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Monday, February 28, 2011

Daily Deal: Get your home bug-free. Details, 2A

SPECIAL



Lindsey's still a winner at home
Song doesn't snag Oscar; 'Speech' triumphs, 8A

FOR A COMPLETE LIST of Oscar winners, go to augustachronicle.com.

Match Play:
Luke Donald wins in Arizona. Golf, 1C

Making a good, clean living



Carolyn Green, 14, milks a goat at Shakerock Farm in Thomson. The Green family, which includes nine children, makes a living off products made from goat milk, including soaps and lip balm. Their products are sold in local stores, festivals and online.

Farm-fresh goat products become family business

By Lynn Davidson
Staff Writer

It's like a scene from the late 1800s — rolling acres of farmland; horses, cows and donkeys in the pastures; little boys with pocket knives whittling sticks; and little girls in dresses gathering eggs.

But modern cars are parked in the driveway and, when it snowed recently, the children sledged on Rubbermaid lids towed by a golf cart.

Kenny and Valerie Green live on Shakerock Farm in western McDuffie County with their nine children, who are homeschooled and heavily involved in taking care of the 90-acre farm.

"We are thankful to have a place for the kids to have responsibilities and to work with their hands and not sit idle in front of a television or video games all day," Valerie said.

When the sixth child, Thomas, was born with eczema, a family business was born. Valerie and eldest daughter Carolyn did research to find ways to treat the skin disorder, and what they discovered coincided nicely with one of Carolyn's pet projects. She had received three small goats for her birthday that year. Their research revealed that bathing the skin with goat milk soap would help the irritation.

"It started clicking," Valerie said. "We looked up the recipe and made a few bars for us and for the family."

"Then more people heard about it and wanted the soap, and it developed a life of its own," Kenny added.

Carolyn is in charge of milking at least one of the goats — there are now four — twice a day. It's a job that has to be done seven days a week, 365 days a year, so when Carolyn can't do it, her brothers — Joseph, 10, Benjamin, 9,



Thomas, 6, and Grace, 7, watch their sister Carolyn pour goat milk. The family makes about a dozen fragrances of soaps, which vary depending on the season.

and Thomas, 6 — fill in.

"I work with all the animals, but the goats are my favorite," Carolyn said.

She strains the milk and places it in the freezer "until slushy." Valerie then mixes in extra-virgin olive oil or palm oil.

"Carolyn and Valerie spent hours researching the proportion of oils to come up with a formula that won't dry the skin out," Kenny explained.

"We're very selective. Just because it's natural doesn't mean it's good for you," Valerie said.

Kenny makes a lye solution to add to the blended ingredients.

"Sugars in milk caramelize real easily,

so we have to constantly stir it to keep it from burning," he said. "I like to keep a thermometer in it, but Valerie and Carolyn don't need one."

The whole process takes about two hours. The next day, the soap is unmolded, cut into bars and placed on racks to air-cure for four weeks.

The younger siblings then help Carolyn cut fabric and raffia and wrap it around each bar. They place the bars on shelves in "the soap room" in the entryway of the house.

"Carolyn has an eye for picking out fabric to go with the scent of the soap," Valerie said.

Please see **FARM** on **PAGE 8A**

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Advocates, educators fight cuts

By Dorie Turner
and Shannon McCaffrey
Associated Press

COLUMBIA COUNTY MAY CUT PROGRAM

ATLANTA — A plan to scale back Georgia's free, full-day pre-kindergarten program — the first of its kind in the U.S. — to a half-day has teachers fearing shrunken paychecks and working parents scrambling to find day care for their 4-year-olds.

Republican Gov. Nathan Deal has proposed shortening the pre-K day from 6½ hours to four hours, which GOP leaders say would save the 84,000-student program about \$54 million. Deal, who recently announced a dramatic overhaul plan that he says is needed to keep lottery-funded initiatives such as pre-kindergarten from going broke, also proposed adding 5,000 slots to ease a nearly 10,000-child wait list.

Many other states and private preschools already operate with a four-hour day, and schools should have plenty of time to teach if they plan well, Deal said when he announced the overhaul Tuesday. He has said schools could trim lunchtime and naptime to give students more learning time.

Studies show attending pre-K gives poor students a better chance of graduating high school and going to college.

Advocates fear low-income families could suffer the most, noting that 60 percent of children in Georgia's pre-K program come from families that earn less than \$40,000 a year.

Bobby Cagle, the head of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, said Deal wants to help districts by providing more funding for aftercare programs for at-risk children

Columbia County likely would eliminate its public school pre-K program if Gov. Nathan Deal's proposed cuts go through.

Superintendent Charles Nagle said local taxpayers subsidize the county's 20 pre-K classrooms with about \$100,000 per year. That allows the system to take a 6½-hour pre-K program up to a full day so the pupils can ride to and from school on a regular bus schedule.

Cutting back to half-days would require additional bus service to take those roughly 400 children home in the middle of the day, Nagle said, or it would force the county to pay for extending the program to a full day. Either way, local costs would rise to about \$500,000 — and the county can't afford it.

"It's going to be very difficult for us to justify that," Nagle said. The school board hasn't deliberated on the proposed changes, he added.

Nagle said the school system likely would be able to absorb the staff into other elementary school positions, but he's less certain whether there is enough private child-care capacity in the county to handle the additional children — particularly in the Appling, Harlem and Grovetown areas.

"My guess would be we're going to have to be the bad guy and tell some of these people to get on the list for day care," Nagle said.

— From staff reports

MORE ON PRE-K CUTS

► Richmond County weighs impact of cuts/8A

Please see **PRE-K** on **PAGE 8A**



Pre-kindergartner Marcus Singletary attended a Pre-K Day ceremony at the Capitol in Atlanta on Tuesday. Advocates gathered to push for more early education for Georgia's children on the same day Gov. Nathan Deal proposed cuts.

JOHN BAZEMORE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEATHER



Increasing clouds
High: 84 Low: 50
More weather on Page 8C

See it now

BROWSE AND SHARE photos from weekend events at spotted.augusta.com.

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DEATHS

Mr. Clarence H. Atkinson	Matthews, Ga.
Mrs. Helen D. Best	Ellijay, Ga.
Mrs. Lois M. Effingham	Augusta
Mr. Frederick C. Evans Jr.	Bartow, Ga.
Mr. Willie L. Goff	Augusta
Mr. Morris Grissom	Thomson
Mrs. Brenda C. Mack	Thomson
Mr. Phillip S. Page	Virginia
Mrs. Virginia S. Page	Augusta
Mrs. Betty A. Richardson	Augusta
Mr. Carl Toney	Athens, Ga.
Mrs. Charlotte Walden	Beech Island
Mr. LeRoy Williams	Augusta

Price at the pump could slow recovery

Associated Press

NEW YORK — High fuel prices are putting the squeeze on drivers' wallets just as they are starting to feel better about the economy. They're also forcing tough choices on small-business owners who are loathe to charge more for fear of losing cost-conscious customers.

Gasoline prices rose 4 percent last week to a national average of \$3.29 a gallon. That's the highest level ever for this time of year, when prices are typically low. With unrest in the Middle East and North Africa lifting the price of oil to the \$100-a-barrel range, analysts say pump prices are likely headed higher.

For drivers such as Robert Wagner, 51, a high school teacher from Thornton, Colo., the higher fuel costs mean cutting back on movies and dinners out for his family.

"We're very, very frugal right now," he



Over a year, analysts estimate, oil at \$100 a barrel would reduce U.S. economic growth by 0.2 or 0.3 percentage points. Rather than grow an estimated 3.7 percent, the economy would expand 3.4 percent or 3.5 percent. That would mean less hiring and higher unemployment.

said as he trickled enough \$3.09-a-gallon gasoline into his Chevrolet Suburban to get him to his next pay day.

Analysts and economists worry that by lowering profits for businesses and reducing disposable income for drivers, high fuel prices could slow the recovery.

Americans are less prepared to absorb the spike in gasoline prices than they were the last time prices rose this high, in 2008, because unemployment is higher and real estate values are lower, says David Portalatin, an analyst for the

market research firm NPD Group.

It has been four months since gasoline topped \$3 per gallon. In that time, drivers have spent \$14 billion more on fuel than they did a year ago, Portalatin says.

Diane Swonk, chief economist at Mesirow Financial in Chicago, says this year's cut in payroll taxes offers consumers a buffer against higher fuel prices. Still, she expects all but the wealthiest Americans to cut back on discretionary spending. And the longer prices stay high, the more damage they do.

Gasoline prices rose throughout last fall as the developing nations of Asia and the recovering economies of the West began using more oil.

Much of the recent unrest took place in countries that are not big producers of oil. But when Libya plunged into chaos, there were disruptions in shipments of its high-quality crude, which is well-suited to making gasoline.



Pre-K

Continued from 1A

and for transportation. But Cagle acknowledged the extra funding would not be enough to cover all the costs.

The state also is looking to eliminate 112 counselors who help pre-K students transition to kindergarten.

At a hearing Friday at the Capitol, pre-K supporters turned out in force urging lawmakers not to balance the budget at the expense of the state's youngest students.

Emily Cunningham, who teaches in Snellville, choked back tears as she told legislators she wouldn't be able to continue teaching if she made less money because of the shorter day.

"There are many teachers already investigating other employment," she said.

Atlanta teacher Ginger James said she would be willing to accept two more students in her class to keep the program intact.

"If you do hurt pre-K, you may not need to worry about HOPE in the future," James said, referring to the scholarship program.

Lawmakers seemed to hold open the possibility of larger class sizes but noted that the only money they can work with is from the lottery. That constraint has others, including Rep. Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, calling for the state to find extra money for pre-K.

Benfield, D-Atlanta, said the state is going backward because children need a full day to be prepared for kindergarten.

"This is not going to help working parents and it is not going to work for providers," said Benfield, whose 5-year-old daughter attends a state pre-K program.

Some school districts might end their pre-K programs altogether because it's so difficult to find teachers willing to work part-time. That could be especially problematic in rural areas.

Steve Barnett, a co-director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, said the cuts were a big step back in Georgia. About 40 states offer pre-K programs, and most of those with programs as large as Georgia's give parents the option of full- and part-time.

RICHMOND COUNTY LOOKS AT OPTIONS

Richmond County school administrators have begun discussions about what impact the proposed pre-K cuts would have on the county.

Deputy Superintendent James Whitson said it would cost \$1.4 million for the county to continue a full-day pre-K while receiving funding for only a half-day program from the state.

That money would go toward sustaining the operations and the full-time salaries for roughly 58 pre-K teachers and instructors.

Whether the county decides to shift to a half-day program or pay for the extra cost of maintaining a full day would require a vote from the school board.

If the county moves to a half-day program, teachers would receive part-time pay, and it would cost the county in transportation services.

In a half-day system, pre-K students would not be able to ride the bus home with kindergarten or first-grade students at the end of the school day. The county would have to create a new route to take pre-K students home around noon, adding about \$750,000 in transportation costs, Whitson said.

"It would force us to give drivers overtime, plus the cost of wear and tear on the buses," Whitson said.

Whitson said working parents would have to pay for day care for the remainder of their workday. He also said cutting pre-K services would slow the educational process and set children back developmentally.

"If you have students that are behind entering into the first grade, if I have to catch up, I'm having to catch up from the very beginning. That's not something we want," he said.

Before making any changes to the county's pre-K program, Whitson said, administrators will wait to see what comes out in the legislation. After that, school board members "will have to make a decision," he said.

- From staff reports

83RD ACADEMY AWARDS

Hometown still cheers Lindsey

By Susan McCord
Staff Writer



Hillary Lindsey, of Washington, Ga., was nominated for Best Original Song for *Coming Home* from the film *Country Strong*. *We Belong Together* from *Toy Story 3* won.

Hillary Lindsey didn't win an Oscar on Sunday for original song, but she is still a winner in her hometown of Washington, Ga.

"Our town is celebrating that she is one of five nominees of over 100 movies that were submitted for this category, so she is a winner in our eyes," said Lindsey's mother, Kathy.

Hillary Lindsey co-wrote the song *Coming Home*, which is sung by actress Gwyneth Paltrow's character in the film *Country Strong*. It was nominated along with *We Belong Together* from *Toy Story 3*, *I See the Light* from *Tangled*, and *If I Rise* from *127 Hours*. Songwriter Randy Newman won the Oscar for *We Belong Together*.

Washington-Wilkes Country Club was abuzz Sunday night with friends and family watching the Academy Awards. Hillary Lindsey helped raise \$20,000 for local band students who couldn't afford instruments, said Debbie Wells, the president of the Washington-Wilkes Arts Foundation.

Whether she won or lost, Lindsey is a winner in their eyes, Wells said Sunday night before

MORE ONLINE

GALLERIES: View photos from the red carpet and at the ceremony at augustachronicle.com.

CATCH UP: Read how Hillary Lindsey of Washington, Ga., got started at augustachronicle.com.

LIST OF WINNERS: For a list of Oscar winners from the 83rd annual Academy Awards, go to augustachronicle.com.

the winner was announced. "Lindsey sent a video thanking 'the whole town for loving her, and saying how much she loved us,'" Wells said.

MAJOR ACADEMY AWARD WINNERS

BEST PICTURE



The King's Speech took home top honors Sunday, winning four Oscars for best picture, actor, director and original screenplay.

BEST DIRECTOR



Tom Hooper won for *King's Speech*. The Englishman who began making short films at 13 gave credit to his mother in his acceptance speech.

BEST ACTOR



Colin Firth won for his role as King George VI in *The King's Speech*. It was his first Oscar win. Firth won a Golden Globe earlier in the year for his role in the film.

BEST ACTRESS



Natalie Portman won for her role in *Black Swan*. It was the first Oscar for the 29-year-old mother-to-be who played a prima ballerina descending into madness.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS



Melissa Leo won for her role in *The Fighter*. She was so overcome by her win that she used an expletive during her acceptance speech. She apologized backstage.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS



Melissa Leo won for her role in *The Fighter*. She was so overcome by her win that she used an expletive during her acceptance speech. She apologized backstage.

OTHER WINNERS: *Inception* won four Oscars in technical categories. *The Social Network* won three.

- From wire reports

Farm

Continued from 1A

"The soap is tan, so it needs a colorful cover to dress it up. She fits the personality of the soap."

The soap is made into about a dozen different fragrances, which vary with the seasons. About 56 bars are made twice a week, and they are sold at Hair It Is in Augusta, LMN Pharmacy in Thomson, Etc. of Harlem, at area festivals and online.

Besides soap, the family's goat milk products include lotions, beauty products and lip balm.

Valerie said they receive a regular order from several physicians' offices in Augusta "because the nurses have to wash their hands a lot."

While the soap is curing, life on the farm stays busy. Older brother Daniel, 18, works the farm and has his own farrier business, which includes looking after the family's seven horses. Carolyn also takes piano and cake-decorating lessons.

"With all the kids, we have lots of birthdays," she said. "So, they get to pick what they want on their cake, and I make it."

Joseph recently became the proud owner of two sheep and is in the process of learning to

MORE ON THE FARM

FOR MORE information, go to www.shakerockfarm.com.

shear them. Carolyn and Grace, 7, are learning how to spin the wool into thread, and Valerie is researching how to make sheep milk soap.

Younger brothers Thomas and Nathaniel, 4, are nicknamed Frank and Jessie James "because they get into so much together," their dad said. They stay busy playing practical jokes on anyone who's close by. They also like to carve treasures from the scraps of soap bars.

Julieann, 2, and Anna Rose, 14 months, stay close to their mama in the house and enjoy attention from their older siblings throughout the day.

All these activities take place around daily school lessons.

One room of the 4,500-square-foot house has been transformed into a school room, with a desk for each child - plus their maternal teacher - bulletin boards and chalkboards, bookshelves and a computer.

In the spring, the whole family works a vegetable and fruit garden. This year, they plan to try growing blueberries, which could inspire a new soap scent.

Reach Lynn Davidson at (706) 823-3332 or lynn.davidson@augustachronicle.com.

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