

The Crimson White

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Comcast offers UA digital

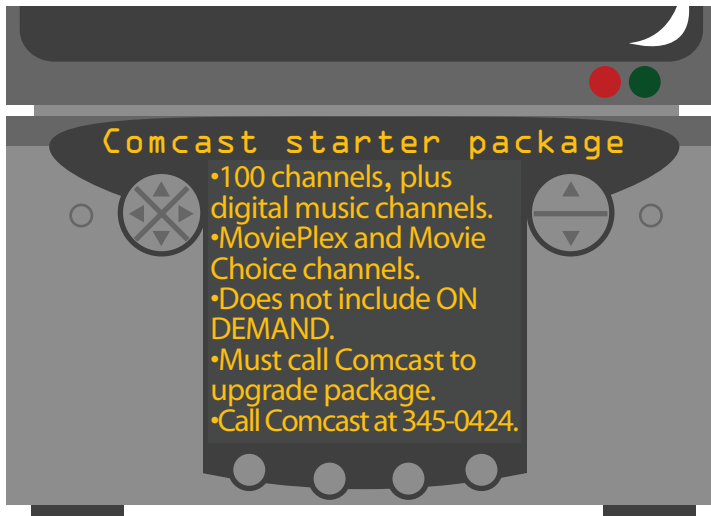
By ERIN CORNELIUS
Contributing Writer

Students could be spending more time glued to their television screens starting this fall semester.

Thanks to a new deal between the University and Comcast, the campus cable provider, all UA residence halls now have digital cable.

"Housing and Residential Communities is always looking to upgrade services and add additional amenities to enhance the on-campus experience," said Alicia Browne, spokeswoman for UA Housing and Residential Communities.

The digital cable service is being offered on a trial basis at no cost to students for at least the next two years, said



Shirley Darr, assistant director of UA auxiliary and support services.

Every residence hall on campus has been equipped with digital cable boxes. All

students have to do is hook their televisions to the cable boxes.

In the suite-style residence halls like Riverside, all bedrooms have digital cable, but

the common living area does not have the new feature.

This service will increase the number of channels students can choose from, but the starter package installed in the residence halls does not include the popular ON DEMAND service that allows viewers to order movies at little to no cost.

Browne said the starter package offers 100 channels plus digital music channels.

Students will also have access to MoviePlex and Movie Choice channels, Browne said.

Students can choose to pay an additional fee to Comcast and upgrade their cable package to include ON DEMAND service. Upgrading a package

See **COMCAST**, Page 2

Students plan to climb 7 Summits

By MEGHAN MENARD
Student Life Editor
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Four years ago, Andrew Hillery would have said he was heading back to New Orleans after he graduated.

But now when Hillery, a senior majoring in communications, returns to his hometown of New Orleans he said he feels lonely.

"None of my friends are there anymore," he said.

His family isn't there, either. His father, who lived in New Orleans for 45 years, and the rest of his immediate family moved to Houston, Texas, after Hurricane Katrina, and they probably will not be back to the Big Easy anytime soon.

When Hillery drives by his family's old home in uptown New Orleans, he said the atmosphere just isn't right. Two years after the hurricane, a FEMA trailer still sits in the nice neighborhood and while the tourist areas of the city are the best he has ever seen them

Seven Summits

- Mount Everest in Nepal, Asia, is 29,035 feet.
- Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa, is 19,340 feet.
- Mount Aconcagua in Argentina is 29,834 feet.
- Mount Denali in Alaska is 20,320 feet.
- Mount Elbrus in Russia is 18,570 feet.
- Mount Vinson Massif in Antarctica is 16,066 feet.
- Mount Kosciuszko in Australia is 7,310 feet.

never be the same. "After Katrina everything was so different," he said. "That's why I felt this void, this need to do something."

So he started running.

"And I was never a runner,"

See **SUMMITS**, Page 5

Midtown Village nears completion

Retail spots still available for lease

By MICHELLE TANNER
Senior Staff Reporter
tanner@cw.ua.edu

Students buying or renting condominiums in Midtown Village might be moving in earlier than expected.

Those planning to live in building three of the complex were able to move in July 20, about a month earlier than expected, said Alice Maxwell of Advantage Realty.

The condos are part of the new 35-acre commercial and residential development called Midtown Village, which is located at the intersection of McFarland Boulevard and 15th Street.

"Building one will be ready

by the end of this week, and building two will open by the beginning of school," Maxwell said. "We knew that we would have to get them ready in phases so that everyone wouldn't be moving their things in at the same time."

Though the residential areas are opening quickly, the retail areas, which hold much of the attraction of Midtown Village, still won't open before the fall. The 20 confirmed tenants of the retail space include Barnes & Noble, Coldwater Creek, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Quizno's Subs, Athlete's Foot, Bama Fever and Panera Bread.

Barnes & Noble, which will occupy 27,000 square feet, will probably be the first to open, Maxwell said.



Construction continues on Midtown Village, scheduled to open this fall. Building three of the condominiums was ready for move-in July 20.

Maxwell said while she does not have the information to make an accurate statement, she guessed about 40 to 50 percent of the condos' tenants are students.

"The condos are attracting a mixed population," Maxwell said. "Students, professionals, tons of sports fans — even people who just want to use it for game day weekends

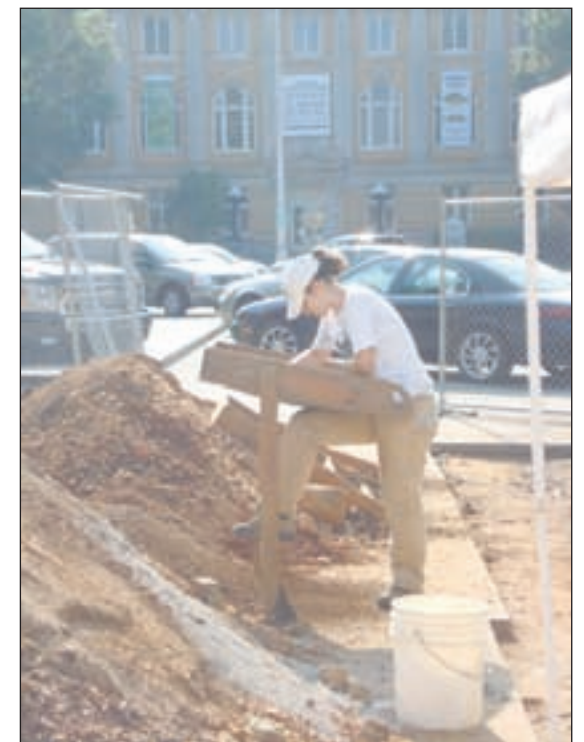
so they don't have to worry about reserving a hotel."

Location, security and the retail stores are the main benefits attracting UA students to Midtown Village, Maxwell said.

"The stores are something that other developments just don't have," Maxwell said.

See **MIDTOWN**, Page 2

Whistle while you work



See "UA archeology uncovers old buildings," Page 3.

Row your boat ...



CW/ Alison Pollini

The UA men's rowing team practices at 5 a.m. every weekday morning on the Black Warrior River.

Minimum wage increases to \$5.85, to reach \$7.25

By JESSE HOLLAND
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's lowest-paid workers will soon find extra money in their pockets as the minimum wage rose 70 cents to \$5.85 an hour Tuesday, the first increase in a decade.

It ends the longest span without a federal minimum wage increase since the pay floor was enacted in 1938. The last increase came in September 1997, when President Clinton signed a bill raising the minimum 40 cents to \$5.15 an hour.

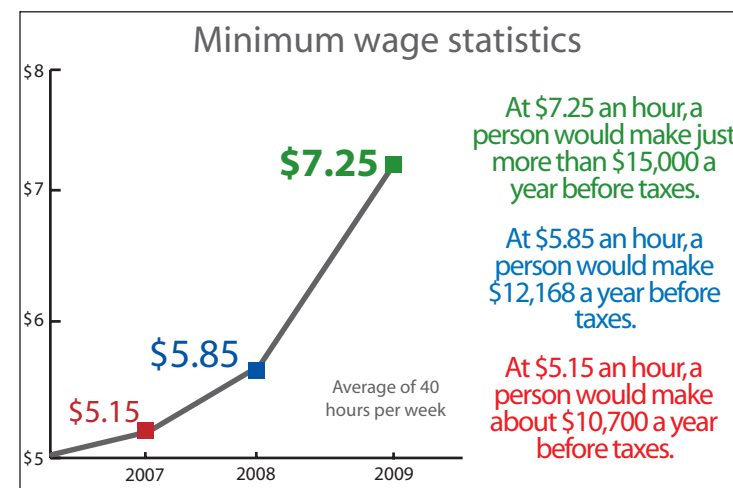
Legislation signed by President Bush in May increased the wage 70 cents each summer until 2009, when all minimum-wage jobs will pay no less than \$7.25 an hour.

Government figures show about 1.7 million people earned \$5.15 or less in 2006.

The increase is one of the few major legislative successes of the new Democratic-controlled Congress. They added the increase to the \$120 billion Iraq war spending bill, which Bush initially vetoed because the Democrats insisted on a troop-pullout date. Bush signed the bill May 25 after the Democrats removed their pullout provision.

To help make the minimum wage provision palatable for Republicans, Democrats added \$4.84 billion in tax relief for small businesses to help them hire new workers and offset any cost associated with an increase in the minimum wage.

Democratic presidential candidates are making further increases in the minimum wage an issue in their primary campaigns. If the minimum wage were linked to the real purchasing power of a dollar, it would already have



reached \$9.05 in January 2006, according to a Congressional Research Service report.

More than two dozen states and the District of Columbia already had minimum wages higher than the federal level; Alabama was not one of those states.

Critics of the federal increase say it might force some

businesses to stop hiring entry-level employees. They also contend that beneficiaries of a higher minimum wage likely will be teenagers working part-time jobs, not the working poor.

But advocates for the poor argue that making minimum

See **WAGE**, Page 2

IN CAMPUS brief

To submit a brief, e-mail news@cw.ua.edu

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Seating added for River City Showdown

Due to high demand for tickets to the River City Showdown on Sept. 29, the Gator Bowl Association will add more than 5,800 temporary seats at Jacksonville Municipal Stadium. The additional tickets will be split evenly between the participating schools. Due to the overwhelming initial demand by its fan base, UA's allotment of 2,600 additional tickets has already been accounted for by existing orders.

According to Erik Dellenback, director of marketing, the Gator Bowl Association is working closely with the City of Jacksonville on a new temporary seating plan that will, for the first time, utilize both the upper and lower portion of the south end zone in the area referred to as the Bud Zone.

"The new seating configuration will help us maximize seating, while ensuring the comfort and safety of all the fans," said Kelly Madden, 2007 Gator Bowl Association Chairman.

In addition to the large local following for both universities, excitement over the game may stem from its historic significance. This will be the first time legendary coach Bobby Bowden has faced the Crimson Tide. The two programs last met in 1974.

Rick Catlett, president of the Gator Bowl Association, credits Florida State Athletic Director David Hart as the catalyst for the game.

"Dave approached his alma mater, Alabama about the idea before bringing it to the Gator Bowl Association for consideration. Alabama athletic director Mal Moore eagerly accepted," Catlett said. "We loved the idea and are proud to host this historic game."

Parking is available through the Gator Bowl Association at a cost of \$20 per car. More than 300 RV spaces have already been sold, however additional bus and RV parking can be accommodated in the private lots surrounding the stadium. For parking information go to www.gatorbowl.com.

The mission of the Gator Bowl Association is to provide Northeast Florida with the very best in amateur athletics and related activities in order to maximize positive impact on the area's economy, national image and community pride. A not-for profit organization, the Association's primary charitable activities are focused on education and youth in the North Florida area.

Sheraton becomes independent

Owners drop franchise, sign new lease with UA

By AMANDA PETERSON
Campus Affairs Editor
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Soon, the blue and red sign outside of the Sheraton Four Points will not stand outside of the hotel.

There will not be a Sheraton there anymore. The owner of the Sheraton Four Points Hotel has dropped the Sheraton franchise to independently operate the hotel instead.

The Executive Committee of the UA Board of Trustees met via teleconference yesterday to approve a new lease agreement between the hotel owners and the University.

The University owns the hotel but leases it to three firms. Jackson Hospitality, one of the three firms, manages

the hotel.

A 30-year lease was negotiated in 2005 and would have lasted through 2035. Because of the proposed change in ownership structure, the owners needed a 50-year lease, set to last through 2056.

But Lynda Gilbert, vice president of financial affairs, said during the teleconference that if the University wants to use the property, it has the option of purchasing the hotel after September 2035.

"This particular issue has been considered by the University for a considerable period of time," Trustee Joseph Espy said. "I am satisfied with this issue. This is in the best interest of the University and our system."

As part of the new lease, the University also has final approval of the new name of the hotel. Cory Jackson, president of Jackson Hospitality, said he hopes the University

likes the name he has chosen as much as he does.

And if Jackson wants to make any major exterior changes to the building, he will have to get the approval of the Board of Trustees.

But Jackson said the first project will be to renovate all public spaces in the hotel and to update the 21-year-old building. All of the guest bathrooms and half of the 150 guest rooms will be renovated, and the kitchen and restaurant will be remodeled.

"This is not just new bedspreads," Jackson said. "When someone walks in and it's finished, it will look like a new hotel."

Jackson said all renovations will begin in December and hopefully be finished by next June, so the hotel's operation during football season will not be interrupted.

"I can guarantee that we will not be interrupting any

football season business," Jackson said. "I would be a dead man if I interrupted football season."

While Jackson estimates 70 percent of the hotel's business comes from University functions like football games and parent weekends, he said the rest of the business comes from conferences.

Between the hotel and the Bryant Conference Center, it has one of the largest meeting centers between Mobile, Birmingham and Jackson, Tenn., Jackson said.

The hotel is currently ranked in the top 10 percent of Sheraton hotels, and Jackson said they are very proud of its record. But he said it is more beneficial for the hotel's business to be independent.

"I'm able to divert money that I send to the national franchise and I am able to spend it on what I need for the hotel," Jackson said.

COMCAST

Continued from Page 1

will allow students to order any movies and programming offered through ON DEMAND without limitations by the University.

"Comcast is very excited to be able to bring our digital technology to the students and open a whole new world of entertainment to the University and its students," said Comcast representative South Morrison, said.

Patrick Howell, a junior majoring in finance, lived in a residence hall for his first two years at the University and he will be living in Bryant Hall during the upcoming school year.

Howell said he is excited about the addition of digital cable to his room.

"I will probably watch more television, especially newer channels," Howell said. "But it's not going to change anything about my lifestyle."

Howell said he thinks digital cable will make living in a residence hall very different

from previous years when the service was not offered and residence hall life will be better because the cable service will increase students' entertainment options.

He said he would like the ON DEMAND option but would not pay any extra for the service because the cost of living on campus is already high.

Mary Caitlin McNeely, an incoming freshman, said she was happy to hear about the addition of digital cable to her residence hall. McNeely's mother, on the other hand, was not

pleased with the new amenity.

"We don't have it at home," Peggy McNeely said. "It's not necessary, and we don't watch many R-rated movies."

Jon Thompson, another incoming freshman, will be living in Riverside North and that said the service will be nice even though he is not an avid TV watcher. He would prefer if digital cable was available in the main living area instead of the bedrooms, he said.

"I will want to use my bedroom for studying," Thompson said.

WAGE

Continued from Page 1

wage won't keep adults out of poverty.

A person working 40 hours per week at the previous minimum wage of \$5.15 made about \$10,700 a year.

The raise to \$5.85 an hour increases that to \$12,168 a year before taxes.

An increase to \$7.25 would boost that to just more than \$15,000 a year.

The federal poverty level for singles is \$10,210, couples is \$13,690 and \$17,170 for families of three.

MIDTOWN

Continued from Page 1

"The location is just wonderful, and we recognize how important security is right now."

The condominiums will have covered and gated parking garages, as well as access-required corridors and an access code to enter into the development itself, Maxwell said.

Those interested in Midtown Village have a long list of features to look forward to, including a full-size washer/dryer, European style cabinets, granite countertops, track lighting, walk-in closets, pre-wired high speed Internet, and 9-foot ceilings with crown molding.

The Midtown Village Web site also lists a fitness center, clubhouse, swimming pool, putting green and elevator access as proposed building and community features.

Claire Condra, a sophomore majoring in elementary education, will be moving to her Midtown Village condo next month. Condra said she was excited to learn that the construction was on schedule, rather than behind schedule as she had heard. She and her roommate are excited about their new location, she said.

"We decided on Midtown because we signed a lease at Crimson Place, and then they told us that there was no longer space available," Condra said. "At that point we did not want to go through that process again. I think everything worked out for the best and we are even more excited about Midtown Village."

Advantage Realty required that all buyers purchase the condos, rather than lease them, and still sold out all 224 units. Currently, some buyers are reselling their units for a profit or leasing to outside tenants.

"We've got roughly 20 to 25 units for sale now — including one-, two- and three-bedroom units," Maxwell said.

Prices for units range from \$159,000 for a one-bedroom to \$239,000 for a three-bedroom.

Will Nevin, a graduate student, said he and his roommate considered moving to a condo in Midtown until he realized how expensive they are.

"It was simply a cost issue," Nevin said. "My roommate and

I am two ordinary grad students — we just didn't have the money for a place in Midtown. For the ones that do, well, I'm happy for them."

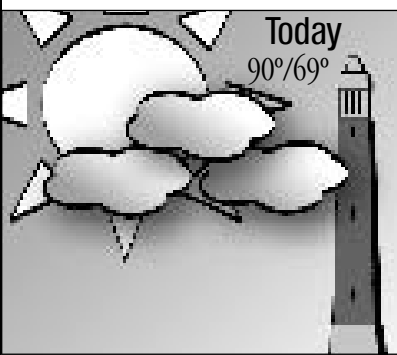
Closing procedures for the condominiums are expected to be completed by Aug. 20 at the latest. Condra and her roommate are expecting to move in Aug. 5.

"The location is perfect," Condra said. "Although it makes us a little nervous not being able to see the finished product, I have complete faith that the apartments will live up to their expectations and I am happy to get to be a part of that."

"It's exciting, just so exciting," Maxwell said. "It's been so much fun working with students and with alumni from around the country."

Interested students can reach Maxwell and Advantage Realty's Alice Maxwell team at (205) 292-4546 or at sales@alicemaxwell.com.

WEATHER



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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's not necessary, and we don't watch many R-rated movies."

— Peggy McNeely, mother of an incoming freshman, about the addition of digital cable to residence halls.

See "Comcast offers UA digital," Page 1.

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UA archaeology uncovers old buildings

By JACOB SUMMERS
Radio News Director
jsommers@cw.ua.edu

As the University constructs new campus buildings, it has a chance to learn from its history and the older buildings.

This summer, the UA Office of Archaeological Research began to unearth a mystery on campus: the discovery of the foundations of Jefferson and Washington halls on Capstone Drive, in the parking lot behind Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library.

Now the office, under the leadership of Robert Clouse, is working against the clock to unearth enough of the site to convince UA administration to protect it for further study because the Transit System is currently slated to build two stops near these sites.

"We need to find at least the front and back, and side walls," said Clouse, executive director of university museums. "The primary emphasis of this second phase is to identify the parameters of the buildings. So far, we have found the south end of Jefferson."

While the researchers know which buildings they have found, Clouse said establishing where the walls and remaining foundations are has been difficult.

"We know we are in the buildings, but we don't know where," Clouse said. "It's like



CW/ Lauren Barrera

Clouse and his team work to finish unearthing the staircases of a coal cellar in Jefferson Hall. The team will be finished by Friday so the University can rebuild Capstone Drive and make preparations for CrimsonRide.

being blind-folded in a strange room. To make a recommendation to pursue these studies, we need to know where to study."

The weather has worked for and against the team of researchers. Rain has flooded the site and even kept them from going out on some days,

but it has also unearthed a unique and rewarding find.

"Thanks to the rain, it collapsed part of our excavation and actually revealed a new wall," Clouse said. "Our work just slumped away and revealed a wall that we didn't know was there. We were only inches away."

The team has also run into man-made deterrents. Clouse said sewer and water lines have destroyed portions of the foundations. These problems delay their progress, but no one is to be blamed.

"It's invisible to construction or utility workers — so they shouldn't be condemned

for it," he said. "They didn't know."

Clouse said the second phase of the research has been done at the request of Provost Judy Bonner to determine if the site is worth preserving. Clouse said the team began the dig on April 23 and dug for about a week before reviewing their research and presenting it to the provost.

"We are working to determine if we have enough to keep the research going - we are at the crux of the research phase," Clouse said. "We would love to be able to show an interpretation on the surface. So far, the only two examples of this that we have are the mound on the Quad, and the Rotunda of stones in front of the Gorgas steps."

At first, there were only five to six workers, and now there are close to 10 as the dig speeds along, uncovering new segments and new sites.

"Along some of these areas, we have found ash in places where the roof obviously caved in," Clouse said. "This level is where we will find most of the valuable artifacts, because this is where everything from the floors below fell to."

The Washington dig, by Morgan Hall, has revealed a clear path of ash, marked by black soot on the walls starting about 2 to 3 feet underground.

On the north side of the dig, the team has uncovered what they said might be a dividing wall between the halves of the building. Also, Clouse said the buildings did not in fact run parallel to each other or the street, but rather at angles, each building slanted towards the other, with the space between narrowing as it neared the edge of what is now Capstone Drive.

Clouse said he cannot determine future plans, but one idea would be to construct a representation of what they have found on the grassy area that will cover the parking lot when the transit system is constructed, as a reminder of the building, and for students to view and interpret.

"Really, it doesn't matter whether or not we finish studying it this week, next week, five years or 10 years from now," Clouse said. "The point is to preserve it so that we can continue to study it 10 years from now, and that is what we are working toward now."

Jacobs said this idea would be fascinating, and once more, a reminder of how much history this campus has.

To date, Clouse and his team have uncovered multiple wall segments, and are working to find the full length of each wall, to determine the size and parameters of each building.

UA receives grant for Parkinson's research

By CASSY SPENCER
Contributing Writer

Through funding by the Michael J. Fox Foundation, several UA and UAB students have started paving a new path of genetic Parkinson's Research.

The students and researchers will be searching for genes that can lead to Parkinson's, the main culprit being a gene called alpha-synuclein.

The University research group is using a comma-sized *C. elegans* worm as an animal model, removing as well as inserting new genes, a process known as "over expressing."

The research should determine which DNA could be held liable for this fatal disorder.

Despite the worm's simplicity, this creature has a DNA structure similar to human DNA, with a few essential hormones relative to the disease, such as dopamine.

Also, more than 50 percent of all human hereditary diseases have been linked to genetic components also found in the worm.

Guy and Kim Caldwell, both professors of biological

sciences at the University, along with David Standaert, vice chair of neurology at UAB, will be awarded \$250,000 to split between the two research labs over the next two years.

Working hard on the study is doctoral student Shu Hamamichi, who performed what Caldwell dubbed a heroic task by using a technique called RNA interference.

of the missing function to be viewed more clearly.

Contributing researcher John Ricketts, a sophomore majoring in biological sciences, works daily at the lab on projects funded by the MJFF grant, researching several diseases related to Parkinson's.

One of these is Eystonia, which developed from the same protein malfunction that has been known to cause Parkinson's disease.

Ricketts said the most rewarding aspect of participating in this study is getting to meet victims of these diseases, and knowing that each day of work in the lab is moving those victimized by Parkinson's and Eystonia toward a cure.

"You get bogged down in the day-to-day work, but seeing these kids come in and knowing how much our progress is affecting them is very rewarding," Ricketts said.

"You get bogged down in the day-to-day work, but seeing these kids come in and knowing how much our program is affecting them is very rewarding."

- JOHN RICKETTS
Contributing researcher

"We are extremely honored to be representing the goals of MJFF once again," Guy Caldwell said in a recent press release. "There is a really fine nucleus of Parkinson's researchers that has grown here at Alabama."

The award given to the University and UAB was one of nine in the world for the foundation's 2007 Target Validation.

The program was designed to follow up on other discoveries made in the Caldwell lab, the 2003 Protein Degradation program, also founded by the Fox Foundation.

This knocked out about 1,000 gene functions from the tiny worm model, a task that would have required thousands of dollars and nearly a year of research had a small mouse been used, and this process allowed the impact

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Our View

Don't shout for wage hike yet

After years of debate about the issue of minimum wage, Congress finally approved the first increase in wages in a decade, which went into effect Tuesday.

The minimum wage increased to \$5.85 an hour to the cheers of Democratic lawmakers who helped push the measure through, calling it "the payday of 2007." According to *The Washington Post*, the wage will increase another \$1.40 in the next two years to reach \$7.25 an hour in July 2009, a 41 percent increase over the \$5.15 wage that had been in place since 1997. An estimated 5.3 million workers in the United States earn less than \$7.25 an hour, the *Post* reported.

At least with the first set of wage increases, student workers on the UA campus won't be affected since the University starts the pay scale at \$6.10 an hour. But, starting next summer, the University will have to raise wages to at least \$6.55 an hour.

The question we have about the wage increase: How will this actually affect the economy and the lives of workers who earn this wage?

We can't allow ourselves to fall prey to the hype that these wage increases will somehow magically fix all the woes the poorest in our society have. No economist says all problems are solved when, at the end of all the wage increases, someone making minimum wage will only bring home \$15,000 a year instead of the \$11,000 they currently bring home.

But what will the economic impact be of changing the wages of, according to the *Post*, at least 12 million workers in the country?

If *The Washington Post* has it pegged, the wage increases could have a negative impact on jobs and job creation. For example, 10 years ago when the minimum wage increased, 146,000 jobs were cut from the restaurant industry, and 106,000 hires were postponed nationwide. That's just in the restaurant industry.

The fear is the wage increases could be canceled out by increased prices in products across the country. If it costs more to make a product, that cost has to be passed on to someone, most likely the American consumer.

Even if the poorest in society are bringing home \$4,000 more each year, if prices across the board increase, that extra \$4,000 could be canceled out.

We're hoping that won't be the case, and the increased wages will still be more than the increases in prices for goods. If it works out that way, then the wage increases will be worth it.

The one other thing to keep in mind is 30 states have already adopted minimum wages higher than the older federal wage. Some states already have minimum wages higher than what the federal wage will be in 2009. So, this increase might not be as relevant in some places as in Alabama and other places.

We want these wage increases to be a success. We're just not hopping on the parade bandwagon — yet.

Our View is the consensus of the CW editorial board.

Life changes on a mountaintop

By MEGHAN MENARD

As I lay on the two-inch foam mattress on the concrete floor, I thought about my home a thousand miles away. I was sweating in my scrubs as the afternoon sun shined through the steel bars that made up the second half of the classroom's wall.

I felt like I was in prison as the flies circled my head and the small fan blew just enough air to tempt me with the thought of air conditioning.

I was in El Paraíso, Honduras on a medical mission trip from hell, or so I thought at the time.

As I lay useless on the matress, I thought about the night before, my stomach aching with just the slightest memory of the sickness I had endured.

The previous morning I woke up at 5:30 a.m. to the sound of a rooster crowing outside of the village's school, where our team of 42 slept, ate and set up our free medical and dental clinic.

I managed to finally get out of bed, ready to brace the cold showers — there was no hot water at the school. After breakfast it was off to work in the pharmacy (set up in one of the school's classrooms). Then around noon it was lunchtime.

When I walked from the pharmacy to the kitchen I heard the bad news that had been circulating throughout our team since the first day: more team members had gotten the virus.

The doctors of the group said it was a stomach virus someone brought from the

States, and the bug was spreading quickly.

After lunch I suddenly became too weak to work. My entire body ached. I left the pharmacy just in time to throw up my entire lunch and then some in the dirty restroom.

Within minutes nurses and doctors were by my side. I first took pills then after the sickness worsened I was given a shot, then an IV. I couldn't stop throwing up, and I wasn't the only one.

By the end of our trip, 31 members of our team got the horrible stomach bug.

I woke up the next morning disoriented and exhausted, trying to remember what happened. My friend who was sleeping next to me on the floor told me she had also gotten sick.

We spent the day complaining.

We thought of our clean bathrooms at our homes, with toilets you can flush without having to fill with water from a well. We thought about warm showers and clean sheets and sleeping without the sound of insects flying around the room.

I wondered why I was in Honduras.

The next day we left the village and went back to the mission home, a beautiful building owned by Baptist Medical and Dental Mission International, where hot showers and a night indoors awaited us.

That afternoon we went to the Good Shepherd Children's Home, a home for abandoned and abused Honduran children, which is also owned and operated by BMDMI. As the school bus somehow man-

aged to climb up the bumpy mountain to the home/school, I thought of how the trip had let me down. I had expected something life changing, and all I got was a stomach bug.

A crowd of happy children welcomed us as we got off the bus. About 220 children live in the home.

Team members handed out candy and toys trying to communicate with the children with the small bit of Spanish they knew.

I was overwhelmed at first. I looked at the smiling children and couldn't help but feel sorry for them. I wanted to pull an Angelina Jolie and take them all home.

"Hola," I said to a girl standing next to me. "Como te llamas?"

Her name was Selania and she was 12 years old. I couldn't remember any more Spanish so I gave her some candy and thought about walking away.

But I stayed. I stood there awkwardly, wishing I could speak Spanish.

A friend of Selania's came up and stood with us. She was 15 years old and knew some English. They asked me to see their room, and when I agreed, they both smiled.

There were four beds in the small room. They pointed out which beds were theirs and I could see they were proud of what they had.

I thought of my bed at home. I thought of my parents and my family and I wondered why I was so blessed and why I took it all for granted.

As we sat on the porch of one of the small, cabin like homes, I saw another young girl. She was sitting alone, away from

the group. By the simple gestures of asking her name and giving her candy, I became her friend. She held my hand as we walked to hear Greg Vaughn, who runs the home along with his wife Eva, give a speech to our team about the children.

Vaughn told the story of one child named Roni, who had been at the home for only three days.

"I'm not going to point anything out," he said as the small girl stood before him. "But if she passes by you I am sure you can see the scars of where she's been abused."

She didn't have to pass by me. I could see the scars from where I stood about 10 feet away. Thick scars had formed on her neck, arms and legs.

Vaughn told us Roni had been a slave to a Honduran woman, doing chores all day long and being beaten with anything the woman could find.

Staring at Roni I felt so guilty for complaining about a stomach bug, so grateful for having loving parents and so blessed to be standing on top of a mountain in Honduras in the midst of all of these amazing children.

As our group made it's way back to the school bus, I gave each of the three girls I met a huge hug. After I hugged the eldest of the three girls she looked me straight in the eye and said sincerely, "Thank you for coming."

And with that, the trip changed my life.

Meghan Menard is the student life editor of The Crimson White



MCT Campus

Get involved with the SGA and new Crimson Karma

By R.B. WALKER

As we approach the beginning of another school year, we are constantly looking for new ways that students can contribute to the tradition that is unique to our University. It is with great excitement that we, as a student body, should embark upon an opportunity to leave our mark at Alabama.

Terri Saban, wife of Alabama football head coach Nick Saban, as well as UA faculty and staff members, approached us a few months ago with an innovative idea to help unify our student body in an attempt to better the

community in which we all learn, live and grow.

The initiative, appropriately called Crimson Karma, focused around the idea that "what you do comes back to you."

The Crimson Karma initiative will encourage students to take care of themselves, take care of others, take care of our campus, and take care of the Tuscaloosa community around us. Throughout the year the SGA will be sponsoring numerous projects based on these four pillars.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Saban, the UA administration and the SGA com-

munications office we will be working together to encourage students to take ownership of their personal and external environments.

Our plans include safety and health initiatives, programs to help students adapt to the new transit system and campus clean-ups. Essentially, the initiatives introduced by Crimson Karma will become a part of the everyday ideals that shape UA. Our first project will be a volunteer effort to help freshman students feel at home when they move into their residence halls.

As I think back on the nervous excitement I felt

when moving to campus my freshman year, I wish there had been such a program that was led by students. A group of student volunteers will be at all residence halls to assist new students and their families with the move-in process and to help them become acclimated to the UA campus.

Numerous campus organizations have pledged to help but we are looking for as many volunteers as we can get. If you are interested in volunteering for the move-in event, call the SGA communications office at 34U-ASGA and come help us get this project off to a great start.

Look for Crimson Karma representatives to help students transition to the CrimsonRide transit system in the fall.

This experience will be new for all of us, and Crimson Karma is determined to help students with everything from learning the routes to figuring out which bus to ride.

Crimson Karma is a call to action, service and positive self-awareness, and it will inevitably lead to students feeling a deeper sense of pride and ownership in the University.

It is important to understand that we will all be a part of Crimson Karma, and that

each decision that we make can positively or negatively influence ourselves, others and the community around us.

If we remain dedicated to its purpose, Crimson Karma will spark a student awareness movement unlike anything our campus has ever seen.

I am excited to see how students embrace the idea of "karma," and I am confident that this initiative will contribute to our lasting impact on Alabama's flagship university.

R.B. Walker is the 2007-08 president of the SGA.

Officials: CrimsonRide is ready to get started

Bus system prepared better than Tuscaloosa Trolley at beginning

By MARY GAIN
Contributing Writer

The invasion of the 40-foot-long buses begins Aug. 11 at the University.

The CrimsonRide transit system will take over the roadways, running four free bus routes. UA Transportation Services officials anticipate students, faculty and staff members and visitors will not be walking across campus this fall — they will be riding the transit system.

According to the CrimsonRide Web site, catching a bus should not be a problem because multiple buses will run each route.

The system will include 17 buses with 41 stops. The buses will run from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and night hours will be 7 until 2:30 a.m.

Orientation students were the first to try out CrimsonRide,

with three buses in operation this summer.

"The orientation students were very excited and pleased with the aesthetics of the buses," said Ralph Clayton, assistant director of Transportation Services.

He said the overall response from both students and parents that have ridden on CrimsonRide has been very positive.

Carolyn Therrell, a senior majoring in public relations, said she thought the previous trolley system was unreliable.

"Many students would walk to class instead of taking a chance on the trolley," she said.

Ronnie Robertson, director of Transportation Services, said CrimsonRide and the Tuscaloosa Trolley are incomparable.

"The trolley system never had the funding that CrimsonRide is getting," Robertson said. "CrimsonRide is not obligated to the rest of the city since it is funded only through student tuition."

The bus wait should be five minutes on the academic routes and 20 minutes on the outer limits, according to the CrimsonRide Web site.

Global positioning system technology is installed within each bus, and students can check the status of the buses with TransLoc via the Internet if they think traffic might be a problem.

"CrimsonRide will be very effective if students make it effective," Robertson said. "In order for the buses to be on a timed schedule, students have to park in the designated locations."

Clayton said one advantage of CrimsonRide is the improvements for handicapped students, because the buses will have several stops across campus.

The buses are handicap accessible and have two spaces inside each for wheelchairs. Installed ramps will lower to the ground and allow easy access for students.

Clayton also said that if expansion is demanded,

Transportation Services is open to modifying the routes according to student needs.

"The current plan for the transit system is to stay on campus," he said.

The buses will run rain, shine and even on game days. CrimsonRide will run free of charge on game days and will provide rides three hours before kickoff.

"Game day operations will have specific pickup and drop off locations," Clayton said. "There will be transit lanes open with 15 to 17 buses running for game day."

Campus commuting will be altered this fall, Robertson said.

"The master plan for UA is to make the University a pedestrian-friendly campus," Robertson said. "With the rising prices of gas there are no reasons not to give CrimsonRide a chance."

More information about the system and its bus routes can be found on the CrimsonRide Web site at www.crimsonride.ua.edu.



CW File Incoming freshmen ride the CrimsonRide bus during the summer as officials test out the new program for full implementation this fall.

SUMMITS

Continued from Page 1

he said. "I played baseball in high school."

He continued to run, not knowing exactly what he was training for.

"I ran a half-marathon and then I did a triathlon, but there was still this void," he said.

After talking with his childhood friend Brendan Batt, who also lived in New Orleans and is a senior at Louisiana State University, the two knew what they had to do: Climb the Seven Summits, the highest peaks of each of the seven continents.

"We were so mad we wanted to put ourselves up against Mother Nature," he said.

Neither of them have any previous mountain or glacier climbing experience, Hillery

"My dad is scared because he knows I'll go through with it. So he knows in four years I'll be climbing Mount Everest, passing dead bodies on the way up."

— ANDREW HILLERY

UA senior majoring in communications

said.

He said they have joined Mountain Madness, a company that teaches amateur climbers through a seven-day course that ends with the students climbing Mount Rainier in Washington on their own, and which offers guides that lead the climbers up the Seven Summits.

Batt said they will peak Mount Rainier Aug. 24 and leave sometime in December to tackle the first of the seven summits, Aconcagua.

Hillery said they hope their venture will help them to relieve Mother Nature but also

to contribute rebuilding New Orleans.

"We will either start our own charity called Hill and Batt Charity for Rebuilding New Orleans or we will donate the money to Save N.O.L.A.," he said.

He said he is sending e-mails to major companies asking for donations.

"All I'm looking for is a response," he said. "It's for a good cause."

Their traveling and climbing expenses will be paid for by donations from family members and from their own pocket.

ets.

"This summer [Batt] did construction work and I worked in New York to raise money," he said. "We're both sending letters and e-mails to all of our family members."

Batt said it costs about \$4,000 per person to climb each of the summits except Mount Everest, which costs about \$50,000. He said neither his parents nor Hillery's parents have made contributions.

"Our parents are totally against it," he said. "They don't want anything to do with it."

Hillery said his mom thinks he is just going through a phase.

"My dad is scared because he knows I'll go through with it," he said. "So he knows in four years I'll be climbing Mount Everest, passing dead bodies on the way up."

Batt said they exercise each day to prepare for the climbs.

"We try to stay in the best shape possible," he said. "We train for hours a day; it's a big part of what we're doing. It's not going to be our bodies that fail us."

Hillery said he runs every day, weight trains twice a week, swims and runs stadiums in Bryant-Denny.

Batt said the best thing about

mountain climbing is that it takes mental and physical strength.

"It builds character and teaches you to push beyond your limits," he said. "It's a huge adventure. Most of my friends think [the plan] is B.S. But if you keep stuff like that in the back of your head it pushes you."

Hillery said he is excited to go up against a mountain.

"I definitely feel some anxiety," he said. "But sometimes I think about it and it just gets me pumped up. I just can't wait to get to the top."

Donations can be made by contacting Hillery at hille003@gmail.com.

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Grant funds students' biomedical research

By HAYLEY STRONG
Contributing Writer

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Grant of \$1.8 million has given 10 students from the University and three students from Stillman College, Shelton State Community College and California State University Fresno the opportunity to work with a UA mentor on various scientific projects for the past two years.

The University and Louisiana State University are the only schools in the Gulf Coast States to receive the grant, said Martha Powell, chairwoman of the biological sciences department and director of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Undergraduate Science Program Grant at the University.

Powell said the University also received a \$1.6 million grant in 1998.

"We had to write a grant proposal both times, and they are highly competitive," Powell said. "There are only about 30

Research grant

What: The Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Grant
Amount: \$1.8 million
Who: 10 UA students and three students from Stillman College, Shelton State Community College and California State University, Fresno
For: Biomedical research

in the nation that are awarded. We will get a chance to apply again in two years from now, and a lot of our success depends on how well we are able to keep the momentum going without the money."

Powell said the research conducted ranges from studying fruit flies as model organisms in order to understand what happens with nerve cells

in Parkinson's disease to working out the molecular signaling pathway in yeast, which can be used to understand the cancer response in cells.

Lindsey Smith, a 2007 UA graduate in biology, said she has been working with Leslie Rissler, UA biology professor, for the past two years on research regarding amphibians.

"Alabama is one of the hot spots in the world for amphibian biodiversity, so our lab works with amphibians," Smith said. "The main focus is to describe the evolutionary history of these species. When we extract the DNA of the salamanders and compare them, they're different. They've diverged over time into three different species."

Smith said this research is important to conservation, because species have to be described well by scientists before the government can protect them.

She said she has worked more than 40 hours a week this summer on the program



CW/ Matt Abbey
Savannah Howell presents her Howard Hughes Medical Institute research to Joe Benson, UA vice president of research, on Wednesday.

to finish a manuscript on her findings in order to publish them in a journal. The grant paid a stipend to cover her living expenses until the program ended on July 25.

"I'm going to medical school in a month at [the University of Alabama at Birmingham,]" Smith said. "There's summer

research there, but of course it's on humans and cancer research, but I'm sure I'll do something like this again sometime down the road."

Donnie Copeland, a senior in biology from California State University Fresno, has been at the University for seven weeks, conducting research on the

digestive physiology of python snakes with Steven Secor, UA biology professor.

"The changes I have observed are only found in snakes that are infrequent feeders, such as the python," Copeland said. "The heart enlarges several times after it eats, and what I'm looking at are the cardiac enzymes and the metabolism, or the digestion of the meal. I also look at glucose and see how they metabolize that as well."

Copeland said he came to the University because it served two benefits: his intrinsic interest in reptiles and the potential for this to carry over in future biomedical research.

"This is something where there's not any research out on it, so that was also an added benefit," Copeland said.

The students involved in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Grant presented their research in the form of posters at noon on July 25 in the lobby of the biology building.

Workshop offers students crash course in journalism

By BRIAN REYNOLDS
Contributing Writer

The 24th annual University of Alabama Multicultural Journalism Workshop was held July 8 through 18.

Ed Mullins, director of MJW, said the program is a great chance for high school students to learn about the journalism profession.

"They get a little crash journalism major in 10 days," Mullins said.

The program gives students experience in modern forms of journalism, which are print, broadcast and online, he said.

They write stories, take pictures, write headlines and change their stories to broadcast form.

"They get the full range of journalist venues," he said.

About 90 percent of those who attend MJW go on to college and about half of those students go to the University, Mullins said.

"Journalism vis-à-vis democracy and politics is the most important I think," Mullins said.

He said the students also learn intangible aspects of the news.

"They come away with a better sense of what it means to have good judgment in the news, one of the most important things to know," he said.

Carrington Jackson, an MJW participant from Atlanta, Ga., said the most important thing he learned was how to write like a journalist.

"I learned how to write directly," he said. "In journalism you're trying to convey the points exactly like they are

with no fluff around them. It's a lot different from writing in school."

He also said his favorite part of the program was the broadcast.

"We had to condense our stories into a 30-second clip and read off the teleprompter at WVUA," he said.

Katie Finney, an MJW participant from Daphne, Ala., said she most enjoyed hearing from the visiting professionals.

"My favorite part was when the lady that ran Tuscaloosa Magazine came and talked about layout and design," she said. "She did a lot of layout but did a lot of writing too and that's kind of what I want to do."

Mullins said many of the students who attend MJW come away with career ideas.

"They really do learn if this is what they want to do for the rest of their lives," he said.

The program also has a larger goal of expanding diversity in the journalism profession.

"At first it was just African-Americans, but we started admitting all races," Mullins said.

The program draws students from all over the country.

"We've had as many as 10 states represented, but this

year decided to keep it a little closer to home," Mullins said.

This year's students are from Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

Mullins, Marie Parsons, Marian Huttenstine and Cathy Lawrence, all faculty members at the University, started the program in 1983.

The program cost around \$1,000 per student, but is free to students because of sponsorships from Dow Jones and

support from other groups like the Tuscaloosa News and the Alabama Press Association.

An average of 20 students out of the 150 who apply are admitted each year.

The program is well known and reputable all over the country Mullins said.

"This is the most important outreach program this department has had in the 30 years I have been associated with it," he said.

Thompson shows GOP appeal

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTGOMERY — A new survey shows potential presidential candidate Fred Thompson has jumped to the front of the Republican field in Alabama, while the Democratic race between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama has tightened up.

Capital Survey Research Center, the polling arm of the Alabama Education Association, released a statewide survey showing Thompson, a former Tennessee senator born in Sheffield favored by 34 percent of likely Republican voters.

Thompson was followed by former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani with 20 percent, Arizona Sen. John McCain with 11 percent, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who has not announced, with 7 percent and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney with 5 percent.

That was a major change from a statewide poll that Capital Survey Research Center did in May. Thompson wasn't included in that poll, which had Giuliani with 29 percent, McCain with 23 per-

Probable presidential election outcome for Alabama



Fred Thompson - 34%

- Rudy Giuliani - 30%
- John McCain - 11%
- Newt Gingrich - 7%
- Mitt Romney - 5%



Hillary Clinton - 33%

- Barack Obama - 29%
- John Edwards - 9%
- Al Gore - 6%

841 people polled with an error ratio 5 percent.

cent, Gingrich with 15 percent and Romney with 7 percent.

Brad Moody, a political scientist at Auburn University Montgomery, said the changing numbers show the Republican race is wide open for the state's presidential primary on Feb. 5.

State Republican Party Chairman Mike Hubbard said

Thompson has appeal as a conservative Southerner.

"If he does indeed jump into the race, I see him doing extremely well in Alabama," Hubbard said.

In a survey of likely Democratic voters, 33 percent said they would vote for Clinton. The New York senator had polled 37 percent in May.

Obama polled 29 percent in the new survey. The Illinois senator had 21 percent in May.

"If this poll is representative of what's going on in the South, it should be a little of a wake-up call for Hillary Clinton," David Lanoue, chairman of the UA political science department, told The Birmingham News.

Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards tallied 9 percent in the new survey, which was the same level of support he had in May.

Former Vice President Al Gore, who has not announced, polled 6 percent, down from 9 percent earlier.

The new survey was conducted July 11 through 13 and July 16 through 19 with 841 likely voters. It had a sampling error margin of 5 percentage points.

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Science grant funds student research programs

By HAYLEY STRONG
Contributing Writer

The National Science Foundation has again given the University money to be used for research in chemistry, this time in the amount of \$318,209, said John Vincent. The grant is for three years, and it runs three 10-week summer programs, said Vincent, a chemistry professor.

Eight students, two of whom are from the University, are participating in the program, though Vincent said normally

12 students are involved each summer.

Vincent is mentoring Keith Bentley, a junior majoring in biochemistry, as he researches agents for type 2 diabetes.

"Dr. Vincent has proposed that there's a protein [Chromodulin], that helps people with diabetes type 2 and increases their sensitivity to insulin," Bentley said. "I'm testing to see if I can find this protein in urine, because researchers are trying to decide how it's transported in the body. I

think I have found the protein, but I have to do the steps a few times before we can conclude that this protein is there."

Vincent said he, undergraduate and graduate students have been working on this biochemistry research for 15 years.

Bentley said he applied for this program after researching abroad in Germany last summer, and he said he will probably conduct research next summer as well.

Kristen Fitzpatrick, a

junior majoring in chemistry, decided to conduct organic chemistry research instead of biochemistry research.

Fitzpatrick said she applied for the program because she wanted to know more about job options available for a graduate with a chemistry degree.

"The ultimate goal in research is for [your findings] to be used in industry or some other way, so I figured the program was a good starting place to see if I liked chemistry," Fitzpatrick said.

"I'm not sure if I would do this particular research long-term, but I've enjoyed applying what I've learned in my classes. I'm still in the deciding stage of my career, but this has helped me."

Fitzpatrick said she is working on the first part of a two-part process in a reaction, called a trichloro methylation of an activated carbonylic acidation.

"The main area of industry that this benefits is pharmaceuticals," Fitzpatrick said. "In particular, when you're trying

to get certain drugs to target a specific receptor in the body, you need it to have certain functional groups attached to it."

Fitzpatrick said if both parts of the process are done in sequence, it will complete the reaction.

She said if the reaction is completed, her mentor Timothy Snowden, assistant professor of chemistry, will publish their work in a chemistry journal.

The program will end for the summer on Aug. 10.

UA students spend summer days at local swimming pools

By TYLER BIGBIE
Contributing Writer

Saturday morning, Daniel Galbraith, a recent UA alum, woke up and started making phone calls to friends. He had a very important decision to make about which swimming pool to visit.

Galbraith said he knows from experience that if you want to get a good spot at any pool in town, you have to get there early.

This was Galbraith's last weekend in Tuscaloosa, and he wanted to make sure it was "spent right."

"After four years at the University it's time to move on to bigger and better things," Galbraith said. "And the only thing I wanted to do today is hang out at the pool."

During the summer, some students spend their time by the pool. The pool scene is where most students get together to hang out and meet new people. Seasoned veterans of pool lounging,



CW/ Tyler Bigbie

The University Village pool has become popular with UA students because of the submersed pool table and pool parties with live music.

like Galbraith, know the main pools in the Tuscaloosa area are at the Student Recreation Center and the University Downs and University Village apartment complexes.

Galbraith and his friends were gathered around a cooler, filling it with beer and

ice to take to the University Downs swimming pool.

"The University Downs pool has been the benchmark for all apartment pools in the Tuscaloosa area for the past few years," said Justin Abernathy, a senior majoring in finance. "I know I've probably been going

to the [University] Downs pool since I was a freshman."

Laura Whitlock, a junior majoring in public relations, lives at University Downs. She said she uses the pool every other day or more. The atmosphere is incomparable, she said.

"Everyone knows everybody and if you don't, you will by the end of the day," Whitlock said. "If you don't have a beer, someone will find you one. If you want food, someone's ordered pizza."

It's not just the patrons, but the staff of the apartments as well who help to add to this atmosphere.

The Downs staff sometimes provides food and does drawings, Whitlock said.

Some students are not as fond of the Downs pool and prefer to head other places.

"I used to go there [University Downs] a lot last summer, but I started going to the University Village pool recently," said Jim Madden, a senior majoring in business.

"It's a little further from the campus but it is a lot cleaner."

University Village is a new apartment complex near the intersection of 10th Avenue and Greensboro Avenue.

"I also like the [University] Village better because it has a pool table built into the pool," Madden said. "More and more people seem to be visiting the [University] Village pool each weekend."

Madden likes the University Village pool because it's not as crowded as one of the pools he used to frequent.

"I used to go to the Rec [Center] pool during the school year because it is always busy," Madden said.

The Rec Center pool is another favorite for some students, and due to the large size of Rec's pool and lounging areas it is one of Tuscaloosa's hot spots to cool down.

"I just love the lazy river that goes around the pool," said Maude Crepault, a junior majoring in pre-med. "I like all the other pools in the area, but the Rec is my favorite because of the location."

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■ BOOK REVIEW: 'HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS'

'Deathly Hallows' is satisfying conclusion

By COREY CRAFT
Senior Entertainment Reporter
craft@cw.ua.edu

Note: I'm going to keep this vague enough as to not discuss too many spoilers, but if you'd prefer to go into this book completely unaware of its content, I wouldn't read this review.

There has been so much pre-release speculation about the conclusion to J.K. Rowling's epic fantasy series, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," that last week, in an opinions column geared toward the already-building backlash against the novel (before it was released), I said it seemed likely to



disappoint; that surely it could not satisfy everyone and that

people have had their own ideas of where they want the story to go for so long, it seemed inevitable that a lot of people would walk away unhappy.

Now, having read the novel, any whining from the more needy areas of fandom seems even more self-aggrandizing — as if these losers could have come up with a more thematically fulfilling, action-packed conclusion that ties up most of the loose ends! "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" is a wonderful way to wrap up the series.

Though, to be honest, I guess I can see where some of the criticism comes from. This is the first book to break

the formula that the rest of the series has fallen into. "Deathly Hallows," unlike its predecessors, does not follow a year at the wizarding school Hogwarts; at the conclusion of 2005's "Half-Blood Prince," headmaster Albus Dumbledore was killed, leaving Harry with the seemingly-impossible task of tracking down four enchanted Horcruxes, magical objects each imbued with a portion of the evil Lord Voldemort's soul. It is Harry's responsibility to destroy these objects — wherever and whatever they are — and face the Dark Lord one-on-one.

Needless to say, it is a Herculean task for a 17-year-old, even one as adept at facing

the Dark Arts as Harry Potter. Though, even as Voldemort further takes control of the wizarding world, Harry finds himself seduced by the legend of the Deathly Hallows — three magical objects that enable their possessor to, as the book puts it, "defeat death."

Rowling, as ever, keeps the tone fairly bleak for the last installment. As the books have progressed, the tone has gotten considerably darker, and this may be the most relentless yet.

Though I can't claim any one moment in this novel is darker than the scene in the cave in "Half-Blood Prince" (in which Harry fights a great number of zombies — yes, zombies — while

forcing his beloved headmaster to drink a potion that makes him want to kill himself), the book is filled with death, most of it unexpected and sudden, nearly all of them affecting in some way. It's not quite a bloodbath, but more than a few beloved supporting characters bite the dust.

And yet, for all the dwelling on death, the conclusion was somewhat inevitable.

There was rampant speculation about who would die, who would come out on top, but I shall repeat that this is ostensibly children's fantasy: complex though it is, dark though it may be, there was never any doubt as to the general outcome of the story.

■ MOVIE REVIEW: 'HAIRSPRAY'

Musical adaptation of '88 Waters film highly enjoyable

By COREY CRAFT
Senior Entertainment Reporter
craft@cw.ua.edu

I realize it's a tough sell, given the bright, squeaky-clean promotional material, but "Hairspray" is quite a bit of fun, perhaps the most unabashed good time at the movies in some months. This is remarkable for more than a few reasons.

First, director Adam Shankman is responsible for such gems as "The Wedding Planner," "Bringing Down the House" and "Cheaper by

the Dozen 2," among others. This is a frightening resume, enough to strike fear in the hearts of reasonable moviegoers and cast any project he becomes involved with under instant suspicion.

Next, the cast is a motley assemblage of minor stars and B-listers. Christopher Walken (great though he is) is in everything, Queen Latifah can be excellent but has made some questionable career choices as of late, and John Travolta ... well, he's been off lately as well, and from the advertising, his role as an overweight woman

seemed to be stunt casting of the highest order. Everyone else, of course, was even more suspicious. Amanda Bynes? The guy from "High School Musical?"

So the movie had a pretty significant battle to win over my dark, prejudiced soul, and as I've said above, it did. The fact that it overcame such seemingly insurmountable obstacles and was not only a good movie but perhaps a very good movie makes it a must-see, more or less. And Shankman proves a more than capable choice for

director; having come from a background in choreography, it's obvious where his strengths lie.

The film is an adaptation of the 2002 Broadway musical, which itself was an adaptation of the infamous John Waters' 1988 film. The plot follows young Tracy Turnblad (here played by newcomer Nikki Blonsky), an unflinchingly optimistic, overweight teenager whose sole ambition is to dance on a local music show hosted by TV personality



rottentomatoes.com

Nikki Blonsky stars in the film "Hairspray," a musical adaptation of the 1988 John Waters comedy. It opened in theaters everywhere Friday.

See HAIRSPRAY, Page 9

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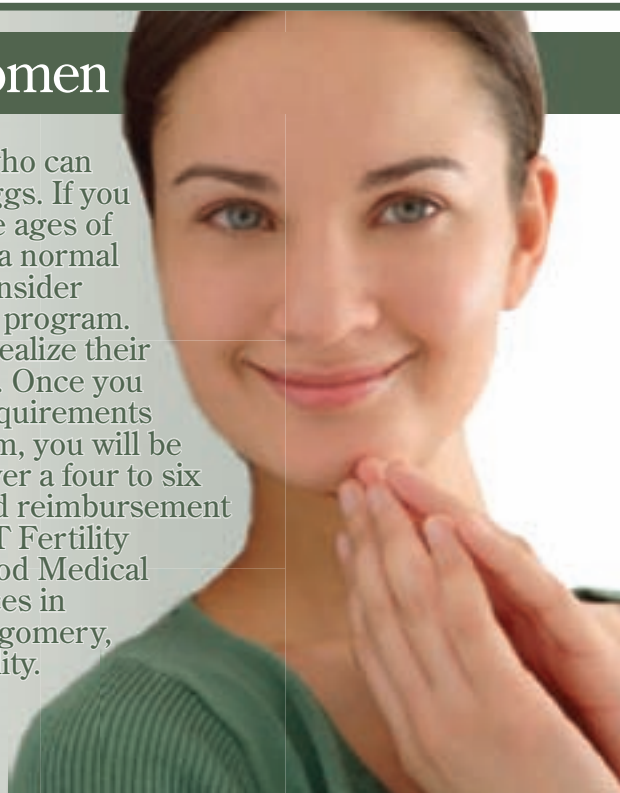
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INbrief

from wire reports ...

Cinema Nouveau presents Absolute Wilson

Cinema Nouveau, the Tuscaloosa Arts Council's independent/art film series at the Bama Theatre, continues with "Absolute Wilson," Aug. 3 through 9. Showtimes are weeknights and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

"Absolute Wilson" chronicles the epic life, times and creative genius of Robert Wilson, intimately revealing for the first time one of the most controversial, rule-breaking, and downright mysterious artists of our era.

Tickets are \$7 for general admission, \$6 for seniors and students and \$5 for Arts Council members. Tickets will be on sale at the Bama Theatre box office about 30 minutes before showtime.

MOVIE REVIEW: 'ONCE'

By PHIL OWEN
Senior Entertainment Reporter

In what has so far been an abysmal year at the movies, there have been only a handful of excellent films released, and the best of that handful is playing at the Capri Theatre in Montgomery Aug. 3 through 5.

That film, "Once," an absolute triumph of a film, tells the story of an unknown Irish entertainer (Glen Hansard) and a Czechoslovakian immigrant (Marketa Irglova), and how they form a bond in what might be the most beautiful possible way: by making undeniably wonderful music.

As the film opens, we find Hansard's street guitarist playing and belting out a song on the streets of Dublin, which is something he has made a habit of doing as he, like many unknown artists out there, waits for his "big break." Meanwhile, Irglova is a street vendor, who sells many different items,

ranging from magazines to roses and back again.

They meet one day when the girl decides to inquire into the guy's life outside of street entertaining. After the two have a quick bite, the girl's musical talent is revealed, and the two have a brief jam session in a small music store.

But the story of "Once" is of more than just music; the real heart of the film is an atypical tale of love. But unlike just about any other romance you'll see this year, this film expresses an intensely real love, a love that is so real you can actually see it on the screen and hear it in the music. And like real life, this love may be hindered by circumstance, or even push them into something greater if they each go in separate directions.

And the fact that until the very end of the film we don't know what will happen between the two is further evidence of the film's excellent

craftsmanship on the part of freshman director John Carney.

But that isn't what makes "Once" a great film. No, "Once" achieves masterpiece status because it accomplishes a level of pure emotion that no other recent film can rival, and it does this through a series of musical performances by the two leads. Yes, "Once" is a musical, but not a "Dreamgirls" or "Chicago"-style musical. Rather, this is what can only be described as "musical verite," or basically just a film in which the characters play music in a naturalistic way.

And it's that music, that beautiful music, that makes "Once" such a powerful experience. Through song, these characters are able to express joy, sorrow, regret and hope very clearly and effectively. Because so much of the film's emotion is expressed in song, it is more difficult for hard-hearted audience members to prevent themselves from being affected by that emotion.

What I'm saying here is that "Once" is that rare film that can touch the hearts of even the most jaded among us. "Once" is the must-see movie of the year and is a film that I, along with many others, will treasure in my heart as long as I walk this earth.

'Once'

Director: John Carney
 Starring: Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova
 MPA rating: R
 Release date: Aug. 3 at the Capri Theatre in Montgomery
 Run time: 85 minutes
 CW critic rating (out of four):

★★★★

HAIRSPRAY

Continued from Page 8

Corny Collins (James Marsden, Cyclops from "X-Men"). Her hours of practice pay off, as her dancing attracts Collins and teenage heartthrob Link Larkin (Zac Efron) enough to allow her on the show — in spite of the Nazi-like station manager, Velma von Tussle (a terrific Michelle Pfeiffer), who doesn't want any subversive elements — particularly black people — on her show.

Tracy senses injustice and becomes something of an inadvertent social activist when she agrees to stand up for integration and her black friends so one day she can dance with them on television — and perhaps win the Miss Hairspray pageant along the way.

The plot is slightly more complex than that, as every character receives his or her big moment, particularly black TV host Motormouth Maybelle (Latifah), her son Seaweed (Elijah Kelley), Penny's zealot mother (Allison Janney) and the Turnblad parents, Edna and Wilbur (Travolta and Walken).

Travolta's casting, odd as it may sound, is very good. The role of Edna

is traditionally played by a man in drag — Divine in the original film, Harvey Fierstein or Michael McKean on Broadway — but Travolta, interestingly, tones down the inherent camp value in the role and finds a sweeter, more timid tone, here portraying Edna as a character ashamed of her weight and frightened of the changing world she dares not venture into.

Add to that terrific performances by Latifah (reminding us that, yes, she is an Oscar nominee, and it was also for a musical), Kelley (an amazing talent), Marsden and Pfeiffer (plus an out-of-nowhere hilarious minor role from Janney), and you have a very strong supporting cast. But the movie would fail without a strong talent in the character of Tracy, and Blonsky, a young woman plucked from open auditions for the role, nails it.

And before you think this is a white-washed tale of integration (terrible pun), this is a sneaky, subversive film; it contains a great deal of the irreverence of the Waters film with some great songs from Marc Shaiman, who most may know from his other great film musical, "South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut." There are a great

many double entendres at play here and some unexpectedly sly moments. All in all, it's an extremely good-natured tale of the need for integration in the '60s, and a clever lampooning of the culture. And you probably won't be able to stop humming the songs.

'Hairspray'

Director: Adam Shankman
 Starring: John Travolta, Michelle Pfeiffer, Queen Latifah, Nikki Blonsky and Christopher Walken
 MPA rating: PG
 Release date: July 20
 Run time: 107 minutes
 CW critic rating (out of four):

★★★★

Release date: "Hairspray" is a surprisingly sly, jubilant musical filled with entertaining performances and excellent songs.

DISC picks

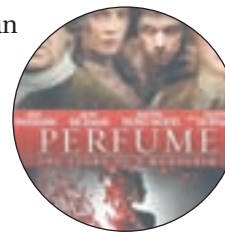
DVDs released Tuesday
By Corey Craft
Senior Entertainment Reporter

"Zodiac" is among the year's best films so far, a completely immersive police procedural that recreates the feared era of the Zodiac killer in San Francisco in a masterful way. Jake Gyllenhaal, Robert Downey Jr. and Mark Ruffalo give amazing performances in this true-crime story of obsession.



"The Number 23," in contrast, is one of the year's worst films so far, a completely dull thriller of obsession that piles plot contrivance upon plot contrivance and ends in the absolutely most ludicrous way possible. This is the movie that Jim Carrey fired his agent over. That must mean something.

"Perfume: The Story of a Murderer" is an odd film, the somewhat epic story of a serial killer man with an unusually precise sense of smell. The ending goes off the rails, but it's a fascinating bit of allegory, and director Tom Tykwer amazingly represents the sense of smell in a visual way. Which is really weird, come to think.



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INbrief

from wire reports ...

Six Tide players on coaches preseason All-SEC football teams

The Crimson Tide football team placed six individuals on the SEC coaches preseason teams.

Senior cornerback Simeon Castille was the only UA player earning first-team accolades. The three-year letterman from Birmingham led the Tide in interceptions and fumble recoveries in 2006 after picking off six passes and recovering three fumbles during the season.

A pair of Tide offensive linemen earned second-team honors on the offensive side. Junior center Antoine Caldwell and sophomore tackle Andre Smith made the cut after stellar 2006 campaigns. Caldwell was a second-team All-SEC honoree following his sophomore season, while Smith earned Freshmen All-SEC and Freshmen All-American honors from several publications after starting all 13 games as a true freshman.

On the defensive side, sophomore linebacker Prince Hall joined Smith and Caldwell on the second team. Hall, a Freshman All-American was third on the team with 77 tackles in 2006 after redshirting in his initial season of eligibility.

Senior Wallace Gilberry was named to the third defensive team. The three-year letterman started all 13 games in 2006. He posted a career-high 43 tackles last season while tallying 10.5 tackles for loss.

Placekicker Jamie Christensen was named third-team kicker. Christensen, who missed time as a junior with a groin injury, became the first Tide player to kick game-winning field goals in successive weeks in 2005, when he booted a 31-yarder to beat Ole Miss and a 34-yarder the following week to earn a 6-3 victory over Tennessee in Tuscaloosa.

UA wheelchair basketball coach makes U.S. team

By WILL BARRY
Contributing Writer

A Tuscaloosa resident will be one representative for the United States at the 2007 Parapan American Games held in Rio de Janeiro this August.

Local athlete Jacob Counts, who grew up in Covington, Ky., and now lives in Tuscaloosa, has been selected as a member of this year's U.S. team.

Counts is the assistant head coach for the UA men's wheelchair basketball team and will be one of 12 athletes on the U.S. Parapan Men's Wheelchair National Team.

The national team was selected near the end of March and has had four training camps up to this point.

The competition this August is the qualifying tournament for the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, China.

The United States must finish in the top three at the Parapan American Games in order to secure a spot in Beijing.

Counts said he believes his experience helping coach the UA wheelchair team will help him become a better teammate and player when he starts international play.

"It's been a really good experience. I've learned a lot about the game through teaching it. It's kind of helped me brush up my game quite a bit as far as just thinking about the game everyday and explaining it," Counts said. "It's proved my ability to deal with different personalities and different players, just stuff like that pretty much in general."

Counts and the rest of the 2007 Parapan American Men's Wheelchair Basketball team had its last chance to practice in the United States a few weeks ago when they attended the United States Men's Wheelchair Basketball Festival, sponsored by the National Wheelchair Basketball Association, at the Lakeshore Foundation

in Birmingham, which is an official U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Training Site.

This festival featured all 12 athletes from the U.S. Parapan Men's Wheelchair National Team as well as 24 of the nation's best up and coming players.

The up and coming players that were not on the national team were split up into three teams and played each other and the national team in order to prepare the national team for Brazil this August.

This was the national team's last weekend to get ready before departing for Brazil and the competition was a good send off.

"I thought it went really, really well. It was really good to get some competition, and we could all run together and really, really fine tune some things. So, in that respect I thought it went awesome," Counts said. "I think we're right where we want to be — really confident too. I mean it's a great group of guys."

An added challenge in playing overseas will be facing countries they have not seen in years, if at all. This makes the team dig deeper to scout their opponents from various countries.

"A lot of times it can be very difficult, and then some teams like Canada, for example, has one of the better

teams in the world and their core group of guys have been together for probably five or six years now," Counts said. "So we can look at tapes from like the World Championships in Amsterdam last year or we had a qualifying tournament for that in 2005 in Denver."

Tuscaloosa has given Counts a home away from home. Despite not getting as much attention as some of the more mainstream sports, he has still felt support from the fans.

"Living in Tuscaloosa has been really great," Counts said. "The community has been really supportive. I was really surprised by the fan turnout we had. Things like

that are really important to me as a player. You really feel the support from the community. So, it really helps a lot."

If the U.S. team can pull out a top three finish at the 2007 Parapan American Games, they would qualify for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China, which would make all the hard work and sacrifice worth it.

"It would be great," Counts said. "It's something really, I mean I think all players, you know, from the day they start playing they kind of dream about that opportunity and aspire to get to that level. It'd be pretty amazing."

The team is excited as they head off to Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil, and their hopes are high as well as their goals. With an Olympic bid hanging in the balance, expectations are at an all-time high.

"Our goal is definitely to win gold on this trip," Counts said. "That's pretty much what we're aspiring to do and anything less would definitely be a little bit of a disappointment."

"But at the same time mentally before you go I think you just focus a lot on [the] team, on executing your game plan and just playing the best game possible. Playing really hard and playing really smart and then hopefully, hopefully that will be enough to get you the gold."

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Crossword

ACROSS
1 I thought so!
4 Be in debt to
7 School grp.
10 Vegas opening?
13 Altar vow
14 Roll of bills
15 Spherical object
16 Step into character
17 Regrets deeply
19 "The Bald Soprano" playwright
21 Egg dish
22 Jan of Jethro
23 Gum
24 Gym padding
25 Increase in pay
26 Old Cosby series
28 61-in-'61 guy
30 Places
31 Answering argument
34 Groups of nine
35 Began with preliminary remarks
40 Of marriage
42 Toy gun ammo
46 Fertilis loam
47 Desert Storm missile
48 Anbricantes
50 Writer Hantoff
51 That's disgusting!
52 Apply postage beforehand
54 Add bubbles
57 Actor Mifune
58 Added on
59 Smoltor food
60 Name for a lion
61 Pleading letters
62 Boundary
63 Fink
64 Black goo
65 Sushi staple
66 Pig's digs

DOWN
1 Hawaiian port
2 Eliot's Beede
3 Like some yarns?
4 Held the title to

5 Power measure
6 Meese and Mc Bain
7 Painter of small dolls
8 Walked (on)
9 Dogpatch guy
10 TV collie
11 Confront boldly
12 Rocks
18 Comic Booster
20 Periods
22 Oldsters' grp.
24 English Civil War battle site
26 Fink flooring
27 Junior, to senior
28 Wirtwa's award
29 Looks like
32 Highlander's hat
33 Fuss
36 Up in the air
37 Tools for cutting roots
38 Sigma follower
39 Antiquated
41 Harvest

42 Hostage taker
43 borealis
44 Adjusted
45 Beforehand
49 Wading bird
51 Streisand movie

53 Land measure
54 Archer or Bancroft
55 Revival meeting shticker
56 Swirl of water
58 Broke bread

Solutions

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Signed Sissy

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INbrief

from staff reports ...

Nine UA gymnasts earn academic honors

The Alabama Gymnastics team placed nine student-athletes on the 2007 Academic All-Southeastern Conference list.

"We are very proud of our history of success when it comes to this honor," Alabama gymnastics head coach Sarah Patterson said. "Our ladies know that academics are our number one priority and they work hard every semester to uphold our great tradition of excellence in the classroom."

Senior Erin Rightley made the list for the fourth year in a row while junior Terin Humphrey, a two-time NCAA Champion, earned the honor for the second time. Sophomores Cassie Martin, All-American Brittany Magee and Amanda Montgomery all made the honor roll. It was the second time for Martin and Montgomery. Humphrey and Magee joined the Tide during the second semester of their freshman year and weren't eligible for the honor.

Four freshmen joined the Tide upperclassmen on the list. Morgan Dennis, the 2007 NCAA Floor Exercise Champion and All-American Kassi Price were joined by SEC Balance Beam Champion Ricki Lebegern and Casey Overton.

Since the 2000 season, Alabama has averaged 11 honorees per season, including a program high 15 honorees for the Tide's 2002 NCAA Championship season.

Tide football at SEC Media Days today

By CAROLINE GWALTNEY
Sports Editor
gwaltney@cw.ua.edu

The annual celebration of the return of football season, better known as SEC Media Days, is being held at the Wynfrey Hotel in Hoover this week, and Alabama's interview schedule starts today.

With the start of fall practice nearly a week away on Aug. 3 and the season opener nearly a month away, the much-anticipated 2007 season is soon to begin. The Crimson Tide opens with Western Carolina Sept. 1.

While last year's Media Days passed quietly without any major headlines, this year's event will likely be a media frenzy, especially with the arrival of new Alabama football head coach Nick Saban.

Also, after Brandon Deaderick, Roy Upchurch and Brandon Fanny were arrested last week outside a bar on the Strip in Tuscaloosa, Saban will most likely publicly address this issue for the first time.

Saban, along with senior cornerback Simeon Castille and junior center Antoine Caldwell, will be interviewed by the press from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. today.

Castille, one of the Tide's top defensive playmakers and a first team All-SEC cornerback, led Alabama with six interceptions and three fumble recoveries last season.



UA Media Relations

Alabama head coach Nick Saban, along with senior cornerback Simeon Castille and junior center Antoine Caldwell, will represent the Tide in the SEC Media Days today at the Wynfrey Hotel in Hoover.

Representing the Alabama offense, Caldwell is the Tide's returning starting center who registered 58 knockdown blocks last season and also has All-SEC honors.

Arkansas, South Carolina, Auburn and Kentucky participated Wednesday, while Alabama, Vanderbilt, Florida and Mississippi State are being interviewed today. Georgia, Tennessee, Ole Miss

and LSU will wrap up the event Friday.

Arkansas junior running back Darren McFadden, the only unanimous choice for this year's first-team pre-season All-SEC by the league's coaches, represented Arkansas Wednesday, along with coach Houston Nutt and senior linebacker Weston Dacus.

Head coach Steve Spurrier,

senior running back Cory Boyd and senior linebacker Jasper Brinkley represented South Carolina Wednesday.

First-team All-SEC defensive lineman Quentin Groves, senior quarterback Brandon Cox and Auburn head coach Tommy Tuberville also participated in interviews Wednesday.

Head coach Rich Brooks, first-team All-SEC quarter-

back Andre Woodson and junior free safety Marcus McClinton spoke for Kentucky.

Birmingham native and junior wide receiver Earl Bennett, senior linebacker Jonathan Goff and coach Bobby Johnson will speak for Vanderbilt at the same time as Alabama today.

Head coach Urban Meyer will join defensive back Tony Joiner and senior wide receiver Andre Caldwell for Florida at 10:30 a.m., along with coach Sylvester Croom, defensive back Titus Brown and quarterback Michael Henig of Mississippi State.

Strong safety Kelin Johnson, senior center Fernando Velasco and head coach Mark Richt will speak for Georgia Friday morning at 8:30 a.m. along with first-team All-SEC runningback B.J. Green-Ellis, sophomore defensive lineman Marcus Tillman and head coach Ed Orgeron from Ole Miss.

Head coach Phil Fulmer, second-team All-SEC quarterback Erik Ainge and junior linebacker Jerod Mayo for Tennessee will wrap it up Friday at 10:30 a.m. along with head coach Les Miles, first-team All-SEC wide receiver Early Doucet and first-team All-SEC defensive lineman Glenn Dorsey for LSU.

For Auburn and Alabama updates and interviews, go to al.com. To see interviews from all the other SEC schools, go to secsports.com.

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