

The Crimson White



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UA community loses three in wrecks

Kappa Delta sorority loses two members in accident during break

By CAITLIN TUDZIN
Senior Staff Reporter

Flower arrangements cover just about every flat surface available at the Kappa Delta sorority house. Though they serve as a constant reminder of two members who recently passed away, the atmosphere is still remarkably upbeat.

"That's the way they would have wanted it,"

said Marci Malone, a 2003 UA graduate and member of the sorority.

Lauren Braddy and Christin Lancaster were killed March 28 in a car accident outside Orlando, Fla., on their way to Fort Lauderdale to join other Kappa Delta members on a cruise to the Bahamas during spring break.

Two other Kappa Delta members — Hannah Jones of Dothan and Mary McGinness of Lookout Mountain, Ga. — were injured in the accident.

Braddy, a senior from Raleigh, N.C., was majoring in fashion retailing, and Lancaster, a

See KDS, Page 6A

UA student, legislator's daughter dies during break

By MEGAN NICHOLS
Senior Staff Reporter

"Sweet."
"Dutiful."
"Happy."

All these are words used by friends and associates to describe Jennifer Lindsay Millican, a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences

who was killed in a car accident during spring break.

The 21-year-old was the daughter of state Rep. Mike Millican of Hamilton. She was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority.

Millican was killed March 27 after her car ran off the road and struck a tree on Winston County 41 south of Addison at 9:05 p.m. She was alone in her vehicle and was wearing her safety belt.

Lacey Valeska, Kappa Kappa

See MILLICAN, Page 7A



Jennifer Lindsay Millican

Residents question conditions of Denny Court

Tenants say maintenance problems remain unrepaired as rent increases

By STEPHEN DAWKINS
Staff Reporter

The rent is going up at University-owned Denny Court apartments despite complaints from several residents about the living conditions there.

Some tenants said they are frustrated with the \$15 rise in their rent, from \$335 to \$350, because Denny Court, located on 10th Avenue across the street from Bryant-Denny Stadium, is an old structure and problems are frequent.

"The buildings are not worth what we are paying

See DENNY, Page 8A



CW/ Lizzie Heard

Residents at Denny Court apartments, located near Bryant-Denny Stadium, recently met with their resident manager to discuss their living conditions.



Tom Green comes to campus

CW/ Tom Neil

ABOVE: Comedian Tom Green borrows a skateboard to do a few tricks for the camera on University Boulevard on Tuesday. RIGHT: UA students Kurt McMahan (left) and Grant Clark (right) "shotgun" beers for the camera on the lawn of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house to see who is the fastest. This performance, filmed on campus Tuesday, may be featured in an upcoming piece hosted by Tom Green on *The Tonight Show*.

Contortionists, Old English rappers, beer guzzlers rejoice

Tonight Show staff searches for interesting people at UA

By JON GARGIS
News Director

Comedian Tom Green and a crew from *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* hit the Capstone on Tuesday, and the University's most talented individuals may be hitting the airwaves within days.

The question is, what talents from Tuscaloosa's finest will be shown to the

nation?

Green and the *Tonight Show* crew are traveling around the country to film material for a recurring *Tonight Show* segment searching for the "Most Interesting Person"

See GREEN, Page 5B



Supreme Court to decide fate of 'under God' in Pledge

By MERRICK WEIDRICK
Staff Reporter

The Supreme Court met March 24 to hear arguments against the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance after Michael Newdow, an atheist who says he does not want his 9-year-old daughter to hear the Pledge recited in her classroom, filed suit.

Newdow first filed suit with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco,

where a three-member panel ruled 2-1 in his favor. The Bush administration then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in opposition.

The justices, minus conservative Judge Antonin Scalia, will most likely release a decision in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* before the Court convenes in June.

Blair Scott, Alabama director of the American Atheists Inc., attended the hearing and a rally in Washington, D.C., to sup-

port the changing of the Pledge.

Scott said he was "flabbergasted" at the way he said the media discriminated against fellow demonstrators at the rally.

"What kills me is our crowd had 400 some people, and not a single media site was there," Scott said. "They showed footage of supporters, but not us."

"If that's not biased reporting, then I don't know what is."

See PLEDGE, Page 3A



CW Illustration/ Tom Neil and Tiffany Schwarz

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, ~~under God,~~ indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.



the World IN Brief

CAMPUS

McNair Scholars Program under new leadership

Nancy Campbell has become the new manager of the McNair Scholars Program.

Campbell, who began her duties in February, earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at Florida State University. She holds a master's and doctorate degrees in clinical psychology from Alabama.

Before her appointment, Campbell served on the Birmingham-Southern College faculty for 15 years, and she was on the UA staff for 11 years.

The McNair Scholars Program was launched as a unit within the Center for Teaching and Learning in 1999. It is funded through the U.S. Department of Education TRIO Program.

Marine engineer wins alumni volunteer award

The College of Engineering recently named Warren Ross of Mobile as the 2004 recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Volunteer Award.

Ross is a UA aerospace engineering and mechanics graduate. He is also the leader of the aerospace engineering and mechanics department's alumni advisory board.

Ross serves as director of marine engineering for Northrop Grumman Ships Systems in Pascagoula, Miss. He is a member of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers and the American Society of Naval Engineers.

Philosophy Club examines 'Evidence and Ethics'

The Philosophy Club will present "Evidence and Ethics," a senior thesis presentation by Parker Sweet, at 7 tonight in 258 ten Hoor Hall. The presentation focuses on standards of evidence and how those standards affect moral theories.

'You've Got a Friend' applications due Friday

Applications for the "You've Got a Friend" program with West Alabama Big Brothers Big Sisters are available at the office of the Coordinating Council of Student Organizations.

Applications must be placed in the CCSO drop box by Friday. The program provides students an opportunity to mentor children in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. For more information, call Christina Carden at 394-3592.

STATE

Limited home rule bill passes Senate

The Alabama Senate voted 16-8 Thursday to give limited home rule to counties, provided locals support the powers in a referendum.

The bill, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Lowell Barron, D-Fyffe, would give counties decision-making powers about public services, noise ordinances and other health and safety issues. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

NATION

Non-profit children's camp in New York looking for counselors

The Fresh Air Fund, an independent, not-for-profit agency, is recruiting college students to serve as counselors for the organization's summer camps for inner-city children. Camp organizers need over 400 counselors to work at five Fresh Air Fund camps in Fishkill, N.Y., 65 miles north of New York City.

The Fresh Air Fund has provided free summer vacations to more than 1.7 million inner-city children since 1877.

For more information, call Jake Grinsted at 800-367-0003, ext. 8979, or visit www.freshair.org.

Rumsfeld backs more Iraq troops if needed

WASHINGTON (AP) — If violence in Iraq gets worse, U.S. military commanders will get the troops they need to deal with it, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Tuesday. Coalition forces fought on two fronts Tuesday, battling a Shiite-inspired uprising in southern Iraq and Sunni insurgents in the city of Fallujah in clashes that have killed dozens of American troops and at least 100 Iraqis since the weekend.

WEB POLL

Should "under God" be removed from the Pledge of Allegiance?

- Yes
- No

Log on to www.cw.ua.edu to cast your vote.

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Student pushed to work with underprivileged children

By **RACHEL TELEHANY**
Staff Reporter



Kristin Robinson

The following is the third installment in a series of profiles on the Capstone's 2004 USA Today All-USA College Academic team members.

Kristin Robinson is the girl you want to hate.

She has a 4.0 grade point average, has won several prestigious academic awards including induction into at least three honor societies and was a member of the 2002 Avanti orientation team. But admiration easily replaces jealousy when Robinson reveals her passion for children.

Robinson was named to the 2004 USA Today All-USA College Academic team for her academic accomplishments and said she was thrilled just to be nominated.

"It was an exciting surprise," Robinson said. "I was aware that I was in the running, but I wasn't sure how competitive it was."

More than 600 people apply for the award from universities nationwide, and only 82 people are recognized. While Robinson received honorable mention, she said she just felt fortunate to be recognized.

A senior from Birmingham majoring in social work with a minor in psychology, Robinson can attribute her nomination to the USA Today Academic Team to her development of a program called Tuscaloosa Foster Friends. Robinson began the project two years ago through partnership with the department of human resources, and it has since grown into a program dedicated to caring for foster children during meetings with the Tuscaloosa County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

Foster Friends provides activities, art projects and

interaction with college-age students. The care is important because it offers an educational and caring environment for the children, Robinson said.

"[The children] don't have a lot of permanence in their lives right now," Robinson said. "So we try to provide stable relationships and let them know that they are cared about and that someone is looking out for them."

Foster Friends volunteers recently took children and foster parents to a UA gymnastics meet. Many of the children had never been inside Coleman Coliseum, and Robinson said she is hoping to expand the program to include more field trips.

Rhonda Rogers, president of the Tuscaloosa County Foster and Adoptive Association, said

Robinson is invaluable help for the organization.

"She is a wonderful person and has helped so much," Rogers said. "Sometimes she is the only one who shows up, and that really shows her dedication."

Robinson is also involved in Head Start, a federally funded, national program that provides an educational setting for preschool students of low-income families. Services include alphabet lessons, health screenings and meals to ensure proper nutrition for

the children.

Robinson has also been involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and the YMCA soccer program and served as a counselor last summer for impoverished children in England.

Long-time friend Brandon Boggs said Robinson has always had a drive to succeed.

"She is a hard worker with a desire to help people who may not have had a fair shake in life," Boggs said. "And she's intelligent — a whole lot smarter than I am."

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Doctor testifies that fetuses feel pain after 20 weeks

By **KEVIN O'HANLON**
The Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A type of abortion banned under a new federal law would cause "severe and excruciating" pain to 20-week-old fetuses, a medical expert on pain testified Tuesday.

"I believe the fetus is conscious," said Dr. Kanwaljeet "Sonny" Anand, a pediatrician at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. He took the stand as a government witness in a trial challenging the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Under cross-examination, Anand acknowledged that he believes a less controversial abortion procedure, known as "dilation and evacuation," would cause the same amount of pain to a fetus. An estimated 140,000 D&Es, the most common method of second-trimester abortion, take place in the United States annually.

He also acknowledged there is no medical definition of "consciousness."

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, signed by President Bush in November, has not been enforced because judges in Lincoln, Neb., New York and San Francisco agreed to hear evidence in three simultaneous, non-jury trials on whether the ban violates the Constitution.

Anand said Tuesday that fetuses show increased heart rate, blood flow and hormone levels in response to pain.

"The physiological responses have been very clearly studied," he said. "The fetus cannot talk ... so this is

See **ABORTION**, Page 8A

Tide After Ten Presents



Showing This Week at Ferguson Theater

Thursday, April 8 at 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 PM
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Rated R



Tuscaloosa police force dwindling due to low pay

By SAMANTHA HALL
Senior Staff Reporter

Tuscaloosa is losing police officers at a rate faster than it can train them, and local officials have said enough is enough.

The City Council is looking for a solution to the city's dwindling police force, which has lost more than 30 officers in the past two years, many of which went to cities with higher starting pay.

Councilman Walter Maddox is chairman of the council's administration committee. He said it is time for the city to make itself more competitive

with those surrounding municipalities when it comes to recruiting officers.

"Our police and fire departments are the best in the state and we need to pay them for that work," Maddox said.

Tuscaloosa has lost about 10 officers over the last two years

to other cities who with more competitive plans. Nearby Shelby County offers its officers a starting pay of more than \$32,000, while

Tuscaloosa lags behind at \$28,000.

Maddox said the council has given its final input on the possibilities of a new plan, and

now the human resources department and Tuscaloosa Mayor Al DuPont are now expected to come up with a recommendation by May.

If that happens, a final decision on what changes should be made is anticipated by June.

Some steps have already been implemented to encourage officers to stay despite low pay. TPD Chief Ken Swindle, who was not available for comment before press time, told *The Tuscaloosa News* last week that he has tried to increase morale among police officers and increase the visibility of patrol cars in the community by allowing some officers to take police cars home.

Maddox said that though there are other issues throughout the city that need attention, the issue of low police officer pay is one of the most important ones facing the council at this time.

Check out *The Crimson White* on the Web at www.cw.ua.edu.



Local police salaries

Locality	Starting Salary
Bessemer	\$27,000
Tuscaloosa	\$28,000
Shelby Co.	\$32,198
Hoover	\$36,000
Pelham	\$42,000

PLEDGE

Continued from Page 1A

Scott thinks the arguments for keeping the phrase in the Pledge are "all emotion and no legal standing."

Scott said people argue the Pledge has been this way forever, but in reality, the phrase was added only 50 years ago, and that when Congress approved this phrase it did so to promote a single religion of the United States, which would violate separation of church and state.

"That violates our constitution. The bottom line is the law is the law," Scott said. "My daughters don't feel comfortable saying it, even though one considers herself to be a Christian," Scott said. "I don't blame them."

Scott thinks the students who sit out during the pledge may be "ostracized" by the students who are saying it.

John Giles, president of the Christian Coalition of Alabama, said he believes

Newdow's agenda is to remove any acknowledgement of God from the public forum.

Giles said that since only a small percentage of people in the United States is atheist, the majority of people believe in keeping the pledge as it is.

He cited an Associated Press poll taken March 25 which reported that 87 percent of Americans wanted "under God" to remain in the Pledge.

"With the high number in the polls, the ['under God' part in the] Pledge doesn't divide us as a nation," Giles said.

UA law professor Bryan Fair said he understands the arguments for both sides: some argue it is unconstitutional for the government to enforce religious teachings, while others argue that since the courts use the national motto "In God We Trust" on government currency, God should be referenced in the Pledge as well.

"My personal view is that the government should never deal with religious liberty," Fair said.

Jeff Hyche, principal of Hillcrest High School, said he does not agree with the claim that Congress promoted a single religion when they included the controversial phrase in the Pledge. He said as a school, Hillcrest High students recite the Pledge every morning, and so far the school has received no complaints.

Hyche said teachers do not force the children to recite the Pledge, but they do ask them to be respectful and not to talk during the recitation.

Hyche said he thinks the phrase "under God" does not refer only to a Christian God, but to any God in whom people believe.

"It's whatever God you want it to be," Hyche said.

UA finance major Will Gillespie said he thinks there are more important issues that affect Americans every day more than worrying about two words in the Pledge.

"The Confederate flag, the Ten Commandments and now this. What's next?" he said. "Don't say it if it bothers you."

"It's obvious both the police and fire departments need our immediate attention," Maddox said. "We have concerns about all city employees but right now our focus needs to be there."

Councilman Kip Tyner, See SALARIES, Page 7A

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While we were out...

While many students' personal affairs might dissolve into a sea of work-free beach bumming over spring break, life in the rest of the world continues to go on. Campus might have been deserted, but UA news stories kept coming.

Here are our perspectives on a few of the big events that happened over the break:

The clock finally chimed midnight on March 27, as the Connecticut Huskies topped the Alabama Crimson Tide by a final score of 87-71 in their NCAA Tournament matchup. The loss may be a bittersweet ending to the year for the basketball team, but Alabama has nothing of which to be ashamed. While the game might have been a little one-sided, that was UConn's modus operandi throughout the tourney, as the Huskies dominated even in Monday night's national title game against an overmatched Georgia Tech.

We've got nothing but praise for everyone involved with the team. From coach Mark Gottfried's rigorous schedule, to the players who performed above and beyond the call of duty, it was an amazing year for the Tide.

In other sports news, football head coach Mike Shula was embroiled in controversy over the break as he renamed a spring training award originally named after Sylvester Croom, a former Alabama standout and now head coach at Mississippi State.

Reasoning that having an award named for a competitor could hurt recruiting, Shula changed the award's name to honor another Tide legend, Bart Starr. The new nomenclature quickly caused a backlash both locally and in Mississippi, where some accused Shula of being spiteful and petty.

Realizing his faux pas, Shula reversed course Monday as he issued a personal apology returning the award to Croom's honor and creating a separate award bearing Starr's name. The damage, however, has already been done. Relations between Alabama and Mississippi State will undoubtedly be strained, and the fact that Croom was turned down for the Alabama head coaching position does nothing to alleviate the uncomfortable nature of the situation.

All around, the name change was a bad call. The move, while it might have good intentions, served only to make Croom look better to recruits and to paint Shula as insecure in the face of his competitors. The football program, coming off a 4-9 season and finally finding some off-season stability, has many more important things to worry about.

Sadly, events more important than sports also happened over the break, as two car accidents claimed the lives of three UA students. Jennifer Lindsay Millican, daughter of state Rep. Mike Millican, was killed in Winston County, and sorority sisters Lauren Braddy and Christin Lancaster were killed in an accident in Florida on their way to board a cruise to the Bahamas.

In a student body of 20,000, it might seem the deaths of three students would go unnoticed, but few people were left unaffected by the tragic and sudden passing of three members of our community. It's times like these when we are all reminded of our own fragile mortality and the true value of human life.

Our hearts and prayers are with the friends and families left dealing with the heartbreak.

Our View is the consensus of The CW editorial board.

Honesty called for in slavery debate

By JOSHUA D. ROTHMAN

To what extent, if any, the University ought to investigate and acknowledge its own complicity in supporting the institution of slavery is something about which reasonable people can certainly disagree.

But having a discussion about such matters requires, at the very least, thorough honesty and factual accuracy about the issues involved, neither of which is offered by Richard Patrick Samples in his March 24 *Crimson White* opinion piece.

Mr. Samples asserts that apologizing for slavery "might be a good idea if all who are guilty apologize."

Such an argument is disingenuous, as it amounts to steering a debate about the University's role in slavery onto the shoals before it even begins.

That much of the world practiced slavery at some point or another before the 19th century is both obviously

true and entirely irrelevant to a conversation about slavery and the University.

To my knowledge, no one has or would ever suggest that the University uniquely bears responsibility for perpetuating slavery or that it has a responsibility to assume the historical burden of slavery's legacy alone.

It does, however, bear direct responsibility for its own behavior. Shirking such a responsibility by refusing to examine that behavior unless the entire world does the same is an absurdity and marks a cowardly and evasive form of denial.

It is also worth noting that though Mr. Samples correctly points to the ubiquity of African slavery in world history, he significantly misstates and understates the particular part the South played in that past.

Mr. Samples, for example, is simply wrong when he writes that Cuba and Brazil (which abolished slavery, incidentally,

in 1888, not 1884) had larger slave populations than the antebellum South.

By 1825, the United States had the largest slave population of any country in the world, at more than 1.5 million people, the overwhelming majority of whom lived below the Mason-Dixon Line. By 1860 roughly two-thirds of all the enslaved people in the Western Hemisphere lived in the American South.

Moreover, the notion that the South's "so-called pro-slavery stance was really an opposition to ending slavery in extreme ways, such as immediate, uncompensated emancipation" is ludicrous.

While a significant number of white Southerners in the early 19th century claimed to believe in freeing the enslaved and colonizing them in West Africa, few ever did so.

And by the 1830s, largely in response to the increasingly loud voices of Northern abolitionists who were, to borrow the words of Mr. Samples,

"advanced enough" to recognize slavery as a secular evil and a religious sin, white Southerners began to reject as a matter of principle any and all criticisms of the institution of slavery.

From that point through the Civil War, Southern politicians, ministers and — perhaps most pertinently — university professors consistently claimed instead that slavery was not merely legal and constitutional, but that it provided for a more moral, more biblical and more humane form of social organization than the free labor system of the North.

Such a mindset precluded the possibility of considering an end to slavery in any way, extreme or otherwise. To demand that the University recognize its own role in fostering and perpetuating that mindset is not to call for blame, but only for candor, courage and leadership.

Joshua D. Rothman is an assistant history professor.



State budget crisis requires long-term solutions

Coming out of turn four at the Talladega Superspeedway, a car is tapped on the bumper, brushes the wall and then spins out into the midfield. Upon inspection, it becomes clear that the car will need repairs to finish the contest, and a complete overhaul before it can go on to the next race.

Like that speeding car, Alabama's budget has hit the wall hard and needs to undergo serious repairs to compete in fiscal year 2005.

As we near the midpoint of the 2004 regular legislative session and we look toward addressing the state's budget crisis, we hear the words *deficit*, *shortfalls* and *cutbacks* as they relate to our state's fiscal situation.

Year after year, the above terms are thrown at us so often that we forget their meanings. A mere five months ago, I wrote about the draconian

cuts we were being forced to make to provide a balanced budget for FY 2004.

I know many of you must be thinking there is nothing to worry about, the same things are said every year and government always manages. But the harsh reality is that there is a fiscal crisis in our state.

Fulfilling constitutional requirements, Gov. Bob Riley submitted to the Legislature his budget for FY '05. The proposed budget for FY '05 has a \$340 million shortfall that has to be filled to have the same level of funding as the FY '04 budget.

His patchwork proposals are nothing more than a smokescreen to hide the reality of our budget crisis.

The governor's recommendations rob from Peter to pay



Bryant Melton

Paul, as Riley is merely shifting money from one entity to give to another. The results of that move directly affect the least of these: our children and senior adults.

For example, because of federal mandates, the only items that can be cut from the Medicaid budget are the Children's Health Insurance Program and prescription drugs.

After the Riley tax plan failed, we were only able to have a balanced budget for FY '04 after Alabama received more than \$200 million in one-time federal money, after significant reductions to already under-funded state agencies were made and after all other non-state services were slashed to the bone.

The governor must provide the leadership necessary to solve the state's financial

problems, yet he continues to be disengaged in the process. He knows his proposals are not an amenable solution to our budget crisis. In fact, a Feb. 11, 2004, story in *The Anniston Star* quotes the governor's finance director, Drayton Nabers, as saying, "We [the Riley administration] have not come up with a permanent solution. We have not come up with a two-year solution. We have to come up with a one-year solution."

Rather than take the governor's halfhearted route, we must focus on long-term solutions rather than short-term fixes. If we allow the governor's proposals to become a reality, the effects will be long-term and widespread. I assure you that we remain ready and willing to work with our governor to find solutions.

Bryant Melton, D-Tuscaloosa, is the state representative for District 70.

Instead of leading, Riley hides head in the sand on state budget troubles

With the state facing a budget deficit of \$340 million for fiscal year 2005 and without any new revenue, reductions will have to be made in order to fulfill constitutional requirements to balance the budget. However, it appears that Gov. Bob Riley is trying to balance his budget on the backs of those who can least afford to pay, while protecting corporate special interests.

In September, Riley proposed his "plan to guide us out of this difficult times" in the form of \$1.2 billion in tax increases. Like a leopard changing its spots, the gover-

nor has done a complete about-face and has said he "will not seek, nor support, any new broad-based taxes." While the governor's new position sounds good, he is like the proverbial ostrich with his head in the sand — not willing to face the crisis in state government.

The fact of the matter is, like most working people, Alabama's state employees and teachers, pay their fair share of state income taxes. These residents paid more than \$100 million in state income taxes in 2002. The entire net corporate income

tax in 2002 amounted only to \$190 million. Alabama's state employees and education workers contributed more than half as much income tax as all corporations doing business in Alabama.

The governor is calling his proposals cost-saving measures, but the truth is they're nothing more than political rhetoric aimed at protecting large corporations that don't pay their fair share of taxes. While average working people in this state are paying their fair share or even more than they should, the governor is protecting big multimillion-

We must work to craft a budget to meet our people's needs without exception.

dollar corporations.

During his State of the State address on Feb. 3, Riley said, "We must find innovative solutions that will address these [budget] problems without placing a greater burden on our citizens." The governor is speaking out of both sides of his mouth and is playing politics with the livelihood of state

employees. When the governor talks about residents, he talks about corporate special interests.

The governor has said he wants state and education workers to contribute more toward the cost of their health insurance benefits. While I agree that rising medical costs are going to force public employees to pay more for health care service, now is not the time.

For nearly two years, state employees have seen merit raises frozen. Their health costs have increased over the past few years, and that has resulted

in a net decrease for these employees in recent years.

The governor must provide the leadership and concrete action necessary to solve the state's financial problems. However, he must do so without unduly burdening the hardworking families of this state, which includes state employees, teachers and support staff.

We must work to craft a budget to meet our people's needs without exception.

Ken Guin, D-Carbon Hill, is majority leader of the Alabama House of Representatives.

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Elementary, middle school students arrested for school bus vandalism

By KRISTEN TROTTER
Senior Staff Reporter

An 11-year-old and two 13-year-olds were arrested Monday on 52 counts of unlawful breaking and entering for breaking into and smashing glass on 52 city school buses during spring break.

The students were placed in juvenile detention, where they will remain until a hearing, which must take place within 72 hours according to law.

"Information was developed Monday morning that focused in [the incarcerated students'] direction, and as a result of the investigation they were able to charge them," said Capt. David Hartin of the Tuscaloosa Police Department.

He could not say whether the hearing had taken place yet, or when it would.

At the hearing, a judge will decide whether to keep the students in detention or release them into the custody of a guardian. The punishment, he said, is also up to the juvenile judge.

"They could get restitution, or time in juvenile detention," he said. "This is different from being charged as an adult, where you can get up to a \$5,000 fine and one year in jail."

Joyce Levey, city schools superintendent, said the damage would cost the school at least \$100,000 or more.

Police had originally placed the cost at \$50,000 to \$75,000, but Levey said those figures did not account for the video cameras that were damaged or the overtime pay for the drivers who came in on their day off, among other costs.

Levey said the school system is waiting for the hearing before deciding what disciplinary action to take against the

students.

"We will wait and see what happens when they have their court date," she said. "Once we get that verdict from them, then we will proceed on the disciplinary action." She added that the students had to

"They could get restitution, or time in juvenile detention. This is different from being charged as an adult, where you can get up to a \$5,000 fine and one year in jail."

— Capt. David Hartin
Tuscaloosa Police Department

be treated individually, with the 11-year-old being treated according to school board policy for elementary school students, and the 13-year-olds being treated according to policy for middle school students.

Though 52 buses were damaged, Levey said the city schools were not having any problems with student transportation: the city schools borrowed 23 buses from Jefferson County. Tuscaloosa County also contributed to repairs and supplied glass.

"We have not been slowed down at all," Levey said.

Steve Terry with the Tuscaloosa City Schools transportation department said all the buses would hopefully be repaired by Wednesday. As of Tuesday afternoon, all but eight had been repaired.

"We would be through by now but we've run out of glass," he said.

To prevent vandalism from happening in the future, eight

new security cameras are being installed at the bus shop, Levey said.

"That should alleviate the problem," she said.

The school board also will attempt to have police check the premises during future holidays, and is considering additional insurance to cover such costs in the future.

The school will look into full coverage, which could cost an additional \$20,000 to \$40,000 a year, which, during the current state budget shortfall, would not be reimbursed by the state.

Paying for the damage from the destruction is hard for the school when all schools in the state are already strapped for cash, Levey said.

"They're costing me personnel or classroom supplies for kids," he said.

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KDS

Continued from Page 1A

senior from Tuscaloosa, was an early childhood education major. The two became friends when they pledged the sorority in 2000 and are described by their friends as the kind of women who were fun to be around and who always had smiles on their faces.

"They were both fun loving," said Malone, a member of the women's pledge class. "They loved to have a good time, and you knew that if you were going out with them that you would have a good time because they wouldn't stop until they saw you smile."

Braddy had recently completed an internship in New York and was considering moving there after graduation to work in the fashion industry.

"She was a New York City girl," Malone said. "She had just come back from visiting, and she loved life there."

Malone said Braddy was the true definition of a best friend because she was so supportive of all her friends and wanted to make sure they were always happy.

Elizabeth Sullivan, former Kappa Delta president and a member of Braddy and Lancaster's pledge class, said both women were nice to everyone with whom they interacted.

"They were the best friends you could ask for," she said. "They just had tremendous hearts."

Sullivan said Lancaster was the type of person who leaves

a lasting impression because she was so high-spirited.

"Christin was very short and bubbly and excited," she said. "She could talk to a brick wall."

Sullivan said Braddy was the type of person who told good stories and did good impersonations because she truly loved making her friends laugh.

Suzanne Avery, a senior civil engineering major who had been friends with Lancaster since high school, said she never had a conversation with her friend that did not end with laughter.

"She was just bright sunshine, and there was never a dull moment when she was around," she said.

Avery said Lancaster was a baby sitter for four children, and she said they had become like Lancaster's own since they were constantly with her.

"She was so good with kids, and kids loved to be around her because of her great personality," Avery said. "She would have made a great kindergarten teacher."

Kappa Delta President Cissy Smith said alumni, as well as the Tuscaloosa community, have offered plenty of support to the sorority members.

"Everyone has been doing better as each day goes by, but it has certainly been a very emotional time for us," Smith said.

The sorority has planned memorial services for April 15 at 4 p.m. in Calvary Baptist Church.

The Crimson White did not run photographs of Braddy and Lancaster with this story at the request of Kappa Delta members.



Find out what's happening in sports today, Page 8B.

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MILLICAN

Continued from Page 1A

Gamma sorority president and a junior majoring in nursing, said Millican was a great woman.

"She was the sweetest girl you would ever meet or will ever meet," she said.

Valeska said she had some classes with Millican, including a history class taught by associate professor John Beeler.

Beeler said he had Millican in his Western civilization and Britain in the World Wars classes, and he said she was a great student.

"Really dutiful and a hard worker," Beeler said. "Before both tests, she would come up to me and run through the possible ID questions."

Not only did Millican have a good work ethic with her classes, but Beeler said she had a great personality as well.

"I told the class today that she had been killed over the holiday and they were all very upset," he said. "She was just a wonderful kid, and I think that was the consensus of the class

as well. She was continuously engaged in animated conversation with the people seated around her before the class started up."

Gina Bernstein, a junior majoring in nursing and Millican's sorority sister, said she became good friends with Millican when they lived next to each other in Julia Tutwiler Hall their freshman year.

"She was real sweet and always real laidback," Bernstein said. "She was also very smart and artsy, always making a lot of jewelry and clothes and stuff. She was real into that."

Millican's personality will be one of the things Bernstein will remember most about her friend, Bernstein said.

"Jennifer was always happy and smiling and was always in a good mood and upbeat," she said.

Bernstein said Millican had plans to go to law school after graduating from the University. Millican studied in Madrid, Spain, and planned to study at Oxford University in England during the summer.

Whitney Rowan, a senior

public relations major and a Kappa Kappa Gamma member, said she got to know Millican well when they studied together in Spain.

"Jennifer was really down-to-earth and just always went with the flow," Rowan said. "Nothing ever really bothered her — like she didn't get mad ever."

Millican's ability to make others laugh stands out in Rowan's mind, she said.

"In Spain she was not a bad Spanish speaker, but she had that country accent, and she always liked to make us laugh, and it was funny to hear her talk," she said.

Millican's funeral was held March 29 at First Baptist Church in Hamilton.

Susan Caples, director of union services, said the University will hold a memorial service in Tuscaloosa, but no plans have been finalized yet.

Millican is survived by her parents, Michael and Debbie Millican; grandparents Jack and Ree Lindsey and grandmother Gray Millican Murphy, all of Hamilton. She was an only child.

SALARIES

Continued from Page 3A

chairman of the public safety committee, said he thinks public safety officials should have a pay plan all their own.

"Public safety officers have unique needs," Tyner said. "They must go through extensive training and then work at a job much more dangerous than your typical city employee does."

Tyner said a separate pay plan would allow for different pay scales and steps.

Even if the city does not take this specific route, Tyner said something must still be done to keep public safety officers in the city.

"We are not keeping up with the market," he said. "We are spending all of this money training these officers, and then they are plucked away by cities that are willing to pay

\$8,000 more in starting pay."

Tyner also said many public safety officials top out their salaries long before they are done working, preventing the workers from being rewarded for their extended service.

Implementing a new pay plan would reward officers for seniority, additional education and promotion. Maddox said the current salary schedule should be simplified to do that.

"It's bad any time you have a pay plan that even the

human resources department can't understand," Maddox said. "This current plan does not clearly define how these workers can progress."

Maddox said the current plan has not been updated since the city began using it.

"Maybe I'm an old-school thinker, but I believe step plans achieve their goals and are better for morale," Maddox said. "With these plans, the employee understands exactly where they are going next."

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DENNY

Continued from Page 1A

anyway," resident Jesse Granberry said.

Poor heating, molded ceiling tiles, bad lighting, dirty vents and electrical problems were among the topics discussed at a meeting of unhappy Denny Court residents March 8.

Granberry and neighbor Tia Ragland organized the meeting in which residents voiced their complaints to Gregg Bell, resident manager for Denny Court. Bell was receptive to their concerns and said he would try to get something done, Ragland said.

Granberry said he has filed six or seven complaints with Residential Life about his heating since he moved to Denny Court in the middle of the fall semester. He said he has also had problems with windows, the toilet, the oven, holes in the walls and pests.

Because of the poor conditions at Granberry's apartment, housing maintenance is preparing a vacant one for him to move into, he said.

Ragland also said her biggest problem is the heating in her apartment. When her heater is first turned on, "big chunks of dust or mold blow out of the vents," Ragland said. "Once the heater is on, it usually produces cool air.

"They're not keeping the building up like they should. Especially if they are going to raise the rent, it shouldn't look like this."

Allan Guenther, Residential Life assistant director of mar-

keting and conferences, said problems are corrected when they are properly reported.

"The normal process is talking to the resident manager then filing a work report," Guenther said.

However, Granberry said the timeliness of maintenance workers is not the problem.

"It is not a problem with them coming," Granberry said. "It is a problem of the stuff staying fixed. It is a hassle for me to keep calling."

Ragland said she has had problems with her apartment since she moved into Denny Court at the end of January. For the first couple of weeks, anything plugged in at Ragland's apartment would trip the circuit breaker, she said.

Ragland complained about the heat not working soon after she moved in, and maintenance employees worked on her heater for about two weeks, Ragland said.

The heat worked for a while, but then stopped again. Maintenance employees returned to her apartment March 25 to fix the heater again, but it only works periodically now, Ragland said.

Ragland said she left the heater on constantly hoping to warm up the apartment, but it usually blew cold air. She asked the maintenance department to compensate her for money wasted on energy keeping the heater running, but was denied because the power company said her bill was comparable to last year's bill for that apartment.

Guenther confirmed Ragland had submitted a

work-order and that work on the heater had been completed two weeks before spring break.

"The maintenance staff fixed it," Guenther said. "It worked when they left."

Similar problems with his heater prompted Granberry to call maintenance employees to his apartment.

"They told me to keep the heat running, but it stops working," he said.

Granberry was forced to use a space heater because his heating system was running without producing heat, and the combination led to a higher utility bill, he said.

Resident manager Bell posted notes on all residents' doors March 23, which asked them to specify problems with their apartments and give the amount paid for utility bills.

Bell declined to comment, saying it is Residential Life policy that only Guenther speaks to the media.

Ragland also said the lighting in her bedroom is so poor that she "can barely see."

Ragland said she knows many other residents who have had problems that were not corrected in a reasonable amount of time.

"They fixed one of my friend's stoves the other day," Ragland said. "It had not worked since she moved in. If we have problems, they should come fix them."

Guenther said the maintenance department informed him of no other work orders for apartments in Denny Court. Often, residents have problems but don't submit a formal work order, he said.

Work orders can be filed with a resident manager or online, Guenther said.

"Our biggest complaint is not knowing," Guenther said. "They just need to let us know."

However, Denny Court resident Brandon Hawkins said some problem areas are obvious and improvements should be made without tenants having to submit work orders. Hawkins said the problems in his apartment are "things they should have fixed before people move in."

There have been no blinds on Hawkins' front windows since he moved to Denny Court in the fall, he said.

Also, molded ceiling tiles have not been replaced, and the vents have not been cleaned out.

"Basically, this place is run down," he said. "They should have fixed this stuff and they

haven't."

Though he met with Bell about a week before the meeting of Denny Court residents and discussed his problems, Hawkins said he did not turn in a work order because he will be graduating soon.

According to Hawkins and fellow resident Adam Wells, the maintenance crew is not a common sight at Denny Court.

"I've never seen a maintenance person since I moved in," Wells said.

Wells said the heating in his apartment is his only complaint, but he knows he is not the only one facing such a problem.

However, Denny Court resident Toby Meinel said in his experience the maintenance staff has made repairs promptly.

Meinel said he has only filed one work report, and a main-

tenance crew replaced his refrigerator "in the next day or two."

Meinel also said that though he is moving soon, he does not agree with the new rent price because residents had no say in the matter.

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ABORTION

Continued from Page 2A

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Abortion rights advocates argue that it is sometimes the safest procedure for women, and that the law will endanger almost all second-trimester abortions, or 10 percent of the nation's 1.3 million annual abortions.

The law would be the first substantial limitation on abortion since the Supreme Court legalized it 31 years ago in the landmark *Roe v. Wade* case.

Challenges to the ban were filed by several doctors being represented by the Center for Reproductive Rights, the National Abortion Federation and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. The issue is expected to reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

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Wednesday, April 7, 2004 • Page 1B



FOUR-COLOR HEROES TURN INTO GREEN AT THE BOX OFFICE

By NICK BEADLE
Student Life Editor

Many argue that the beginning of Hollywood's recent fling with the comic book movie began with 2000's long-overdue adaptation of *X-Men* to celluloid, but in my opinion, it started in 1998 with *Blade*.

Sure, there are the *Men in Black* movies, but *Blade*, and subsequently the mutant flick, brought seriousness and good ideas the sub-genre still hurting from the silliness of the *Superman* series and the mediocrity of the *Batman* series.

Not to mention the film atrocity that was the

Ang Lee, it's "Hulk smash!" not "Hulk deal internally with his traumatic childhood!").

Toss in a pretty good follow-up to *Blade* and rock solid *X-Men* sequel, add recent comic-inspired indie fare such as *Ghost World* and *American Splendor* and calculate the net box office receipts and you've got a variable load of new comic movies being green-lighted on a pretty regular basis.

Now we're in April 2004, where another slew of comic book films is about to really kick off. By the end of this month, there will be a second, Dolph Lundgren-less *Punisher*. By the end of summer, *Spider-Man 2* and the last *Blade* movie will be released.

And in the near future will be a revamped *Batman* franchise, *Ghost Rider*, *Shazam*, *Iron Man* and *Fantastic Four* and spin-offs such as *Elektra* and *Catwoman*.

Yeah, with this much coming out, some of these movies are going to be bad. Honestly, I'm pretend-

The humorous banter of Hellboy and his cohorts is captured perfectly. But most

matter how much it might be over the head of the target audience. For example, the mad monk Rasputin — yes, that mad monk Rasputin — is the piece's main villain.

Keeping the industry alive

straight-

ing that *Son of the Mask* does not and will never exist. But if they're anything like the *Hellboy* flick released over the weekend, the movies will at least be very entertaining.

Hellboy: A guide to making a competent comic book movie?

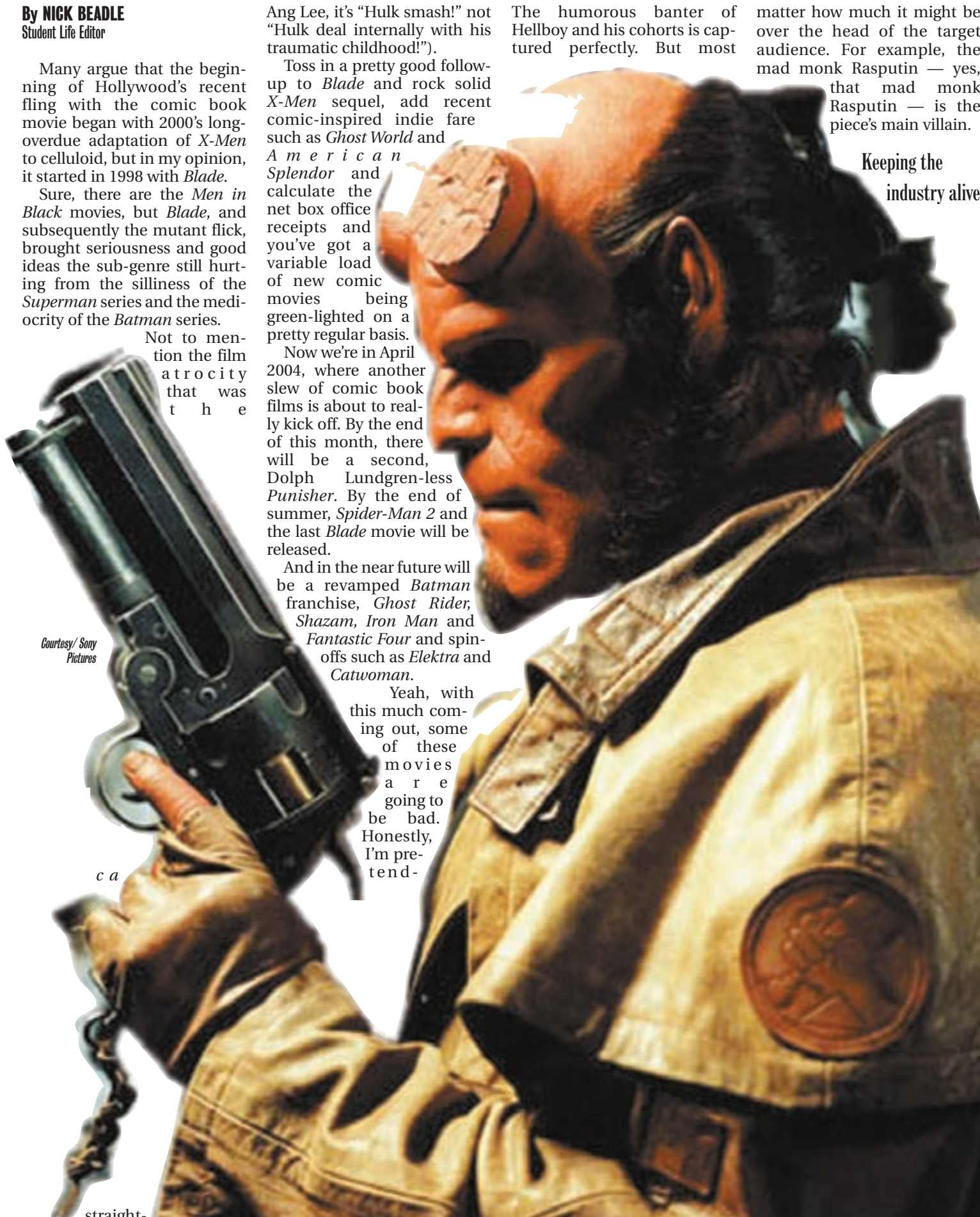
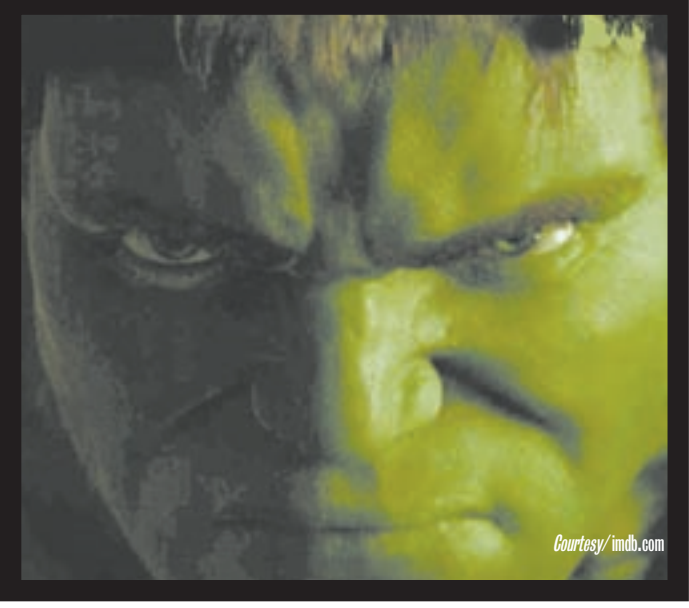
Hellboy works well despite the film being unfortunately more of an occult action piece than the superior pulp action/horror of the comic. This is mainly because writer/director Guillermo del Toro followed suit with *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* and imported what essentially works in comic form to the screen.

Hellboy creator Mike Mignola's character designs are kept intact and even improved upon. (Big ups to whoever decided to add the cracks and chips on Hellboy's horns and stone "right hand of doom.")

With Allan McLeod, he wrote *Speck*, the original Production 101 film produced by *Seinfeld* veteran Tom Cherones. The *Hoe-Down Review* eventually became fodder for another short film, titled *The Hillbilly Hoe-Down Huxtable Revue: The Minor Motion Picture*, that Stewart did in partnership with Draper.

What distinguishes Stewart's humor is what some might call intelligent slapstick. He frequently fuses literary references with more colloquial humor. In the *Hoe-Down* series Vincent Price is frequently shadowed by a Vincent Price impersonator, while Henry David Thoreau prods a naked body with a stick. The *Hoe-Down* series features a big soundtrack, including an infamous number where head Hillbilly Paw Huxtable, played by Stewart, berates a rival

See COMICS, Page 2B



straight-

ing that *Son of the Mask* does not and will never exist. But if they're anything like the *Hellboy* flick released over the weekend, the movies will at least be very entertaining.

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Hellboy creator Mike Mignola's character designs are kept intact and even improved upon. (Big ups to whoever decided to add the cracks and chips on Hellboy's horns and stone "right hand of doom.")

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What distinguishes Stewart's humor is what some might call intelligent slapstick. He frequently fuses literary references with more colloquial humor. In the *Hoe-Down* series Vincent Price is frequently shadowed by a Vincent Price impersonator, while Henry David Thoreau prods a naked body with a stick. The *Hoe-Down* series features a big soundtrack, including an infamous number where head Hillbilly Paw Huxtable, played by Stewart, berates a rival

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Cast Away spoof to premiere tonight at Hale's Tavern

By DAN WHISENHUNT
Staff Reporter

Dude Where's My Boat? lands in T-town this week. The *Cast Away* parody was made spanning a two-year period by UA alumni Matt Stewart and Scott Draper in association with Conspiracy Films and Doppelganger Productions. Both Stewart and Draper are telecommunication and film graduates who work professionally in TV production.

Dude is the culmination of many remarkable achievements for

What distinguishes Stewart's humor is what some might call intelligent slapstick. He frequently fuses literary references with more colloquial humor.

Stewart. The writer/director got his start in the Mallet Assembly honors program, where he became head of the Mallet Players and was one of the original talents behind the Mallet Underground series. While working on Mallet Underground, he developed the Hillbilly Hoe-down Huxtable Review, an ongoing series featuring a mock-Vincent Price and a supporting cast of lovable hillbillies, dead authors, apes and even a mannequin.

Under the auspices of his self-created William Moses Productions,

Stewart made several short films while attending the University. In a documentary titled *The Third Bubble*, he and Draper poked fun at the persistent banality of *Crimson White* cartooning.

With Allan McLeod, he wrote *Speck*, the original Production 101 film produced by *Seinfeld* veteran Tom Cherones. The *Hoe-Down Review* eventually became fodder for another short film, titled *The Hillbilly Hoe-Down Huxtable Revue: The Minor Motion Picture*, that Stewart did in partnership with Draper.

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LADYKILLERS

Continued from Page 4B

dull and pointless one wonders how the Coens justified keeping him in the script; and Ryan Hurst as Lump, the kind-hearted but dumb-as-a-rock grunt worker of the group.

The first problem with the Coens' version lies in the fact

that the kind of humor that likely made the original film funny just doesn't translate to modern audiences. There was a time when killing off every character in a movie could be funny, but somewhere between the Monty Python era and now, human mortality seems to have lost its effectiveness as a cheap laugh.

There are certainly Coen-

esque elements in the film, and these are noticeably smarter and more interesting than the rest of the film.

Irma P. Hall, who plays the little old lady, is absolutely wonderful, and her innocent-minded, gospel-squawking Ms. Munson is the kind of character that the Coens are great at creating. Like other Coen creations, such as Marge

Gunderson or The Dude, Ms. Munson is such a distinctive and unique character that we are not only charmed by her lovable nature but actually grow fond of her because she's so well-developed we almost forget she's just a character in a movie.

There are other strange little tastes of that trademark Coen weirdness mixed in, like the

symbolic garbage barges carrying the unrighteous criminals across the River Styx (or in this case, the Mississippi) to the great garbage heap of hell as a chorus of deep, old voices sing spirituals about "Goin' back to God."

For a moment we can glimpse the greatness that is the Coen brothers, and it's that moment which makes us all

the more aware of just how subpar a movie *The Ladykillers* is. Joel and Ethan, I expect better from you two...C-.

Rating:



Why you got to give Aquaman such a hard time?

MEN'S & LADIES'



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COMICS

Continued from Page 1B

his radiation-induced mutation, not a testament to the apparently strong chemical and mechanical engineering skills of a nerdy 15-year-old, have not been made.

But characters like the X-Men have been dressed down (i.e. less spandex, more protective uniforms). New creative teams on that franchise also took the most logical step in the long history of the team and turned the Xavier Institute for Gifted Youngsters — still the creepiest name of a base of operations in comics — into

an actual school for hundreds of mutant children.

And if you were wondering, beforehand it had basically been a place where a bunch of brooding, occasionally blue, thirtysomethings took part in paramilitary operations, complained about how the world hates them and, well, slept around until they died a "meaningful" death to bring up sales.

The movies have also led to many comics becoming more like contemporary television and film, much to the chagrin of some diehard fans, though there have been some successes such as *Gotham Central*, a cop drama set in the world of Batman, and *The*

Ultimates, an ingenious re-imagining of Marvel's equivalent of the Justice League as a multitrillion dollar homeland defense initiative.

More popular creators from more or less outside the industry have also come onboard popular franchises to drive up attention and sales, including *Babylon 5* creator J. Michael Straczynski on *Amazing Spider-Man* and best-selling author Brad Meltzer on *Green Arrow*.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, *Angel* and *Firefly* creator Joss Whedon and *X-Men*, *X2* and *The Usual Suspects* director Bryan Singer will begin respective runs on *X-Men* titles.

A *Superman* story by Monty Python's John Cleese will also be released in the near future.

And though he's not really a stranger to the industry by any means, writer/director Kevin Smith has brought his writing talents and disregard for deadlines to *Spider-Man*, *Daredevil* and *Green Arrow*.

The storm on the horizon

Just as the comic industry itself regularly experiences creative rebirth and death on a regular basis, this latest upsurge of comic book films will likely come to an end very soon.

If filmgoers and fans don't

the Strip.

Mallet Assembly will screen the movie again at 9:30 p.m. Friday, followed by an encore presentation of *Killer Weed*, the Chris Merritt-helmed

zombie splatter-fest. Admission is free, but seating is limited. If the first premiere of *Killer Weed* is any indication, viewers should get there early.

DUDE

Continued from Page 1B

yokel through song.

Stewart's tenure as director of Mallet players set a new standard, that has not been easy to be proving a hard act to follow.

His prolific outpouring has left a big legacy for the aspiring UA auteur. Unfortunately, like many of Alabama's best and brightest, Stewart left the Tuscaloosa fishbowl in search of better outlets for his considerable talents. He's currently working as a production assistant in Los Angeles and has been an extra in several TV shows, including *The West Wing*, *The District* and *J.A.G.*

Dude Where's My Boat? blends live action, animation, Draper's skillful editing and a "sprawling musical score."

It follows the story of Henry, a shipwrecked, sun-baked castaway who battles isolation, heat madness and variety of inanimate sports balls on a deserted island. It premieres at 10 tonight at Hale's Tavern on

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Walking Tall is too freaking short ... but solid

With *Walking Tall*, the remake of the 1973 cult classic starring Joe Don Baker, The Rock (Dwayne Johnson) further establishes himself as a formidable screen presence by doing what it is that took him to the top in the first place: kicking ass and taking names. However, with the picture's miniscule running time, The Rock is forced to kick as much of it as possible in just more than an hour.

While many have voiced concerns that casting The Rock in a role originally portrayed by a Caucasian (Tennessee-born good old boy might be a little inappropriate), however, any misgivings about the decision disappear quickly once the hero grabs a hold of his eventually deadly 2x4.

The Rock stars as Chris

Vaughn, an ex-member of the United States Special Forces who returns to his hometown in Washington state to find it overrun with corruption and indecency.

The source of the problem happens to be a casino owned by Jay Hamilton (Neal McDonough), one of Vaughn's high-school cronies who has seemingly bought out the police force with the power and influence he has acquired from the economic success of his business.

After being brutally assaulted by some of the security guards as well as finding out that the same guards have been dealing crystal meth to the local teenagers, Vaughn



CATCHING FLICKS WITH
FLANAGANS
Graham Flanagan

runs for and wins the office of sheriff, with his main objective being to clean up the town he once called home.

As expected, the cleansing itself arrives in the form of several violent sequences that show Vaughn as a man devoted to achieving his goals regardless of whose bones he has to break.

The PG-13-rated *Walking Tall* succeeds as a traditionally executed action/revenge movie, but excels greatly due to solid performances by the supporting characters. Especially notable are McDonough as the platinum-haired, white Escalade-driving

villain and Michael Bowen (aka Buck in *Kill Bill: Volume 1*) as the corrupt ex-sheriff who eventually comes after Vaughn with a high-powered machine gun.

Both of these actors are provided with chances to show how evil and sleazy they can be, and prove that they are worthy character actors who should be offered juicier, more complex roles down the line.

Director Kevin Bray presents the action sequences as little more than showcases for The Rock to look like an unstoppable fighting machine.

Vaughn wields his trademark 2x4 with merciless glee and is hindered only after being shocked with a tazer.

I had feared that, by the end of *Walking Tall*, there would be some kind of liberal-mind-

ed anti-violence sentiment shoved down the audience's collective throat. However, this never takes place and emphasized is the simple idea that the Chris Vaughn character, when crossed, will resort to violence whenever necessary to make things right. This becomes most obvious when, in the climactic hand-to-hand battle scene, Vaughn takes a giant tree limb to the knee of his foe, who subsequently drops like a bag of melted Skittles.

The only complaint I might have with the picture is its thin running time.

While listed as being 85 minutes, I can assure you that this figure is very much a fabrication.

After the screening I attended, which began at roughly 8 p.m., I looked at my watch as

I walked to my car and saw that it read 9:11! No, it's definitely not 85 minutes; maybe 75, and that's being extremely generous.

Apparently the filmmakers had to cut out some footage in order to attain the lucrative PG-13 rating and the complete R-rated version will be available when the film is released on DVD.

Nevertheless, with *Walking Tall*, The Rock proves that he can and will succeed as an action actor in the tradition of Vin Diesel, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Steven Seagal.

Bring on the next hit.

Rating:



Jet Li's Rise to Honor: an action flick in a game

By CHRIS BUNN
Staff Reporter

This game is like playing an action movie. It starts, of course, with a tutorial. You learn your basic stuff ... basically, you learn how to kick ass, which is what this game is all about.

The basic storyline (which is just that, very basic) is that the boss dies and he wants you to get a letter to his daughter. She is, naturally, in the United States while you are in China.

Here's something else that's cool, while not integral to the game: While you're in China your character speaks Chinese; in the United States you speak English. There is, of course, a reason the boss sends you. See, your character is basically the ass-kicker. You are the bodyguard.

So now you go to America and try to find this daughter, and you meet this really, really annoying fat guy.

I can't remember his name, but you will hate him. He does, of course, get you into trouble. That also means you get to fight more. If you didn't have the fighting, this game would suck.

The controls in this game are interesting if nothing else. Instead of button pressing like most games, you hit enemies by slapping the right analogue stick toward them.

This lends you the ability to easily take on a bunch of enemies at one time.

There are also a few gun-fighting moments in the game. Now these aren't revolutionary, but they do add a little variety to the otherwise very straightforward game.

They don't add enough variety to warrant you to immediately purchase the game, but they do help to mix it up a bit.

Most of the opponents you will come across are just as easy as the last, with the occasional difficult ones. The game is, however, generally easy.

The control scheme ensures that brainless morons could play this game. I mean, face it, you don't have to memorize combos.

You don't even have to memorize which button does what. You use the analog sticks and two of the shoulder buttons sometimes. That's it.

There are a couple of "stealth" moments in the game. These are so terrible that I'm embarrassed that I even mentioned them. Really, they suck. This was the worst part of the game.

The A.I. of the guards gives new meaning to that word. Whoever thought that was a good addition to the game should meet Jet Li ... in a corner, after slapping his mom. Really, it's that bad.

All that being said, the game really is fun. It's not the

best game in the world at all. I do think this analog stick control thing should be used in more games — more games with deeper game play. Overall, the game is like one of Li's movies — fun, but not much else.

Go rent this one, and have a good time.

Scores:

Overall: 3.5

Gameplay: 4 (Needs more depth)

Graphics: 4 (Good, but nothing we haven't seen before)

Sound: 4.5 (I like the fact their languages are appropriate)

Affleck's Jersey Girl succeeds despite lack of familiar Kevin Smith humor

Yes, I had many doubts before actually manning up and going to see Kevin Smith's new, cheesy fatherhood saga *Jersey Girl*. The trailer was pretty bad (it looked like the sequel to *Bounce*), and the entire premise was a solar system away from the stuff Smith is notorious for making.

As we have seen in his past five movies, the guy is all about profanity; he likes things explicit. It just didn't make much sense for him to whip out this PG-13 family film for both parents and kids to enjoy. And as I said, from the looks of the trailer, you wanted to know that it was going to be a bomb, a stinker, a steaming pile, you know? A lot of people, myself included, just wanted to hate this movie without seeing it.



CATCHING FLICKS WITH
FLANAGANS
Ben Flanagan

But then I remembered I did like some of his work (*Chasing Amy* and *Clerks*), and knew that he was capable of telling a unique story. Granted, only two of Smith's movies are actually any good (and they are excellent), but since I liked them so much, I'll give him

another shot for sure.

Now *Jersey Girl* is not a stinker. In fact, it really isn't all that bad. As expected, it is topped with a healthy portion of melting cheese and oozing sentiment, but you feel like that is just what Smith is going for here.

Ben Affleck stars as Ollie Trinke, a hot shot New York music publicist with a brand

See GIRL, Page 4B

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GIRL

Continued from Page 3B

music publicist with a brand new wife (Jennifer Lopez) and a baby on the way. When the baby is finally delivered, though, Ollie's world starts to crumble, as his wife dies just moments after the kid slides out.

Normally, I don't find it humorous when a new mother bites the dust at childbirth, but when an impatient and smoking Ollie hears the bad news from the doctor, he breaks down in tears but keeps this cigarette right between his fingers during the episode.

I hope that was on purpose, because that kind of thing is pretty sleazy.

Soon after also losing his job and his home in the city, Ollie moves in with his blue-collar father (strangely played with a variation of Ratsos Rizzo by George Carlin) in a small New Jersey suburb.

After a few sequences of Ollie realizing his life must now slow down a bit to raise his daughter, we are hit with a "7 YEARS LATER"-type title card and move into the meat of the film.

Ollie's daughter, Gertie (Raquel Castro), is a real firecracker with her father's and grandfather's tough Jersey wit.

Ollie and Gertie's relationship is entirely believable and also rewarding.

In his daughter, he sees the wife he loved so much and lost too soon. Their many interactions are wholesome, innocent and solid enough to carry the film alone.

Luckily, none of the film's characters are annoying, which could have easily happened with the little girl, but Castro's charm swarms the picture. Gertie's lone fight with her father is monumental acting from a child.

Liv Tyler is fun as the horny video store clerk who develops a crush on Ollie. The also usually profane Carlin worried me at first but soon grew on me with a decent performance.

The View Askewiverse is said to be dead, but several Smith regulars show up here and there for the real fans to catch a glimpse. Rick Derris

Normally, I don't find it humorous when a new mother bites the dust at childbirth, but when an impatient and smoking Ollie hears the bad news from the doctor, he breaks down in tears but keeps this cigarette right between his fingers during the episode. I hope this was on purpose because that kind of thing is pretty sleazy.

(from *Clerks*) is a reporter, Coey London (from *Chasing Amy*) is a hilariously angry townsperson, but it's the brilliant Jason Lee who is unfortunately wasted in a minuscule scene as a publicist.

Where was his role? The guy almost saves Smith's movies single-handedly, and he gets the shaft from his boy? What's up with that, Kev?

After seeing all six of Kevin Smith's films, I'm not too sure about his artistic eye for making movies.

He definitely has a superb gift in writing dialogue, but as a director, it seems like the guy is just pointing the camera and saying "action."

Sure, this time he's got a new skilled cinematographer in Vilmos Zsigmond (the man who shot *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*), but I'm still

not seeing any talent in the visual aspect of his films.

As far as the famous Kevin Smith humor goes, things are a little limited. As I said before, his tendencies to use the f-word and discuss all forms of graphic sex are what made the guy famous, but here, the guy holds back big time.

He throws in a few bad words, but his whole agenda is just to tell this father and daughter story, and he executes nicely. I'm interested in Smith's next attempt at a non-Jay and Silent Bob film, even if it is ripe full of sap. Now's the time to hate, haters.

Rating:



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The Ladykillers a big disappointment

By MATT SCALICI
Film Critic

I've been accused many times in the past of being too hard on mediocre movies made by great filmmakers. These accusers tell me that each movie should be judged on its own rather than be compared to the previous work of the individuals involved.

It's true; *The Ladykillers* might have gotten a better reaction out of me if I hadn't known it was made by the Coen brothers. But is it fair of me to judge a film based on how good I think it should be? I learned at an early age that if you show potential, more will be expected of you, and if a C-wasn't good enough for Sister Mary Jude, it's not good enough for me.

Joel and Ethan Coen have created for themselves a near cult-like following with their wonderfully quirky and unique films. Their filmogra-

phy is practically the canon of 1980s and 1990s cult film: *Blood Simple*; *Raising Arizona*; *Fargo*; *The Big Lebowski*; *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?*; *The Man Who Wasn't There* ... I could go on but, you get the point.

The films listed here, and even the lesser known Coen brothers films not listed, are all unforgettable, brilliantly written and cleverly directed films, and, like Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*, I simply can't tolerate mediocrity when I know the filmmaker's capability.

Perhaps the problem arises in the original material, the 1955 British comedy of the same name that starred Alec Guinness and Peter Sellers. I've not seen the original, but I'd have to assume that it's a quality film considering the two headliners plus the fact that the Coens, perhaps two of the greatest film aficionados on the planet, seem to like it so much. The concept

remains the same: a group of scoundrels posing as musicians rent a room in a little old lady's house and then try to kill her when she discovers they are criminals. Then one by one the criminals get what's coming to them in a sort of British, slapstick way.

In the Coen brothers' version, the story takes place in Mississippi, and the criminals are renting the little old lady's basement to tunnel into a nearby casino's underground safe.

Tom Hanks plays the peculiar Professor G. H. Dorr, a character so strange and long-winded we can't help but enjoy watching him even if he isn't very funny.

Professor Dorr's cohorts include Marlon Wayans as a foul-mouthed casino janitor; J. K. Simmons as the demolitions expert afflicted with a rather tough case of irritable bowel syndrome; Tzi Ma as The General, a character so

See LADYKILLERS, Page 2B



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Local • Long Distance • Wireless • Internet

Forensics classes to expose true criminals

By WAYNE PARRY
The Associated Press

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J. — Near the tennis courts at Centenary College, a student is itching to set something on fire, and only too happy to oblige when asked to toss a lighted match into a plastic garbage can filled with newspaper.

A thin wisp of smoke appears after a few seconds and flames curl lazily upward.

Another trash pail, this one filled with paper doused in gasoline, is set ablaze.

There's an instantaneous whoosh as flames shoot into the air, the heat warm upon the faces of students 10 feet away, the smoke thick, black and sooty.

On this gray day, Norman Cetuk is teaching about 20 students how to investigate fires: identifying how and where they start, how an accidental blaze might burn. He wants to help them see, feel and smell how vastly different a fire is when powered by an accelerant.

Eventually, they hope to determine why a fire was set, and even more difficult, prove who did it.

It won't be easy: Only 2 percent of all arsons in the United States result

in convictions.

With the public's appetite for television crime dramas like *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, the courses Cetuk teaches at the tiny college in northwestern New Jersey have become increasingly popular, especially among law enforcement professionals.

While pleased that television has brought renewed interest to forensics, he said the shows have little to do with reality.

"These type of shows only highlight the glamorous aspects of the job," said Cetuk, a retired arson investigator. "You don't see the everyday frustrations, limitations of working within a budget, time constraints, handling 30 to 50 cases a month, the human tragedy that as an officer or investigator you also have to deal with at a crime scene."

His courses cover such topics as processing crime scenes; examining dead bodies for signs of foul play; collecting tiny fiber evidence; and using fingerprint and DNA evidence in investigations and prosecutions.

Colleges, high schools and even some grammar schools across the nation have seen a dramatic increase in the popularity of forensics courses

since *CSI* debuted.

In Virginia, enrollment in Old Dominion University's criminal justice program increased nearly 14 percent from 2002 to 2003. In Newport News, a middle school offered forensic science to seventh and eighth graders, and 100 immediately signed up. The class now has a long waiting list, as do similar programs in Michigan, Montana and elsewhere.

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences can also attest to the growing interest. Over the past three years, more than 5,000 parents and students have sought information and more than 1,000 teachers have inquired about incorporating forensic science into their lesson plans.

Cetuk insists his classes be strictly hands-on.

On a recent day, he pours gasoline on a board and lights it so students can see how the fire follows the fuel trail and leaves a distinct burn pattern.

Significantly, once the fire burns itself out, very little of the wood is damaged, in much the same way that a floor set ablaze by an arsonist is blackened but not totally consumed.

The board reeks of gasoline and several students recoil from the stench

when the board is held near their faces.

Cetuk, who spent 13 years as a Bridgewater police officer and another 16 as an investigator with the Somerset County prosecutor's office, heading the arson unit, can tell whether an arsonist was left-handed or right-handed by the burn marks left by flammable liquid splashed on a floor.

Other experiments will expose lies. Say, for example, the owner of a business that just went up in flames claims all his company records were burned in the fire.

Cetuk takes a 6-inch-tall stack of newspapers, douses it in gasoline and lights it. Instantly, the pile erupts in flames.

Nothing, it would appear, could have survived such a blaze. But after Dave Tynan, a Hackettstown firefighter taking the course, douses it with a fire extinguisher, Cetuk reveals a surprise.

He peels away the charred exterior and opens the middle of the pile to reveal a virtually untouched sports section detailing a New York Giants game.

Only the outermost edge of the paper is singed.

"You have a guy saying, 'My

records burned up,'" Cetuk said. "I say, 'Didn't happen.'"

In much the same way, a property owner can be exposed as a liar after claiming she dropped a lit cigarette on the floor or in a pile of clothes and the resulting fire consumed everything.

When Cetuk drops a cigarette on a pile of clothing, nothing happens right away. Only 20 minutes later is there even a hint of smoke rising from it. A fire in a couch or bed can take four hours to really get going, he said.

"If someone says, 'I dropped a cigarette on it, and it burst into flames,' uh-uh," he said.

He takes a lit highway traffic flare, which burns at 1,800 degrees, and places it on a linoleum-covered board for 15 minutes. It leaves only a small scorch mark. A dropped cigarette, which is infinitely cooler, could not possibly ignite a floor, he said.

This is the kind of stuff Tynan is eager to learn. He's one of several working professionals taking the class, hoping to advance their careers.

"A lot of times we see the fires without seeing how they're investigated," he said. "It broadens my horizons. This stuff really interests me."

GREEN

Continued from Page 1A

in each of the 50 states. The crew is spending part of this week traveling across Alabama to find the "Most Interesting Person" of the state.

The Tonight Show will air the Alabama "Most Interesting Person" segment April 15.

Green said Tuesday that he was on the Rick and Bubba radio show Monday and would travel with the crew to the Elk Lodge in Birmingham on Tuesday night.

Green has been a guest on *The Tonight Show* a number of times, but said this project is his first in-the-field segment for the show. He had no specifics on what he and the

crew were looking for in "interesting people."

"The Most Interesting Person combines talent with interesting characteristics," Green said. "We're looking for somebody we find interesting enough to bring to L.A."

Green mentioned a number of interesting characters he had found after spending Tuesday morning on campus. He said many double-jointed people demonstrated their abilities for the camera. One male student was able to shove a pen up his nose, and another male student could rap Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Green said.

One student not only demonstrated his ability to Green and the crew but also to an entire class. Stephen Lucas,

a freshman majoring in telecommunication and film, was prompted to show his talent when Green and crew walked into professor Gary Copeland's TCF 100 class Tuesday afternoon.

"He was just being Tom Green," Lucas said. "He had his megaphone and was bobbing around the room. He was looking for someone to do something, and no one did anything, so I did."

The talent that Green and the entire class saw was Lucas' ability to put his legs behind his head while on a table.

"I did it when I was a kid. I hadn't done it in a while, but it was the first [talent] that came to mind," Lucas said.

Lucas' odd talent seemed to be enough to fuel the

eccentric Green.

"He can do it for hours, ladies!" Green said to the class.

Lucas said he was excited about the possibility of being featured on *The Tonight Show*.

"I was pretty stoked. Tom Green told me the most exciting person would get to come on the show," he said.

Other students in the class, however, were not as forthcoming as Lucas.

When Green asked one male student if he had a talent to share, the student replied, "None that you would like to see."

Green and *The Tonight Show* crew filmed at various locales on campus, including classrooms, the Ferguson Center, and the corner of University Boulevard and

Wallace Wade Avenue in front of the UA entrance sign. Green's presence slowed traffic at that intersection as many students driving by waved and yelled at him.

Green and crew also filmed on the lawn of the nearby Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house after fraternity members yelled for them to come over. There, two male students submitted their talent for consideration: shotgunning beer.

Grant Clark, a sophomore majoring in management, and Kurt McMahan, a junior majoring in political science, each shotgunned a beer for the crew.

Clark finished his beer after about two seconds, with McMahan finishing shortly after.

"It's the only thing I can do good," Clark said. "I haven't been beaten yet. I got that going for me."

"I was surprised he beat me," McMahan said.

McMahan said Green's crew told him he had a good shot at being featured on the show, and he was looking forward to that chance.

"I'm excited about the possibility of being on TV," he said. "I hope my grandmother doesn't see it, though."

McMahan, however, discounted the notion that shotgunning a beer is a talent.

"It's not a talent so much as it is a chauvinistic ritual," he said.

Editor Chris Sanders contributed to this report.

Oil prices rise nearly 2 percent Tuesday

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Oil prices rose nearly 2 percent Tuesday as traders covered bets that prices would continue lower, in preparation for a potential surprise in Wednesday's release of weekly U.S. petroleum inventory data.

The inventory report released last week, which showed a build in crude stocks and an unexpected build in gasoline stocks, sparked selling that weighed on crude oil futures prices through Friday.

Analysts expect a slight build in crude oil stocks again Wednesday, as oil imports are seen remaining strong and refinery runs are likely to increase, with plants emerging from seasonal maintenance.

Crude futures prices have gained since last September on announcements by OPEC that it planned to cut its crude

oil output to avoid a second-quarter glut on the world market. But traders have grown skeptical of OPEC announcements, since a pledged output cut of 900,000 barrels a day never materialized last winter and a 1-million-barrel-a-day

cut, which was to take effect April 1, also appears doubtful.

The group produced more than 1 million barrels a day this year beyond the output ceiling of 24.5 million barrels a day, which it set late last September to reflect its first planned cut.

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Eventual champions end Tide's run

By CHARLIE GASNER
Sports Editor

PHOENIX — It was a history-making season for the Alabama basketball team. But now it's history.

Ben Gordon and Rashad Anderson combined to score 61 points as the Connecticut Huskies (31-6) opened up a huge early lead and cruised the rest of the way, beating the Crimson Tide (20-13) on March 27, 87-71, in the Phoenix Regional final.

The first NCAA Tournament regional final in Alabama basketball history got away from the Tide quickly. UConn put the game away with a first-half offensive explosion in which Anderson hit all six of his 3-point attempts and Gordon hit three of his four. When the dust settled, the Huskies were 9-of-11 beyond the arc and had racked up 53 points to Alabama's 29.

"That was the best half of basketball anyone's played all year against us," Alabama coach Mark Gottfried said.

UConn center Emeka Okafor was one of the few Huskies not in on the first-half scoring fun — he only had 2 points — but he certainly made his presence known. Okafor had five blocks and seven rebounds in the half.

"A guy like [Okafor] is hard to get good looks on," Alabama forward Chuck Davis said.

Still, Davis never backed down. He got the better of Okafor several times in the first half, finishing the period 5-of-9 with 11 points, four rebounds and two assists.

Alabama fell behind as much as it did because of its first-half outside shooting. While Gordon and Anderson were hitting everything they threw in the air, Alabama's 3-point shooters were just 2-of-12 in the half.

After cruising to a nearly 25-point lead, the Huskies put the brakes on with about 14 minutes left. UConn went into stall mode, holding the ball until just a few seconds were left on the shot clock. Alabama cut the lead to 16 at times, but Connecticut turned the pressure back up every time the Tide threatened to come back.

"We just could not make a run without them answering every run we made," Gottfried said.

Gordon finished with 36 points and Anderson with 28. No other Husky scored in double figures; Charlie Villanueva was closest, with eight points. Davis was Alabama's leading scorer with 24, and Kennedy Winston added 21.

Antoine Pettway, playing his final game in an Alabama uniform, scored just one point but provided the steady ball handling that marked his college career. He dished out four assists, never turned the ball over and grabbed five rebounds.

"We probably didn't realize how big Antoine Pettway's shoes [will be] to fill," Gottfried said.

"That young man is a special, special, special player. We'll miss him."

Davis and Winston were named to the all-Phoenix Regional team, along with Okafor, Anderson and MVP Gordon.

Gottfried had praise for his sophomore big man after the game.

"I think Chuck has matured so much from last year to the beginning of this year, and from the beginning of this year to now," Gottfried said.

Davis, unencumbered by the *Sports Illustrated* cover jinx, finished with 24 points, nine rebounds and just one turnover.

He did most of his second-half work against Huskies other than Okafor, who sat with a sore shoulder in the second half after taking a foul from Jermareo Davidson midway through the first half.

Alabama's last six games. He has also hit safely in six of the last seven contests.

Hoover native Greg Paiml also extended his hitting streak to a career-high seven games with a single in the third inning. Paiml also scored two runs in the win.

The only downside to the recent trend of successes against lesser competition is that the production isn't carrying into the games where the decision might not be as predictable. With its 3-6 record in conference play, Alabama is tied for 10th in the SEC.

Vanderbilt is next and with a pitching staff that includes first-round draft pick Jeremy Sowers, wins should not be easy to come by. The Commodores will arrive in Tuscaloosa this weekend for a three-game series with game one scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. Friday.

"[Vanderbilt's] got an outstanding pitching staff," Wells said. "They're much improved from the Vandy teams we're used to playing."

Kaz Matsui homers as Mets beat Braves

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Kaz Matsui couldn't have done any better had he written his own script.

Matsui homered on the first major league pitch he saw and Tom Glavine beat his former team for the first time, leading the New York Mets over the Atlanta Braves 7-2 in their season opener Tuesday night.

Mike Piazza hit a long home run off losing pitcher Russ Ortiz for the Mets, coming off consecutive last-place finishes.

But Matsui has already made a big difference from the leadoff spot.

The rookie shortstop from Japan had a huge game in his big league debut, going 3-for-3 with two doubles, two walks and three RBIs.

"It was more than I ever imagined," Matsui said through a translator to a roomful of media.

Despite a .192 spring with only one home run, Matsui said he was feeling more comfortable at the plate the last 3-4 preseason games.

"I did a lot of batting practice and it helped a lot," he said. "Today, if a strike came on the first pitch, I was swinging. I didn't imagine it would be a home run."

Glavine, who was 0-4 with a 10.35 ERA against Atlanta last season after signing a \$35 million, three-year contract with the Mets the previous winter, had another rough start.

This time, however, he recovered after giv-

ing up a leadoff single to Rafael Furcal and a home run to Marcus Giles in the first inning.

"It's impossible. It couldn't be more of the same," said Glavine, who strolled off the mound and gave himself a thorough talking to.

"It's not anything that can be printed in a newspaper," he said. "I just gave myself a timeout and told myself to get back to being aggressive. Do what you've been doing that has been successful over my career."

Glavine allowed only a harmless single to Giles in the third and a two-out single to Chipper Jones in the sixth. The left-hander went six innings and allowed four hits, two walks and struck out two.

"It certainly ranked up there with some of the big wins I've had. I don't want to overplay it, but it was gratifying to pitch well after the way I pitched against them last year," said Glavine.

"He was pretty sharp, obviously," said Giles. David Weathers and Braden Loper combined for three innings of scoreless relief to finish it.

Matsui, a seven-time All-Star in Japan, drew about 50 members of the Japanese media to Turner Field. The switch-hitter, batting left-handed, hit the first pitch of the game from Ortiz 429 feet over the center-field fence for a 1-0 lead. Matsui gave the Mets the lead for good in the second inning with an RBI double.

BASEBALL

Continued from Page 8B

The La. Tech pitching staff allowed 11 hits, issued seven base-on balls, and plunked to batters in Tuesday's contest.

Junior second baseman Allen Rice got the offense started for the home team in the third inning with a two-RBI single up the middle. Rice finished the game 2-for-5 and picked up three RBIs.

"When you start coming up in situations with runners on base and you produce, you can use that in clutch situations in the bigger SEC games," Rice said. "But with this team we've got, we're expected to do a lot more."

Evan Bush also continued his recent run-producing consistency as he went 2-for-4 and picked up an RBI. With his seventh-inning RBI, Bush has now driven in at least one run in


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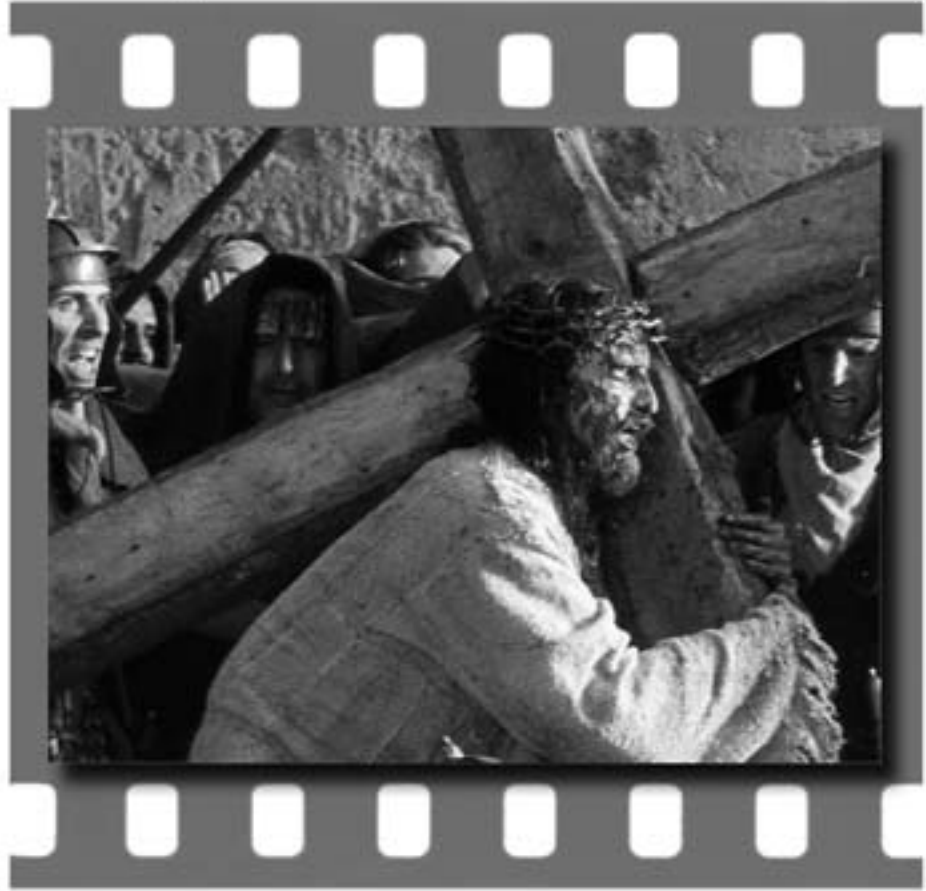


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CROOM

Continued from Page 8B

done something like that.”

In the end, Shula's staff agreed to change the award's name back to the Sylvester Croom Commitment to Excellence Award.

Bart Starr's name now graces the Most Improved Quarterback Award, which was given to Miami transfer Marc Guillon.

Linebacker DeMeco Ryans won the Croom award this spring.

Croom has forgiven, but likely not forgotten.

“I talked with Mike last night and he explained his thought process on why the name of the award was changed,” Croom said in a statement Monday.

“He assured me that it was not personal, that he meant no disrespect toward me. He was looking at it strictly from a recruiting standpoint.

“I appreciate Mike and the University keeping my name on the award; it means a lot to me.

“It recognizes everything I tried to accomplish during my time at the University of Alabama.”

SLUMP

Continued from Page 8B

Ark., only compounded the problems.

Alabama put together a late-inning rally en route to the 6-3 win in the series opener Friday night, but one win would be all the Arkansas Razorbacks were willing to allow. The Hogs picked up 7-2 and 11-6 victories on Saturday and Sunday respectively, forcing the Tide to return home with a 2-2 record on the four-game road trip.

The series loss was Alabama's first to Arkansas since 1995.

SOFTBALL

Continued from Page 8B

Wright also delivered on the mound for the Tide. Wright got her ninth win of the season in game two by two-hitting the Rebels, striking out five of them.

Alabama's dynamic duo of Ashley Courtney and Angela Johnson both homered to set up the Tide pitchers. Courtney belted a three-run homer in game one, while Johnson powered up game two with a two-run homer.

The Tide finished the Rebels off with an 8-3 victory Sunday. Ole Miss took an early three-run lead but the Tide bounced back with eight straight runs, including a four

spot in the top of the fourth, to secure the sweep. The win kept the Tide in third place in the Western Division.

Mississippi has been a second home for Alabama hitters, Murphy said, but he expects a challenge from Mississippi State this weekend.

“It seems like our hitters have a great time hitting in Starkville and Oxford,” Murphy said. “But [MSU] will have better hitters [than Ole Miss].”

The Tide and the Bulldogs hit the diamond in Starkville for a doubleheader starting at 5 p.m. Friday.



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Wednesday's Horoscope

MYSTIC STAFFS By Lushia Soniuk

Aries (March 21-April 20). Sudden impressions may clarify a strained relationship. Watch loved ones for subtle clues and unexpected hints. Social power struggles are easily resolved before midweek. Ask probing questions and refuse to ignore public controversy.

Taurus (April 21-May 20). Key financial decisions prove worthwhile. Friends and relatives may compliment creative business strategies. Use this time to advance career plans, apply for loans or foster working partnerships.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Romantic overtures are gently persuasive over the next few days. Expect new love affairs or unique friendships to trigger key decisions. Some.

Gemina will soon change their daily obligations and long-term family plans. Stay focused and watch for subtle invitations.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Colleagues may be mildly confrontational over the next few days. Remain sensitive to lingering disagreements involving seniority, assigned duties or delayed promotions. Emotional reactions may be unpredictable. Avoid acting as mediator or adviser.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Intimate relationships begin an intensive phase of planning. Some Leos, especially those born after 1963, will adopt controversial family ideas. Shared expenses, rare promises or relocation may be accented. Go slow and press for reliable details.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Home repairs or unexpected family expenses may be temporarily draining over the next few days. Although financial luck is high, past duties or forgotten payments will briefly reappear. Quickly finalized all plans and obligations. A delayed response may trigger unnecessary conflict.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Late social invitations may prove emotionally complicated. Expect friends or colleagues to present conflicting choices, dates or times. Creative planning or group events may intensify private tensions. Loved ones will ask for acceptance; remain cautious and watch for key breakthroughs.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22). Workplace differences and minor jealousies may be annoying. New co-workers may press for advancement or request special favors. Public discussion is best avoided, however. Fresh ideas and creativity will be quickly challenged.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 21). Compliments or rare group invitations indicate a new attitude of social acceptance. Watch for unique proposals or unexpected opportunities for change. Apologies from friends or workplace regrets will not be conventionally expressed. Respond with cheerful honesty and expect emotional distance or distrust to soon fade.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20). Old memories or forgotten friends may challenge present relationships. Expect loved ones to need careful support and extra reassurance. Plan private encounters or cozy family gatherings. This is not the right time to let nostalgic thoughts or past disappointments take top priority.

Aquarius (Jan. 21-Feb. 19). Group plans may be postponed or canceled. Close friends and colleagues are easily distracted by quick reversals and fast reversals. Take none of it personally. At present, underlying family or romantic tensions may influence social decisions.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20). Business relations may be briefly strained by private agendas. Pay special attention to career ambitions or ongoing power struggles between colleagues. Withheld emotions will rise quickly to the surface. Avoid public debate, if possible, and opt for solitary duties.

IF YOUR BIRTHDAY IS THIS WEEK...
 Subtle health issues affecting the immune system, circulation or kidneys may be briefly bothersome. Before mid-March, study daily routines, sleep patterns and fitness regimes. In the coming weeks, improved habits will greatly reduce minor ailments. After April 8, watch also for a sudden flurry of business openings, new job assignments or financial changes.

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Alabama head football coach Mike Shula, shown here with former quarterback Brandon Avalos, renamed and quickly re-renamed the Sylvester Croom Commitment to Excellence Award.



Croom award name restored after controversy

By **MAGEN HUGHES**
Senior Sports Reporter

Mississippi State head football coach Sylvester Croom will look to show Alabama coach Mike Shula and his team just how committed to excellence Croom is when the Bulldogs play the Crimson Tide on Nov. 6.

Last week, Shula announced his coaching staff would no longer hand out the Sylvester Croom Commitment to Excellence Award because the staff did not want to recognize a rival SEC coach in its spring awards.

The name of the award, created by then-Alabama head coach Bill Curry in 1987, was changed weeks ago to honor former Tide quarterback Bart Starr. But after drawing much regional and national criticism for the decision, Shula returned from a cruise, promptly reinstated the award's name and apologized to Croom.

"We would like to publicly apologize to Sylvester Croom and his family for changing the name of one of our spring awards," Shula said in a statement released by the University's sports information office.

Croom, a standout lineman under coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, became the SEC's first black head coach this off-season when Mississippi State hired him to replace Jackie Sherrill.

Many former players, both black and white, expressed concerns that the move would hurt Alabama in recruiting.

Furthermore, many former players said they found the change in poor taste because of everything that Croom accomplished for the University.

"You take the black guy's name off it and give it to Bart Starr?" former Tide fullback and Johnny Davis, a teammate of Croom, told *The Tuscaloosa News*.

"Should a [former] player buy the award or

earn it? Whatever they're doing, it's sending a bad message to the community and to the recruits."

Croom and Shula were both in the running for Alabama's head coaching job last spring when former coach Mike Price was fired, adding yet another interesting dynamic to the Croom award saga.

"I'm thoroughly disappointed that they chose to remove my name from an award that meant a lot to me because of the career I had at Alabama as a player," Croom told the *Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger* last week.

"To remove my name from that award because I achieved success in my coaching career is disappointing to me. I find it hard to believe that Coach Bryant would have ever

See **CROOM**, Page 7B

Teams keep playing during spring break

Softball rebounds from LSU losses to sweep Ole Miss, stay in Western Division race

By **BUDDY HUGHES**
Senior Sports Reporter

The 11th-ranked Alabama softball team bounced back from a sweep at the hands of division rival LSU last weekend to sweep Ole Miss this weekend and remain in the hunt for an SEC Western Division title.

The Crimson Tide (31-9, 12-6 SEC) allowed LSU to get early leads in both games of the March 27 doubleheader. The Tigers jumped out to a two-run lead in game one and a three-run lead in game two.

LSU scored six straight runs in the first game before Alabama got onto the board with a two-run home run by Stephanie VanBrakle. But that was as close as Alabama would get, as they dropped game one, 6-2.

In game two, the Tide had cut LSU's lead down to three thanks to a Staci Ramsey single, but the Tigers immediately pounced back on the Tide putting up four insurance runs to secure a 9-4 win.

Game three saw a pitcher's duel turn into an avalanche of runs. Alabama trailed by only one after a four-run bottom half of the fifth inning, but once again, the Tigers separated themselves from the Tide with a four-run inning in the top of the sixth. LSU held on for a 10-7 win.

LSU had Alabama's number all weekend thanks to a combination of the Tide's mistakes and the Tigers' execution.

"They hit pretty well but we didn't pitch well," Alabama softball coach Pat Murphy said. "A good team always takes advantage of mistakes."

Alabama took out its frustrations on the Rebels, blanking

See **SOFTBALL**, Page 7B



Alabama infielder Allen Rice had two hits and three RBI in Alabama's 10-1 win against Louisiana Tech. Alabama has outscored its last six nonconference opponents by a combined 64-5 margin.

UA/ Kent Gidley

No SEC opponent, no problem

Alabama gets well against another nonconference opponent, this time with 10-1 win against La. Tech

By **CRAIG S. WYSOCK**
Assistant Sports Editor

A pattern is emerging for the Alabama baseball team: If the opponent is not in the SEC, expect a win — and don't expect it to be close.

Tuesday night's 10-1 victory against the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs (12-22) was the latest piece of evidence for the case that the Crimson Tide wins the games it should be winning.

Alabama (20-11, 3-6 SEC) got strong pitching from starter Andrew Walker and timely hitting throughout the lineup en route to its third straight non-conference victory. The Tide is 7-1 in its last eight non-conference games.

"Our confidence level is higher in games like tonight's," coach Jim Wells said. "It's no knock on these teams, but the level of competition takes a big jump on the weekends. We

just need to start winning some conference games."

"[Louisiana Tech] played like a conference opponent tonight," Walker said. "They came up here hacking at everything I threw them. But they swung at a lot of balls. Plus, I had better control of my off-speed stuff."

Walker (2-0) played off of the Bulldogs' aggressive nature and amassed nine strikeouts in seven innings. He

gave up five hits and only walked one batter. The one run that scored was unearned.

Eric Mennen also pitched two innings of shutout relief for Alabama. The two Tide pitchers combined to only throw 129 pitches. That stat takes on more significance when compared to the 173 pitches that the four Bulldog hurlers threw in only eight innings.

See **BASEBALL**, Page 6B

Baseball drops series to Ole Miss, Arkansas

By **CRAIG S. WYSOCK**
Assistant Sports Editor

Alabama's baseball team finished 3-4 by the end of spring break, losing an SEC series against Ole Miss and Arkansas in the process.

In both conference series, Alabama managed to win only one of three games. A midweek win against South Alabama was sandwiched between those contests.

The first weekend of the break brought the Ole Miss Rebels to Tuscaloosa for the typical trio of games. The Rebels won the first game 11-1 and the final 4-2, but couldn't find the answer to freshman Wade LeBlanc in game two, losing 2-1.

The loss was the first blemish to Ole Miss' conference record this season, and only its third overall.

LeBlanc allowed six hits through nine innings and only gave up one run, a homer in the top of the ninth. But the Tide offense bailed out its freshman ace and put two on the board to pick up the victory.

It was the second walk-off win for Alabama this season and LeBlanc's third complete game. The Lake Charles, La., native has all three of the team's complete games this season.

While the offense has struggled throughout the course of SEC play so far this season, averaging only 3.78 runs in nine games, the nonconference portion of the schedule has more than made up for the lack of production.

Including last Wednesday's 12-1 thumping of South Alabama in Mobile, the Crimson Tide has outscored its last six nonconference opponents 68-7.

Alabama collected 12 hits in the win against its in-state opponent, and also benefited from eight walks, four hit batters and two errors.

Freshman shortstop Greg Paiml came off the bench and contributed a career night at the plate. The Hoover native went 3-for-3 with three doubles, two RBIs and two runs scored. He also extended his hitting streak to six games.

No other Tide player had more than one hit in the contest. Ryan Beagle, Rocky Scelfo and Nick Richardson each drove in two runs as well.

The road win provided a momentary break in the season-long struggles the Tide have had to endure away from Sewell-Thomas Stadium. But last weekend's trip to Fayetteville,

See **SLUMP**, Page 7B



CW/ Luisa Morenilla

Alabama gymnast Jeana Rice finished with the top all-around score at the NCAA West Regional on Saturday with a 39.550.

Alabama finishes second to Oklahoma at regional, advances to nationals

The Associated Press

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Oklahoma and Alabama advanced to the NCAA women's gymnastics championships by claiming the top two team scores at the NCAA West Regional at Oregon State on Saturday night.

Oklahoma's score was 197.100, while Alabama finished second with 196.900. Oregon State was third with 196.850, followed by Boise State (195.275), California (195.175) and Cal State-Fullerton (193.000).

The Sooners and the Crimson Tide will compete April 15-17 at the NCAA championships at UCLA.

The top all-around finisher was Alabama's Jeana Rice (39.550), followed by Oklahoma's Ashley Cooney (39.525), Oregon State's Tanya Ricioli-Hebron (39.500), Alabama's Shannon Hrozek and Oklahoma's Kasie Tamayo (39.475).

Oregon State's Tanya Ricioli-Hebron and Boise State's Lindsay Ward (39.350) earned individual all-around berths to the championship.

The top two all-arounders whose teams don't advance also qualify for nationals.

Rice tied teammate Shannon Hrozek and Oklahoma's Kasie Tamayo with 9.90 marks to win bars, and Alabama's Ashley Miles won the floor title with a 9.95.

Miles also tied Cooney for first place on vault with a 9.95.

Ricioli-Hebron won the beam title by tying her career-high of 9.95.

It was the second year in a row the Beavers missed out on the trip to nationals, after having been edged by .025 in the South Central Regional a year ago.

"It's hard to lose by five-hundredths of a point," coach Tanya Chaplin said.

"Overall this team has fought really hard all year. I couldn't be more proud."