



**MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Tide looks to finish season without Mitchell

**SPORTS PAGE 5**

**MUSIC**  
Black Sabbath reunion no longer a reunion

**LIFESTYLES PAGE 8**

# The Crimson White

Wednesday, February 22, 2012

Serving the University of Alabama since 1894

Vol. 118, Issue 92

## Bama finds its Idol

Amber James performs at the second annual Bama Idol Tuesday night. Contestant Ashton Perkins won the competition.



CW | Pete Pajor

**Student wins iPad 2 for performance of Beyonce's "Listen"**

By Deanne Winslett  
Contributing Writer

Bama Idol hosted its second annual competition Tuesday evening in the Ferguson Center Theater. While people filed into the the-

ater, a Whitney Houston Pandora station played in the background as a tribute to the recently passed singer. When it was time to begin, junior Cornelius Chacere and graduate assistant Jasmine Bush took the stage.

Chacere and Bush were the two hosts for the evening's competition, and they started things off by showing a brief comedic video as an introduction, including clips from the original auditions and rehearsals.

Afterward, the audience was introduced to the panel of judges, which included UA student Kamie Crawford, William Martin of the Department of Theatre and Dance and Steven Hood, new executive director of Housing and Residential Communities. They sat behind an ornately decorated table, contributing to the distinct "American Idol" theme.

SEE BAMA IDOL PAGE 6



Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., and UA President Robert Witt break ground at the NOAA facility near Bryce Hospital.

CW | Eric Yaron

## Sen. Shelby helps break ground at NOAA facility site

**Forecasting center will work with National Weather Service**

By Eric Yaron  
Contributing Writer

Government officials, academic leaders and even the first American woman to walk in space all met Tuesday morning for the groundbreaking ceremony of the new National Water Center on the campus of The University of Alabama.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the building will be the first of its kind to combine hydrological forecasting operations and research under one roof.

NOAA Deputy Administrator Kathryn Sullivan, U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, UA President Robert Witt, Associate Director for Water of the United States Geological Survey William Werkheiser and Deputy Director of the National Weather Service Laura Furgione met for the groundbreaking ceremony at the building's future site between the Riverside Residential Community and Shelby Hall.

Representatives of both NOAA and the USGS as well as members of various other agencies involved in water services will staff the new 60,000-square-

foot complex. "This building is another major step forward," Werkheiser said. "This is a place where all of the best minds in our agencies can come together to deal with those [water-related] issues."

As the first building of its kind, the National Water Center will allow the National Weather Service, in association with other federal agencies, to provide more effective emergency notifications to the public in the event of major flooding or other water-related natural disasters. These notifications will include highly detailed maps outlining the anticipated paths and effects of future floods allowing for faster and more effective evacuations.

Shelby expressed his belief in the importance of the center and emphasized to the assembled lawmakers just how crucial the research conducted there will become.

"It's not what we build here or start today, it's what comes out of this building," Shelby said, "Information, forecasting and knowledge which will help our economy, help our people and help our nation."

With the aid of these and other projects within the National Water Center, communities will become more resilient to floods and NOAA's stated goal of creating a 'Weather-Ready Nation' will move closer to becoming a reality.

SEE WATER CENTER PAGE 2

## UAB student government voices opposition to mine

**Students call for UA System to not allow coal mining at Shepherd Bend**

By Tray Smith  
Special Projects Editor  
ralphliesmith@gmail.com  
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Student Government leaders at the University of Alabama at Birmingham have joined a growing list of community organizations in expressing their opposition to a potential strip mine on University of Alabama property at Shepherd Bend in Walker County. The UAB Undergraduate Student Government Association has unanimously adopted a resolution asking the University of Alabama not to allow the land to be used for coal mining.

Andrew Hayes, a member of the USGA Senate at UAB who co-authored the resolution, said the issue is important to UAB students.

"This issue is very pertinent to our students, and the decision made by the board will echo endlessly," Hayes said. "We felt the need to clearly voice our opinion on behalf of the UAB student body."

Hayes said the USGA opposed the strip mine because it could threaten water quality throughout Birmingham, not just for UAB students.

"We try to tie UAB and the Birmingham community in as much as possible," Hayes said. "It's obviously something that has gotten the attention of the entire community."

The resolution resolves to implore "the University of Alabama System to neither sell nor lease their significant land and mineral holdings to allow coal mining at Shepherd Bend."

A permit for the proposed mine was awarded to Shepherd Bend LLC, a company owned by the Drummond family, in 2010 by the Alabama Surface Mining Commission. It would be located on part

SEE STRIP MINE PAGE 2

**"This issue is very pertinent to our students, and the decision made by the board will echo endlessly."**

— Andrew Hayes

## Instructor, author, DJ raises money for city



Submitted Photo  
'Tuscaloosa Runs This' was released as an e-book this summer.

**Two collections memorialize Tuscaloosa before, after storm**

By Stephen N. Dethrage  
Assistant News Editor  
sndethrage@crimson.ua.edu

The classic, stereotypical college professor is an older man sporting a bowtie, quiet and reserved; and a fan of cigars, crosswords and reading Walt Whitman by a fire in his humble home after the kids are put to bed.

Many instructors at the University stand in proud contrast to that image, but one of them, Brian Oliu of the department of creative writing, does this particularly well.

Students familiar with Oliu have discussed

SEE OLIU PAGE 3

## AKA hosts forum on sexual health

**Group outlines risks of unprotected sex through informative discussions**

By Dexter Strong and Kris Mitchell  
The Crimson White

The Theta Sigma chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority hosted their third forum of this semester, Better With the Lights On: Sex and Sexual Health, last night.

Jessica Vickery, assistant director for the Student Health Center, said it is imperative that college-aged students understand that sexual health be seen as intertwined with one's physical, mental and emotional health, and that sexual health should be treated as just as important as other areas of health.

The forum encouraged UA students to engage in productive and safe sexual habits. Among the topics

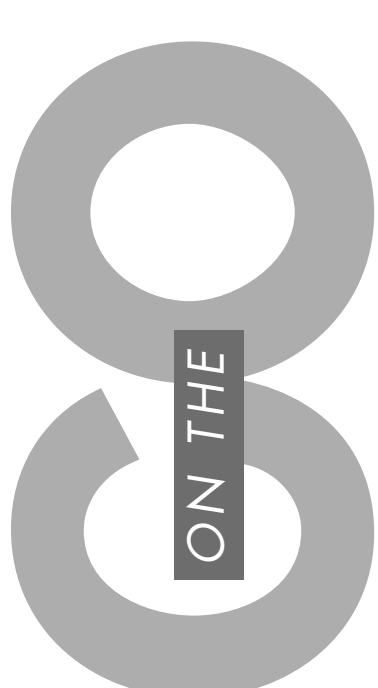


CW | Margo Smith

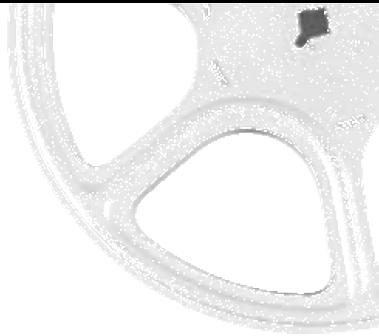
Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority hosted a forum on sexual health Tuesday night. The forum included facts and interactive games.

addressed by Tuesday night's and treat sexually transmitted discourse on safer sex were sexual consent, how to prevent

SEE SEX TALK PAGE 3



# ONLINE



## ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: THE VOICE OF A GENERATION POLL

Mark Zuckerberg and Harry Potter face off in the last round of the Voice of a Generation poll. Vote online at cw.ua.edu.

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# ON THE CALENDAR

## TODAY

**What:** Cullen Murphy Lecture, book signing and reception

**Where:** 205 Gorgas Library

**When:** 2:30 p.m.

**What:** Wonder of the World

**Where:** Allen Bales Theatre, Rowand-Johnson Hall

**When:** 7:30 p.m.

**What:** The Sixth Riverside Bollywood Film Festival presents 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' (1998)

**Where:** Media Room, Riverside Community Center

**When:** 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY

**What:** Student Recital Featuring Heike Palm, cello

**Where:** Moody Music Building

**When:** 5:30 p.m.

**What:** Pulitzer Prize Winner Douglas Blackmon 'Slavery By Another Name'

**Where:** 205 Gorgas Library

**When:** 6 to 8 p.m.

**What:** Wonder of the World

**Where:** Allen Bales Theatre, Rowand-Johnson Hall

**When:** 7:30 p.m.

**Submit your events to calendar@cw.ua.edu**

## FRIDAY

**What:** Financial Aid Open House

**Where:** Plaza, Student Services Center

**When:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**What:** Luis Rodriguez to present lecture on autobiography, It Calls You Back

**Where:** Ballroom, Ferguson Student Center

**When:** 1 p.m.

**What:** SANKOFA

**Where:** Ferguson Center Theatre

**When:** 6:30 p.m.

# ON THE MENU

## LAKESIDE

### LUNCH

Montreal Steak  
Herbed Mashed Potatoes  
Corn on the Cob  
Sautéed Mushrooms  
Chipotle Chicken Tortilla Soup  
Farfalle Pasta with Broccoli & Ricotta (Vegetarian)

### DINNER

Baked Cod  
Macaroni & Cheese  
Steamed Carrots with Brown Sugar Glaze  
Eggplant Parmesan Pizza  
Devil's Food Cupcakes with Vanilla and Oreo Frosting  
Farfalle Pasta with Broccoli & Ricotta (Vegetarian)

## BURKE

### LUNCH

BBQ Pulled Pork  
Macaroni & Cheese  
Seasoned Collard Greens  
Chicken Tacos  
Brownie Blast  
Eggplant Parmesan (Vegetarian)

## BRYANT

### LUNCH

Beef Stroganoff  
Honey Glazed Baked Chicken  
Steamed Broccoli  
Yellow Squash  
California Cruisin' Chicken Sandwich  
Summer Vegetable Tortellini Alfredo (Vegetarian)

## FRESH FOOD

### LUNCH

Breaded Pork Chops & Seasoned Carrots & Green Beans  
Spaghetti with Green Pepper & Mushroom Marinara Sauce  
Chicken Salad Sandwich  
Southwest Cheese & Corn Chowder  
Stuffed Portobello (Vegetarian)

# ON THE RADAR

## Samsung commits to LED screens, will spin off LCD unit

From MCT Campus

Samsung Electronics Co. is spinning off its LCD display manufacturing business and merging with its smaller LED display unit in a move that reveals the company's vision of the future of televisions and mobile screens.

The South Korean company announced the decisions on its website on Monday; both choices were approved by Samsung's board of directors earlier in the day.

"Currently, the display market is undergoing rapid changes with OLED panels expected to fast replace LCD panels to become the mainstream," Samsung said in a statement. "Amid this structural change of the display industry, adopting measures for change and innovation, including business restructuring, are essential to improve our competitiveness for our display business."

Samsung's LCD business – which until last December was a joint venture with Sony that built displays for TVs and computers – will officially become a standalone corporation, wholly

owned by Samsung, on April 1.

After the spinoff is complete, "the new corporation will consider adopting various restructuring measures including a merger with Samsung Mobile Display and S-LCD Corporation," Samsung said, acknowledging that more cost-cutting moves are on the way.

The spinoff comes as LED-backlit screens are becoming more popular and less expensive to produce. At the same time, demand for LCD displays is still growing, particularly in larger screen sizes, according to data from the research firm DisplaySearch.

Also set for April 1 will be the merger of Samsung's growing LED display-making business, which is currently a wholly owned, standalone company, into Samsung Electronics.

The merger is taking place "to nurture the LED business as the future growth engine of Samsung Electronics' component business" by allowing the smaller unit to be able to easily take advantage of its parent company's resources in development, manufacturing and sales, Samsung said.

## Center will solve water challenges

WATER CENTER FROM PAGE 1

The University's involvement in this project does not stop with the building's location. In addition to helping advance hydrological research nationally and mitigating the effects of water-related natural disasters, the center will be serving the University of Alabama community as well. The National Water Center will open up opportunities for faculty and students to become involved in research currently being conducted by national agencies regarding the effects of water on our nation.

"Water resources present our society with some of its biggest challenges," Witt said.

"The National Water Center that will be built on the UA campus will assist in meeting those challenges while providing a mutually beneficial research relationship between faculty and students from UA and other institutions and the experts with NOAA and other federal water experts."

The National Water Center is expected to be completed sometime in mid-2013 and will begin operations shortly thereafter. Senator Shelby expressed his hope to return to the campus in the future to witness this monumental building in full operation.

"We're bringing a lot of the study of water, how water interacts with the atmosphere, how it interacts with droughts and how it affects the economy and the whole nation right here in Tuscaloosa," Shelby said.

## Canada Day jazz quintet to open Sonic Frontiers series

Harris Eisenstadt and his acclaimed quintet, Canada Day, will lead off Sonic Frontiers, a cutting-edge avant-garde jazz series on The University of Alabama campus. The Sonic Frontiers series is designed to further artistic diversity on the UA campus, says series organizer Dr. Andrew Raffo Dewar, assistant professor in New College and the School of Music. The

concerts will foster creative exchange among music professionals, UA students, faculty and staff and the greater community through performances and class visits by world-class performers of avant-garde jazz. The first concert will be at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at UA's Ferguson Center Theatre. The concert is free and open to the public.

## UA students, faculty to lobby for higher education

On March 1, UA students, administrators, faculty and staff will travel to Montgomery, Ala., to advocate funding for higher education. Buses will leave at 7 a.m. from the parking lot at the Student Recreation Center. Students will participate in a parade, receive a barbecue lunch and participate in a meet-and-greet ses-

sion with various political leaders from across the state. Higher Education Day is a free event, and community service hours will be awarded through Service Learning Pro. To register, go to sga.ua.edu and fill out the form for Higher Education Day.

## UA Away Scholarship available to study, serve or work abroad

Students interested in working, serving or studying abroad this summer or fall are eligible to apply for the UA Away scholarship given by The University of Alabama Division of Student Affairs. The UA Away scholarship initiative funds students in need of financial

support to make studying abroad possible. Student Affairs is promoting global citizenship through opportunities to study, serve and work abroad. Scholarship applications are available at www.sa.ua.edu and are due Thursday, March 1, by 5 p.m.

## Book benefits tornado relief

OLIUI FROM PAGE 1

Lady Gaga and cologne with him, parted as he DJed at clubs and bars across the city and, most importantly, witnessed his love and charity for Tuscaloosa since the tornado rocked the community on April 27.

Immediately following the storm, after realizing the extent of the damage, Oliu said he didn't know what he could do to help the community, but he knew he had to do something.

"In the days after the tornado, I collected writers that I knew cared about this city and told everyone to give me pieces about Tuscaloosa. Some were written before the storm, and some were written just after," Oliu said. "Everyone played to our own strengths. I certainly can't use a chainsaw, but I knew I could gather people together and assemble something."

Oliu assembled an e-book, a compilation of the works sent to him by the writers whose help he solicited. He titled it "Tuscaloosa Runs This" and released it for free with a feature that allowed people who enjoyed the book to make donations for the cause. The money the book raised, nearly \$1000, Oliu donated to tornado relief.

The book isn't finished helping Tuscaloosa, though. Oliu recently accepted the help of Bob Weatherly, the owner of Egan's Bar on the Strip, to finance the production of the e-book in hardback form, which can be preordered for a release in early March. Oliu said after Weatherly

was repaid for the costs of its publication, all surplus money the book makes will again be donated to the city's recovery.

Oliu also donated \$500 of the profits from another of his books, "So You Know It's Me," to the Red Cross during their relief efforts in the city.

That project, a collection of Tuscaloosa-themed lyrical missed connections Oliu had previously listed on Craigslist, was published by Tiny Hardcore Press, who announced its availability for presale on April 26, a day before the tornado devastated Tuscaloosa.

The book featured connections that were missed exclusively in locations in Tuscaloosa, including the ten Hoor parking deck, the Barnes and Nobles at Midtown Village and Bryant Denney Stadium.

"There's nothing sadder than a missed connection. There's a certain desperation of the language," Oliu said. "A lot of the times, the poster says 'I don't think anyone will read this, or this is a long shot, or I know you'll never see this, however...' and there's a passionate honesty to it."

Although the book was not printed or officially released until the end of May, Oliu allowed preorders for the book and donated the proceeds, about \$500, to the Red Cross and their efforts in aiding Tuscaloosa.

"I talked to Roxanne [Gaye, his publisher], I said, 'Look, take all my money, whatever extra money I get, and donate it to the Red Cross.' She's incredibly kind, an amazing woman, and she was just like, 'Yeah. Let's do it.'"

Oliu's most recent project, a

short book called "Level End," is made from sections cut from a longer book he is still writing that focuses on several classic video games and the tropes and feelings associated with them. Level End does this on a smaller scale and focuses on a game's most intense moments: boss battles.

"In this book, these are all of the boss battles and the save points. I'd write a prose poem or a lyric essay about a boss battle and the tropes that revolve around them. There's always an underwater fight, one where something digs up from underneath, the robot fight; there are just these certain recurring things."

The book features eight pieces on these struggles and a final boss fight, as well as a few resting places in between that explore another popular video game feature: the save point.

"I looked at those things and categorized them as fights that you have in your life," Oliu said. "So I kept asking myself, where were moments in my life where I reached the end of something, and what were things I had to overcome to get there?"

"Level End" will be released by Origami Zoo press, who plans to sell a regular edition as well as, in true video game spirit, a "gold edition" that will feature the essays bound as a game booklet, a CD of bonus features and a map designed by members of the cartography department at UA.

Oliu has been in Tuscaloosa since 2005, when he began studying to earn his MFA, which he earned in 2009. He now teaches as an instructor of literature and creative writing.

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# Auction to help special education



Art auction to be held Thursday, Feb. 23, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Northport Civic Center.

Submitted Photo

By Mazie Bryant  
Contributing Writer

The artwork of special needs students from the Tuscaloosa area will be sold in a silent auction hosted by the Sprayberry Education Center at the Northport Civic Center on Thursday, Feb. 23, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

The Sprayberry Education Center is the special education facility for the Tuscaloosa County School System. Starting at age 3, students with special needs can attend the Center to receive educational, behavioral and social assistance.

"Sprayberry is a wonderful school that provides for the needs of students with exceptionalities," said Sprayberry intern Sara-Beth Dickinson, a

senior majoring in early childhood special and general education. "The administrators, faculty, staff and especially the students make the school an incredible place to work."

Sprayberry is divided into preschool, multiple needs, autism and alternative programs that center on providing individually focused attention to each student. The multiple needs, autism and alternative programs focus on students from elementary to high school.

The Center previously offered a gifted program, but Tuscaloosa County Schools began providing the program at the start of the 2011 school year.

School faculty and parents will host Sprayberry's 8th annual art show in order to

increase funds and community awareness of the programs. Guest artists will donate their work in conjunction with the student artwork that will be showcased.

The various divisions of the show will be the Little Hands exhibit of preschool artwork, Extraordinary Art of the multiple needs students, Enlightened Art by the gifted program and Expo Art from the alternative classes.

Through the many programs, parents and faculty of Sprayberry have noticed the students' power of expression through art.

"The art is a method of expression that all students can participate in," Sprayberry Parent Teacher Organization President Carla Allen said. "It may be different for individ-

ual children. Some can work independently, and others might require hand-over-hand assistance. Art is something that appeals to different senses, thus providing sensory stimulation."

The art show will include catered food by Walnut Hill Designs. There will be no admission fee, but all artwork will be available through the silent auction with bids starting at \$20. The proceeds collected from the event will benefit the Sprayberry Education Center by providing funds for a new sensory room, library books, increased technology and equipment for Special Olympics training.

"I think the art show is a wonderful opportunity for the students and staff to come together in a unique way to raise money for the school," Dickinson said. "The students really enjoy being able to create their own artwork and see it on display at the show."

Tuscaloosa community members are encouraged to attend the art show in order to publicize the purpose, goals and achievements of the school.

"The art show hopes to raise awareness to the diversity of Sprayberry Education Center," said multiple needs teacher Jamie Evans. "We want to highlight the abilities of our students instead of focusing on their disabilities."



Volunteers participate in the interactive portion during Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority's forum on sexual health held Tuesday night. CW | Margo Smith

## AKA uses metaphors to explain sexual health

SEX TALK FROM PAGE 1

infections and how to properly use contraceptives.

Upon entering room 30 of ten Hoor Hall, students were greeted by AKA sorority members who handed them cups of water with symbols representing various levels of sexual activity.

Students were encouraged to have metaphorical sexual encounters using their respective cups of water with the other forum attendees corresponding to the symbols on their cups.

Those with "A's" on their cups were abstinent and were instructed not to touch other student's cups. Students with "M" cups represented monogamous sexual relationships and exchanged their water with only one other student. Students with cups marked "C", which represent condoms, had symbolic protected sex by toasting with other cups, whereas students who had cups with smiley faces were told to exchange water with other students with corresponding cups indiscriminately.

This icebreaker opened the door for a guided discussion on the implications of sexual activity led by Vickery, who with several games that fostered interaction, illuminated many of the unknown, confusing and seldom-discussed elements of

sexual life.

Theta Sigma thought the topic was relevant to students and hoped to help students handle the many sexual topics that confront them.

"By using interactive games and lively discussion we can help get this important message out there," said Paige Adaire, a sophomore majoring in management information systems.

"This forum helped to demystify the many problematic notions held by our classmates," said Eryka Wade, a junior majoring in English and African American studies.

The attendants of the forum thought the forum was both fun and informative, but should have had more male representation.

"I learned a lot. I definitely did not know there were ten steps to properly putting on a condom," said Cameron McAdams, a senior majoring in mechanical engineering.

Both Theta Sigma and the Student Health Center are committed to providing more events like this one. Theta Sigma asked students to be on the lookout for more forums and encouraged students to attend "Ask the Sex-perts," an event sponsored by the Student Health Center that will be held April 21 at the Ferguson Center.

# Artist's Sungod statues designed to honor Crimson Tide national title

By Jasmine Cannon  
Senior Staff Reporter  
jmcannon@crimson.ua.edu

Dave Carlson started his own business by making two-pound painted statues he calls Sungods in honor of sports teams. In light of Alabama football's most recent national championship victory, he has now created the Bama Slammer Sungod statues, which are painted in crimson and white.

"I was just wondering what I could do," said Carlson, a die-hard Alabama football fan. "I thought a really good gesture would be to make a special little Bama Slammer for each one of the seniors who are graduating. Everybody on that football team gets a championship ring, a hat and a shirt, but I wanted to make something a little bit

Dothan and Duncanville have received the gift of a Bama Slammer.

All in all, Carlson has not forgotten the people responsible for the football team's success. He made special Bama Slammer Sungods for head coach Nick Saban and every senior on this year's squad.

Carlson included the names and jersey numbers along with the record and "BCS championship" on each senior's Sungod.

"I think that's sweet and nice [that he gave the Sungods to members of the team]," said Tymesha Keiling, a junior majoring in psychology. "I think it's different because you don't really hear about people doing stuff like that for the team. I think it's creative."

Students said it is great that people are supporting and recognizing UA athletics.



Submitted Photo

Carlson sports his Team Sungod shirt while holding one of his signature statuettes.

players to know they are supported in the Crimson Tide community even outside the state of Alabama."

"Maybe he could do more, and more people would know about it and get the word out [that he has these to offer]," said Keiling.

Carlson's collegiate Sungod business began when he was asked to make some sporting colors from the University of Florida. He's glad to have items for Alabama fans now and hopes more people can learn about unique items en route to preparing for another championship season.

"I hope they didn't lose too many good players this year," Carlson said. "I know Dont'a Hightower is going to the pros and Trent [Richardson] and

Dre [Kirkpatrick], but I've got pretty good faith in Saban. He'll get them all back and get that team going again."

For more information on the Bama Slammer Sungods and all other work, visit teamsungods.com.

Each Sungod purchase will result in a \$5 donation to Nick's Kids Foundation.

"I thought a really good gesture would be to make a special little Bama Slammer for each one of the seniors who are graduating. Everybody on that football team gets a championship ring, a hat and a shirt, but I wanted to make something a little bit more personal for the seniors."

— Dave Carlson

more personal for the seniors." Carlson began making Bama Slammers when he was asked by a friend to make something commemorating the Tide. The desire for the Sungods grew around Florida and has found its way to Alabama. Carlson said people from cities like

"It's nice he showed his appreciation to the football team and his support for the University of Alabama athletics," said Leah Bradford, a sophomore majoring in telecommunication and film. "It's encouraging for the

## UAB SGA comes out against strip mine

STRIP MINE FROM PAGE 1

of 1,300 acres UA owns along the Black Warrior River and would discharge wastewater 800 feet away from a Birmingham Water Works Board in-take facility that supplies water for 200,000 Birmingham-area residents.

According to Black Warrior Riverkeeper, an organization opposed to the mine, coal mining at Shepherd Bend may not be economically feasible without access to the University's land in the area. The University has said it has no plans to sell or lease the land.

Dexter Forbes, president of the Green Initiative at UAB and a co-author of the resolution, said that he hopes the

resolution will lead to more conversation about the issue.

"I hope that this resolution will encourage the UA System Board of Trustees to open up a dialogue about Shepherd Bend and join the students of the UA system in protecting our city's drinking water," Forbes said.

Charles Scribner, executive director of Black Warrior Riverkeeper, said the USGA resolution is a strong statement from UAB students.

"The UAB Student Government has made a strong statement that they want to protect their city's drinking water and their University's reputation from the Shepherd Bend Mine proposal," Scribner said.

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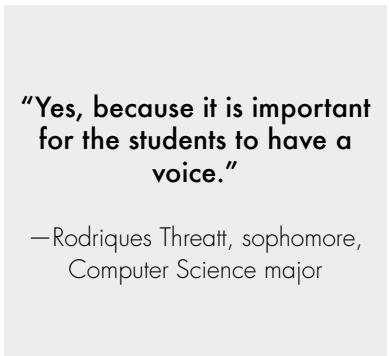
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## Do you care about the SGA election?



"Not really. All I hear about is how corrupt SGA is by the machine and also it does not affect my day to day life."

—Dylan Kalvin, sophomore, Civil Engineer



"Yes, because it is important for the students to have a voice."

—Rodriques Threatt, sophomore, Computer Science major



"Yes, because it is a representation of the student body and your voice can be heard."

—Sonya Randolph, senior, Biology major



"Yes I do care because I think it is a great way for the university to be structured under a unified group."

—Mackensie Henderson, freshman, Public Relations major



CW | Susan Hurwitz

## Simply UnAshamed? More like positively shameless

As I was stepping into my car several days ago, I noticed a colorful piece of paper stuck under my windshield wiper. Perturbed, I reached down to remove the leaflet when, much to my annoyance, I discovered that the glossy paper had become one with my beautiful Honda Accord, fused to the windshield by rain and subsequent heat. Out of options, I took a look at the flyer and discovered that it had been placed in the name of God. It was an invitation to UnAshamed, a non-denominational Christian fellowship held on Thursday nights at 8 p.m. at Daystar Family Church.

Next to this newest layer of papery residue left on my car, are the two previous residue squares left by the two previous UnAshamed leaflets that were brutishly shoved under my wiper. I guess you thought that the third time would prove to be the charm, and in a sense it is, because instead of you blasting me with unwarranted advertising, you now get to hear from me.

People of UnAshamed, I regret to inform you that I will never attend one of your programs. My decision was sealed by the fact that you are not a



legitimate religious organization. Stay with me non-believers and accept for a moment that there are certain religious organizations that are more legitimate than others.

An authentic religion grasps the difference between witnessing and propagandizing, something your group fails to understand. An authentic act of witnessing should consist of human interaction. It is a deep, heartfelt discussion of varying spiritual viewpoints. Your propaganda bombings of campus parking lots should be condemned as acts of mass vandalism.

Was this what Jesus of Nazareth meant when he uttered the Great Commission? When he commanded the disciples to "be My witnesses?" I hardly think that these imperatives justify sneaking into parking lots and dormitories and, rather than

actually justifying yourself to other humans, posting flyers everywhere (which done without permission in residence halls, mind you, is a violation of housing policy, and resident advisors everywhere would prefer you to cease and desist) and then bolting.

But then again, I wouldn't expect your group to understand that either because authentic religion is literate, and you are not. No, upon visiting your website (unashamed-ua.com), I was met by a video featuring actors performing a disturbingly violent drama. Action-packed depictions of Christ, replete with simulated beatings and crucifixions all taking place on a central stage, with melodramatic orchestral music rising in the background.

Then the scene changes and the stage is still lit, but it now features a group of African-American performers pumping up the mostly white crowd with a bit of Christian rap. This is quite a tonic, I'm sure. Not only do you get to lose yourself in a hysterical crowd, but you also get to feel cool, edgy and exotic while doing it. Hands raised while jumping up and down, with faces contorted

into expressions of intense emotion, your congregation is whipped into a frenzy. The music reaches its crescendo, and the video, titled "Intro/ Crunk 2011," ends.

Unlike literate religion, yours is a cult of spectacle. You are not inspired to higher thinking by ancient texts, but are compelled to tribalism by images and noise.

Authentic religion is thoughtful and reflective. I don't need to attend one of your pep-rallies to be quite sure that there is nothing thoughtful or reflective about what you do. How could there be? In the next video, featuring a concert, the lights are dimmed, the music is blaring and the crowd is chanting in unison: "Sold out! Sold out! Sold out!"

Which, it turns out, is fitting, because in addition to offering your weekly therapy sessions, you also offer an array of officially licensed products that are peddled by your umbrella ministry: The Basement, based out of Birmingham. One is free to choose from a wide array of cheap necklaces, dog tags and t-shirts. It was Jesus himself who flipped tables in the temple when he saw that a house of worship had become a mar-

ket. Also, saying that a certain percentage of the proceeds go to missionaries is no different than selling an animal for sacrifice as was done in those days – they both try to pass off a moneyed exchange as genuine giving.

You should, frankly, be ashamed. Desperate for membership, you plant yourself in a location where you know you will be able to find hoards of young, malleable adults outside of their comfort zone and in search of meaning: a college campus. You thrust your advertising material on them. When they attend, you ensnare them with wild antics and trendy merchandise. Free from adhering to standards laid out by authentic religion, your hip, free-floating religious organization is a trap for young people.

If you must continue to exist, however, please consider this advice: First, I believe that you should change the name of your cult from "UnAshamed" to "Shameless." It just seems fitting. Second, please stay away from my car.

*Evan Ward is a senior majoring in history. His column runs on Wednesday.*

Wednesday,  
February 22, 2012  
Editor • SoRelle Wyckoff  
letters@cw.ua.edu  
Page 4

### YOUR VIEW

"Many people think our government is broken because they don't see the changes they want to see as quickly as they want to see them, but our Constitution was written that way for a reason."

— **Jeb**,  
in response to "Occupy movement ineffective at achieving goals"

"We see all Obama was, charismatic. Popular satisfaction with him as a president has significantly declined over his term."

— **Maggie Nelson**,  
in response to "Grand Old Party's poor candidate a failing Republican strategy"

## It is possible to have a successful 'friends with benefits' relationship

By Samantha Romo

After the release of the 2011 box office hits, "No Strings Attached" and "Friends With Benefits," audiences everywhere took a closer look at what exactly it means to be a "close friend." Like most other things in life, these Hollywood blockbusters painted a fairytale picture, or in this case, picture show, of the benefits that crossing the friendship line into steamier territory could potentially create.

But can you really have your cake and eat it too? Personally, I like to think that in our modern day society being purely platonic is possible – that we are capable of not letting our emotions cloud our judgment. However, as experience and

observation show, in most relationships, this isn't the case.

When looking at these friendships, you have to start at the root of what benefits each party is really looking gain. When it comes to the way men and women interpret sexual encounters, women are more commonly known for linking to emotional attachment, whereas men are more commonly known for linking it to sport.

I have no doubt in my mind that if an attractive girl were to propose the idea of casually hooking up to a guy friend, he would comply. But is it possible for this proposition to be fulfilled without succumbing to a double standard? When guys get laid, it usually comes with a pat on the back, but when girls get laid, it usually comes with

friends turning their backs. So, why then, would both parties agree to it? Where do their motives lie, and is it possible that they are both in it for the same reasons?

As these Hollywood fairytales go, love inevitably conquers all. But let's gets real, we're not Mila Kunis or Justin Timberlake, and we sure don't live in New York City. The majority of girls at this university have getting the "ring by spring" engrained in their brains from the minute they step foot on this campus. So chances are, guys, if a girl is proposing to casually "hook up," whether you want to believe it or not, strings are attached.

Don't get me wrong though, this doesn't say this is the case

for all of these agreements. It would be naive to base every "friends with benefits" relationship on a typical stereotype. It does, however, bring back the important question of what exactly each person is looking to benefit from this kind of relationship, and why he or she agreed to it in the first place.

For some people, commitment just isn't in the cards at this point in their lives. Struggling to balance school, work, organizations, friends and a relationship on top of everything else can seem to be impossible. So in these situations, is the idea of having freedom when you need it, yet someone you trust when you don't feel like venturing out to the meat market really that far-fetched?

My opinion is no. If you've got a good thing going, then why try to change it? I will advise, however, tread these waters carefully. Be sure both parties are on the same page; and even if you start off on the same page, be aware that when it comes to getting emotions involved, things could potentially end catastrophically and even be detrimental to the initial friendship that the two people once shared.

So can we have our cake and eat it too? I would say that platonic is not impossible, although the odds are not in your favor, my friend.

*Samantha Romo is a freshman majoring in public relations. Her column runs biweekly on Wednesday.*

### SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

#### Project Rebound offers counseling

By Nick Darby

If the April 2011 tornadoes had a massive, irreversible impact on your life, Project Rebound is here for you. Project Rebound has served our University this school year by helping the campus community recover from the deadly tornadoes that struck Tuscaloosa nine months ago.

The program is founded on the belief that simply talking to others can be a great way to combat the anxiety, depression and general negative change that have infiltrated so many of our lives as a result of the storms. By contacting Project Rebound, any student can talk to a graduate student who deeply cares about his or her campus community and would like to help it recover from the disaster in any way possible. These student crisis counselors would be honored to talk to you about your experiences and any feelings that you may have as a result of the disas-

ter that struck our community.

If you had significant property damage as a result of the storms, these students can connect you with the resources to assist you in receiving your reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency if you have had any problems with a FEMA claim or have not filed a claim. Project Rebound Crisis Counselors can also refer students, faculty and staff to multiple resources across campus to address emotional, physical or behavioral challenges that may be affecting them in the wake of this horrible disaster.

Please feel free to contact Project Rebound at (205) 348-0025, or email Melanie T. Tucker, program director, at mtucker@cchs.ua.edu or Michelle Tanner, lead counselor, at mtanner87@gmail.com.

*Nick Darby is a counselor for Project Rebound.*

#### Baptist Campus Ministries can be a place of refuge

By Megan Miller

I've always been a very independent person, so imagine my surprise when my first weekend away from home at college was one that was completely panic-stricken. I was concerned that I had made the wrong decision in choosing to go to a school three hours away from home. That feeling persisted until my roommate invited me to the Baptist Campus Ministries for an event called Survival. At Survival, we had small group time, seminars and pizza, providing you the chance to get to know other freshman majoring in the same thing as you, living in the same dorm as you and maybe in some of the same classes. Survival was the first night I knew I had made the right decision in coming to UA; the first night I felt like it was home. Ever since then, the BCM

has often served as a place of refuge for me. I immediately got involved with their small group Bible study called Journey Groups, their Tuesday night worship titled Discovery and Wednesday lunch. Journey Groups allowed me to be able to learn more about God and more about myself in a small group setting. Discovery helped me meet some upperclassmen that I now look to as mentors. Wednesday lunch provided a delicious home cooked meal once a week that was a nice break from the dining hall food. I've also gotten involved with the freshman leadership team.

In February and March, the freshman leadership team is reaching out to the Air Force ROTC Cadets. We will have a special lunch honoring the cadets Wed., Feb. 29, and we will host a dinner honoring the cadets on March 1.

Even if you are not a part of the ROTC, we would still love for you to come to one of our events. It's not too late to join a spring Journey Group, and this semester we have five studies to choose from on different days and at different times so as to best fit with your schedule. Discovery is Tuesdays at 7 p.m., and Wednesday lunch is every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Your first Wednesday lunch is free, and after that, they are only \$1.

The BCM has been a great way for me to get involved in different activities. For anyone who doesn't already have a campus ministry or church to attend, I hope the BCM can provide that same sense of welcome and safety it did for me that first week I was at UA.

*Megan Miller is a freshman majoring in journalism.*

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The Crimson White reserves the right to edit all guest columns and letters to the editor.

# Sledge succeeds in and out of classroom

Ashley Sledge competes on the uneven bars at the 2011 NCAA Regional championship.



Ashley Sledge

to make sure everyone is where they need to be.

"From day one, one of the responsibilities that I have as a head coach is their academic success," Patterson said. "I feel that, as a coach, that's my first responsibility as the head coach is to make sure they are set academically."

As Sledge has progressed into her third year at the Capstone, she's taken on more responsibility in and out of the classroom.

"I used to have meetings with her to keep her in line, and as we move into her junior year now, she asks for meetings with me now, she's organized, she's vocal as a leader," Patterson said. "She's the perfect example of watching someone grow and mature into their athletic ability, their leadership role and being a successful young adult."

So what does the future hold for Sledge? She is still deciding on a number of options including graduate school for marketing or sports management. Patterson says the sky is the limit.

"I think Ashley Sledge could be president if she wanted to be," Patterson said. "She has it all. She is bright, she is smart, she has a great personality, but she has that charisma that people will love in the business world."

By Marc Torrence  
Sports Reporter  
marctorrence@gmail.com  
@marctorrence

For junior Ashley Sledge, balancing her pursuit of an advertising and public relations degree as well as competing on the Alabama gymnastics team is a daunting task.

Her key to success? A planner. "I learned how to use a planner my sophomore year," she said. "I had never really used one before and just kind of got

by with turning things in, doing things last minute. But once I did that, my life got so much better."

Sledge is one of the Crimson Tide's top performers inside and outside of the gymnasium. Last season, she was named a first team Vault All-American and second team All-SEC while helping lead the Tide to its 5th national championship in gymnastics.

But in the classroom, she is just as accomplished.

Sledge was named a Scholastic All-American her freshman year and made the SEC Academic

Honor Roll as well as the Dean's List her freshman and sophomore years.

She said academics is an important part of being a student at Alabama, and her planner helps her stay organized.

"I came in my sophomore year and I was like, 'I'm making a change this year. I'm not going to be up all hours of the night trying to finish something and then try to go practice,'" she said. "That's just not conducive to what we do. Outside of the gym, making the right decisions has helped me

inside of the gym."

It helps to have a head coach like Sarah Patterson who values academics just as much as much as gymnastics.

"Sarah stresses academics more than she stresses our athletics. I know that's hard for people to grasp because she's a coach," Sledge said about Patterson. "She's focused on our academics while we're here so that we can succeed later in life."

The team has multiple staff members and tutors to help the gymnasts stay on task academically, but ultimately, it is Patterson who makes sure the girls are keeping up with their studies. Patterson is sent monthly reports on grades and attendance and conducts meetings

# SPORTS

Page 5 • Wednesday,  
February 22, 2012  
Editor • Marquavious  
Burnett  
crimsonwhitesports@  
gmail.com

**SPORTS**  
*this weekend*

THURSDAY

• Men's Basketball vs Arkansas: 6 p.m., Fayetteville, Ark.

• Women's Basketball vs Auburn: 8 p.m., Auburn, Ala.

FRIDAY

• Softball vs East Carolina: 4 p.m.

• Softball vs North Dakota State: 6 p.m.

• Baseball vs Arkansas-Pine Bluff: 6:05 p.m.

• Gymnastics vs LSU: 7 p.m., Baton Rouge, La.

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

# Alabama to move forward without Mitchell

By Brett Hudson  
Senior Sports Reporter  
bbhudson@crimson.ua.edu  
@Brett\_Hudson

Some uncertainty around the Alabama men's basketball program was cleared up on Monday when head coach Anthony Grant announced that junior forward Tony Mitchell had been suspended for the remainder of the season, and senior forward JaMychal Green had been reinstated to practice.

In his weekly press conference, Grant said that Green will not play against Arkansas Thursday night and did not elaborate on the reasoning for that decision.

"We try not to think about it too much," redshirt junior guard Andrew Steele said. "We just have to worry about the people we're going to have and focus on trying to go to Arkansas and get a win. Obviously, it would help us if we had him, but the good thing is we have a few games under our belt of not having him, so it isn't anything new for us."

Green's future when it comes to playing time has yet to be determined.

"We'll see how the week goes this week, and we'll make some decisions after Thursday," Grant said.

The uncertainty continued when Grant only said, "I don't know," when asked if he expected Mitchell to return to Alabama next year for what will be his senior season.

"It's a disappointment," Steele

said. "Obviously he's someone that can help our team with the talents he has, but we understand that it was [Grant's] decision to make and we have to stand behind it."

Mitchell took his 13.1 points and seven rebounds per game with him as his season officially ended.

The task of replacing his production fell on the corps of backcourt freshmen that were recruited to come to Alabama in Grant's marquee class of 2011.

"They get an opportunity everyday in practice to showcase what they can do," Grant said. "We have several guys that are seeing more consistent time that they haven't seen before. It's good to see them step up and do things that they are capable of doing and certainly help our team."

Freshman guard Rodney Cooper has been one player called upon in this situation. In the last three games, Cooper has

averaged 13 points on 29 minutes per game, compared to season averages of five points and 16.8 minutes per game.

Some individuals took advantage of having more playing time, but the team as a whole struggled. In the three games that both Mitchell and Green have been suspended for up to this point, Alabama is 1-2.

Before Green's suspension, Alabama had a 5-4 record against Southeastern Conference opponents.

Even with the new challenges presenting themselves, Grant thinks his team has done well in the face of adversity.

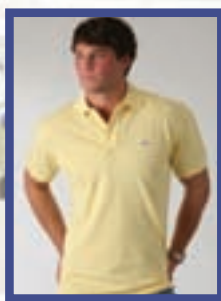
"I think our guys have moved forward," Grant said. "I think we understand, like everything else, you can only control what you can control. For our guys, it's about trying to get prepared for the opponent ahead of us and trying not to deal with distractions, trying to eliminate them as much as we can."



Senior forward JaMychal Green looks to make a play against two USC defenders.

Photo by Kent Gidley

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

# Coaching could be in the future for Andrew Steele



By Brett Hudson  
Senior Sports Reporter  
bbhudson@crimson.ua.edu  
@Brett\_Hudson

Redshirt junior guard Andrew Steele once announced that his career as a Crimson Tide basketball player was over. Steele then re-joined the Tide's coaching staff before announcing his return as a player. He bounced back from injury and is coming off two-straight double-digit scoring games.

**Crimson White:** When you were sidelined with concussion issues earlier in the season, did you ever expect to make a comeback to basketball?  
**Andrew Steele:** I didn't think about it. I would still play from time-to-time, going up to the Rec and playing with my teammates, but I didn't image being able to come back in this capacity.

**CW:** What was it like when you took on an assistant coach-like role while you were sidelined?

**AS:** Coaching was something I thought I wanted to do when I finished playing. The coaches did a really good job of giving me that chance and letting me experience it firsthand. It furthered my conviction that [coaching is] what I want to do when I graduate.

**CW:** Do you want to coach here at Alabama when your playing career is over?

**AS:** I would love to stay here. That would be the dream situation. But, whatever chance I get, I'm going to take it.

**CW:** Did you step up and change your role on the team after you came back from suspension without senior forward JaMychal Green and junior forward Tony Mitchell?

**AS:** I think I had to. When I first

came back I think I brought a lot of experience to our backcourt because other than Trevor [Releford] and Ben [Eblen], we didn't have anyone that had played before. Then when we lost [Green] and [Mitchell], with the experience we lost, I felt like I kind of had to step up. It wasn't necessarily scoring, but to lead and be more aggressive in other ways that can help the team.

**CW:** What does the possibility of an NCAA tournament bid mean to you?

**AS:** I've never been. No one on our team has ever been. So for me and [Green], who have been here for four years, for him to end his career on that high now would feel really good, especially with how close we are. I've heard from everyone it's an experience unlike anything else. I've always watched it since I was little and dreamed of getting to that point. Especially this year with everything I've been through personally, and what we've been through as a team, it would be the perfect ending to [the season].

**CW:** Is it unusual for you to be one of the older guys on a team that is so young?

**AS:** Not necessarily, because even on my high school team I had to assume a leadership role. I remember when I was a freshman and had no clue and thought that the day when I would be one of those veteran leaders is so far away. But, it's here now.

**CW:** Do you ever turn to your older brother Ronald, who played for the Tide, for advice and leadership help?

**AS:** I constantly talk to him now. The biggest thing he told me was to make sure I go out there and lead, stay positive, bring energy, always put the team first and do whatever it takes to win. Learning from him and constantly talking to him has been a big

COLUMN

## Suspensions force Tide to look ahead

By Marc Torrence  
@marctorrence

The last few weeks have certainly been a whirlwind for the Alabama men's basketball team.

The team was riding high after a double-overtime win against Ole Miss in early February. Since then, however, things have been anything but normal.

First, there was the suspension of Tony Mitchell for conduct detrimental to the team – not expected, but not a surprise.

The team survived Auburn without him. In fact, it was

the one of the most dominant basketball wins against the Tigers in basketball history.

But then things really took a turn for the worst. Trevor Releford, JaMychal Green and Andrew Steele were all

suspended for an unspecified violation of team rules.

Do we even have to talk about the disaster in Baton Rouge that night?

Releford and Steele were reinstated after just one game, but a sense of uncertainty still lingered around the team as it fell to Florida on Valentine's Day.

The team finally got a short-handed win, a gritty effort against Tennessee at home, but the uncertainty remained – will Tony Mitchell or JaMychal Green be back this season? When?

Well, Alabama fans got their answer Monday afternoon. Mitchell is suspended for the rest of the season, and Green is back at practice – he will not be available for Thursday's game

at Arkansas.

And now, it's time to move forward.

The Tide is still very much in the tournament hunt. ESPN bracketologist Joe Lunardi projects the Tide as a No. 10 seed in the NCAA tournament, and many other pundits like him seem to agree that Alabama is positioned to make the tournament as one of the last at-large teams.

A four-game stretch remains to determine its fate.

First up, are the Arkansas Razorbacks in Fayetteville on Thursday – a very winnable game even with Green not playing.

Then the Tide welcomes Mississippi State and Auburn to Coleman Coliseum. The Bulldogs will be a tough test, but Green has matched up well against their big men this season and last. Alabama has

also already beaten Auburn without Tony Mitchell in the lineup.

Finally, Alabama finishes its season on the road at Ole Miss. The Rebels have struggled this season, and have already lost to Alabama once.

Is it possible that the Tide could win out? Absolutely. Alabama showed it could win without its two stars in the line-up against Tennessee. Getting one of them back only helps its chances.

Right now, the focus is on the future. Green will be back eventually, and Mitchell is done for the season. There are no more questions about suspensions or eligibility. It's time to move forward with what could be a defining season for Alabama basketball.



Tony Mitchell



Trevor Releford



JaMychal Green

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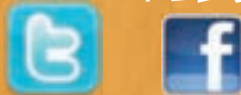
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# Black Sabbath reunion show turns into 'Ozzy and Friends'

By Jefferson Fabian

Last November, the legendary metal pioneer Black Sabbath announced that, for the first time in more than 30 years, it would reunite with the band's original lineup. Members would consist of vocalist Ozzy Osbourne, guitarist Tony Iommi, drummer Bill Ward and bassist Geezer Butler not only to tour, but also release an album of completely new material.

Basically, this is a metalhead's dream come true. Everything seemed to be going well. The members all liked each other, they were all relatively healthy (I mean, they are getting older) and they were all in the same room together; these are conditions that haven't been met for quite some time. The outcome looked promising.

However, those of us who have realistic expectations about old bands reuniting thought that this might be too good to be true. And it was.

On Jan. 9, it was announced that Iommi has lymphoma. The band sounded optimistic, noting that they weren't planning on having to cancel tour dates or push back recording for the new album. I figured this reunion could still happen even if only three of the four could make it, but then complications arose with another member.

Earlier this month, Ward announced he

would not be taking part in the reunion unless he was provided with a "signable contract" amid rumors that Sharon Osbourne, Ozzy's wife and solo career manager, ordered Ward to be fired from the band. She denounced the rumors publicly, but it still remains that the band is without their original drummer.

The last nail in the Sabbath coffin, at least for me personally, came this past Saturday when the band announced that Iommi would only be able to make one show in light of his recent cancer developments. The band remains firm in its claims of Iommi's good health, but he still needs to take time off for treatment and recovery.

This leaves the band consisting of Ozzy and Geezer as the final remaining original members. What we're left with after the departure of Iommi is essentially another one of Ozzy's horrible solo tours. Zakk Wylde will replace Iommi for the dates already scheduled. Upcoming concerts in Europe with "Black Sabbath" billed as the headliners now read "Ozzy and Friends."

The band promises old fans that there will still be a special Black Sabbath set in which Geezer will join Ozzy on stage, but this is hardly a shadow of the act formerly promised. Without the other half of the band, it's essentially a Black



black-sabbath.com  
Tony Iommi

Sabbath cover band. Actually, it's worse than that. It's a Black Sabbath cover band featuring "Crazy Train" and other Ozzy hits that you'll have to sit through.

It's depressing, and I can't say that I'm really surprised, but it's not a completely bad situation. If anything, it means we may have some Sabbath to look forward to in the near future. There's still hope that the band can come through and offer Ward a reasonable contract, if not now, then maybe in the next year or two.

Also, there's certainly hope that Iommi sees a swift and healthy recovery, as he is dealing with a highly treatable form of cancer. As a fan, I'm disappointed that it couldn't come together this year, but if the cancellation means better health for Iommi, I can wait a little longer.



L.A. Noire is one game incorporates a solid storyline.

COLUMN | VIDEO GAMES

# Video games give players more than just a pastime

By Buddy Acker

My life revolves around video games. I remember playing games such as Sonic the Hedgehog 2, Mega Man X, Super Mario World and Riven as a child, and I knew, even back then, that I wanted to devote my life to gaming.

As I got older and started reading some gaming publications, including my favorite, "Game Informer," I realized that I wanted to take my passion a step further. I want to write about video games, especially if it means that I can state my case for them.

Video games have progressed visually over the years from 16- to 64-bit graphics, and to the current things of beauty that they are now, but they have also begun to include more realistic characters and feature far better plot progression.

Back in early 2011, a game named L.A. Noire was released. It incorporates both extremely believable characters and a solid story into its structure. As a result, it became one of my favorite games of the past few years. This particular game is just one of many examples of how gaming has evolved.

Despite what anyone else thinks, I view certain video games as art. There are some games, such as Conflict: Denied Ops, that should be shoved through a meat grinder, but then there are a lot of games that need to be acknowledged for their artistic content.

Braid is a prime example of a praise-worthy, artistic game. It is a 2-D side-scroller with platforming and puzzle elements, but its true value lies in its narrative. It uses metaphors to paint a picture of a man's life and the mistakes he has made along the way. Video games can evoke emotions in the person playing them. I have laughed and even cried while playing many different ones.

There is a certain joy to sitting down and playing a great video game that I can't find anywhere else. I can escape my somewhat depressing existence for a little while. I can explore uncharted terrain. I can confront my fears head-on and come out unscathed.

There is no other medium on Earth that can compare to the realm of video gaming. I am proud to call myself a gamer. I would be even more proud to have a job as a video game journalist. Here's to the future.

## Ashton Perkins wins vocal contest

BAMA IDOL FROM PAGE 1

The contestants were introduced one at a time. There were twelve contestants in the finale, out of the 62 who auditioned this year. The top twelve included the following students: Amber James, Brea Basham, Randy Bowden, Micah Spires, Allie Niles, Amber Hersh, Aaron Finney, Candice Rosenkranz, Jonathan Bell, Ashton Perkins, Antennetta Clark and Anthony Ciulla. They performed in that order.

Amber James was the first performer of the evening and sung her rendition of "Waiting Here for You." Judges gave commentary after she was done, giving feedback similar to how the judges of "American Idol" do.

"I think you have a very, very sweet voice," Crawford

told James after her performance.

The competition progressed in that pattern, with each competitor performing in turn and the judges giving them constructive feedback afterwards. The audience sang and clapped along with the tempo of each performance.

After Hood asked if performers could leave the stage and perform in the crowd, the sixth performer, Amber Hersh did just that. Hersh began her performance of Miranda Lambert's "Kerosene" by getting the audience clapping with the beat, and shortly afterwards, she left the stage and entered the crowd. The crowd responded to this with cheers and encouragement.

"You decided you were going to have a good time, and you decided everyone was going to have a good time with you," judge Martin said to Hersh.

Another first of the evening came after the tenth

contestant Ashton Perkins performed. Perkins was the first performer to receive a standing ovation following her performance of Beyonce's "Listen." Audience members stood and sang along with her as she hit the high notes, and the judges recognized her for her powerhouse voice.

"I was struck by the natural sounds you make. That's something you can't learn," Martin told Perkins. Crawford said simply of Perkins' performance, "I have no words."

The last contestant of the evening was Anthony Ciulla, who performed Josh Groban's "Remember When It Rained."

"It went from one extreme to another, and you really showed skill navigating those extremes," Martin said of Ciulla's performance.

Hood remarked on the various catcalls and shouts Ciulla received from the female audience members throughout his performance.

"If I was a college student

of the female persuasion, I would be looking for you," Hood said.

Ciulla informed the audience that he was, indeed, single.

Hosts Chacere and Bush retook the stage, giving a final salute to the judges for their constructive contributions. Audience members were instructed to vote by texting in their picks to the Bama Idol hotline.

While votes were tallied, the a capella group Subject To Change entertained the crowd with a performance. Subject To Change is the only a capella group at the university, and they received positive feedback from the crowd.

The hosts then had all the contestants line up on the stage, and the three winners for the evening were announced. James won third place and received a bag of merchandise from the SUPE Store. Micah Spires took second place, winning a new Kindle Fire for his performance of The Avett Brothers' "Murder In The City."

Spires was one of two of the contestants who played the guitar during their performance. Spires was able to persevere on the stage despite some challenges.

"I kind of had some techni-

cal difficulties so I was honestly shocked to see that I had got second place. I'm very excited. It was a really fun experience," Spires said. "It really means a lot because to be honest I don't really consider myself incredibly talented."

Perkins was the first place winner, receiving an iPad 2. Perkins was encouraged by the hosts and by the audience to perform an encore of her winning performance. The crowd responded with as much enthusiasm as they did the first time, standing and clapping consistently.

"I felt like everybody was really into it, and I really appreciated the fact that it's audience vote. For me to be voted on by my peers to win first place against all this incredible talent is really an honor," said Perkins.

The organizers behind the Bama Idol event were pleased with the talent present in the competition this year. Bama Idol planner junior Symone Johnson said it will be a challenge to rival this year's success next year.

"I was really nervous about everything going well. It feels amazing just to see that we had a great turn out and that everyone enjoyed themselves," Johnson said.

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Page 8 • Wednesday,  
February 22, 2012  
Editor • Ashley Chaffin  
lifestyles@cw.ua.edu

**LIFESTYLES**  
this week

WEDNESDAY

• **Wonder of the World:** Allen Bales Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

• **Wonder of the World:** Allen Bales Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

• **CBDB:** Green Bar, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY

• **The Nest Unveiling/Community Painting:** Rosedale Park, 1 p.m.

• **The Sunshine Factory, Stargazer Lillies:** Green Bar, 10 p.m.

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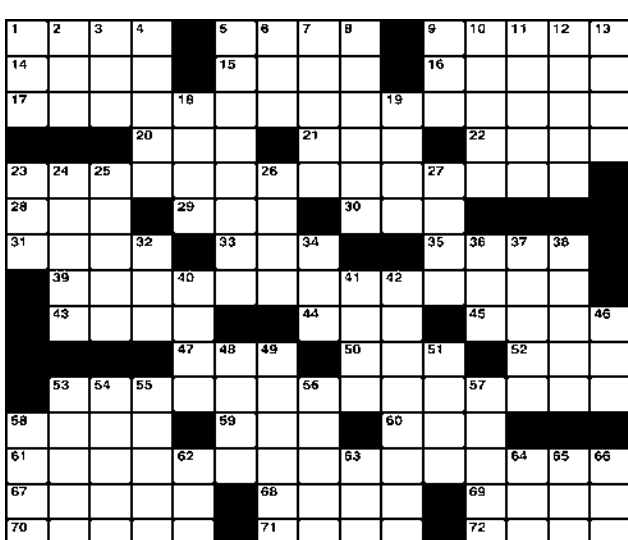
# DOWNTIME

## Crossword

Fun-filled Time Wasters

- ACROSS**
- '50s-'60s Bronx Bombers nickname, with "The"
  - South Seas tuber
  - Oceans
  - Like the team before @, on schedules
  - Not much
  - Hotel courts
  - Best Original Song Oscar winner from ... Disney's "Pocahontas"
  - Little one
  - tzu
  - On the calmer side
  - ... Disney's "Aladdin"
  - Headache
  - WSJ headline
  - ... rock: music genre
  - Faux pas
  - Bars with hidden prices?
  - Evensong?
  - ... Disney's "Song of the South"
  - Wed. vis-à-vis Thu.
  - Reed of The Velvet Underground
  - Expel, as lava
  - Western treaty gp.
  - Periods prec. soccer shootouts
  - Before, poetically
  - ... Disney's "Mary Poppins"
  - French city mostly destroyed in 1944
  - Golf's Woosnam
  - Tyler of "Jersey Girl"
  - ... Disney's "Monsters, Inc."
  - Athena's shield
  - "chic!"
  - File's partner
  - Actor Milo
  - Holiday tubers
  - ...Ball

- DOWN**
- Brolly user's garment
  - Jima
  - '20s White House nickname



By Gareth Bain

2/22/12

### Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

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2/22/12

- Judgment Day
- Blow away in competition
- Pint-size
- Low-pH substance
- Crudely built home
- Switchblade
- Tables-on-the-street restaurants
- "-Ho": Dwarfs' song
- Non-mainstream film
- Prefix with mural
- Civil rights activist
- Medgar Evers
- "Farewell, cara mia"
- Metaphor words
- Skirt line
- Asian plow puller
- Vague pronoun
- Hawaiian strings



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1					6			4
		8	4				9	5
	5							
		4	8	6				

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