

CAROLINA NEWS

Civil War submarine might be lifted from watery grave

BY JIM DAVENPORT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Confederate submarine Hunley could be lifted from its watery grave by mid-July.

The Hunley Commission accepted a proposal from Oceaneering International Inc. on Thursday to lift the vessel. That sets in motion a multistep approval process to raise the Hunley.

Oceaneering International is the same company that raised the Liberty Bell 7 space capsule last year and has been involved in several aircraft wreckage recoveries operations.

Representatives of the company set July as a goal for having the Hunley out of the water. That work would take about 60 days.

The Hunley was the first submarine in history to sink an enemy warship. The vessel, which had a hand-cranked pro-

PELLER and was fashioned from locomotive boilers, went down with its nine-man crew in February 1864 after sinking the Union blockade ship Housatonic. Why it sank off Sullivan's Island has remained a mystery.

Officials hope the expedition to raise the vessel will get under way late this spring.

The Hunley Commission had originally projected raising the sub in 2001. But a conservation tank and lab at the old Charleston Navy Base should be complete by April, allowing an earlier start.

Officials hope to raise the sub sometime in June or July, before the height of the hurricane season.

Project manager Robert Neyland has said workers could spend as long as two months around-the-clock over the site off Sullivan's Island, just outside Charleston's harbor where the submarine was found buried almost five years ago.

Workers are expected to craft a steel frame around the submarine to support it.

Then a crane will lift the frame and the sub to the surface.

The project's cost is estimated at \$16 million, which includes an endowment for future maintenance.

After the Hunley is raised, it will take about a year to excavate the inside of the sub, which includes recovering the crew's remains. The outside of the submarine will be kept in near-freezing water to protect it as the work proceeds.

The vessel will eventually be moved to the Charleston Museum for display.

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Candidate receives elections infraction

BY PATRICK RATHBUN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The Student Government Elections Commission met Thursday to decide the ramifications of three alleged candidate violations.

The first of the election code infractions was filed Wednesday against senate candidate Chanika Williams for a poster-placement infraction. According to the description of the violation, "Mrs. Williams apparently misplaced her signs illegally on the first floor of Gambrell Hall. This inexcusable infraction cannot go unpunished. Mrs. Williams has multiple posters hung on the bulletin board." Williams wasn't present to defend herself at the meeting, but released a statement to the committee explaining the mistake as an "oversight." The elections committee issued a warning to Williams for the alleged infraction.

Another alleged violation was filed Monday against presidential candidate Katie Taylor for an online infraction. According to the description of the violation, "Ms. Taylor has a hyperlink to USC's VIP online on her Web site. When you click on the link, it takes you directly to VIP." Taylor's campaign manager, David Taylor, was present at the meeting and presented a rebuttal. Taylor said as soon as he heard the site was violating the candidate's packet, he changed it so it wouldn't provide a link to the VIP page. The committee concluded that ignorance wasn't an excuse and issued an infraction to Taylor.

The last alleged infraction was brought against presidential candidate Mark Hartney, who was accused of person-to-person distribution of his campaign and/or election information. Hartney said that he generally made a point of avoiding hand-to-hand distribution of materials and that he didn't specifically recall handing out any information. The committee didn't reach a final decision as to the punishment of the alleged violation.

Gas prices highest in 10 years

STAFF REPORTS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The highest gas prices in South Carolina in a decade are putting the pinch on business and state agencies' fuel budgets, with things likely to worsen.

Fuel-cost overruns for the state's 5,600 school buses are approaching \$3 million, said Donald Tudor, transportation director at the state Department of Education. The department is using unspent money from last year and hoping to make up the difference a year from now, he said.

If prices keep rising, some travel may be restricted, said Lexington County Administrator Art Brooks.

A gallon of unleaded regular averages \$1.25 in South Carolina. Tom Crosby of AAA Carolinas predicts a 10- to 15-cent per gallon increase in the next few weeks.

"There's nothing on the horizon that says it's going to come down," Crosby said.

Prices haven't been this high since January 1990, seven months before the Persian Gulf crisis, according to AAA. A year ago, a gallon of unleaded regular averaged 84.6 cents, AAA said. The Charlotte, N.C.-based consumer travel group gets its numbers from the Oil Price Information Service, which samples 15,000 gas stations in the Carolinas.

This year's increase is caused by production cutbacks that began in 1998 and renewed demand from recovering Asian economies, Crosby said.

Government agencies are monitoring the rate increases. So far, the overage is small enough that agencies can absorb them, officials said.



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