

The Crimson White



Who needs spring break with gallons of green beer?

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Gymnastics wants to keep beating Auburn

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Don't fear the mad cow
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Serving the University of Alabama since 1894

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NCAA TOURNAMENT, ROUND ONE ■ ALABAMA 90, MARQUETTE 85

Tide shoots down the Eagles

Felix, Steele snipe away in first-round win

By **MATT SCALICI**
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SAN DIEGO — After a season of ups, downs, injuries and setbacks, even a bomb scare wasn't able to rattle the Alabama basketball team.

After being delayed by an hour because of a bomb scare at Cox Arena, the 10th-seeded Crimson Tide held on to win in the first round of the NCAA Tournament Wednesday, upsetting seventh-seeded

Marquette, 90-85. The Tide was led by a career-high 31-point performance from senior forward Jean Felix.

Felix was simply unstoppable from outside the arc, nailing 8-of-11 3-pointers along with 7 of 8 from the free throw line.

Felix's performance set a new school record for 3-pointers in an NCAA Tournament game and gives the Tide crucial momentum heading into a second round matchup with No. 2-seeded UCLA Saturday.

"We had tough games like when we faced Kentucky, but we knew we had to keep our composure during this game,"

Up next:

Alabama will face UCLA Saturday at 7:30 p.m. The game will be carried on CBS.

said Felix, a native of Pointe-Noire, Congo. "I had to keep my head in the game, but it's not just myself but the team and their trust."

Both teams had plenty of reasons to have their heads out of the game after an early morning bomb scare nearly shut down the tournament site

on the campus of San Diego State University.

"During the normal course of security checks at Cox Arena, bomb dogs were drawn to an unidentified source around a vending cart," according to an NCAA statement. NCAA officials and law enforcement agreed to evacuate the building. After examining the cart, officials gave the OK for the game to go ahead one hour after its scheduled tip-off.

"Both teams experienced this, so it wasn't just us," said Tide forward Jermareo Davidson. "That cannot be a

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Alabama's Richard Hendrix (center) drives to the basket against Marquette's Wesley Matthews (bottom), Ousmane Barro (42) and Jamil Lott (top right) during the first half of the Tide's 90-85 win over the Golden Eagles in the NCAA Basketball Tournament Thursday in San Diego. AP/ Denis Poroy

Home sweet Strip

Lai Lai owners have become a fixture of the UA community

By **KATIE STALLCUP**
Staff Reporter
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The bells on the door clinked as a customer walked in to Lai Lai Chinese Restaurant Wednesday night.

"Congratulations, you're our last customer of the night," a cashier said as she flipped the sign in the window to "closed."

Once the customers trickled out, Lisa Chen sat down at one of the handful of tables. She smiled warmly and introduced herself.

Lisa, 41, and her husband, Jimmy, 48, own and operate Lai Lai on the Strip. It's a popular Chinese restaurant for students to pick up lunch or dinner, decorated with Chinese lanterns and photos of meals on the menu.

Pans and dishes clanked in the small kitchen behind the counter. Jimmy was busy cleaning up, so Lisa did the talking.

She told how the two moved to the United States from Taipei, Taiwan, in 1995. Jimmy

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Taiwan natives Lisa and Jimmy Chen have made the Strip their home with their popular Chinese restaurant, Lai Lai. CW/ Cory Johnson

"We feel very young and feel [the] energy in Tuscaloosa, especially on the Strip."

— **LISA CHEN**
owner of Lai Lai Chinese restaurant on the Strip



"Forrest Gump" author Winston Groom accepts the 2006 Clarence Cason Award from the College of Communication and Information Sciences Thursday night. Media relations/ Jessie Maxwell

'Forrest Gump' author, alum given award

By **TIFFANY SCHWARZ**
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UA graduate Winston Groom is best known for his novel "Forrest Gump," the basis for the 1994 movie that won six Oscars, including best picture.

But it was Groom's various non-fiction works, not the famous novel, that won him the Clarence Cason Award, which is the keynote award each year from the College of Communication and Information Sciences.

"Maybe I should just talk about myself, which is my favorite subject," said Groom as he accepted the award Thursday night at the Sheraton Four-Points hotel.

Groom tried to answer the question of why he writes, taking the audience through his long career, which began as a 12-year-old when he entered, and won, a Mobile Register Christmas writing competition for children.

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Bama Dining locations like the Ferguson Food Court now accept debit and credit cards.



UA dining facilities now take credit, debit cards

Students say change is 'on time' because of dwindling Dining Dollars

By **STEPHEN DAWKINS**
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James Roberts had no cash on Thursday, few Dining Dollars and no Bama Cash. But, thanks to a recent change, Roberts could still get a meal on campus.

All Bama Dining locations now accept Visa and MasterCard, said Virginia Johnson, director of UA Auxiliary Services, and will accept Discover cards after spring break. A problem with the Discover merchant ID caused the delay, she said.

"Hell yeah, right on time," said Roberts, a senior majoring in international business. Roberts said he can now use his credit card to get food on campus, but his father "probably won't like it too much" because he gets the

bill.

March 6 was the first day locations began accepting credit and debit cards. Johnson told The Crimson White in December 2005 that the credit system would be up by March 1, but Johnson said testing has taken longer than expected.

Johnson said there have been no problems with the technical aspect. "It has just been really smooth," she said.

So far this week, credit and debit sales accounted for 3.4

percent of total sales, Johnson said, which is lower than officials expected.

Officials studied many other schools that accept credit cards in their dining facilities and "generally, it's somewhere between 8 percent and 10 percent," Johnson said.

The slow start could be because not many students know about the change yet, she said. Advertisements were bought

See **CARDS**, Page 3

Senate wants SGA scholarship for freshmen

Attorney general review committee gives report, FAC allocations approved

By LORI CREEL
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SGA senators approved a resolution Thursday night recommending a new \$1,000 scholarship be created for incoming freshmen who have served as leaders in their high school student governments or other student organizations.

"If these students had the chance to apply for an SGA-sponsored scholarship, they may have more incentive to become members of the University of Alabama SGA," says the resolution by College of Arts and Sciences Sen. Amanda Minor.

The resolution requests the money for the scholarship be taken from the SGA general fund overseen by the SGA vice president of financial affairs. A committee will also be assembled to create the scholarship applications and select the scholarship recipients.

Students who would receive the SGA-sponsored scholarship would be required to serve on the SGA scholarship committee during their freshman year.

Senators also approved a resolution authored by Graduate School Sen. Elizabeth Hendrix

that asks the University to fund the student health insurance policy as part of the compensation package for graduate teaching assistants, research assistants and administrative assistants.

The resolution says that funding health insurance would help the Capstone become more competitive with other schools. The University stipend package for graduate students is nearly \$4,000 below the national average.

The attorney general review committee also issued its report on the position, created this year by SGA President Mary Margaret Carroll and filled by former Graduate School Sen. Prince Cleveland. The committee recommended in a resolution by College of Arts and Sciences Sen. Meghan Stringer that the position's interim period be extended to through the fall 2006 semester, when a new committee will decide whether to make the position permanent.

The committee said it is too soon to make a decision about continuing the position. It also made several recommendations for the attorney general position in its report.

The committee called for the attorney general to explain the need for a deputy post and requests permission to appoint one. The nominee would also require Senate approval.

Other resolutions, FAC allocations approved

■ A resolution calling for Tuscaloosa to implement regulations on the towing industry.

■ A resolution supporting the efforts of Mayor Walt Maddox to place more police patrols on the Strip and encouraging a statement that the problems on the Strip were not because of underage drinking.

■ A resolution calling for The Crimson White to choose an editor "who will attempt to strike a balance among articles which express a political viewpoint," charging that the paper's opinions page is too liberal.

■ A resolution calling for Bama Dining to "correct the attitude issues inherent at The 24-Hour Diner."

The Senate also approved allocations made by the Financial Affairs Committee to student organizations. Of \$46,483.39 requested, SGA allocated \$17,295.60.

Allocations include:

■ Public Relations Student Society of America received \$600 out of \$858.49 requested.

■ International Folk Dancers received \$694.22; \$644.22 was requested.

■ Student Health Advisory Council received \$300, the amount requested.

■ The National Press Photographers Association's request for \$1,172.56 was tabled.

■ The American Market Association received \$600 out of \$1,264.78 requested.

■ Gamma Beta Phi received

\$565 out of \$1,100 requested.

■ Student Ad Team received \$1,615 out of \$3,465 requested.

■ Proseuche Group Association received \$1,200 out of \$4,285.78 requested.

■ Campus Crusade for Christ's request for \$1,200 was tabled.

■ Lambda Alpha Beta received \$1,200 out of \$4,100 requested.

■ Theta Tau received \$1,200; \$847.65 was requested.

■ Society of Women Engineers received \$1,200 out of \$1,506 requested.

■ WVUA 90.7 FM received \$1,000 out of \$12,000 requested.

■ Circle K received \$1,323.38 out of \$1,455.38 requested.

■ American Society of

Interior Design received \$100, the amount requested.

■ Phi Upsilon Omicron received \$100, the amount requested.

■ UA chapter of American Choral Director's Association received \$900; \$554.18 was requested.

■ Tuscaloosa Chinese Christian Church received \$1,200 out of \$3,600 requested.

■ Alabama Portuguese Student Association received \$910, the amount requested.

■ Alabama Crew received \$1,388 out of \$4,159.85 requested.

■ International Students Association received no funding out of \$720 requested.

■ Institute of Industrial Engineers received \$1,200 out of \$2,139.50 requested.

According to the report, the attorney general should also take over two of the duties assigned to the executive secretary in the SGA Constitution. The duties, to "maintain the SGA Constitution" and to "keep and make available a permanent record of this

Constitution," would return to the executive secretary if the attorney general position is discontinued.

Senators also introduced several new resolutions. Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration Sen. Adam

Rankin authored a resolution that calls on the University to allow students to charge their textbooks to their student accounts by the fall 2006 semester. Rankin advocated such a move during his failed SGA presidential bid earlier this month.

The resolution said other student expenses, such as health center charges and parking tickets, are charged to student accounts, and charging textbooks to student accounts would give students more time to raise enough money to cover the expenses.

SGA to give two \$1,000 scholarships to students

Few have applied, financial affairs VP says

By TRACEY MITCHELL
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The SGA will give \$1,000 scholarships to two students who submit applications to its third-floor Ferguson Center office by noon on March 27. All freshmen, sophomores and juniors not on the SGA's executive council can apply.

Applications are available in the SGA office or on the SGA Web site at sga.ua.edu.

Scholarship winners will be announced at the SGA banquet on April 4.

SGA Vice President of Financial Affairs Lauren Elliott said the scholarships provide opportunities for students.

"It is hard for students to find scholarships" after

On the web
www
sga.ua.edu

"If students have a particular reason as to why they should be awarded, they can submit an essay explaining their situation or reasons," Elliott said.

Elliott said that while there are no specific criteria for the selection of the scholarship recipients, there are some things the SGA is looking for out of applicants.

"The committee will look at the person's contributions to the campus and/or the community," Elliot said. "If it comes down to it, we may also look at overall GPA."

Elliott said that these qualities will be taken into consideration when draining the applicant pool but are not necessarily the end-all qualifications of scholarship winners.

For more information on the scholarships, e-mail Elliott at sgavpfa@sa.ua.edu.

they enroll, she said. "These scholarships are a way to add a chance for money not available to those college students."

Elliott said only a couple of applications have been submitted to the SGA so far.

"I made the applications easy as possible," she said. "I didn't want to turn people away from submitting, so the application is just straightforward and simple."

Students can provide additional information emphasizing that they deserve the scholarships, such as letters of recommendation or proof of financial need, along with the application.

U.S. forces launch air assault

By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — On Thursday, U.S. forces and Iraqi troops launched what the military described as the largest air assault since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, targeting insurgent strongholds north of the capital.

The U.S. military said

the raid, dubbed Operation Swarmer, was aimed at clearing "a suspected insurgent operating area" northeast of Samarra and was expected to last several days.

The Pentagon said 41 people were arrested, but it was not clear if suspected insurgents put up any resistance.

Residents in the targeted area said there was a heavy

U.S. and Iraqi troop presence, and large explosions could be heard in the distance.

The U.S. military said there was no firing or bombing from the air and the source of the blasts was not known.

"More than 1,500 Iraqi and coalition troops, over 200 tactical vehicles and more than 50 aircraft participated in the operation," the military

The Crimson White

Rated 2nd in the Southeast competition for Best Student Newspaper at the Southeastern Journalism Conference



"Serving the University of Alabama since 1894"

CARDS

Continued from Page 1

in issues of The Crimson White this week, and officials have put up signs at cash registers at the Ferguson Center Food Court and other locations.

Students interviewed Thursday said they were not aware of the change, but said it is a needed one.

Jamie Abrzot, a freshman majoring in political science, said she is out of Dining Dollars so it is "good news" to know Bama Dining locations accept credit and debit cards.

"Well, it probably just means I'll spend all my real money because stuff costs so much [at the Ferg Food Court]," Abrzot said.

Julia Neil, a freshman majoring in business, said the change will not affect her.

"I have a debit card, but I'm not gonna use it at the Ferg," Neil said.

The main reason for implementing the credit card system is convenience for students, Johnson said.

The system will make it especially convenient for prospective students and their parents who visit the University during the summer, she said.

Dining facilities at different universities accepting credit and debit cards is a growing trend, Johnson said.

"It's very laborious to go through the process of being able to accept cards, so a lot of colleges haven't done it yet," she said.

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Our View

Try towing this away

You park somewhere that seems like it's maybe not the best place. Maybe it's at a friend's apartment complex or maybe it's in a spot without those familiar white lines. Wherever it is, you've probably parked there countless times, and it's always been OK. This time, however, you come back to an empty space. Your car's been towed.

Either it's happened to you or you know someone who has been unfortunate enough to lose his car to a tow truck. In a city and a campus starved for parking, it's only inevitable that some vehicles will have to be towed. And to be fair, sometimes the towing is deserved — if you knowingly park in front of a yellow curb or in some private lot, that's the game you play. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose.

This patrol towing, however, is something entirely different. With patrol towing, drivers literally roam the city looking for cars to tow with permission from property owners. None of the garage owners contacted for a Thursday report on towing in Tuscaloosa would 'fess up to patrol towing for good reason.

The entire enterprise seems shady and, at times, extra-legal. Once these companies have towed a person's car, they can charge whatever they want. It's holding vehicles hostage. It's borderline extortion.

SGA business Sen. Nathan Clark's run-in with a towing company pushed him to write a resolution recommending the city of Tuscaloosa reign in these patrol towings. After his car was towed on a Saturday night, Clark had to hunt down the tow truck driver.

"We finally got in touch with the guy, and he said, 'If you're not here with \$160 in cash, then I'm leaving and I won't be here 'til Monday — and it's \$15 per day,'" Clark said.

If a car is towed from public property, then prices are capped. A tow company, when called by the city, is allowed to charge \$75 for a basic tow, \$50 per hour for winch use if needed or car flipping and \$10 per day for storage — a far cry from Clark's \$160 on-demand incident.

Tuscaloosa has the power to regulate non-consent towing like other municipalities. Yet no rules are in place to stop the literal highway robbery that is taking place across the city. There are good towing companies and honest drivers, but to protect us from the ones that aren't, we need caps in place.

In the end, it shouldn't matter whether you're parked on public or private property. All towing — public, private, deserved or underserved — should be the same.

Our View is the consensus of the CW editorial board.

Letter to the Editor

Expect a towing for parking illegally

I do not understand why anyone would be surprised when their car is towed from underneath a sign warning that nonresidents will be towed. I am even more surprised that someone representing their college to the SGA could see a tow truck driver towing cars and a sign warning of being towed and still choose to park where he should not have. How could anyone expect their car to be there when they returned?

I have a simple solution to the towing problem: Don't park where you have no right to park. This will save you the trouble of worrying about what is being charged for towing or wondering if your car will be there when you get back. The article ["Towing in the cash" from Thursday] didn't make mention of the fact that every person who is towed has parked on someone's private property and ignored posted warnings. This seems

typical for your average self-absorbed college student.

I would not want someone parking in my driveway that I did not say could park there; what these people are doing is no different. I think you would get a very different reaction from people living in apartment complexes behind the Strip who often cannot find parking places at their homes because of all the people using a private parking lot like it is a public one.

In six years at this school, I have never once been towed. When I want to visit a friend at their apartment, I get their visitor parking permit. If they don't have one, I use a public lot. I show respect for others' property by not thinking that I have a right to use the parking lot they have provided for their tenants as my own personal space. It's not that hard.

Warren Keith
Graduate student,
mechanical engineering

What, me mad cow worry?

Over the years, I've developed some bad culinary habits.

I can't remember the last time I ate three square meals in a day, and I've got the button combo for my favorite snack, F8, memorized. My food is fast. My food is greasy. My food is very unhealthy.

Probably my worst habit is my love for big, meaty hamburgers cooked as rare as I can get them. There's just something about the taste of a hunk o' pink meat on a soft bun. It's absolutely delectable.

Ruby Tuesday offers my fix: the Ultimate Colossal Burger, a seemingly 2-pound meal unto itself cooked to order. I get it rare, of course.

"Watching Nevin devour a Colossal Burger is like a train wreck," said my friend Jesse Huguette, a junior majoring in mechanical engineering. "You want to look away, but you just have to watch."

With my penchant for beef, it was hard not to notice Monday's announcement that a single cow in the state had tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the brain-wasting disease more commonly known as mad cow. Alabama's confirmed case marked the third known infected animal in the United States.



My View

Will Nevin
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Details, even several days after the public announcement, are sketchy. As reported by The Tuscaloosa News, on a small farm somewhere in northern Alabama, a cow unable to stand or walk was euthanized by a local veterinarian and buried on the farm.

Judging by the cow's teeth, it appeared to be more than 10 years old, meaning it could predate the 1997 ban on ground cattle in cattle feed. Though the cow's origin remains unclear, it had been on the undisclosed farm for less than a year. After the cow's death, samples were sent to the University of Georgia for testing, where it was confirmed that the downed animal was infected with mad

cow disease.

Now, state and federal officials are scrambling for more information. On Wednesday, investigators announced they were going to exhume the cow to get closer to determining the animal's exact age. They are also trying to track down any herd mates or offspring.

So, should we (well, more appropriately, I) be afraid for our nation's cattle? Not according to one Auburn University professor.

"In my opinion, [the beef supply] is 99.99 percent safe," said Dr. Lisa Kriese-Anderson, an associate professor and extension animal scientist. "The material just isn't in the meat."

Kriese-Anderson's "material" is brain matter and spinal cord tissue from infected animals. Unlike the common cold, chicken pox or the bird flu (an over-exaggerated threat for another column), the only way to transmit mad cow disease is by eating infected tissue. To get mad, cows have to eat brains and spine from other cows. To develop the human variant, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, we have to eat those same bovine brain bits, which "just isn't in the meat."

"It's just an animal health issue," Kriese-Anderson said. "The animal was under the

care of a veterinarian. It never went near a harvest facility."

Even a widespread mad cow outbreak among our four-legged friends is unlikely after the 1997 feed protections.

"We have put firewalls in place so this will hopefully never be a widespread problem," Kriese-Anderson said.

Cattlemen also have little to fear, as the professor said she didn't expect to see much of an upswing in prices.

"I'm hoping that it just makes producers more aware and vigilant," Kriese-Anderson said.

Our beef is safe, and Alabama's cows aren't all going to wake up tomorrow with mad cow disease. So there are a few less fears for me. What about my rare hamburgers? Those have got to be bad, right?

"As long as the food was handled properly before cooking and you've got clean surfaces, you can eat your burger not cooked to 160 degrees. You can eat it rare or medium rare," Kriese-Anderson said.

Exactly what I wanted to hear.

Ruby Tuesday, you've got my back, right?

I'll save you a seat, Jesse.

Will Nevin is opinions editor of The Crimson White. His column appears on Fridays.



CW/ Braxton Thrash

History proves Jesus was not imagined

By DEBORAH CROOKE

This column is in response to J. Zachary Dover's Jan. 13 letter to the editor, "Calling the Watchman to account," in which he addressed an article about a court case in Italy. I think Mr. Dover's arguments can be addressed by answering the following two questions: Did the man Jesus ever really exist? How do we know that the Bible, specifically the New Testament, is a reliable source of information?

This column is an answer to the first question. Since the Bible's veracity has been questioned, I turned to ancient non-Christian sources.

Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman historian who lived through the reigns of over a half dozen Roman emperors and has been called the "greatest historian" of ancient Rome. Tacitus is best known for two works: the Annals and the Histories. He recorded at least one reference to Christ and two to early Christianity. The most important is found in the Annals that were written

around A.D. 115. It concerned Nero blaming the Christians for the burning of Rome:

"Consequently to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace," Tacitus wrote. "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus."

It has been noted that Tacitus had to receive his information from some source. He had access to all the official records and reports because of his standing with the government as a historian, including those records filed by Pilate. Other Roman sources mention Jesus, his crucifixion or early Christians and their beliefs include Thallus, Pliny the Younger, Emperor Trojan and Emperor Hadrian.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-97) served Vespasian in both Jerusalem and Rome, the latter period as

his historian. In his Antiquities, written around A.D. 90-95, Josephus speaks about many persons and events of first century Palestine and makes two references to Jesus. The most important of these is more accurately translated from an Arabic manuscript:

"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good and was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."

The other is very brief and in the context of a reference to James, "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ." There are other references to Jesus (Yeshu) in the Jewish Talmud, including a passage that

recounts his "crime" and that he was "hanged" on the eve of the Passover. Crucifixion was commonly referred to as hanging in the first century.

Did Jesus exist, or was he a figment of someone's fertile imagination? The ancient records are clear that a Jewish man named Jesus (Yeshu) did indeed exist, that he was crucified and that his followers reported he was alive again three days later. If you read further in the official records, they confirm that the Romans considered the teachings to be "abominations" because the Roman gods were no longer being worshipped after people became Christians.

The records indicate the Christians were burned, tortured and crucified, but they did not renounce their faith in Jesus.

Do you have a belief you would hold to in the face of such an outcome?

Deborah Crooke is a 1984 UA graduate.

■ GYMNASTICS

Tide gymnasts put streak on the line

Alabama's last loss to Auburn was in 1979

By DAN SELLERS
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The five seniors on the Alabama gymnastics team have compiled an impressive resume.

They have garnered three top-three finishes at the NCAA Championships, 12 All-America honors, three individual national championships, and one SEC championship between them.

However, the five have one more tradition they want to ensure continues tonight.

The Crimson Tide has put together an unprecedented winning streak against archrival Auburn. Each time that those two teams have met in the last 27 years, Alabama has come out with a victory.

Alabama's last loss to the Tigers came on Jan. 20, 1979, by a score of 117.95 to 116.45.

"It's very important to beat them," said senior and three-time NCAA champion Ashley Miles. "Nobody wants to be the first Alabama gymnastics team to lose to Auburn. But I really don't see that happening anytime soon. You've just got to have your game face on and be ready to compete when they come in."

To say the rivalry has been one-sided is an understatement, but coach Sarah Patterson said it gets tougher each year.

"The more you do it the harder it gets, because it would make their whole season if they could come in here and beat us in our home gym," Patterson said. "They're a team that is contending for a berth at the national championship, and I think they have a tremendous possibility of getting there."

Miles, who is ranked first nationally on the vault and floor exercise, acknowledged the improvement made by the Auburn team during her playing days.

"Auburn is a team that has gotten progressively better every year, and the gap has

gotten smaller and smaller," she said. "I don't think [the streak] is going to change too much this year, but in the upcoming years, it's going to be more exciting."

Aside from the match being against Auburn on Friday night, it will be the last performance for the seniors at Coleman Coliseum.

Along with Miles, Tide fans will bid farewell to All-American Mari Bayer, All-American Dana Filetti, Dana Pierce and Rachel Delahoussaye.

Delahoussaye's senior season has been taxing. The Mandeville, La., native endured the hardships with her family in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and learned soon after that she would not be able to compete.

"She is a great role model as a student-athlete," Patterson said. "I don't think I've seen one athlete go through so much. To go through the devastation



CW/ Elliot A. Knight

ABOVE: Senior All-American Mari Bayer performs her routine on the balance beam earlier this season. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Senior Ashley Miles, a 3-time NCAA champion hits her final pose on the floor exercise.

with the hurricane and not being able to compete her senior year, she maintained a very positive attitude."

Delahoussaye has a degenerative bone defect in her wrist that will not allow her to compete.

"It's been a trying year, but it has made me a stronger person," she said. "I had to learn a lot of lessons this year. It's been good to be a part of this team. In the end, it all worked out for the better, and it has helped to shape me into the person I am."

With all the accomplishments and honors achieved by the senior class, there is one thing that the five women have not been a part of: a national championship team.

"That's one of the biggest things that we've wanted to accomplish, but if you focus on that too much, you can't enjoy the journey," Miles said.

Alabama finished second at the NCAA Championships in 2003 and 2005, and third in 2004.

Patterson said she was disappointed that senior night fell on Alabama's spring break because of the rise in student attendance this year, but she hopes for one more big crowd to send the seniors out.

"They are a championship group of ladies," Patterson said. "They've been a key component of our success over the last four years. I'm hoping that we have a great crowd, and they still have a lot left in their career this year, but certainly competing at Coleman has been quite exciting for them."



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■ **BASEBALL**

Tide wants bats hot against Georgia

By **DAN SELLERS**
Senior Sports Reporter
■ sellers@cw.ua.edu

The Alabama baseball team broke out of its recent offensive struggles with a season-high 13 runs in a 13-3 win over the No. 20 Southern Miss Golden Eagles Wednesday night, but the Crimson Tide will have its hands full as SEC play starts up this weekend.

Alabama will travel to Athens, Ga., for a three-game series with No. 25 Georgia starting today. Alabama coach Jim Wells is hoping that the offensive success from the win over Southern Miss will carry over to the weekend.

"We swung the bats well [Wednesday night], so you hope that carries on," Wells said. "Momentum is a big deal. Hopefully we can get that momentum going and get some confidence and swing it like we're capable of doing."

In last weekend's series with No. 6 Nebraska, the Cornhuskers held Alabama to only four runs to earn the sweep. Alabama had trouble finding its stroke the whole series, but the Tide hit .038 with runners in scoring position.

The four runs in the series made it the ninth lowest run total over a three-game series in Alabama history, and it was the first time the Tide had been swept on the road



Alabama Baseball players after a win over Kent State earlier this season. The Crimson Tide heads to Georgia for a three-game series this weekend.

since LSU did it in 2002.

"[The first weekend of SEC play] is one of the most important times to pick up your offense," senior catcher

Kody Valverde said. "We need to start off on a good note because later on our pitcher's arms may get tired, so it's important to come out and

swing it."

Valverde has been the most consistent hitter for the Tide this season and has become the biggest power threat. He

is leading the team in hitting at .324 with five homers and 23 RBIs.

Emeel Salem, who was 3-of-6 on Wednesday, is hitting .321 with eight RBIs and 16 stolen bases.

"A lot of people are going to underestimate us, but we're going to put the bat on the ball and a lot of good things are going to happen."

— **ALEX AVILA**
freshman baseball player

Alabama has had to rely heavily on offensive production from freshmen. Alex Avila, one of those freshmen, struggled early but is starting to find his stroke. He is splitting time between third base and designated hitter, and he is ready to contribute in conference play.

"I knew this is where I wanted to be, because the SEC is like the major leagues of

college baseball," Avila said. "It's something that we've all been looking forward to."

The pitching staff was predicted to be the anchor for this team, and they have been nothing short of impressive. Wade LeBlanc (3-0, 1.75 ERA) has been the workhorse of the Tide, but the success of the pitchers goes beyond one player.

Sophomore reliever David Robertson (1-1, 1.59 ERA) is having an encore of his freshman campaign, and freshman Tommy Hunter (3-1, 2.25 ERA) has performed well as a starter.

Freshman Austin Graham (2-1, 2.87 ERA) was injured in his last outing against South Alabama, but Miers Quigley (1-1, 2.07 ERA) filled in nicely against Southern Miss.

Jake McCarter (2-0, 1.53 ERA) has been the Tide's go-to long reliever, and Josh Copeland (0-0, 2.77 ERA) has been a steady out of the bullpen.

While the Tide's pitching prowess came as no surprise, Avila said that the Alabama offense might surprise some people in SEC play.

"We want to go into Georgia and come out with three wins," Avila said. "And I have a good feeling that it will come through. We can hit. A lot of people are going to underestimate us, but we're going to put the bat on the ball, and a lot of good things are going to happen."

■ **CLUB SPORTS**

Women's crew team looks forward to going varsity

By **JESSIE PATTERSON**
Deputy Sports Editor
■ patterson@cw.ua.edu

With its spring season already underway, the women's rowing team is not only working for a successful season now, but coach Larry Davis is also preparing for the women's club team to become a varsity sport in the fall.

Davis, who was named the women's varsity coach on Feb. 26, is overseeing both the men's and women's club teams.

"We are excited to have a coach of Larry Davis' knowledge and experience on board as we start this new venture," Alabama athletic director Mal Moore said in a statement. "Larry is well respected and connected in the rowing community and brings immediate respect to our program."

Davis, whose first official day of work was on March 13, has served as the head coach of the Alabama Crew Club since 1998.

"Right now my job is to lay the groundwork for the women to be varsity in the fall," Davis said. "We have 30 women and we're targeting to

be at 40 or 50 women next year. As a result of that, we'll be looking at having to buy new equipment, boats, oars and things like that."

Women's rowing is the first varsity sport to be added at Alabama since the softball program was created in 1996.

Davis said the transition is a process that has already begun, but he won't be doing much off-campus recruiting for the team's first season.

"A lot of the ladies that are currently on the team are planning on trying out for varsity, and I think it's a great opportunity and they're excited about it," Davis said.

With most high school seniors having already made college plans by March, Davis said that he's expecting a lot of walk-ons to show interest over the summer. He's putting fliers in admissions packets to encourage any woman to try out for Alabama's newest varsity sport.

Davis said prior experience isn't critical to rowing.

"You just need just some athletic ability and a desire to work at the level we're going to ask them to," he said.

Filling the remainder of the

spots on the team is not the only thing that has to happen before the fall season begins. Davis said to accommodate the new equipment, the rowing team's boathouse will also have to be modified. While a new boathouse is in the long-term plans for the program, Davis said it will be three to

five years down the road.

Davis said the athletics department did a lot of research to see just how feasible a rowing program would be.

"I know they've talked to schools like Clemson, Virginia and Tennessee that have programs," Davis said. "They

researched costs, plusses and minuses of all sports. It came down that they felt that rowing was the best option at the University. I think those things came together and decided that crew was the sport that they wanted to have."

While he said there's still a

lot to be done before the fall, Davis and the Alabama women's crew team is still focused on its spring season.

The team will compete in the Augusta Invitational in Georgia this weekend. Alabama will host the Row Tide Regatta on the Black Warrior River on April 8.



The women's rowing team practices in the Black Warrior River. The team will become a varsity squad in the fall.

CW/ Elliot A. Knight

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LOA

Continued from Page 8

to play reggae music in the area.

“I’m just floored that people like it so much,” he said. He added that the band members want loa.com.

to play reggae because of their love for it, and they are glad other people appreciate it and have such a good time at their shows.

You can learn about future shows at the band's Web site, www.thedown-

On the web WWW thedownloa.com

St. Patty's Day Bands

Who: Hamm Bagby and the Siege
Where: Mellow Mushroom

Who: Dancing Outlaws and Foot of the Hills
Where: The Booth

Who: McPherson Struts
Where: Egan's

Who: Ross and Gabe's
Where: Mugshots

BARS

Continued from Page 8

hoping patrons will come by to check out the bands.

Hamm Bagby and the Siege will be performing at Mellow Mushroom, and McPherson Struts will be at Egan's. At the Jupiter, All-American Tragedy will take the stage.

Innisfree, which opens at 10 a.m. and closes whenever the last bartender drops, will be serving up green Bud Light.

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■ BAND PROFILE

Down Loa a rare reggae band at UA

By JOSH MALLORY
Contributing Writer

When you think of reggae bands, you rarely think of five Alabama natives, but local band Down Loa is hoping to change that. According to their Web site, Down Loa's only mission is to "bring the authentic, head noddin', fist pumping, ass shakin' true roots reggae sound to the masses."

The band, whose name refers to the Voodoo name for a god one calls down in a trance, brings a different sound to the local scene and calls it "refreshing."

"Not a lot other people are out there doing it," drummer Cliff Miller said of the local scene.

A Google search of "reggae bands Alabama" led to no other results.

The band plays at local venues such as Mellow Mushroom, Little Willie's and Innisfree.

They started out doing covers, but now add some original songs such as "Drinking Milwaukee's Best." They cover 1970s reggae icons such as Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Jimmy Cliff and Lee "Scratch" Perry, as well as reggae rock bands such as Sublime, which did reggae rock "first and best" according to the band.

The audience requests are often limited to Marley, as

people no longer remember the popularity of reggae artists in the '70s. However, at one show, some guys in the crowd requested a song by Ape Men. When asked if he thinks the audience members really liked that band or just wanted to show off, Miller quickly responded "both."

The audiences at their shows have a good time and always dance, Miller said. He said that at one show, a Bob Marley Tribute at Little Willie's, the atmosphere was so free that a homeless woman was dancing with two students.

While the band plays a lot of dance-oriented music, it doesn't ignore the progressive tradition of reggae, either.

"We have lots of fun, but we play the political stuff too," Miller said.

What separates reggae from other music, Miller said, is the bass. It carries a lot of responsibility in a reggae band. Because the music is so percussive, the bass often carries the melody and, of course, compels people to dance.

Founding members Miller and lead singer Justin Jones became roommates several years ago and discovered they shared a love of reggae and wanted to play it.

They put together a band and played an open mic night at a now-closed Tuscaloosa bar, Poppy's. The crowd



Submitted photo

Down Loa is a reggae band based in Birmingham. Down Loa is named after a Voodoo name for a god one calls down while in a trance.

responded so well that the band eventually started playing there on weekends.

The bar might have been small, but it was packed, and

these performances led to other gigs at larger venues.

The band also features bassist Adam Shattuck, keyboardist John Ellis and saxophone

player Brad Guin. Guin, who started out in jazz bands, has played with notable acts such as The Temptations, The Four Tops and the O'Jays.

Miller said he is appreciative of the band's opportunity

See LOA, Page 7

T-Town bars toned down for St. Patty's

By JOSH MALLORY
Contributing Writer

This year, St. Patrick's Day might be overshadowed by another notable tradition — spring break.

A mass exodus from town officially starts today, but for those students staying in Tuscaloosa to celebrate the luck of the Irish with gallons of green beer, don't worry. Some of the local bars are offering specials to lure you in.

Downtown, you'll find drink specials at Fourth and 23rd and Mugshots.

Fourth and 23rd is hosting a band, 95 Reasons, and

servicing up \$2 domestic beer and \$2 green shots.

Mugshots is also showcasing a band, Ross and Gabe's. You'll also be able to find drink specials there. Mugshots will be selling \$1 green beer and \$2 Guinnesses.

Wilhagen's will be having regular happy hour prices until 9 p.m. and promises plenty of green beer.

For drink specials on the Strip, check out Buffalo Phil's

If you go ...

Fourth and 23rd
\$2 domestic beer,
green shots

Mugshots
\$1 green beer, \$2
Guinness

Buffalo Phil's
\$3 green pitchers,
\$2 shamrock shots

and The Booth. Phil's will be selling \$3 green pitchers and \$2 shamrock shots.

The Booth will be opening at noon, and happy hour will last for nine hours. That night, Dancing Outlaws will take the stage with Foot of the Hills opening.

While not all the bars are offering drink specials, they are still

See BARS, Page 7

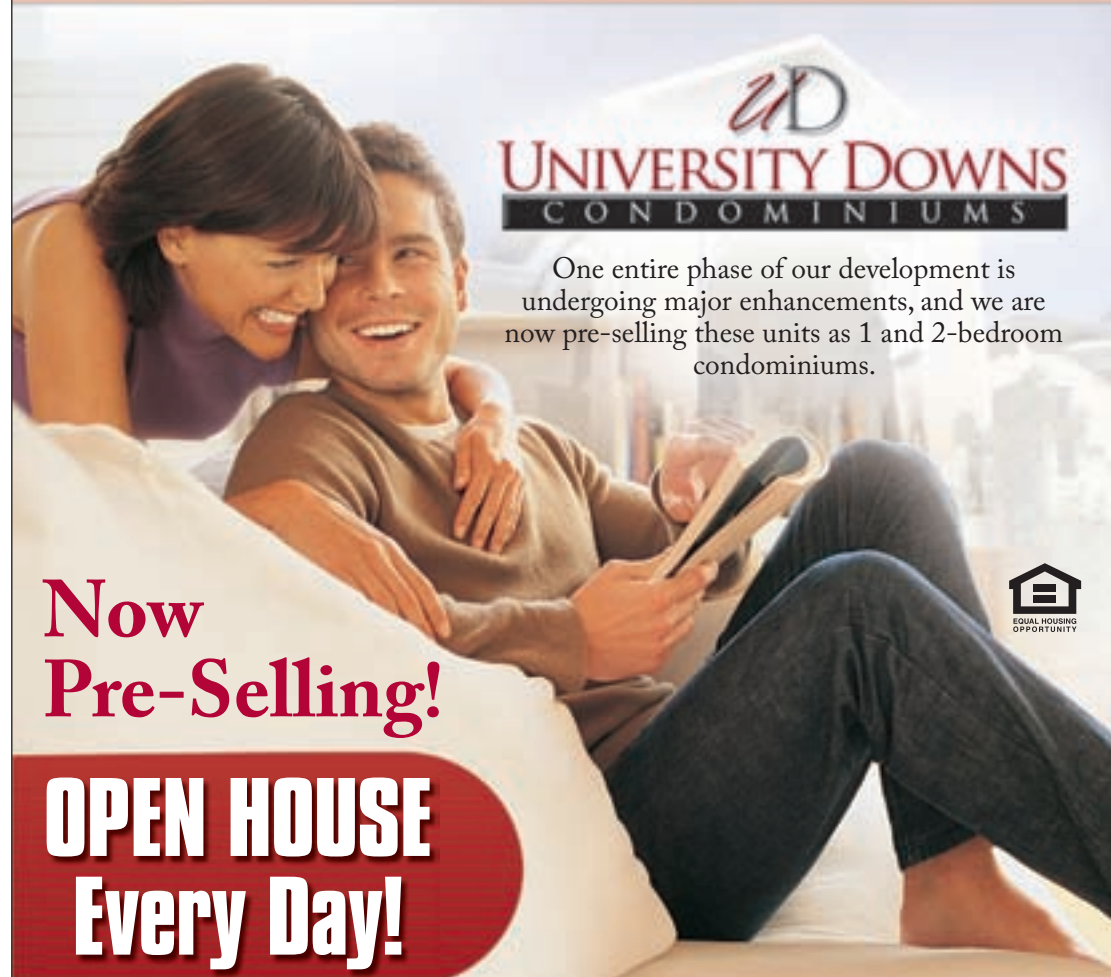
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		Baseball vs. Troy 6:30 pm	Softball vs. Bham Southern 7:00 pm	Baseball vs. Ole Miss 6:30 pm	Baseball 4:00 Softball vs. Tenn (DH) 1:00pm
					SUNDAY Baseball 2:00 Softball vs. Tenn 1:30pm

A Athletics Schedule Spring Break

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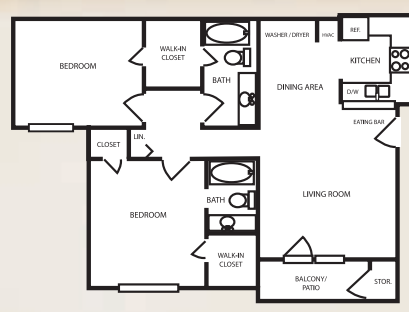
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