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THE PAGE POST-HERALD READS

BULLETIN BOARD

■ **Robert Brian Conner** of Birmingham graduated May 8 from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., with a bachelor's degree in communications and broadcasting. He was commissioned an officer ensign in the Navy and will join the fleet in Japan this fall. He is a member of the Golden Key Honor Society, the Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society and the NAACP, a magna cum laude graduate, and Student of the Year. Conner, a 1996 graduate of Shades Valley High School, is the son of Rev. Marvin R. Conner.

■ The United States Steel Foundation awarded \$10,000 college scholarships to **Philip M. Bunger**, a senior at Central Park Christian School, and **Tara A. McGowan**, a senior at Ramsay Alternative High School. They are the children of employees at U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works.

■ Furman University in Greenville, S.C., has inducted members of the Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society. They are **Lindsay E. Brown**, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Brown; **Robert T. Burton**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burton; **Leigh M. McIntosh**, daughter of John McIntosh; **Natalie E. O'Neal**, daughter of Robin O'Neal; **James G. Pennington**, son of Dr. and Mrs. William Pennington, all of Birmingham; **Kristin M. Mullins**, daughter of Elizabeth Mullins of Homewood; **Daniel E. McBrayer**, son of Dr. and Mrs. John McBrayer of Hoover; and **Frances L. Mathis**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Mathis of Vestavia Hills.

■ **Kelli Elizabeth Caulfield** and **Jamella LaVise Davis**, both of Birmingham, have earned bachelor's degrees from Xavier University in New Orleans.



Special to the Post-Herald

Earle Holland, a Homewood native, has traveled throughout the world, including Antarctica, where this photo

was taken. Although he loves his life, Holland writes that he left a lot behind after moving out of the South.

Home's a state of mind

Writer finds solace in South

Earle Holland, the director of research communications at Ohio State University, tells about how rare trips back to his home state of Alabama bring back memories of everything he left behind.

We headed South the other day. It was early Friday evening, and we would drive straight through to reach Birmingham by the next morning.



Reader's Story

My wife, Susan, teaches gifted kids in a public school on the outskirts of Columbus, Ohio, and the coming week was spring break.

Gifted kids are like sponges, sucking knowledge from teachers struggling to stay one step ahead. And she

was drained and needed the solace of seeing "the folks."

As "the good husband," I agreed to drive her down, knowing she'd likely be asleep before we left the neighborhood, and I'd have 10 hours of semi-solitude on the road.

I'm an introvert trapped in an extrovert's job. That long drive would, I knew, conjure up the memories of my early days as a newspaper reporter, and other hours on dark, Alabama two-lanes, chasing stories.

A reassuring melancholy always comes with those memories.

I don't make it back very often. It's not that I don't love the state, because I do, deeply. But coming home always brings with it a lot of pain, remembrances of what was, and dreams of what

might have been.

We moved north in the late 1970s for a better job, and it turned out that way. Now, looking back 26 years, that was a good decision, but not one without a price. We tried to make regular visits back, but over the years, few friends and family chose to journey northward.

We had to adapt to isolation from our beloved South.

Susan looks forward to Alabama trips, but they only remind me of what I left behind. So I tend to stay away. When I do journey home, it is only a few days until I have to escape to I-65 north. Each trip in the past decade has been the same:

A few days fixing the relatives' computers (a hobby) and a half-day or so digging through the family memorabilia.

My father wrote editorials for The Birmingham News for a quarter-century, the last of which during the turbulent 1960s, and was a correspondent for Time and Fortune magazines.

He was a Neiman Fellow at Harvard — a high honor among journalists — and was once called to a private dinner with JFK at Blair House along with a handful of other Southern newspapermen to discuss the roots of civil unrest.

At Mom's house, there are boxes of clippings and letters, programs and keepsakes, linked to famous people in difficult times — all reminders of what one life can accomplish.

Sons will always compare themselves to their

Please turn to HOME, page B4

ADOPT A PET



Special to the Post

Shelly is a 4-year-old female.

includes news and photographs appears Thursdays.

LETIN BOARD: Send submissions to Post Herald Bulletin Board, P.O. Box 2553, Birmingham, AL 35202. E-mail to postherald.com. Direct questions to Paulette McKinney at 325-2343.

FOR CALLING ALL SHUTTERBUGS: Please send copies of your p

are adoptable pets staying Greater Birmingham Society, 1713 Lombasley. The adoption fee is \$15 plus a refundable \$65 litter deposit for an adopted pet. Shelter hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Saturday and 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 780-7281 or visit bss.org.

Please send items to Paulette McKinney, P.O. Box 2553, Birmingham, AL 35202. For information, call 325-2343.



Jan-Michael Stump/Post-Herald

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as communications platforms, they could provide wireless phone and Internet service.

Today's most visible airships have company logos plastered on their sides and hover over major sporting events. They trace their heritage to the Navy blimps that provided surveillance for allied convoys crossing the Atlantic Ocean during World War II.

Now researchers are updating lighter-than-air technology for the 21st century with new power systems and fabrics to help them survive even high-altitude missions in the stratosphere, where temperatures and solar radiation are extreme.

There is based on a design developed more than 21 years ago by Canadian Hokan Colting of Canada, who set a world airship altitude record of 21,000 feet last year in a 62-foot version. His design is maneuvered by propellers mounted around the sides.

The Aerosphere would operate initially from 5,000 to 15,000 feet and remain aloft for about two days, Lawson said. At that altitude it would have to comply with the same Federal Aviation Administration regulations that govern Good-year blimps and other aircraft flying over the United States.

participating in special events, education programs, gardening and more. Opportunities are offered for adults and teenagers.

■ **Contact:** Heather Pike at 879-0409, ext. 278, or hpike@birminghamzoo.com

Home

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fathers. It's probably preordained by our genes, instructions that we must surpass our elder's grasp. Rooting through those boxes of family history always forces the comparison, and I wonder how I've measured up.

I write about science for one of the country's biggest universities, count as close friends a half-dozen Pulitzer winners and even have a weekly column with the New York Times Syndicate.

I've swum with porpoises, made friends with Nobel Laureates, spent nights in observatories and operating rooms watching geniuses at work. I even made it to Antarctica and while there, walked on mountain slopes virgin to human footsteps. Not bad for a kid from Homewood, I guess.

The price of all that was leaving home and learning that when you return, you are different from the person who left.

Home never changes — instead, we do.

People who have never left home don't realize that the South is more a state of mind than it is a geographic place. That the roots of our upbringing, our culture and our families are always there waiting for our return.

No matter how long it may take.

Catch the news in the Birmingham Post-Herald
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