

Secretaries Day

Area secretaries celebrate the 49th annual Administrative Professionals Day, noting how their duties have evolved over the years.
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Inquiry in police shooting on hold

■ It will be at least May before a grand jury hears about the case.

By LISE FISHER
Sun staff writer

A grand jury investigation into the January shooting death of a college student by a Gainesville Police officer will be delayed until at least next month, State Attorney Bill Cervone said.

Cervone, who initially planned to take the case to a grand jury no later than April, now says he hopes a hearing will be held in May.

Cervone said the delay has been caused because of difficulties gathering "necessary information," but he would not elaborate.

The area's chief prosecutor did not rule out the possibility it could be June before the grand jury will be convened in the case of University of Florida student Corey Rice.

Cervone said he intends to present the case of Rice and GPD Officer Jimmy Hecksel to grand jurors himself.

Rice, 30, died after Hecksel, 29, fired as many as seven shots at him on Jan. 30. All shots were fired at the driver's side of Rice's car. Hecksel told officers he pulled Rice over for erratic driving when Rice suddenly backed up and then began driving toward him. A camera in Hecksel's car captured the incident on tape.

Investigators have talked with witnesses who were in the area when the shooting occurred. But the only witnesses during the critical moments of the shooting were Hecksel, Rice and the camera, a source close to the case said.

It's expected that grand jurors will consider laws regarding self-defense and justifiable homicide and all degrees of murder charges, including manslaughter.

The tape, which has not been made public, likely will be shown to the grand jury.

Cervone said he would not discuss his presentation to grand jurors or specifics of the investigation, including toxicology results. The tests were done to determine if Rice had been using drugs or alcohol.

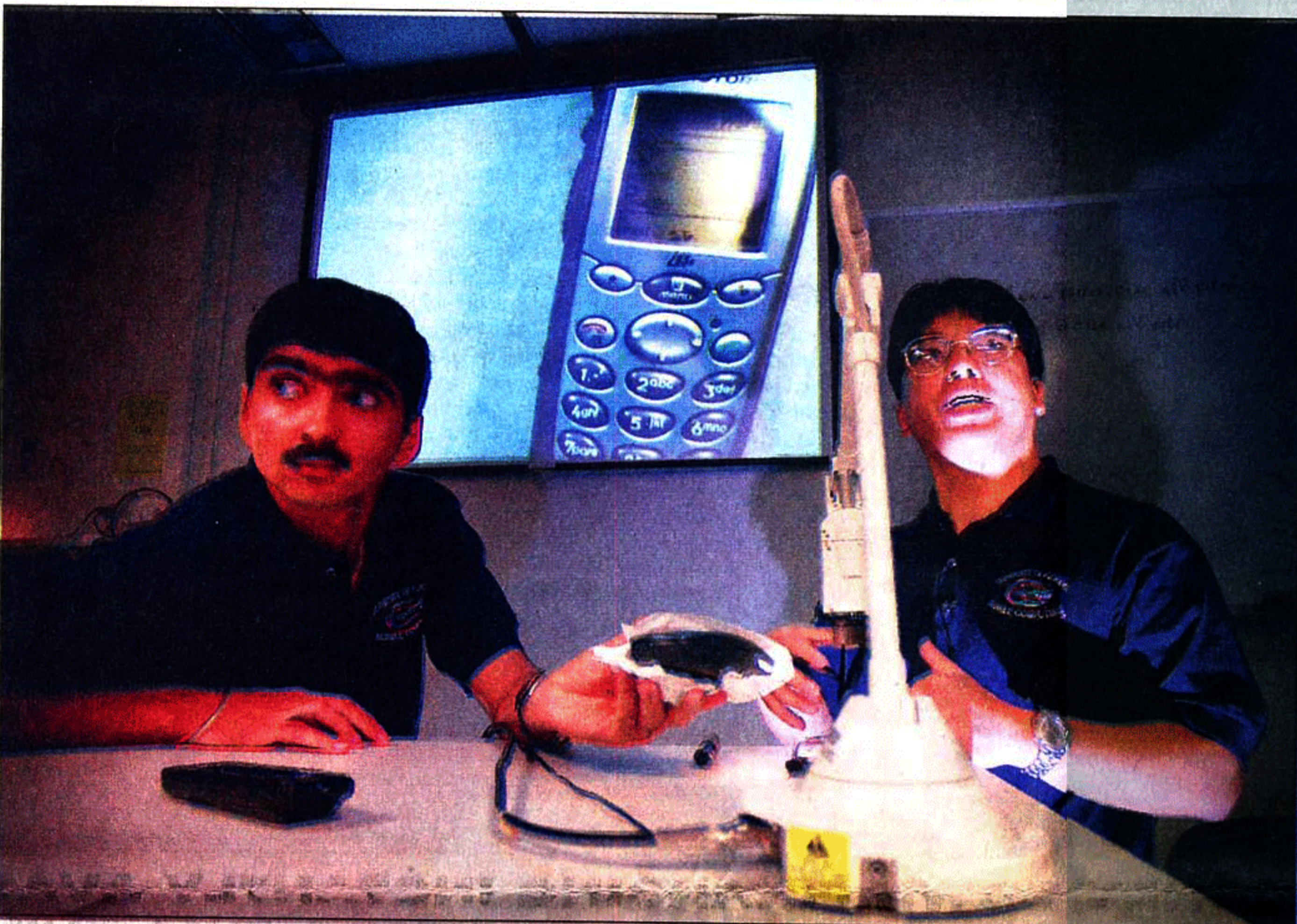
DELAY continued on Page 4B

UF students design 'killer apps'

Gadgets to sell phones



The new cellular phone, called the Motorola iDEN, uses the computer language Java, which enables the use of more complex applications.



Photos by JON M. FLETCHER/The Gainesville Sun

Describing a cellular phone-based system he created for keeping track of travel expenses, Yohzhong Liu, right, was one of several University of Florida computer engineering students to demonstrate advanced applications they developed for a new cellphone developed by Motorola that is capable of processing advanced computer languages. UF computer engineering student Varun Verma assists.

Uses range from coffee checkers to shopping aids

By TIM LOCKETTE
Sun staff writer

Kevin Birkett has seen the future, and it looks a lot like a Dilbert cartoon.

"If I spend 15 minutes a day checking the coffee machine, and I'm a \$60,000-a-year employee, I'm getting paid \$1,800 a year to drink coffee," he said. "Our application changes all that."

Birkett and his friend David Nordstedt are the creators of iCoffee Club, a computer program that links office workers' cellphones to the office coffee pot — a program that allows supervisors to check on whether the pot is full and to call "volunteers" to make new coffee when it's empty.

They're also among the two dozen University of Florida computer



Motorola senior technical staffer Jyh-Han Lin judges a team's presentation during the contest.

science students who have spent the last two months searching for a "killer app" for Motorola's new iDEN cellular phone.

Motorola's new product is the first cellular phone that uses Java, the

programming language that brought gimmicky, flashy "applets" to the Web. The phone hit the market earlier this month, but UF students started writing programs for the phones months ago, part of a Motorola-sponsored contest to see who can write the best program for the device. The students presented their ideas to Motorola executives on campus Tuesday.

The grand prize in the contest is a job at Motorola — and maybe a place in computing history. Motorola executives tout the phone as a groundbreaking development in "mobile computing." In 10 years, they say, Java-equipped cellphones will be indispensable.

"It'll be like a magic wand," Motorola executive Jaime Borrás said.

PHONE continued on Page 3B

COUNTYWIDE STATE OF EMERGENCY

Tiny beetle causes big problems

■ Alachua County will begin cutting down loblolly pines to fight the infestation of pine beetles.

By JANINE YOUNG SIKES
Sun staff writer

A Southern pine beetle outbreak in Alachua County — the likes of which haven't been seen since 1994 — spurred county officials on Tuesday to declare a state of emergency.

State Division of Forestry officials have identified nearly 100 areas in the county with pine beetle infestations, mostly in neighborhoods with large concentrations of loblolly pines, the pest's favorite snack.

"If there was some magic way that I could bring a helicopter in and pluck the loblollies out, I would," said Dave Conser, Alachua County Forester with the state Division of Forestry.

Within the next week, the county plans to implement a cost-sharing program to encourage residents to remove infected trees.

Left unchecked, the pine beetle problem could spread to thousands of trees, officials fear. In 1994, more than 42,000 trees were cut down countywide as a result of a pine beetle epidemic.

The county plans to contract with either the city of

FYI: Pine beetles

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BEEBLE continued on Page 4B

Airport board member quits

By RAY WASHINGTON
Sun staff writer

Airport governing board member Roger Brower has announced his resignation from the panel, effective May 1.

Brower, 58, said his decision to resign from the nine-member Gainesville-Alachua County Regional Airport Authority was based on "totally personal" considerations.

"It is not an issue with the authority," said Brower, a staunch defender of the beleaguered board, whose members are appointed by Gainesville City Commissioners, Alachua County Commissioners and the governor.

A special city- and county-appointed panel last year

BROWER continued on Page 4B



Brower

Dateline Florida



The Associated Press

MIAMI Helping kids just say no

Florida first lady Columba Bush is surrounded by youngsters Tuesday during the Drug Free Youth in Town summit in Miami.

sexual battery charges, police announced. John Wei was taken into custody last week by the FBI

in San Jose, Calif., after fleeing to avoid prosecution, authorities said Monday.

4 animal research projects suspended

By CARRIE MILLER
Sun staff writer

Four animal experiments at the University of Florida have been suspended indefinitely because the researcher has used more than three times as many rabbits over the past year as had been approved.

In order to do future experiments at UF, veterinary researcher David Armstrong will have to be monitored by his department chair and dean, with quarterly audits of how many animals he is using, a biomedical oversight committee recommended at a special meeting Tuesday.

And any data gathered in experiments on unapproved animals must be reported as such to the pharmaceutical companies that paid for his research into drugs that suppress blood vessel growth

A UF researcher used more than three times as many rabbits as had been approved.

in the eye. As UF's use of research animals remains under intense scrutiny by federal regulators and a private accrediting agency, members of its Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee said they were trying to send a message.

"I say we err on the side of being extremely conservative," said Nanette Parratto-Wagner, a veterinarian on the committee.

"If we look at this under the entire umbrella of compliance issues that have plagued the

EXPERIMENTS continued on Page 3B

FERNANDINA BEACH Former deputy charged with killing his mother

A former deputy sheriff has been charged with second-degree murder in the beating death of his 77-year-old mother, who was found with her hands and feet bound.

Dwight William Parker, 39, a Nassau County deputy from 1985 to 1986, was charged in Louise Sears Parker's death and also with the theft of her television.

Louise Parker's husband, Thomas V. Parker, who died last month, was a former police chief in Fernandina Beach. Another son, Thomas V. Parker, is a Putnam County deputy sheriff.

OAKLAND PARK Massage parlor owner faces battery charges

The owner of an Oakland Park