete the workshop can enter into a payment plan that prevents the county from seizing and selling the property. For more information, call Lamb at (901) 432-4882.

iled by Daniel Connolly

Alex Eilers, education manager at the Pink Palace Museum, will share her adventures in the Antarctic today from 6-8 p.m. at the Pink Palace Museum. The lecture is free. Eilers will be joined by researcher Dr. Jennifer Burns. ANTARCTIC ADVENTURES: THE SEQUEL



The Ways and Wonders of the Weddell Seals

Presented by:

Alex Eilers

PolarTREC Teacher & Manager of Education
Pink Palace Museum

A look at their research with Weddell Seals aimed at the interested non-scientist

Date: Friday, 11 May

Departure: 11:45 a.m.

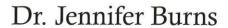
Lunch & Lecture: Noon

Location: Pink Palace

Discovery Theater

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Sign Up in the Activities Book



Professor of Biology at the University of Alaska -Anchorage











2011-2012 Homeschool Students Programming

