

metro

CLOSING ARGUMENTS

Ossoff, Handel make final pitches

In Georgia, B-2



one of us

charlie patton

Charter school founder charged with fraud

Accused of overcharging for services, equipment

By Denise Smith Amos
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The founder of a charter school company that managed two schools in Jacksonville was charged Monday, along with a business partner, with racketeering and organized fraud allegedly involving 15 charter schools in Florida.

Prosecutors say Marcus May, owner of Newpoint Education Partners, is accused of misusing and co-mingling charter school money, as well as taking excessive payments

and "kickback" fees, and spending the proceeds on such things as cruises, numerous trips to foreign countries, plastic surgery, home mortgages and a personal watercraft.

"May obtained more than \$1 million of public funds from a pattern of thefts from the state department of education, six school districts and 15 Newpoint-managed charter schools," said District 1 State Attorney Bill Eddins, in a prepared statement.

In total, Newpoint's charter schools in Florida

received \$57 million from the state and from six school districts, including Duval, between 2007 and 2016, the affidavit attached to the charges states.

In Jacksonville, Newpoint ran the San Jose Academy and San Jose Preparatory High schools on Sunbeam Road. Both are now managed by a different company and serve 310 middle and high school students.

An attorney representing May and Newpoint, David McGee of Pensacola, said his client did nothing

wrong and that the expenditures were proper because his client earned that money from his companies.

"To the extent that it is legitimate income ... he can use the income from his businesses to buy some of the same things other people buy," McGee said.

The latest charges accompany others filed against Newpoint last year by Eddins, whose district includes Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties.

"This has been in court for a year and there has been a series of allegations that haven't held water so

far," McGee said.

The new charges go beyond last year's indictment, said Russell Edgar, assistant state attorney on the case, because they involve more charter schools and counties. "We thought this was not an isolated case," he said. "It appears to be a pattern throughout the state."

He said May used Newpoint to convince parents and others to start charter schools, form nonprofit corporations and take positions on school governing boards. (Charter schools are public schools

FRAUD continues on B-3

Parcell is head of Lutheran Social Services refugee center

Eight months ago, Christina Parcell, 45, decided she was ready for a change.

The mother of three had spent the previous five years working at the Ponte Vedra Beaches offices of the Fisher, Tousey, Leas & Ball law firm.

"It was a wonderful job, a safe job," she said. "But I didn't feel I was contributing."

The daughter of a man who spent most of her childhood working for the Peace Corps, she wanted to make a difference. So she took a job with Lutheran Social Services as an international programs manager, overseeing the agency's refugee services program.

When a refugee arrives in Jacksonville, her program has 90 days to work with the new arrivals. They pick them up at the airport, settle them into an apartment, get them enrolled in Social Security, help them apply for work permits, enroll the children in school, enroll the parents in English language classes and find the adults employment.

"If we have succeeded, they are self-sufficient," she said.

They almost always succeed, with a 99 percent success rate. Finding the refugees jobs is not difficult.

"We have more jobs than people," she said. "They will do the jobs other people won't do. They are grateful to be here."

The biggest challenge she has faced in her job so far is the roller coaster created by the on-again, off-again immigration ban.

"It creates uncertainty," she said. "In March, we had zero arrivals. It makes it difficult to run the business ... Then the ban was lifted. We had a sudden influx. That was wonderful, but we weren't prepared."

Another issue is that people don't understand what a refugee is, she said. "Refugees are people whose countries no longer exist or are at war," she said.

They are people who fled their homes, often with little preparation, to seek the sanctuary of a refugee camp, she said. Before they are allowed into the U.S., they are vetted by six different agencies. Several years sometimes pass before they are allowed into the country. One

PATTON continues on B-3

DNA on bullet fragment links man to killing

Currently in jail, suspect faces a murder charge

By Garrett Pelican
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A Jacksonville man is charged in the shooting death of another man caught in a crossfire when a gun deal near Edward Waters College was interrupted last summer by a robbery, authorities said.

Detectives got a warrant last week for the arrest of Devin Ro-shaun Bartley, 21, after state lab tests of a bullet fragment collected at the scene tested positive for his DNA and that of the victim, according to the sheriff's office.



Bartley

Facing a murder charge, Bartley turned himself in Monday and was booked into the Duval County jail, where he remains in custody in lieu of \$500,000 bail.

Anthony Carl Whitley, 37, was found slumped inside a Chevrolet Impala that crashed into a fence near 4th and Grunthal streets about 11 p.m. Sept. 4, 2016. Shot several times in the head and wrist, he was pronounced dead at the scene.

"There was an open passenger door that indicated to officers, because of the blood trail leading away from it, that there was another occupant in the vehicle," Lt. Steve Gallaher said Monday. " ... But they were no longer at the scene."

Gallaher said detectives determined the shooting actually took place a couple blocks away near Dot and Grunthal streets and the victims were able to drive away before crashing the Impala. At that location, they found shell casings and bullet fragments.

Shortly after, detectives were notified Marcus Treynard Glover, 20, had shown up at the hospital with multiple gunshot wounds, Gallaher said. Then, he said, Bartley came into the emergency room, shot in the hand.

Glover told detectives he and Whitley had arranged for a gun deal to take place at

DNA continues on B-3

Splash and Shop



Shoppers share an umbrella as they walk in the rain Monday at the St. Johns Town Center. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

Bill Brinton 1952-2017

Community leader and attorney dies at 64

Brinton led successful drives to create office term limits and conserve trees

By Charlie Patton
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William D. "Bill" Brinton, an attorney who led successful campaigns to limit outdoor signs, create term limits for city offices and protect trees, died Monday morning. He was 64.

"He was probably the greatest example of the servant/leader I have known in my life," said Nina Waters, president of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "He was tenacious in every cause he chose ... It's a huge loss for this community."

"He was absolutely driven as far as anything he did," said Graham Allen, who worked with Mr. Brinton for 41 years. "He probably accomplished as much or more than any president

of the Jacksonville Bar Association ever has. He was a driving force in anything he did."

In 1987, frustrated that City Council seemed unwilling to enact an ordinance to implement recommendations from a Jacksonville Community Council Inc. study that argued for limits to be placed on outdoor advertising, Mr. Brinton co-founded Citizens Against Proliferation of Signs, CAPSigns for short.

Mr. Brinton knew the city charter provided for citizen-initiated amendments. So he wrote an amendment and organized a petition drive to get his amendment on the ballot. Voters approved. It was the start of a three decade long battle that made Brinton "one of the preeminent na-

"He was probably the greatest example of the servant/leader I have known in my life. He was tenacious in every cause he chose. ... It's a huge loss for this community."

Nina Waters

president of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

tional experts on sign regulation and the First Amendment," said Tracy Arpen, his CAPSigns co-founder.

He used the same approach — placing a citizen-initiated amendment on the ballot following a petition drive — to enact term limits on elected city positions in 1991. In 2000, he co-founded Citizens for Tree Preservation and once again put a citizen-initiated on the ballot to protect trees. Voters approved overwhelmingly.

He also led campaigns to get City Council to pass an anti-litter law and led

an unsuccessful effort to create a dedicated funding source, a one-mill property tax, for the public library system.

CAPSigns and Citizens for Tree Preservation merged to become Scenic Jacksonville. In May, he was honored at a luncheon for his work on behalf of Scenic Jacksonville. During the luncheon, it was announced that an endowment has been established at the Community Foundation which, when fully funded at \$300,000, will

BRINTON continues on B-3



Attorney Bill Brinton, who 30 years ago co-founded an organization that has evolved into Scenic Jacksonville, died Monday morning. He had been battling lung cancer. (Photo by Leah Powell)

DNA

Continued from B-1

the Dot Street location, but during the deal, a masked gunman confronted and robbed them.

"During that robbery attempt, Marcus said he pulled his handgun and there was a gunfight between him and the robber, and that's when Whitley was shot and killed," the lieutenant said.

Bartley told detectives he had been walking down the sidewalk several blocks away when he heard gunshots and then noticed he'd been struck in the hand. He said he sought help from a friend, who gave him a ride to the ER.

Gallaher said detectives collected a DNA sample from Bartley with his consent and released him due to a lack of information linking him to the shooting. Gallaher said police tracked down the gun buyer, who backed up Glover's account.

"Detectives were able to loosely link the individual in the car buying the guns

and Bartley as associates; however, at this time they are not able to prove that that subject set up this robbery," Gallaher said.

A bullet fragment from the scene was sent to the state police crime lab for processing, which found both Whitley's and Bartley's DNA on it. An analyst determined it must have traveled through Whitley before striking Bartley.

Reached Monday, the victim's younger cousin, Devin Alexander, said the arrest brought him a little closure because he had made peace with Whitley's passing. "He was a good guy who found himself in the wrong spot at the wrong time because somebody put him in a bad situation," he said.

Alexander, 23, said Whitley, described as a gentle giant and teddy bear known to loved ones as "Amp," had been a mentor to him since his father passed away.

"He was a great dad, a great guy and the best cousin I could ask for."

Staff writer Dan Scanlan contributed to this report.
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Castillo de San Marcos rain doesn't deter



Tourists don't let the rain deter them from touring the Castillo de San Marcos grounds Friday, June 16, in St. Augustine, Fla. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

FRAUD

Continued from B-1

run by non-public boards rather than elected school board members.)

These charter board members had little or no experience operating schools or handling bookkeeping, payroll or facilities, according to the affidavit.

May, through Newpoint, charged the charter schools a management fee of 18 percent of whatever the state sent the schools in per-student funding, plus his expenses, the affidavit says.

May hired a bookkeeping company for all the schools and directed that company to weekly withdraw all but \$1,000 from each charter school's bank account and to deposit those funds into a single Newpoint bank account.

The affidavit said such co-mingling of funds is against Florida law and was done without the knowledge of charter school board members.

According to the affidavit, May used his own companies to buy and then sell items and services to the charter schools at hundreds of thousands of dollars over the actual cost.

He had some of his companies pay "leases" to another of his companies, which in turn paid off mortgages and downpayments on his personal homes.

He also had the charter schools lease furniture, equipment and computers from a company he and a partner owned. That company within a couple days then paid "kickbacks" to May or to Newpoint for no apparent reason, the affidavit says.

In 2014, his partner's company, called School Warehouse, received \$375,000 from Newpoint schools in Duval and Pinellas counties which had paid markups of 165 percent over retail prices.

School Warehouse sent \$175,000 of that to a Fifth Third Bank account to pay the partner's home mortgage and the rest, \$200,000, went to another related company, which transferred \$25,000 to a real estate company owned by May and \$175,000 to First Merit Bank, where it was applied to a balance on May's home equity credit line, the affidavit says.

In 2015, School Warehouse received more than \$225,000 from Newpoint's charter schools, and School Warehouse wired \$100,000 to another real

estate company owned by May, the affidavit said.

A similar kick back scheme involved Apex Learning, a Washington online learning company.

Beginning in 2012, Apex charged Newpoint's charter schools an "elevated" price for online curriculum and materials and "rebate" back to Newpoint — not the schools — the difference between the elevated and the actual price, the charges say.

That way, Apex rebated to \$23,785 to May from Duval, part of more than \$700,000 in rebates from Apex, the affidavit says.

The affidavit also alleges that charter schools paid for "fictitious" furniture, equipment and computers from companies linked to May.

When Newpoint-controlled charter schools closed, many missing items listed on inventories couldn't be found. In some cases, there was no paperwork proving an item had been delivered. In other cases the paperwork shows the school paid a lot more than the item's price, Edgar said.

Also, Newpoint-managed charter schools won \$3.7 million in charter school program grants from the state, based on

how many students were supposed to attend the schools. The affidavit lists four cases of over-estimated enrollment for bigger than usual payments.

For instance, in 2013, Newpoint said its Duval school would have 225 students and it took \$350,000 from the state. The school enrolled just 54 students, the affidavit states.

About 85 percent of those grant funds, or \$3.2 million, reimbursed Newpoint schools for invoices submitted by May-selected vendors "at grossly marked-up prices," the affidavit said.

The affidavit says parents were overcharged for school uniforms and that uniform, lunch and activities fees went into a bank account for May.

Some of the charges linked to one of May's companies included Visa-paid trips to Amsterdam, the British and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Brussels, Cancun, China, France, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Japan, Los Cabos and Italy.

It is unclear when this case will be heard. A previously set August court date will likely be postponed in light of the new charges, McGee and Edgar said.

Denise Smith Amos: 904-359-4083

PATTON

Continued from B-1

African woman and her son, who recently arrived in Jacksonville, spent 20 years in a refugee camp.

When they are allowed into the country, they pay for all the services they receive including \$1,250 per person for travel to the U.S., she said. They are given money to get them started, but the money is

a loan, not a gift. They are expected to repay all the money they receive and are given a bill by the government. They can't obtain a loan to buy a home or a car until that debt is discharged. They start paying taxes as soon as they start working.

Last year, Lutheran Social Services brought 294 refugees to Jacksonville. So far this year, they've brought in 138.

Charlie Patton: (904) 359-4413

BRINTON

Continued from B-1

support the work of Scenic Jacksonville.

Born in Kansas City, Mr. Brinton came to Jacksonville in 1959 when his father became head of the city's public library system. After graduating from Lee High School, he earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and a law degree from the University of Florida.

After interning in the summer of 1976 with the Jacksonville law firm Freeman, Richardson, where Allen was a young attorney, he joined that firm in 1977. In 1989, he and Allen formed Allen, Brinton, Simmons & McCarthy.

In 2000, Rogers Towers bought that firm and Allen and Mr. Brinton became shareholders in Rogers Towers.

"He was staunchly loyal," Allen said. "He always had your back."

He was also a dedicated family man who had two daughters and three grandchildren to whom he was known as Pops.

Survivors include his wife, Cathy Brinton, daughters Caroline Brinton and Leslie Bicksley, and grandchildren, Luke and Adams Graham, and Virginia Bicksley, all of Jacksonville.

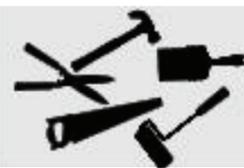
A funeral is planned for 10:30 a.m. Thursday at St. Matthew's Catholic Church, 1773 Blanding Blvd.

Charlie Patton: (904) 359-4413



Your HOME Source

An Advertising Special Feature



M. Daigle & Sons: Start summer with the room of your dreams

Warm weather comes and goes in Northeast Florida, so you never know what the season will bring. Mike Daigle, founder and owner of M. Daigle & Sons, recommends that homeowners think about adding a low-emission glass room.

It's the perfect way to enjoy the outdoors without suffering through the blistering heat or afternoon downpours. Equipped with more than 35 years of experience in many home enhancements, M. Daigle & Sons contractors can build a glass room addition on your home that will keep you comfortable and able to enjoy in any type of weather.

The company's knowledgeable contractors specialize in exterior improvements — such as low-E, screwless glass rooms — that can become an extension of your home. M. Daigle and Sons can also ensure that pests or hot air won't find their way through your siding or windows.

For siding, the offerings include low-maintenance vinyl, great for replacing old wood siding, which tends to rot, and durable Hardie board products. According to Daigle, the trend seems to be that

homeowners electing to enhance their current homes instead of trading up in the market. He carries top-of-the-line siding, windows and doors backed by guarantees from both his company and the manufacturer.

"We're an honest company. We're here to help customers and enrich their lives," said Daigle. "Our business has grown due to our reputation for quality, consistently satisfying our customers and exceeding their expectations."

Customer satisfaction is one of the foundations of Daigle's business plan, and he customizes a work plan with every client.

"When I sit down with a customer to prepare a proposal, each aspect of the proposal is designed specifically with that job in mind," Daigle said. "We encourage people to think about it, compare prices, look at our customer reviews and contact the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation and the Better Business Bureau. I'm proud of this business; we're in this as a family and we want our customers to feel like they're part of the family. This

is evident by our commitment that each customer either meets with the owner or one of the sites. We don't have salesmen looking for a commission check."

Daigle started his career in residential construction in 1978, gaining decades of experience in exterior home improvements. His seven sons have worked with him over the years, and four — Ted, Beau, Brian and Stephen — continue to work with him in renovating, improving and restoring homes throughout Florida.

"My name, and my family's name, is on each and every project from start to finish so, open, honest communication in all aspects of the project is our priority," said Daigle.

For your free, no-pressure estimate on any exterior home improvements, especially sun and screen rooms, vinyl siding and Next Generation products, call today or visit www.mdaigleandsons.com.

M. Daigle & Sons is a one-stop shop and brings the same dedication to every project, large and small. As Mike has said since day one, "We take pride in our work, we put our name on it."



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