May 9, 2013

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
MAY 2, 2013 – MAY 9, 2013

For specific news stories, see the following page numbers:

NEWS ABOUT
STATE ISSUES  2
UA CAMPUS ISSUES  9
UAB CAMPUS ISSUES  22
UAH CAMPUS ISSUES  29
OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES  50
SPORTS  56
Finance director takes new position

Official leaves Bentley's Cabinet to accept job in Jefferson County

Staff, wire report

MONTGOMERY | Gov. Robert Bentley's state finance director, Marquita Davis, is leaving for a job in Birmingham.

The governor announced Friday that Davis has accepted a job as executive director of the Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity. Davis, who oversees the state budgets for the Bentley administration, will move to her new job after the current legislative session ends May 20.

"It has been an absolute honor and privilege to work with Gov. Bentley and to serve the state of Alabama," Davis said. "I am looking forward to this opportunity to continue to serve the people of Alabama in a new capacity."

The JCCEO board voted Thursday evening to offer Davis the job. She was deputy director of Child Development Services for JCCEO from 2004 to 2008, when she went to work for Gov. Bob Riley's administration.

NEW JOB
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

She served as director of the state Office of School Readiness and then director of the state Department of Children's Affairs under Riley. She retained that post under Bentley, who promoted her to finance director in August 2011.

"Leading our finance department, she has helped us manage one of the most challenging economic times in our state's history," Bentley said.

The governor has not named a replacement for Davis.

Davis earned a bachelor of science degree in family social services from Northern Illinois University. She earned a master's degree in family studies from Alabama A&M University in Huntsville and earned a Ph.D. in early childhood education and child development from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

She has served on numerous civic and community boards and organization, including the board of directors for the United Way of Central Alabama and the boards of Birmingham's McWane Science Center, YWCA of Central Alabama, American Village and Children's First Foundation.

SEE NEW JOB | 3B
State Finance Director Marquita Davis resigning to take job in Jefferson County

By: Kim Chandler

State Finance Director Marquita Davis is resigning to accept a position as executive director of the Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity, Gov. Robert Bentley’s office announced this morning.

Davis will resign at the end of the legislative session which will end by May 20. She will assume her new position in June, according to the governor’s office.

“Dr. Davis has done an outstanding job. Leading our Finance Department, she has helped us manage one of the most challenging economic times in our state’s history,” Bentley said in a prepared statement.

“I greatly appreciate her service to the State of Alabama and to our Administration. I am really going to miss her and the contributions she has made. Her work has benefited everyone in this state. I know that she will serve the JCCEO well in her new role,” Bentley said.

Bentley appointed Davis as finance director in 2011. She was the first female and the second African-American to hold the position of state finance director.

Davis previously served as the Bentley’s commissioner of the Department of Children’s Affairs and as the director of the Officer of School Readiness.

Davis had previously worked for the JCCEO, serving as director of child development services from 2004 to 2008 before she went to work for Gov. Bob Riley’s administration.

As finance director, Davis at times brought a lighter touch to the role. At legislative budget presentations this year, she rolled a wagon-load of fake money bags on stage to illustrate the size disparity between the two state budgets.

“It has been an absolute honor and privilege to work with Governor Bentley and to serve the State of Alabama,” Davis said in a prepared statement.

“I am looking forward to this opportunity to continue to serve the people of Alabama in a new capacity,” Davis said.

The governor has not named a replacement for Davis.
Budgets are priority for state lawmakers

Legislators required to complete budgets in final days of session

By Bob Johnson
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | Passing the education and General Fund budgets are the only tasks Alabama lawmakers are required to complete in the final three days of the 2013 legislative session, and they have made them their priority.

The Senate Finance and Taxation-Education Committee chairman said he plans to bring up the education budget on Tuesday. Republican Rep. Trip Pittman of Daphne said the main areas of disagreement are the size of a pay raise for educators and how much money to set aside to repay money the state has borrowed from a state savings account.

House Speaker Mike Hubbard said the session has been successful and that most items on the Republican leadership priority list have passed.

Lawmakers will return Tuesday and Thursday and then will return for a final day on May 20.

Pittman’s committee has approved, at his request, a 1 percent raise for educators and a 1 percent bonus if extra money becomes available. He said House member and some senators want the raise to be 2 percent.

“I’m getting more comfortable with that amount,” Pittman said.

House Minority Leader Rep. Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, said he believes the state can afford a 5 percent raise and he will offer an amendment to increase the raise to that amount. He said he would also like to see a 5 percent raise for state employees.

Pittman said he was glad that most lawmakers seem to favor the 1 or 2 percent raise and not the larger amount.

He said he wants to have $75 million paid back to the state savings account out of this budget for the 2014 fiscal year which begins Oct. 1.

Hubbard said most of the agenda Republican lawmakers established for this session has been approved, with a few items that still must pass one of the two houses. A key agenda item was a bill that allows gun owners to have guns in cars and eases other restriction on carrying weapons.

The bill has been approved by both chambers but has gone back to the Senate to review changes made in the House. The House sponsor, Republican Rep. Ed Henry of Hartselle, said he expects the bill to come up Tuesday in the Senate.

Hubbard told The Associated Press that he and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh of Anniston have gotten together and “mapped out” what still must pass.
Stimpson: RSA criticism was valid

Robert McClendon
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Mayoral hopeful Sandy Stimpson's ties to Alabama's conservative political apparatus can be a blessing. They helped him raise $103,000 in March alone.

But they might also be a curse, at least in Mobile's present-day political arena. Stimpson sits on the board of the Alabama Policy Institute, a conservative think tank based in Montgomery, and, for a time, was its chairman.

Over the years, API has been a vociferous foe of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, the state's biggest pension manager. In particular, API has taken issue with RSA's nontraditional investments in real estate and economic development. Normally such a dispute wouldn't have much impact on a municipal election, but Mobile has benefited disproportionately from RSA largess.

The pension management entity has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the local area over the last 20 years. Its investment in downtown real estate literally changed the city's skyline. That puts Stimpson in

See RSA, Page 7A

See next page
RSA

David Bronner, chief executive of RSA, said that it would certainly be ironic for Stimpson to take the helm of a city that has benefited so much from the very kinds of investments that API has seen fit to criticize.

Bronner said that a close working relationship with local government is a prerequisite for RSA to invest in a community. If Stimpson were elected and seemed unwilling to cooperate, Bronner said, "We would just go on to some other place. You can't fight city hall."

API has been critical of RSA on a number of fronts, but the 2012 article took the pension fund to task specifically for its use of alternative investments like those it has made in the Mobile area.

The piece was largely a response to a RSA-commissioned study that touted the economic stimulus created by its alternative investments in Alabama.

According to the study, the pension fund directed 10 percent of its investment portfolio, about $5.6 billion, in alternative investments between 1990 and 2011, resulting in a $28 billion economic expansion and $1.1 billion in additional tax revenue for the state.

The report said that any massive investment will have a stimulating effect.

But the report argued that RSA would have netted an additional $42 million for its pensioners had it directed its entire portfolio to more traditional investments.

The report stated, "While investments in Alabama are certainly appreciated, they may have little to do with 'safe-keeping' Alabama's pensions by creating financial solvency for a broken retirement system, which is no longer sustainable in its current form."

Cameron Smith, API's policy director and a coauthor of the article, said that neither Stimpson nor any of the board members had input into its critiques of RSA.

Smith said that he keeps board members abreast of what he is working on, and they see research before it is published, but they do not have direct influence on his work.
COOPER GREEN

Downsize efforts a 'failure,' doctors say

Barnett Wright
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The Jefferson County Commission's efforts to downsize Cooper Green Mercy Hospital have been an "abject failure" and primary care services for many indigent patients are almost nonexistent, a group of area doctors said Monday in a press release.

From Page 1A

The Jefferson County Medical Society — which represents more than 2,200 physicians — said the sick poor are now left with a "worst-case sce-

nario: indigent patients are now suffering from a breakdown in the continuity of care and lack of the critical physician-patient relationship."

The press release was signed by members of the organization's executive team including Drs. Stephen Steinmetz, president; Gregory Ayers, president-elect; Darlene Traffanstedt, immediate past president; and Theodis Buggs Jr., vice president.

The press release was the latest development over the county's decision to downsize the Sixth Avenue South facility.

On Friday, al.com reported that the county hasn't paid nearly $4 million to four area hospitals that have treated indigent county patients since Cooper Green was downsized on Jan. 1, according to county records.

That total does not include the amount the county owes independent physicians who have treated the indigent.

County officials say all of the money is not owed, and the invoices are not being paid because they need to verify that all the patients being treated at area hospitals are from Cooper Green, and not just the uninsured or charity cases.

County Manager Tony Petelos said the emergency rooms are crowded for factors other than indigent patients, including a higher than normal flu season earlier this year.

However, Petelos said the county does need more primary care doctors.

"We are now advertising
for doctors in the surrounding areas,” he said. “We are advertising in Atlanta, Memphis, Nashville, Hattiesburg, in Tuskegee in Montgomery for doctors at Cooper Green.

“We’ve got interviews, and we’re meeting, and we will continue to advertise, and we’re going to get it to a level where we can see patients in a timely fashion,” Petelos said.

Deputy Jefferson County Manager Walter Jackson said “imperfections” are in the system that need to be addressed.

“We don’t mind being top heavy with doctors in order to get this thing down to where we need to be,” Jackson said. “Our goal is get the (indigent patients) out of the emergency rooms of area hospitals and come to Cooper Green to their medical home … we still have work to do.”

Without enough primary care doctors in place to see the volume of patients that need to be seen at Cooper Green, the impact is felt community wide, Traffanstedt said.

“It’s going to affect every socioeconomic level, it’s going to affect every part of the community, it’s going to affect every hospital,” Traffanstedt said. It’s not a black-white issue. It’s not a rich-poor issue. It’s not a Democrat-Republican issue. It is about what’s right and what’s wrong.

The focus on primary care doctors is important because having enough physicians on staff keeps patients out of the emergency rooms and from being hospitalized, said Ayers, in an interview.
THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Above, Coleman Coliseum is filled with graduates, family and friends during one of the University of Alabama spring commencement ceremonies in Tuscaloosa on Saturday. At left, graduates fill the floor during one of the ceremonies.

STAFF PHOTOS | DUSTY COMPTON
TUSCALOOSA | The Westboro Baptist Church, an anti-gay group known for protesting at military funerals, says it plans to picket in Tuscaloosa on May 18, although University of Alabama and city officials say no permits for a demonstration have been obtained.

The group's website says the demonstration is intended to "remind them (that) the wrath of God" was responsible for the April 27, 2011, tornado.

The Kansas-based group, which styles itself as a Primitive Baptist church, also plans to picket Graceland, the former home of Elvis Presley in Memphis, Tenn., on May 17 in protest of what it said is the "worship" of Presley.

Before arriving in Tuscaloosa on May 18, the group will picket the University of Mississippi, which it claims has made an idol of the sport of football.

The church's website said the protest in Tuscaloosa is meant to memorialize the cancellation of UA's spring 2011 graduation ceremonies, which were abandoned two years ago because of the chaos brought by the storm.

"That whirlwind came from God," the website said.

"Praise His name for it, then fear and obey that God who is able to whip up a whirlwind on a dime!"

"Call this time, between your last GodSmack and your next GodSmack, space for repentance!"

UA's Spring 2013 graduation ceremonies were held Friday and Saturday.

While Westboro's website indicates protesters will be at UA from noon-12:30 p.m., no permits for a demonstration have been obtained from either the university or the city of Tuscaloosa.

Representatives of UA and City Hall said no member of the Westboro Baptist Church group had contacted them. The municipal code requires that any organized assembly planned on public property and announced at
Continued from Page 1A

least seven days in advance must obtain a special event permit.

UA has a similar permitting process for events on campus, although university officials said organizations that apply for permits to use the grounds are generally sponsored by or affiliated with a university department or a registered student organization.

Permits for such events can be denied for a number of reasons, the ordinance said. These include a lack of police forces to ensure public safety, the block of key arterial roads to fire fighting vehicles or the "conduct of the proposed event is injurious to the public health, safety and welfare."

The group's website did not indicate how many protesters are planning to visit Tuscaloosa, but its events typically feature no more than 10 members of the group holding signs with messages like "God Hates America, " "You're Going to Hell" and "Thank God for Dead Soldiers."

It's not uncommon for adults and children to take part in the protests.

Word of Westboro Baptist Church's planned visit spread quickly Monday via social media.

One resident launched a petition on www.change.org encouraging Mayor Walt Maddox, the Tuscaloosa City Council and the University of Alabama to prevent the protesters from demonstrating. As of 4 p.m., the petition had more than 1,000 signatures.

Others were making arrangements to stage a counter-protest. These kinds of activities are not uncommon, with groups forming in an attempt to drown out or distract from the messages being delivered by the Westboro Baptist Church's followers.

Such events have been staged by the famous — such as the rock band Foo Fighters and director Kevin Smith — and ordinary citizens. Last year, a group of residents in Washington state dressed as zombies to detract from a Westboro Baptist Church protest of a military funeral.

Counter-protests often contain messages of acceptance and tolerance. The group's website said the visit to Tuscaloosa is also meant to condemn homosexuality and same-sex marriages, even though Alabama does not recognize same-sex unions.

"You really 'smart' University people should have offered a PhD in The Flood," the website said, "and it should have included an entire semester on the last offense against God before he sent that flood to wipe out the entire earth, except the eight who were in the Ark, to wit: Same Sex Marriage!..." "So, the take away points for today class, to wit: The Lord is coming! America is Doomed!"

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Sister Cities group honors legacy of former UA employee

Marilyn Emplaincourt, a longtime University of Alabama administrator known for her many contributions to international education, was honored by the Tuscaloosa Sister Cities International organization at an Earth Day event on April 22.

Emplaincourt, who died in 2010, was one of three charter members of the Sister Cities organization recognized at the event.

Sister Cities dedicated three cherry trees with bronze plaques recognizing the contributions of Emplaincourt, as well as Jim Fitts III and Rainer Albright Jamison, to the organization. The trees are near Madeiros Point on the Riverwalk Parkway along the Black Warrior River.

Emplaincourt was director emerita of the Japan program and associate director of Capstone International Programs when she retired in 2006 after more than 30 years of service to UA.

Instrumental in UA’s efforts to expand its international programs and develop a new focus on Japan, she established UA’s Japanese language program, its Japan Culture and Information Center and its partnership with numerous universities in Japan. She also developed the Japanese Saturday School and the German Supplementary School when JVC and Satoka Seale, left, and Marilyn Emplaincourt prepare for the Sakura Festival in February 2000. Emplaincourt, who died in 2010, was known for her contributions to international education in Tuscaloosa.

Mercedes, respectively, built their plants in the Tuscaloosa area.

In 1986, Emplaincourt established and coordinated the statewide Sakura Festival and was a charter and active member of the Advisory Board of the Japan America Society of Alabama and the Tuscaloosa Sister Cities International organization, where she was instrumental in establishing the Narashino and Schorndorf Sister Cities and, more recently, the Sister Cities partnership with Sunyani- Techiman in Ghana.

“Her life proves that it is impossible to calculate in advance what the impact might be when one person dutifully fulfills a call to serve. That is part of the wonderful legacy that Marilyn leaves for her family, colleagues, and friends,” said Michael Picone, a UA linguistics professor.

Emplaincourt earned three degrees at UA.
UA cheerleaders' event raises awareness of genetic disorder

Children living with bone disorder attend Sunday practice

By Lydia Seabol Avant
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA

Five-year-old Rhae Busby of Demopolis has had 186 broken bones in her lifetime and is often in constant pain because of osteogenesis imperfecta, a genetic disorder that causes her fragile bones to break easily.

But she excitedly sat next to University of Alabama mascot Big Al on Sunday, her pastel pink walker nearby, with a group of other little girls from Alabama with the same condition, all watching the Alabama cheerleaders practice. The cheerleaders, including a 26-member all-girls cheerleading squad and 22-member coed team, wore yellow in honor of the children with OI.

"The little girls are loving this, and we appreciate anyone willing to help promote awareness," said Rhae's mom, Dana Busby. "I think it's great, because it brings more recognition of OI."

Today is Wishbone Day, where people are encouraged to wear yellow to bring awareness to OI and to

Reagan McBride, 7, talks to Jennifer Clem during the Wishbone Day event.

See next page
WISHBONE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

celebrate the people, like Rhae Busby, who live with the condition each day.

The University of Alabama cheerleaders started organizing a Wishbone Day event last year in honor of Maggie Bailey, the 3½-year-old daughter of two former UA cheerleaders, Jenna and Chris Bailey.

“It’s something we plan to do each year,” said UA cheerleading coach Brian Groeschell.

Jenna and Chris Bailey first discovered their daughter’s condition during an ultrasound before she was born. They said they appreciate the cheerleaders bringing awareness to the cause with the event, which serves as a gathering for Alabama families who have children with OI.

“Support is huge when you have a disorder that’s not common,” Jenna Bailey said.

Families who have children with OI try to get together at least quarterly through the Alabama OI Foundation, Busby added. But Facebook has also been a great source of support from people all over the world who are parents of children with OI, Bailey said.

At Sunday’s event 18-month-old Lucy Slye of McCalla bounded around, happily pointing at the cheerleaders practicing their cheers and stunts. Like most of the children with OI at Sunday’s event, Lucy receives pamidronate treatment, which strengthens bones and helps reduce pain.

Before she started treatment, she had broken almost all of her vertebrae, her shoulder and both of her legs. But since she started the treatment, she has not suffered any more broken bones. The treatment also enabled her to sit up, and she has learned to walk.

“The cheerleading team is so gracious to do this,” said Jennifer Slye. “We are so thankful we can get everyone together.”

For more information on OI or wishbone day, go to www.wishboneday.com or www.oif.org.

Reach Lydia Seabol Avant at 205-722-0222 or lydia.seabol.avant@tuscaloosanews.com.
Hefty price tag for BCS trip

By Chase Goodbread
Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA | The University of Alabama’s January trip to Miami resulted in a second consecutive BCS national championship and another layer to the Crimson Tide’s football tradition. On those things, a price can’t be placed.

But for the trip itself, the price tag was very real.

Through an open records request, The Tuscaloosa News obtained the school's expense report, which it filed with the NCAA, detailing total costs of $3.4 million.

The largest expense covered meals and lodging for the team, school officials, the Million Dollar Band and cheerleaders. The full travel party was 881 people, with the band and cheerleader party representing 457 of those on a five-day stay. The team travel party was 340 over seven days, while 84 school officials traveled four days.

The team’s accommodations were made at one of the nation’s most prestigious hotels, the Miami South Beach Fontainebleau, which was featured in the James Bond film “Goldfinger.”

Transportation costs were $598,465, with the team travel party accounting for about three quarters of that.

UA reported 2,003 absorbed game tickets valued at $751,380, which were withheld for internal distribution. UA absorbed nearly the same number of tickets (2,044) a year earlier for the 2012 BCS National Championship Game against LSU.

According to Forbes magazine, Alabama earned a $23.6 million payout for the BCS title game against Notre Dame, which will be split among Southeastern Conference schools. Alabama’s share of the conference’s total bowl payout won’t be known until the SEC spring meetings in Destin, Fla., this month.

UA’s expense report also included its responses to an NCAA bowl survey, in which UA suggested more bench passes be allocated to participating teams, given the increase in football staff personnel. Alabama also noted on the survey that the team hotel’s transition from hosting Orange Bowl teams Florida State and Northern Illinois to BCS title foes UA and Notre Dame presented “many challenges,” and suggested different team hotels in the future.

UA responded “satisfied” or “very satisfied” to nearly every survey question about its bowl experience in Miami. Questions ranged from the team’s accommodations and entertainment schedule to ticket allotments and on-site practice facilities.

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UA eyes baseball upgrade

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA

The University of Alabama athletic department intends to present plans to the board of trustees for a major upgrade for the school’s baseball facilities, including Sewell-Thomas Stadium, The Tuscaloosa News has learned.

“We recognize that there’s a need to improve our baseball facility and we are studying various options,” UA Athletics Director Bill Battle said. “However, it would be premature to discuss definite specifics or a time frame at this point.”

UA has started raising money for the upgrades, which could cost $30 million. The proposed multimillion dollar renovation would take place in three phases: reconfiguration of the field within the current stadium, which includes moving home plate closer to the fence to help solve sight-line issues; constructing a freestanding indoor practice facility; and both completion of the inside of Sewell-Thomas Stadium, including the addition of luxury suites, and bricking the outside of the stadium.

INSIDE

UA BASEBALL:
Crimson Tide scores early and often to defeat No. 25 Troy | 1C extending the concourse and more.

The plan could be presented to the board for approval as soon as next month’s meeting or may be presented in the fall.

The renovation could take up to two years to complete, but sources said the plan is to have it completed by the 2016 season.

One question that would need to be answered is where UA’s baseball team would practice and play during the construction, although it is likely that the team will remain at Sewell-Thomas Stadium with the renovation working around the team’s schedule. Another option would be for the team to play elsewhere. With the most obvious place being Hoover Metropolitan Stadium.

“We would definitely be interested in that,” said Erin Colbaugh, events coordinator for the city of Hoover. “That’s something where we’d have to go through the process of determining how feasible that would be, but we haven’t had any contact or discussions with the university.”

There also exists the possibility that a new stadium could be built in another location rather than upgrading the existing facility, although that is a remote possibility.

Sewell-Thomas Stadium was recently ranked the 11th best stadium out of 12 in a poll of former Southeastern Conference baseball players conducted by The Tuscaloosa News. The poll did not consider SEC newcomers Texas A&M and Missouri, as former players have not played in their stadiums.

The UA athletic department seeks to have its funding plan in place before presenting it to the board, with money coming largely from private donations. Currently, there is little advertising within Sewell-Thomas Stadium, giving UA another avenue for funding to pursue. LSU’s Alex Box Stadium allows businesses to advertise on the outfield walls. The new Alex Box Stadium cost $37.8 million and opened in 2009.

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Saban’s $10.95M Lake Burton property at auction

Andrew Gribble
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Alabama coach Nick Saban’s $10.95 million investment property in Georgia will be placed on the auction block next month, according to a report from the Atlanta Business Chronicle.

The 9,600-square-foot estate, which rests on the shores of Lake Burton in Clayton, Ga., will sell without reserve in a June 6 auction coordinated by Concierge Auctions.

This is not the home in which Saban resides when he’s away from Tuscaloosa. Rather, it was an investment property that’s been on the market for more than a year. His regular vacation home is nearby at “another great lot on the lake,” realtor Julie Barnett told al.com last year.

“My family and I own another home on the lake, which we have enjoyed for 12 years, so I was excited when this very special lot came available to develop with Jim [Suddes],” Saban said in a statement to the Chronicle. “Lake Burton is our favorite getaway. It’s a beautiful, hidden gem where we find great peace and seclusion.”

Saban’s wife, Terry, was quoted in an October 2012 story in the Wall Street Journal about the difficulties college football coaches face when they try to sell their expensive houses.

The Sabans’ investment property lies on 1.7 acres and features six bedrooms, nine bathrooms, and a wine cellar that has antique gates from Barcelona.
Local companies bow out of competition

Two Tuscaloosa companies that were among the five finalists in the latest Alabama Launchpad competition were eliminated in the final round.

The competition is sponsored by the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation and provides seed-money to enterprising entrepreneurial companies.

The latest competition started with 22 companies, most affiliated with researchers at state universities. The field was reduced to 12 companies, then seven and finally the five that made their last pitch to a panel of judges on Friday in Birmingham.

The Tuscaloosa-based finalists were:

- MagnaPro, which provides a new MRI contrast agent designed to be safer and more effective than those now used. Yuping Bao, a University of Alabama assistant professor in chemical and biological engineering, is a member of its team, which was led by one of Bao's graduate students, Thomas Macher of Prattville.

- ThruPore Technologies LLC, which provides superior catalysts for chemical manufacturers based on the company's advanced materials science. Martin Bakker, a UA associate professor of chemistry, led the team that also includes Franchessa Sayler of Augusta, Ga., who recently completed her UA doctoral degree requirements.
Bailey awaits word
on New Mexico State job

The New Mexico State University regents will announce the school's choice for president at 4 p.m. Monday, according to the Las Cruces News-Journal's website.

Guy Bailey, a former University of Alabama president, is one of five finalists for the New Mexico State job. The website says that the New Mexico State regents plan to make an offer to the selected candidate today, conduct negotiations over the weekend and announce the new president on Monday.

Bailey came to UA after serving as president of Texas Tech University in Lubbock. He started his job at UA on Sept. 4, 2012, but resigned 58 days later, citing his wife's poor health.

He interviewed at New Mexico on April 23-24 and told reporters there that his wife's health had improved enough for him to serve as president.

The Associated Press reported in November that UA granted Bailey, a linguistics expert, tenure as an English professor, agreed to continue paying his base salary of $35,000 and classified him as being on "developmental leave" through August.

Bailey is a native of Montgomery and a UA graduate.
Garrey Carruthers named new NMSU president

By: Lindsey Anderson

The New Mexico State University regents voted 3-2 to name Garrey Carruthers the school's new president Monday afternoon.

Regent chair Mike Cheney will now begin negotiations and hopes to sign a contract with Carruthers by Friday. He was not present for the announcement, and Cheney gave him the news over the phone. Carruthers said, "I'm cautiously optimistic pending the negotiation of the contract," Cheney recalled.

Carruthers, 73, is the school's first internal, permanent pick since executive vice president William B. Conroy became president in 1997.

Carruthers was governor from 1987 to 1991 and is dean of NMSU's College of Business.

"I believe that Gov. Carruthers has the opportunity, has the network and can really start us off Day One with overcoming these challenges," regent Kari Mitchell said, mentioning community colleges, affordability and NMSU's statewide footprint.

Cheney, Mitchell and student regent Jordan Banegas voted in favor of naming Carruthers president.

"With Dr. Carruthers, he's a lifelong New Mexican; he's been a student; he's been a faculty member; he's been in Santa Fe; he's a very generous donor to this university," Cheney said. "He represents as many stakeholders as we can expect one person to represent."

Regents Ike Pino and Javier Gonzales cast the dissenting votes via conference call, supporting finalist Daniel Howard instead.

Howard was an NMSU professor for 20 years and is dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Colorado Denver.

"He is the candidate I feel is best suited for the type of leadership needed for the future, both academically and administratively," Pino said.

One of Carruthers' weaknesses, Mitchell said, is his limited experience with research and community colleges.

"I realize he's not a perfect candidate," she said. "I want to be honest with you about that. There are weaknesses. ... Not a single one of us will be a perfect candidate for any single thing at any point in time."

University teams will help him address those weaknesses, she said.

The regents will now negotiate with Carruthers on salary, which Cheney said will likely fall near past presidents' salaries, and benefits such as the president's house.

See next page
Former President Barbara Couture earned $385,000, while Interim President Manuel Pacheco earns $360,000.

The selection brought to an end the six-month search process, begun with the regents' public forums on the search in November.

Former president Barbara Couture parted ways with the university in October.

About 50 candidates applied for the position, with the search committee interviewing 11 semifinalists and suggesting five finalists to the board.

The regents received more than 600 public comments during the process, Mitchell said.

Carruthers is the 26th person to serve as president at the school, including interim presidents, and the seventh since 2000, with Pacheco serving twice.

Cheney said Carruthers has managed a "complex" government system as governor, been involved in NMSU and "helped carry a good reputation," setting him apart.

"At the end of the day, going back to the criteria we received from the public describing the position of the NMSU president," Banegas said, "... I truly believe that Dr. Carruthers met those five criteria in the best manner."
Liberty Park students explore space

By: Ana Rodriguez

Last month, sixth-grade students at Liberty Park Middle School began participating in space-related activities to help enhance their understanding of the science curriculum.

On April 25, 78 students, along with their parents and members of the community, viewed the moon, stars and planets.

Linda Rummell, sixth-grade gifted specialist, helped organize the event with the Birmingham Astronomical Society, which provided telescopes for the event.

Attendees reported viewing Jupiter, Saturn, the International Space Station, the moon and several star constellations. Students had made star wheels that helped them locate the constellations.

On April 30, sixth-grade science teacher Desiree Spencer invited Dr. Larry DeLucas, a biochemist who flew aboard NASA space shuttle mission STS-50, to speak to the students about his experiences.

And on Thursday, students visited the Huntsville Space and Rocket Center.
Dance for Downs raises more than $5,000 for UAB clinic

By: Ana Rodriguez

The recent Dance for Downs benefit raised more than $5,500 for the Adult Down Syndrome Clinic at UAB.

Dance for Downs organizer Lindy Williamson presented a check to the clinic for $5,559.46.

The amount raised by the second annual fundraiser was more than four times last year’s total, thanks to more than 500 people who attended the dance at Samford University’s Bashinksy Field House.

The group mixed members of the Exceptional Foundation in Homewood, the UCP Center, the Horizon Center and the Parents Advocate for Down Syndrome with Samford students.

Williamson said the event had two primary goals: raising money, support and recognition for the clinic, and creating an opportunity for the members of the Birmingham community to comfortably interact with young men and women who have special needs.

The first Dance for Downs last year drew about 300 people and raised more than $1,000.

This year, with more time, more planning and the sponsorship of Parent Advocates Down Syndrome and the Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement at Samford, the college junior managed to accomplish her goal of a “bigger and better” event.
Annual Spring Scramble 5K run to fight childhood obesity

By: Mike Oliver

Run for your healthy lifestyle at the 7th Annual Spring Scramble 5K.

The run is May 18 in downtown Homewood and is sponsored by the UAB Pediatric Residency Program.

It is the program’s annual campaign to raise awareness about childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyle choices. Proceeds from the event will go to support the Children’s Center for Weight Management at Children’s of Alabama.

“Through our fundraising efforts, we hope to provide equipment and educational materials for children participating in the Children’s Center for Weight Management,” event organizer Dr. Adam Johnson, a UAB pediatric resident at Children’s of Alabama and one of the event organizers, said in a news release.

Registration is available online, www.springscramble.org, until May 17 at 8 p.m. Also, the registration form can be downloaded and completed before 7:50 a.m. on race day. The race starts at 8 a.m.

Cost is $20 for UAB employees and children, and $25 for all others. Children 12 and younger can run free.

Awards will be given to the first- and second-place male and female in each age group, as well as the overall top male and female finishers, first, second and third place.
Allergy sufferers get no relief as grass pollen season looms

Mike Oliver
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Just when you thought it was safe to go outside, a new wave of pollen is getting ready to hit.

The tree pollen season is winding down, but the fine powdery pollen of grass will soon be in force, said Dr. Richard Waguespack, clinical professor in the UAB Division of Otolaryngology.

“We’ll soon be transitioning into the grass pollen season,” he said. “And then in the fall is the weed pollen season. The problem here in the South is that all three literally blend one right after another.”

Grass pollen counts in Alabama are low now, but it is still too early to tell how bad this season will be, Waguespack said. A lot will depend on how much rain falls in the next few weeks. Rain, while temporarily clearing the air, makes the grass grow and produce pollen.

Many associate the tree pollen season with the thick yellow pollen from pine trees coating cars and sidewalks. That’s a good marker that it’s a heavy season, Waguespack said.

But for allergy sufferers, it’s the hardwoods — oaks, pecans, hickories — that cause most of the grief, he said.

During grass season, the pollen is not so visible. Bermuda and Timothy grasses are common culprits here, he said, but those allergic to one kind of grass pollen are more likely to be allergic to many grass pollens because the pollens are so much alike.

Not all allergy sufferers are allergic to the pollens from all three seasons, but if you do suffer allergies, your chances are higher of being allergic to more than one thing, Waguespack said.

Waguespack recommends first trying over-the-counter antihistamines such as loratadine, cetirizine, or fexofenadine. Brand names include Allegra, Claritin, and Zyrtec.

If those don’t work and you’re still miserable, see your doctor or allergist and there may be some prescription relief.
Study: Elderly drivers with dogs crash more

Mike Oliver
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Dog should not be your co-pilot if you are 70 years or older says a first-of-its-kind study from the University of Alabama at Birmingham published Thursday.

The study, which looked at 2,000 licensed drivers 70 and older, found the crash risk for those who always drove with their pets was double that of drivers who never drove with a pet.

The study, published in Accident Analysis and Prevention, compared driving records of those who always have their dogs in the car with those who never do or do it less often.

“THIS IS THE FIRST STUDY TO EVALUATE THE PRESENCE OF PETS IN A VEHICLE AS A POTENTIAL INTERNAL DISTRACTION FOR ELDERLY DRIVERS,” said Gerald McGwin, senior author of the study.

While cellphone use and texting has resulted in states, including Alabama, to enact legislation against it, currently Hawaii is the only state that specifically restricts drivers from having a pet in the lap while driving, the authors said.

McGwin told al.com he got the idea to study distracted driving caused by dogs while jogging around Birmingham.

“I’m an avid runner and get to observe a lot of driving behavior,” said McGwin, a professor in the departments of Epidemiology, Ophthalmology and Surgery. “One thing that I was constantly stuck by is the presence of pets in the cars.”

McGwin was aware of the multitude of research involving such distractions as cellphone use and texting, but could find nothing in the literature about dogs in cars.

It does seem like a silly study but in reality it becomes just as serious as you consider any kind of distraction,” he said.
Hospitals: Jeffco owes $4M for indigents

Officials say county won't pay until all invoices are verified

Barnett Wright
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Jefferson County owes nearly $4 million to four area hospitals that have treated indigent county patients since Cooper Green Mercy Hospital was downsized on Jan. 1, according to county records.

Dozens of invoices totaling $3,952,535 have been sent to the county for medical services provided for the sick poor.

That total does not include the amount the county owes independent physicians who have treated the indigent.

Records show the unpaid hospital invoices include $2.2 million to Baptist Health Systems; $1.3 million to UAB Health Systems; $229,000 to Brookwood Health Services and $216,000 to St. Vincent's Health Systems. If you add all this up, it doesn't equal the exact figure. County officials say the invoices are not being paid because they need time to verify that all the patients being treated at area hospitals are from Cooper Green, and not just the uninsured or charity cases.

"If you look at the bills, I don't know if these patients are our patients. If they're indigent care patients" said Tony Petelos, Jefferson County CEO. One area hospital sent the county a $61,000 invoice for a patient who lived in Montgomery, Petelos said. "We are not going to pay that bill," he said.

Will Ferniani, UAB Health System CEO, said, his institution has always been reimbursed by the county according to the contracts, and "we have no reason to expect that we will not continue to be paid," he said.

Ross Mitchell, vice president, external and government-

See JEFFCO, Page 10A
JEFFCO

From Page 1A

tal affairs for Baptist Health Systems, declined to comment. Efforts to reach Brookwood and St. Vincent’s for comment were unsuccessful.

No contracts

Another factor for the unpaid invoices is that the county has yet to complete contracts with most area hospitals to care for the indigent.

The county has an agreement with UAB, but none with the other hospitals. That means a payment rate for the indigent payment still must be negotiated.

Deputy County Manager Walter Jackson said some people are going to area hospitals without a referral or an authorization number from Cooper Green — which hospitals must have to determine whether the individuals are Jefferson County beneficiaries, he said.

"Anyone we refer to any hospital we are going to be responsible for payment for those services," Jackson said.

Jackson said the county will not pay any invoices where the hospital can’t show the patient is entitled to payment from the indigent care fund.

Commissioner George Bowman, who opposed the closing, said the unpaid invoices are another example of why a plan was needed before shutting the inpatient care unit and emergency room at the county-owned hospital for the poor.

"Things are happening now that they didn’t expect," said Bowman, referring to the commission majority who voted to close. "They thought they could just close some doors on a hospital and have cost savings like you’d find in running a shoe store. But that’s not the case."

Many indigent patients that once used Cooper Green Hospital are now going to other Birmingham-area hospitals for care. (File)

UNPAID BILLS?

$3,952,538

Total invoices amount

Hospital invoices include:

$2.2 million
Baptist Health Systems

$1.3 million
UAB Health Systems

$229,000
Brookwood Health Services

$216,000
St. Vincent’s Health Systems

say the downsizing of Cooper Green has been an "abject failure."

"Indigent patients are now suffering from a breakdown in the continuity of care and the lack of the critical physician-patient relationship," write the president, president-elect and immediate past president of the organization in a letter that could be released as soon as Monday. "Primary care services — the crucible for preventative care and cost savings — for former Cooper Green patients are almost nonexistent.

"As a result, these patients are now flooding the emergency departments of area hospitals as their chronic medical problems like diabetes and high blood pressure spiral out of control," the doctors write.

Petlos said he believes the patients are getting the care they need.

'Miscalculation'

Commissioner Jimmie Stephens, who voted to downsize the Sixth Avenue South facility with Commission President David Carrington and Commissioner Joe Knight, said the transition is moving forward but "made more difficult by the lack of understanding and communication."

"There was a miscalculation by the commission and the public as far as how it would be received moving from an inpatient hospital to an urgent care clinic," Stephens said.

Stephens said a lack of communication during the transition period hindered the county’s ability to reach those patients who needed the hospital. But, "it’s coming around now and looking much better," Stephens said.
UAH unveils drone-like UAVs to aid police with campus safety

By: Paul Gattis

The University of Alabama in Huntsville today unveiled new drone-like technology designed to enhance campus safety that someday may be available to help protect K-12 school systems.

At a news conference today, the school showed off a variety of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that will provide an "eye in the sky" for campus police, according to Gary Maddux, who is leading the research as director of the Systems Management and Production Center (SMAP).

Maddux said the shooting at a Connecticut elementary school in December pushed the languishing research into overdrive. Six months later, Maddux said the University of Alabama police department is scheduled to visit UAH next week to get a first-hand view of the UAV technology.

"We just want to be able to make a difference and we want to make a difference quickly and come up with something to help law enforcement," Maddux said. "That's what it's all about - improving response times so maybe we could mitigate the next tragedy that could occur."

The advantages of the UAVs are to offer a new tool to campus police to investigate criminal activity as well as in emergency situations.

"The UAH Police Department is pleased to be associated with the Systems Management and Production Center in a partnership that is exploring realistic and effective uses for small UAVs in day-to-day law-enforcement and security operations on the campus," UAH Police Chief Michael Snellgrove said in a statement.

"We believe the technology may be incredibly useful and offers us a wide range of possible applications. We intend to review these applications and look for every possible way to take advantage of the available technology. Ultimately, our objective is to enhance our ability to make UAH an even more secure place to study, live, work and visit."

While the technology is similar to military drones that have been a source of controversy, Maddux said, the UAVs must adhere to FAA guidelines - which include not flying above 400 feet. The technology is not as advanced as military drones, Maddux said.

"Obviously, the military has UAVs that fly longer, higher and farther," Maddux said. "Since we are doing research and the military has one set of rules. If you are domestic and falling under what FAA guidelines, you have to stay under 400 feet. As far as drone technology versus what we're doing, I think it's more syntax than anything."

Asked about privacy concerns that could arise with the UAVs, Maddux said the coverage they offer police is similar to fixed video cameras in most any parking lot.

See next page
"Obviously, we're going to be very cognizant of any privacy issues for students," Maddux said. "You can't be flying your drone and look inside a dorm window. But you couldn't do that if you were stationary or over in this building and had a line of sight to look in dorm window. It's the same basic rules."

The research is being conducted with a cautious eye on keeping costs manageable -- particularly as the project could be made available to school systems.

"It's not terribly costly," Maddux said. "We have focused on keeping things cheap. We're using a lot of off-the-shelf software. Many of the UAVs we have utilized to do great things and used as a platform are things that a hobbyist would be buying. Some of our best UAVs are $600-$700. This is not an outlandish expense -- especially with some of the solutions that have been proposed. This is really quite inexpensive. That's one of our primary focuses. We're trying to make sure we keep things affordable."

The largest UAV the school displayed today was about 45 inches in width and weighed about 20 pounds. Another UAV was about 15 inches in width and weighed about 5 pounds.

The UAVs have the versatility to add attachments to its platform, including small spotlights, or infrared cameras in addition to video cameras, Maddux said. UAVs are operated outdoors but work is ongoing to control the flights from a central location indoors.

Much of the research is being conducted by students at UAH as well as other local colleges and universities, Maddux said.

Norven Goddard, a principal SMAP research scientist, also said the UAH campus was erecting virtual geo-fencing around the campus to assist with the UAV program by taking advantage of GPS technology.
Two professors blend healthcare profession, systems engineering to promote better patient care

Blending the healthcare profession and systems engineering, two professors at The University of Alabama in Huntsville are applying manufacturing efficiency systems to healthcare settings to promote better patient satisfaction.

Dr. M. Peggy Hays, associate professor in the UAH College of Nursing, and Dr. Sampson Gholston, associate professor in Industrial and & Systems Engineering and Engineering Management, are incorporating research they've done at a local healthcare facility to develop a proposed UAH course to teach healthcare professionals about using industrial Lean Six Sigma practices in their facilities.

"What we're finding is that hospital administrators either learn Lean Six Sigma, or they go out and hire people who know Lean Six Sigma in order to apply their experience to a hospital setting," Dr. Gholston said. The goal of the new course would be to train existing administrators and nursing staff to interpret data and implement process changes that improve efficiencies and boost patient satisfaction.

"Nursing staff today have more and more duties," said Dr. Hays. "How can they make their job more efficient so they can focus on patient care, which is why they got into the profession in the first place?"

"What we're saying is, we're not trying to make you into a robot but this is a more efficient way of doing it," said Dr. Gholston. "Dr. Hays knew the healthcare side and I know the process efficiencies side, so we can work together to improve healthcare processes."

Lean Six Sigma is an industrial managerial system that aims to eliminate process waste in the forms of transportation, inventory, motion, waiting, overproduction, over-processing and defects. Healthcare applications could open new fields for UAH graduates in systems engineering and nursing who become proficient in applying the system.

"As an industrial systems engineer, I usually talk a lot about making widgets," said Dr. Gholston. "Manufacturing is on its way back, but there are a lot of opportunities for Lean Six Sigma in the service industries, and healthcare is a very big service industry. The worst thing I could do with doctors and nurses is to talk about widgets. They appreciate every patient's uniqueness. But this system can show them how to be more efficient while they treat that patient."

Because facilities have grown so good at gathering it, Dr. Hays and Dr. Gholston say that healthcare systems ranging from doctor's offices to clinics and hospitals are inundated with data - so much data that it can be hard to see how it points the way to more efficient patient treatment. Short wait time tops the list in patient satisfaction assessments, said Dr. Gholston. That efficiency is vital in today's healthcare world, where government payments and in some cases insurance payments are being calibrated on the basis of patient satisfaction, while the general trend is toward lower payments overall.

See next page
"The question is, are we adding value for the patient?" said Dr. Gholston. "Anything that is not adding value for the patient is eliminated." In the current atmosphere of reduced funding, it is also important for providers to enhance efficiency in order to provide the same level of care with less money, he said.

"If I was a patient in a unit," said Dr. Hays, "what are the obstacles to me moving through that unit?"

Interpreting data through Lean Six Sigma provides what Dr. Gholston calls "a dashboard" analysis of data that facilitates better systems decision making by administrators and staff. Like gauges on an auto dashboard, the Lean Six Sigma process identifies which data are important to making decisions affecting the system. In class, "students learn to pick out the relevant data from operations to show the adjustments that need to be made," he said.

"One thing is to be able to provide that data after analysis so that the administrative people - who have the money - can look at it and apply it," Dr. Hays said.

In industry, one of the primary areas where Lean Six Sigma is applied is lead time, which in healthcare equates to patient waiting time. "The shorter that lead time, the more responsive you are in your process," said Dr. Gholston.

Departmentally, Dr. Hays said healthcare applications include unearthing greater efficiencies in emergency room waiting times, operating room use, use of nursing rounds, medication rounds, processing patient paperwork in administrative offices, and workflow of the staff.

"One of the differences between healthcare and the manufacturing sector is that they have so much data," Dr. Hays said. "They collect everything, and it's overwhelming. How can they use their collected data more efficiently and analyze it quicker?"

Lean Six Sigma is key to being able to interpret the data in near-real time and act on it, then assess and refine the interventions to produce optimal results.

"If you wait until the data come in and it's all assembled, you are already behind the 8-ball," Dr. Hays said. "We try to teach students to go ahead and work on it now. Healthcare has become so interdisciplinary that we need to work together with disciplines of all types."

"As a systems engineer," said Dr. Gholston, "history has shown that the best systems are developed by a team of diverse individuals."

Nurses are central to the evaluation and refinement aspects of Lean Six sigma, said Dr. Hays.

"We have to have a champion within that facility to follow up on that," she said, "and that's why I see nurses as so crucial to this process."

SOURCE The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Alabama woman overcomes paralyzing spinal injury to graduate from UAH

The Associated Press

NEW MARKET | A woman who battled back from a car accident last year that left her paralyzed from the chest down will graduate with honors from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Nursing student Christine Smith is expected to get the loudest ovation among the 860 graduates at today's commencement ceremony, AL.com reported.

Her first words to her mother after surviving the car accident that left her paralyzed on Jan. 14, 2012, were about getting in touch with a nursing instructor.

"I knew what had happened as soon as I woke up," she said. "I thought, I've broke something on my spine. It's really bad."

It has been a long recovery since then. Less than a year ago, Smith couldn't even lift her hands or wiggle her fingers.

"In the beginning, you're hoping she's going to walk again and after that first week, they put her in the drug-induced coma and now you just hope she lives," said her father, Scott. "It was obvious she probably wasn't going to walk."

Christine said she didn't know if it would happen. She could barely raise her arms or move her fingers, even though her physical therapist told her she was a "miracle" for sustaining the injuries she sustained while still having use of her hands and arms.

Christine said she didn't know if it would happen. She could barely raise her arms or move her fingers, even though her physical therapist told her she was a "miracle" for sustaining the injuries she sustained while still having use of her hands and arms. When Fay Raines, dean of the UAH College of Nursing, and Pam O'Neal, associate dean for undergraduate nursing, first visited Christine in the summer of 2012, they suggested she consider changing majors.

See Graduate | 3B

See next page
GRADUATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Then the physical therapy began to make a difference and gradually her hands and arms began to behave as she directed. Even the doctors were telling her she could still be a nurse.

So when Raines and O'Neal visited for a second time, Christine said they immediately encouraged her to continue pursuing a nursing degree upon seeing her improvement.

A week ago, she passed her exit exam — the final hurdle for graduation — and Wednesday she picked up her cap and gown.

"The last semester was probably harder probably than all the other years combined," she said. "I wouldn't have been able to do it without my family. My mom drove me to every clinical and class that I had."

Members of Jackson Way Baptist Church helped tear out the basement in the Smith's home and arrange it to accommodate Christine.

And her father said the Biker's Church helped with building a bathroom and a kitchen in the basement for Christine.

"We are able to get through this difficult situation because our faith is in Him," her father said. "We truly believe that God is in control and will make something great out of Christine's life."

The Tuscaloosa News
Saturday, May 4, 2013
Paralyzed UAH graduate majors in determination

By: Paul Gattis

Less than a year ago, she couldn’t even lift her hands or wiggle her fingers. Saturday, she will graduate with honors from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Meet Christine Smith.

Some day she may be your nurse even though she is paralyzed from the chest down. Even if she’s physically limited, she makes up for it in dedication.

How do you define that dedication? Her first words to her mother after surviving the car accident that left her paralyzed on Jan. 14, 2012, were about getting in touch with a nursing instructor.

And calm under pressure? Check out the response Christine, the nursing student, gave to a friend when he began to help remove her from the car after the wreck: “No! Do not touch me. Do not move me,” Christine said, according to her mom Lisa.

Even before being removed from the mangled car by emergency personnel, Christine knew.

“I knew what had happened as soon as I woke up,” she said. “I thought, I’ve broke something on my spine. It’s really bad. I knew it would make it worse (to be pulled from the car).”

Prediction: Christine Smith will receive the loudest ovation of any of the 860 people scheduled to receive degrees from UAH on Saturday morning at the Von Braun Center. And it won’t even be close.

Wanted that degree

What’s not to cheer? Not even a car accident — in which she was a passenger — that left her paralyzed could shake her focus on becoming a nurse.

“That’s her,” said her father, Scott. “I know she was in a ton of pain. You basically have to stare at her for a long period of time to see her wince or do anything. She keeps it inside. She just laid there. We saw that she had movement (in her shoulders and arms) even at that point.

“In the beginning, you’re hoping she’s going to walk again and after that first week, they put her in the drug induced coma and now you just hope she lives. It was obvious she probably wasn’t going to walk.”

But she wanted that nursing degree.

Change of majors suggested

See next page
Christine said she didn’t know if it would happen. She could barely raise her arms or move her fingers, even though her physical therapist told her she was a “miracle” for sustaining the injuries she sustained while still having use of her hands and arms.

When Fay Raines, dean of the UAH College of Nursing, and Pam O’Neal, associate dean for undergraduate nursing, first visited Christine in the summer of 2012, they suggested she consider changing majors.

Then the physical therapy began to make a difference and gradually her hands and arms began to behave as she directed. Even the doctors were telling her she could still be a nurse.

So when Raines and O’Neal visited for a second time, Christine said they immediately encouraged her to continue pursuing a nursing degree upon seeing her improvement. Good thing, perhaps, because Christine’s father said they were ready to “ambush” the deans with the idea she could become a nurse after all.

The final hurdle

Smith had just one semester to complete when the accident happened. But to make that final semester a little easier, UAH spread that semester over two semesters.

It was a little bit of goodwill that Smith had long since earned — evidenced by her 3.4 GPA and the fact that she eventually received the Dean’s Award for a senior “who exemplifies outstanding academic achievement and has exhibited leadership in university and community activities,” according to UAH.

Last Friday, she passed her exit exam — the final hurdle for graduation — and Wednesday she picked up her cap and gown.

“The last semester was probably harder than all the other years combined,” she said. “I wouldn’t have been able to do it without my family. My mom drove me to every clinical and class that I had.”

Vote for a van

Speaking of driving, Christine would like to do that for herself someday — maybe even to get to work to help take care of someone you know. And she could use your help.

Her dad entered her in an online contest to win a specially prepared van that would allow Christine to drive even without the use of her legs. The National Mobility Awareness Partners (NMAP) sponsors the contest, and three winners will be announced on May 31.

You can vote online for Christine once a day until the contest closes on May 10.

Then again, maybe you’ve already helped Christine out. Members of Jackson Way Baptist Church helped tear out the basement in the Smith’s home and arrange it to accommodate

See next page
Christine. And her father said the Biker’s Church helped with building a bathroom and a kitchen in the basement for Christine.

“We are able to get through this difficult situation because our faith is in Him,” Christine’s dad said. “We truly believe that God is in control and will make something great out of Christine’s life.”
High-achieving Haleyville native finds UAH challenging, encouraging

HUNTSVILLE
Maintaining a 3.9 grade point average for four years is hard work, but University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) senior mechanical engineering student Annalis Fowler of Haleyville, said the university has had the right mix to challenge her, encourage her and give her a head start on a career.

"I've had the opportunity to work on so many absolutely amazing projects, and it's all from talking to my teachers and fellow students. Because of this, I have had the opportunity to do so many awesome things and have so many great experiences with my school," said Fowler, who is counting the days until she graduates with a bachelor's degree.

Fresh from finishing first as a presenter of her Senior Design Team's design paper for an Aerial Testing Platform at www. aiaa.org, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Region II Student Conference in Raleigh, N.C., Fowler was excited about what the win will mean for the seven-member team. "It means we'll get our paper published and we'll be able to go on to the AIAA Science and Technology Forum and Exposition," she said. The paper was titled, "AEIP - UAV Sensor Testing Platform." The team adviser is Dr. Brian Landrum. Besides Fowler, team members are Josiah Thomas, Iris Lin, Bryant Finney, Hope Green, Robert Branch and Michael Guyton.

Graduating senior Annalis Fowler has been active on the UAH campus and also maintained a 3.9 grade point average.

"I spend a lot of time studying but I still try to be active on campus," Fowler said. She is a member of the UAH Lancers. She's also a Charger Chaser who supports the College of Engineering by assisting with recruiting and retention activities, and for two years she was a member of the UAH Concrete Canoe Team.

Through a friend and Edwin Guthrie, UAH assistant to the provost for special projects, Fowler also learned about and applied to UAH's Systems Management and Production Center (SMAP). SMAP provides students real-world employment opportunities under a UAH contract. Her work there draws her into the world of Computer Assisted Design (CAD) and 3-D printing to create prototypes.

"I work with rapid prototyping and I do support models," she said. "It's a really fun process and you learn a lot about mechanical structures." SMAP has provided her the opportunity to get real-world engineering experience while still an undergraduate. "I have been able to work with contractors and upper level engineers in the field, and I get to see what they do. It definitely has influenced me."

Fowler is one of many shining stars in the SMAP Center, said Dr. Gary Maddux, the SMAP director who oversees UAH's largest research center. "Our focus is to work with local students and provide them with the opportunities to jumpstart their careers, especially within the area of defense, which is the driver for the local economy," he said.

"Many of us - myself included - had to work a variety of jobs to get through college," Dr. Maddux said. "Mine included chicken cook, carpenter, bag boy and forklift driver. None were very glamorous."

SMAP's guiding principle is that today's students need not only a degree but also related work experience in order to achieve, Dr. Maddux said. "We strive to help all of our students work within their chosen field and within a professional environment so that this experience may be achieved," he said. "We are flexible in our policies, but rigid in that we expect high quality work from those who participate. It is extremely rewarding to be able to provide an environment and a program where students like Annalis can really flourish, which obviously she has done."

Fowler's decision to choose UAH for her undergraduate education came as a result of an unusual sequence of events on her day touring the campus. "I really enjoyed the campus feel," she said. "On my campus tour, I got to speak to the College of Engineering chair and several professors."

Stormy weather that day led to a tornado warning. "I was taken to the safe area in Technology Hall with the chairman and the members of the Moon Buggy Team, and got to talk with my new classmates," Fowler said. "It was really unlike any campus tour I had been on, and it could have gone poorly or really well. It turned out that it went really well."

In the future, Fowler said she is interested in exploring engineering opportunities in the nanotechnology world and she wants to pursue a master's degree. "I haven't really made my final decisions yet. Ideally, I'd like to do is work and earn my masters at the same time, or receive a research assistantship."

Her undergraduate experience enthused her so much that UAH is one of the universities she has applied to for her graduate education. "It's been really cool."
Flexibility just as important as preparation in an emergency

Be prepared. That's what we're taught in the event of a disaster. But Dr. Marita O'Brien, an assistant professor in the Psychology Department of The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), is conducting research that shows preparation is only half of the equation when it comes to safety among the general public.

"You need a plan A and you need to execute that plan A. People are more likely to evacuate or go to their safe space if they've done that during a drill," she said. "But you also need to learn to improvise better. Because if you always do things according to the plan, you may not recognize when the plan fails."

That need for improvisation hit home for the emergency management community on September 11th. Not only did the twin towers collapse that day, but so too did the city's Emergency Operations Center located at 7 World Trade Center. All of a sudden, city officials and first responders, who had undoubtedly trained for an attack, were suddenly confronted with an implacable and unanticipated roadblock. Improvisation was required, and fortunately, said O'Brien, the city was up to the challenge.

"Within three days, they'd rented a space with over 200 computers and they started going by what was in people's heads," she said. But that unexpected situation ultimately led the emergency management community to reassess their approach.

Today, first responders and emergency personnel are taught how to improvise as part of their job. "Resilience is a word a lot of people are using in the disaster management community - not being disaster-proof but being resilient so you can recover," she said. But what about civilians? How can they be taught improvisation? "That's the million dollar question," said O'Brien. "All studies either look at improvisation among emergency workers or at what residents need to do in advance of an emergency. But we haven't focused on training improvisation among non-emergency workers."

That thought struck her acutely during the April 27th storms, when she was stuck at home with no electricity. "I realized I was going to be fine, but the work I had to do was all tied up in my computer and I didn't have power to get it done," she said. "I started to think about how I could apply my research to what was going on around me. Not a lot of people study blackouts, but they're the most common kind of disaster."

A month later, she distributed a survey among the liberal arts faculty who in turn distributed it to friends and family, a technique known in psychology as a snowball sample. "Respondents had to be 19 or older and have been in town for a couple of days during the outage," she said. "I had 187 people respond." And what did O'Brien learn from those respondents? That a lack of preparation wasn't necessarily the worst thing.

In fact, she said, "it was actually helpful to not be fully prepared because then you had to be resourceful, you had to talk to your neighbors. It was almost useful for people to say 'I didn't have everything but I adapted fine.'" Fast forward two years and O'Brien is now using this

See next page
research to conduct a much larger study that focuses on the community's knowledge of
tornadoes, tornado warnings, and protective actions. And she recently received a grant from the
university to expand her sample population to include both undergraduate students and area
senior citizens.

"That paper will be done by July 1st and I'll submit to the International Journal of Mass
Emergencies and Disasters," said O'Brien. Then at the end of the summer, she'll apply for a
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration grant to fund collaborative research between
social and physical scientists on how to communicate with the public to improve response to
warnings.

"That's what I like," said O'Brien, "dealing with this everyday decision-making. Most people in
my field work with specialists - pilots or soldiers - but I like trying to figure out a systematic way
to gather data with a humanitarian focus." And if things don't go according to plan, that's ok too.
"You can't plan everything," she said. "An emergency by its nature is something we didn't
expect!"

All she'll need to do is improvise.
Is Roy Spencer the world's most important scientist?

By: Norman Rogers

Roy Spencer is a climate scientist at the University of Alabama Huntsville who may be the world's most important scientist. He has discovered scientific insights and theories that cast great doubt on global warming doctrine. That doctrine has always been dubious and is often defended by attacking the integrity of anyone who dares to raise questions. Spencer is a rare combination of a brilliant scientist and a brave soul willing to risk his livelihood and reputation by speaking plainly.

The global warming promoters say we must scrap the world's energy infrastructure in favor of green energy. They say that burning coal, oil and natural gas adds carbon dioxide to the atmosphere and that will cause a global warming disaster. The global warming believers demand a massive investment in uneconomic windmills and solar energy. Their demands are not exactly sincere, because their program is a utopian fantasy that will never be implemented on the scale needed to achieve the ostensible objectives.

The coalition of environmentalists, scientists and politicians who are the promoters of global warming inadvertently reveal their insincerity by the specifics of their programs. The much idolized Kyoto Protocol and associated Clean Development Mechanism, lets the giant emitters of carbon dioxide, China and India, off scot free for the simple reason that they would never agree to destroy the future of their countries by giving up fossil fuels. No CO2 emissions credit is allowed for CO2-free nuclear power because it would embarrass the environmental groups that spent decades denouncing nuclear power.

The scientific backing for the global warming scare comes from climate science. Climate science is a weak science. The atmosphere is chaotic and difficult to define with scientific theories. Attempts to predict the future of the climate and to quantify the effects of carbon dioxide are speculative and influenced by ideological biases of the various scientists. In climate science there are strong elements attempting to enforce uniformity of opinion. Scientists that depart from the prevailing climate political correctness are sanctioned.

Monster computer programs, called climate models, are supposed to mimic the Earth's climate. The computer models do a poor job of mimicking the climate. One proof of this is that the 20 or so models from different science groups disagree considerably with each other about the amount of warming that will be caused by adding CO2 to the atmosphere. But, these inadequate computer models are the basis for the predictions of global warming doom. The emotional and financial investment in computer models is so great that their creators have lost objectivity concerning their creations. The computer models are the spoiled children of climate science.

Roy Spencer is not a shrinking violet. Spencer vigorously promotes his ideas. If he didn't, the global warming establishment would happily ignore him and his ideas would be nothing more than a ripple in the climate science ocean. He issues press releases. He appears on television.

See next page
and radio. He is Rush Limbaugh's "official" climate scientist. Spencer has written three popular books on climate science as well as a small book on the principles of free market economics. None of this endears him to his more modest and more politically correct colleagues.

The climate science establishment is irritated that Spencer has come up with highly creative discoveries that the establishment did not think of first. They don't like it that he openly contradicts climate celebrities like Al Gore and James Hansen. If that were not enough irritation, Spencer is a Bible-following Christian, as is his boss at the university, John Christy. Christy, an ordained minister, was a missionary in Africa before becoming a scientist. Obviously Christy and Spencer are not the only scientists who are serious Christians, but they don't seem to care if everyone knows it.

I don't claim and never would claim that the climate establishment is a conspiracy of scientists to create false science to promote their own careers, even though it may appear that way at times, and even though some of the biggest doomsday promoters have had the greatest career success. The advocates of global warming doom believe what they say. But, sincerity is not a substitute for critical thinking or common sense.

How the climate establishment turns the output of the disagreeing computer models into predictions of climate doomsday is obscurantist alchemy. They take the average prediction of the models as the most probable future and assume that the truth likely is somewhere within the range of predictions exhibited by the various models. None of this is more than rank speculation, scientifically. The climate science establishment is less than open with the public concerning the shortcomings of their approach to climate forecasting. At times the public presentations of climate science descend into outrageous advocacy. If you press the scientist-promoters of global warming they will say their methods are the best they can do given what they have. For public consumption computer alchemy is turned into solid science by the operation of the publicity machine and the United Nations's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Even though Spencer is a bit of an outlaw, he is still a climate scientist in more or less good standing. Like cops, Marines, or members of fraternities, once you're a climate scientist, you're one for life, contingent on reasonably good scientific behavior. Remember that climate scientists go through a lengthy acculturation as graduate students, postdocs and junior scientists. His fellow climate scientists may diss him in writing but there remains a line they won't cross. For example, Christy and Spencer still have their government research grants. At a climate science dinner that I attended, I noticed that the scientists were very protective of Judith Curry, an accomplished climate scientist who, like Spencer, has gone over to the dark side and become openly skeptical about the doomsday claims. I attribute this to the fellowship among climate scientists that is stronger than scientific or ideological differences.

Like the climate, group opinion among climate scientists is chaotic, meaning that the potential exists for a sudden transformation, perhaps an ideological ice age or a psychological warming. Spencer, Christy, Curry and the many other skeptic scientists are outliers, but if a tipping point is reached, climate science might undergo a rapid change of collective opinion. This could leave the civilian camp followers and the manufacturers of windmills dangling in the wind.
The pressure that is building on climate doctrine is the failure of the Earth to warm, a trend that has now continued for 16 years. The longer warming is stalled, in the face of constantly increasing CO2, the harder it becomes for the believers to continue believing. Compounding the failure of the Earth to warm is the failure of the oceans to warm for the last 10 years. Normally, failure of the Earth to warm would be explained by saying that the ocean is sucking up the energy flux that would cause the atmosphere to warm. But if the ocean is not warming either, that explanation won't work. (Some persistent believers in ocean warming are now searching for the missing warmth in the deep ocean, a part of the ocean that is largely beyond the vision of most monitoring systems.)

Roy Spencer at some point had an epiphany that resulted in new insights. The central question about global warming, that climate science tries to answer, is what is climate sensitivity. Climate sensitivity is formally a number that describes the amount of warming or cooling the Earth experiences in response to a change in the energy flow. Various things can change the energy flow, including adding CO2 to the atmosphere.

If scientists were gods and able to control the energy output of the sun, climate sensitivity could be measured via an experiment. On the average the energy flow on to the Earth from the sun is about 240 watts per square meter. The outward flow of energy, on the average, is the same, resulting in a stable, average Earth temperature of about 14 degrees Celsius or 57 degrees Fahrenheit. If energy flow could be throttled up, to say 244 watts per square meter, and we observed the resulting change in the Earth's temperature, this experiment would get us the climate sensitivity. According to the climate establishment increasing the energy flow by 4 watts per square meter would cause the earth to warm, averaged over the seasons and different locations, by about 3.25 degrees Celsius. The climate sensitivity is expressed by the ratio (3.25 degrees/4 watts per square meter) = 0.81 degrees per watt per square meter. A climate sensitivity of 0.81 represents a very sensitive climate. If the climate is very sensitive, then adding CO2 to the atmosphere could be a problem.

Given the establishment's belief in a highly sensitive climate, doubling CO2 in the atmosphere should increase the average temperature of the Earth by 3 degrees Celsius. Adding CO2 to the atmosphere effectively changes the net energy flow from the sun because CO2 inhibits the outward escape of energy via long wave radiation.

Scientists are not gods, no matter what they may think, so they can't change the energy output of the sun for an experiment. But they do have computer models that supposedly mimic the Earth's climate and they can use the computer models to perform experiments that are impossible to perform on the actual Earth. Using the admittedly poor models and glossing over the fact that the models disagree with each other, the establishment claims that the Earth has a very delicately balanced climate that will be disrupted by CO2 emissions. You would think that at this point they would demand that we switch to a CO2-free nuclear economy. But the establishment gives away its ideological bias by demanding that we switch instead to a windmill and solar panel economy.

Roy Spencer's science specialty is the measurement of the Earth's temperature by satellites. Spencer and Christy keep track of changes in the Earth's temperature by analyzing data from
certain satellites that measure microwave radiation that originates in oxygen molecules. There are other satellite-based instruments that measure the energy flows into and out of the Earth via long and short wave radiation - heat radiation and sunlight.

Due to random fluctuations from changes in weather, clouds and temperature, the average temperature of the Earth and the energy flows into and out of the Earth wander by a small amount over months. Spencer constructed what are called phase space graph that show this random wandering. An example is below.

This graph is constructed by placing a dot for each day, the dot placed at a point on the graph that represents the average radiation flux and the average temperature over 91 days. These quantities are measured by satellites looking at the Earth. As the radiation or energy flux and the temperature wander the trail of dots traces a path. Rather than being a completely random path, it is evident that there is a suggestion of structure. At times the trail of dots traces a diagonal line. Spencer called these diagonal lines striations.

Spencer discovered convincing evidence that the slope of these striations is a measure of climate sensitivity. In the graph above the diagonal lines follow the striations and indicate that the Earth's climate sensitivity is about 0.11, or about 7 times less than the 0.81 that the establishment claims. The convincing evidence is that Spencer created simple simulations of climate, with
known climate sensitivity, and used data from the simulations to create phase space plots. The climate sensitivity measured from the plot agreed with the known climate sensitivity built into the simulation. Spencer then made phase space plots using data from the establishment's monster climate models, and found, at least for some models, that the same relation held. Let's not claim that Spencer discovered a law of nature comparable to the general theory of relativity, but he has made a genuine discovery of considerable originality.

In a blog posting, modestly titled Has the Climate Sensitivity Holy Grail Been Found, Spencer described his discovery of the striations as follows:

"These linear striations in the data were an accidental finding of mine. I was computing these averages in an Excel spreadsheet that had daily averages in it, so the easiest way for me to make 3-monthly (91 day) averages was to simply compute a new average centered on each day in the 6-year data record."

Spencer depicts his discovery as a flash of insight, like Fleming's discovery of penicillin, where he noticed that mold accidentally introduced into a petri dish was killing bacteria. Spencer's description of his discovery makes a memorable story. This is the type of story that is too good to check, but I decided to check it anyway. In the hallway at a scientific meeting between presentations I asked Christy about this. The expression on his face told me more than anything he said. Spencer's discovery wasn't that easy.

Other scientists have tried to use the satellite data to measure climate sensitivity. Often they came up with obvious overestimates. For example, in the phase space plot above there is a near horizontal line that is a simple fit to the cloud of dots. The slope of that line corresponds to a climate sensitivity of 1.6, an implausibly extreme climate sensitivity. Richard Lindzen of MIT has also devised similar methods of estimating climate sensitivity from measured data. Stephen Schwartz, a government scientist at the Brookhaven National Lab, has investigated climate sensitivity with approaches similar to Spencer.

The small wandering changes in the energy balance come from random changes in clouds as well as an assumed feedback from temperature changes that affect clouds, water vapor and outgoing radiation. Temperature changes, in turn, come from changes in energy flow as well as other causes such as energy exchanges with the oceans. It is this tangling up of cause and effect that make it difficult to deduce climate sensitivity from the noise in the system that causes the small deviations in the energy balance in the atmosphere. Spencer's work essentially revolves around understanding and untangling these effects.

Spencer and his co-author William Braswell published their ideas in a peer reviewed scientific paper that appeared in the Journal of Geophysical Research in August of 2010. The road to publication was long and tortuous and some of his claims had to be watered down to get past the reviewers. It might be that the reviewers were hostile to Spencer because he was upsetting the global warming apple cart or perhaps they thought that Spencer's claims were too broad for the evidence he had. In any case scientists habitually complain about reviewers of their papers. A clear case of establishment bias against Spencer's ideas would come later.
In July 2011, Spencer published another paper in a fairly obscure European journal Remote Sensing. This paper incited an unusual angry outburst from important elements of the climate establishment. It's a bit difficult to know why they were so angry. The paper is an extension of Spencer's previous work and answers some of the criticism of his 2010 paper. Remote Sensing offers rapid peer review and publication, no doubt an attractive feature for Spencer, previously subjected to long delays and false starts from trying to publish in more traditional climate science venues. The establishment anger may have been triggered because the establishment probably didn't know about the article until it was published and secondly because the article highlighted faults in the establishment's climate models by comparing model output to satellite observations of the Earth. Spencer's paper made the models look pretty bad. Spencer's article received huge publicity due to a Forbes column by Heartland Institute fellow James Taylor. This surely added to the upset of climate establishment grandees.

A remarkable, no holds barred attack was made on Spencer on the website The Daily Climate. The Daily Climate article contained statements such as this:

"Over the years, Spencer and Christy developed a reputation for making serial mistakes that other scientists have been forced to uncover."

This is not the sort of things that scientists say about each other, at least not in print. Besides it was a complete lie, because Christy and Spencer are known to be very competent and careful scientists. More interesting than what was said, is who said it. Kevin Trenberth was the first author. The two other authors were John Abraham and Peter Gleick. All three of these scientists are aggressive defenders of global warming catastrophe theory.

Let's take Kevin Trenberth first. By general acclaim, Trenberth is one of the smartest climate scientists alive. Trenberth is a Distinguished Senior Scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. Ironically, Trenberth is a strong critic of climate models, for example here and here, yet he defends the alarmist predictions that are rooted in climate models.

John Abraham is a professor of mechanical engineering. He is one of the leaders of the Climate Science Rapid Response Team. This is a group set up to rapidly refute criticism of global warming alarmism. Activists became alarmed that the global warming skeptics were getting a foothold and the activists decided that the problem was that the media wasn't getting good information in a timely manner. Thus the rapid response team is a counter propaganda outfit. The problem is that if people are starting to doubt what you say, screaming louder may not solve the problem.

Peter Gleick, the third author of the attack on Spencer, is a water scientist and a self proclaimed climate scientist. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation genius award. He is also a criminal, albeit one that avoided prosecution due to good political associations. Approximately six months after the Daily Climate blast at Spencer, Gleick impersonated a board member of the Heartland Institute, a libertarian Chicago think tank with global warming skeptic tendencies. Perhaps believing his own propaganda, he thought that if he could get the confidential packet of documents distributed at the Heartland
board meeting, he could prove that Heartland had a nefarious agenda funded by the fossil fuel industry. When that confidential information turned out not to be incriminating, he forged additional documents designed to discredit the Heartland Institute. (He claimed the forged documents were sent to him anonymously in the mail.) He "leaked" everything to the global warming advocacy blogosphere. But Gleick was an amateur criminal and was quickly exposed. One of his mistakes was to feature himself in the forged documents, making it appear that Peter Gleick was a person of great concern to the Heartland Institute. Gleick used a fake email account to execute his crime. He clearly violated the federal wire fraud statute (18 USC 1343). Gleick's lies were widely disseminated and greatly damaged the Heartland Institute. In spite of strenuous requests by the victim Heartland Institute, the administration's U.S. Attorney in Chicago has refused, so far, to prosecute. Gleick was quickly rehabilitated, returned to his position as the president of the Pacific Institute and given the honor of an invited talk at the 2012 Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union. Maybe the MacArthur Foundation will give him another genius award for escaping prosecution and professional shame.

The pushback to Spencer's Remote Sensing paper became more bizarre when the editor of Remote Sensing, Wolfgang Wagner, resigned and apologized to Kevin Trenberth for publishing Spencer's paper. In his letter of resignation Wagner made it clear that there was no impropriety in the publishing of the paper. Peer review was properly conducted by qualified reviewers. Why would an Austrian professor and the editor of a journal published in Switzerland apologize, for not doing anything wrong, to a government scientist in Colorado? Obviously because the establishment was displeased by the paper and the implied criticism of the establishment. Apparently the influence of the climate establishment is powerful and world wide. If they say jump, scientists everywhere say how high. Presumably the apology was directed to Trenberth acting in his capacity as a leader of the climate establishment.

Steve McIntyre, a prominent skeptical scientist and blogger said this:

"Like most of us, I've been a bit taken aback by the ritual seppuku of young academic Wolfgang Wagner, formerly editor of Remote Sensing, for the temerity of casting a shadow across the path of climate capo Kevin Trenberth. It appears that Wagner's self immolation has only partly appeased Trenberth, who, like an Oriental despot, remains unamused."

Besides the slander and power plays against Spencer described above, the establishment also commissioned a scientific paper to debunk Spencer's work. The scientist chosen to do this was Andrew Dessler, a professor in the atmospheric sciences department at Texas A & M university.

Texas A&M has a large atmospheric sciences department. On their website there are 22 tenured and tenure track faculty. What is really unusual about the department is that all the regular faculty are seemingly required to sign a global warming loyalty oath called the climate change statement. Every faculty member except one new arrival has signed. None of the lowly adjunct faculty's names appear.

The Texas A&M atmospheric sciences department is part of the College of Geosciences. That college also houses the department of Geology and Geophysics that operates practically as a satellite of the Texas energy industry. Texas A&M has a large endowment, heavily invested in
energy industries, and of course, the revenue of the state of Texas is heavily dependent on carbon burning energy industries. There are strange bedfellows in the Texas A&M College of Geosciences.

Andrew Dessler wrote his paper attacking Spencer's paper. It zoomed through peer review in 19 days, a remarkable speed record. It was published in Geophysical Research Letters, a favored journal of the global warming establishment.

It probably didn't matter what Dessler's paper said or how objective it was. All that really mattered is that the climate establishment could say to the world of media and politics that Roy Spencer had been refuted. Spencer had a response on his website within 24 hours of receiving a preprint of the paper. One problem for the establishment is that Dessler is prone to go a bit wobbly and lose focus as to the main task. The main task is making skeptics like Roy Spencer look like incompetent idiots. Dessler entered into a dialog with Spencer and accepted suggestions from Spencer to correct errors and otherwise improve the paper attacking Spencer himself. Spencer felt this was a great step forward from establishment figures ignoring him or taking potshots from afar.

The global warming scientific establishment is starting to look like the final days of the Soviet Union. On the surface it appears impregnable and the dissidents are a minor problem. But the huge soviet edifice quickly collapsed when people lost their fear of the system and the functionaries stopped following orders. There came a point when everyone decided to stop living a lie. I can't believe, for example, that every faculty member at Texas A&M is really happy about signing a climate loyalty oath.

The lie the scientist believers in global warming are living is that the climate models reliably mimic the Earth's climate and are suitable for predicting the future. Roy Spencer has developed a theory to compute climate sensitivity, using real data, data that does not invoke the monster climate models. His theories may or may not stand the test of time, but the climate establishment should stop acting like a science mafia protecting its turf. New ideas should be allowed to circulate freely, not be strangled at birth.

Norman Rogers, educated as a physicist, is a retired computer entrepreneur, a volunteer Senior Policy Advisor at the Heartland Institute, a member of the American Geophysical Union and of the American Meteorological Society. He maintains a website.
Hockey player leaves country

Rape charge won’t be pursued

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The Madison County District Attorney’s office said it will not pursue a rape charge against the former University of Alabama in Huntsville hockey player arrested last month if he remains out of the country.

Prosecutors confirmed Wednesday that Lasse Uusivirta, a native of Finland, had left the country and returned to his homeland.

Uusivirta was arrested last month by UAH police and charged with first-degree rape stemming from a case first reported to campus police in January, police said.

“It is the understanding of the Madison County District Attorney’s Office that Lasse Uusivirta has left the United States to return to his native Finland,” assisstant district attorney Jason Scully-Clemons said in a statement. “It is our understanding that Mr. Uusivirta does not plan to return to the United States.

“If Mr. Uusivirta does, in fact, remain out of the United States permanently, the Madison County District Attorney’s Office will not pursue the charges against him any further. However, should Mr. Uusivirta return to the United States, we will, at that point, take the case against Mr. Uusivirta to the grand jury to seek an indictment.”

Uusivirta was supposed to appear in court this week for a preliminary hearing but waived his right to the hearing. That sent the case to a grand jury to consider an indictment.
Alabama university celebrates 50th year

MOBILE | The University of South Alabama is marking the 50th anniversary of its founding.

The school will hold a celebration on campus in Mobile on Friday night to commemorate its start in 1963.

Gov. Robert Bentley will attend, and officials are planning a special recognition for President Gordon Moulton, who is retiring on July 1.

State lawmakers approved legislation authorizing the school on May 3, 1963, and classes started the next year.

The university has since awarded more than 75,000 degrees, and it now has more than 15,000 students.

— From wire reports
USA heralds founding, Moulton

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Fifty years to the day since the University of South Alabama was created in 1963, the university is having a very big party, and you’re invited.

USA is pulling out all of the stops for its 50th anniversary celebration on Friday at 6:30 p.m. at Moulton Tower and Alumni Plaza on campus. The event is not only a moment of pride in the university’s history, it’s also a tribute to longtime President Gordon Moulton, who will retire this summer after nearly 47 years at USA.

The Jaguar Marching Band will perform and guests will enjoy dinner, live music and fireworks. Dress is business casual.

Speakers will include Gov. Robert Bentley, early faculty members and some of USA’s first students, along with civic and governmental leaders who helped found the university. The USA Faculty Senate will honor 50 outstanding faculty members.

Guests will see a video about USA’s first half century, and everyone will receive a free copy of the university’s 50th anniversary commemorative book.

“This is a big week for us,” said Keith Ayers, USA’s director of public relations. “It’s a big moment for everybody whose lives have been touched by this university.”

University officials have been working
on the anniversary plans for the past three years, he said.

Friday's gala will be a moment to celebrate the university's history and its place in Mobile's heritage.

"There aren't very many universities where the founding students and leaders are still around," Ayers pointed out. "So much has happened in that 50-year period. We felt it was important to take stock of where we are and where we want to go."

Those who planned the tribute began by seeking out the university's first witnesses to history, Ayers said.

"That's been an important aspect of the celebration from the beginning — to get first-hand accounts and record memories and observations," he said.

He described the commemorative book as a definitive record of the university's milestones, including recollections from the first students and faculty members and the state legislators who got behind the effort to establish a public university in Mobile.

It was "the first four-year university that had been created in more than half a century in the state," Ayers said.

In the early 1960s, when the idea for the university came about, Mobile was in a transitory period and not very strong economically, Ayers said. But USA's founders "were not going to take no for an answer," he said.

It began as a single-building campus in west Mobile with an initial enrollment of 276.

Today, USA has 15,000 students, 5,500 employees and a $400 million annual payroll.

It's one of the largest employers in the region and boasts of a $2 billion economic impact. USA will award its 75,000th degree at its graduation ceremony on May 11.

During Moulton's presidency, USA developed the USA Health System, which includes USA's College of Medicine physician practice, USA Children's & Women's Hospital, the USA Medical Center and the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

The health system provides more than 250,000 patient treatments annually.

The university has launched a national search to find Moulton's successor. But Friday's tribute will be about honoring his legacy, and taking stock of USA's past and present.

"We do want to encourage the public to come out" to the celebration on Friday, Ayers reiterated. He's expecting upward of 3,000 people.

"This university is all about the people of this region and this state. The University of South Alabama was created to make higher education accessible to everyone, and in that spirit, we want everybody who cares about the university to come out and celebrate."
Moulton's amazing gift

Let's travel back in time to 1998, the year that would change Mobile forever, the year that Titans clashed, the year that we became a university town.

The Board of Trustees at the University of South Alabama was bitterly deadlocked over the fate of the school's president, Fred Whiddon. Half the trustees believed that Whiddon had to go, that he'd lost his touch, that it was time to fire him.

The other half remained staunch. Fire Fred Whiddon?! The man who created the University of South Alabama out of the void 35 years earlier? The man who parlayed a worthless pine thicket into an empire of higher education that included 10,000 students, three hospitals and a school of medicine, ruling over all like Charlemagne?

Fred Whiddon had controlled everything about USA, right up until he lost control of the school's debt, then lost control of the school's board. His career of dazzling achievement ended in a pratfall that played out tortuously in the media over a couple of years.

Even then, it took the extraordinary exertions of Gov. Fob James, an ex officio trustee, to break the deadlock on the board. Suddenly, on July 29, 1998, Whiddon was out. The board members looked around at each other and collectively sighed: "Now what?"

See MOULTON, Page 8A

See next page
MOULTON
From Page 1A

But the university was in deep financial trouble, with $25 million from unfunded construction projects to pay for, deferred maintenance piling up on the school's cluster of leaky old buildings, an administration in disarray, a dysfunctional Board of Trustees, the school's enrollment in decline, and the public's perception of USA at a low ebb.

The wolf was at the door. Something had to be done, right away. And Moulton was powerless to fix the big problems, emasculated by the word "interim" in front of his name.

As Christmas approached, trustee Ken Kralheim, one of the few USA alumni on the board in 1998, had an epiphany.

He described it earlier this week:

"I decided the only way out of the jam was to declare Gordon Moulton president and let him right the ship, get our operations stabilized, and then he could retire in four or five years. We could conduct our national search then!"

Kralheim began approaching fellow board members with the idea, which he put in the form of a motion that passed on Dec. 3, 1998.

"I count making that argument to the board, which put Gordon in the presidency, as one of the greatest achievements of my life. He was the right man at the right time."

Here's what Moulton did straight away: He opened up the University of South Alabama to our whole community. He invited organizers of the annual Mobili- an of the Year Banquet to move the event to the new Mitchell Center. He invited high schools to hold their graduations there. He invited civic groups like the Mobile Chamber and the Mobile Area Education Foundation to take advantage of the campus facilities.

The university went from being Fred Whiddon's curious phenomenon on the edge of Mobile, to a major center of civic and social life in Coastal Alabama.

Under Moulton's watch, USA became our university. Anyone who hasn't attended several events on the campus in the past year or so needs to get out more.

Not only did Moulton resolve that $25 million construction deficit, but he embarked on a $500 million building campaign that transformed the campus. With a deep appreciation of art, architecture and landscape design that Gordon shares with Geri, the campus has gone from haphazardly institutional to deliberately monumental. Just stroll across that campus will raise a student's IQ.

USA's newfound beauty is more than skin deep. Moulton worked just as tirelessly at academic program development and healthcare delivery. Spend some time with Moulton's vice presidents, and you will marvel at the range of his intellect, at his grasp of the technology and the most arcane details of health care, at his instincts and ability to see into the future, his skill as a team-builder, his openness and availability to students and faculty. He has mastered every discipline he set his mind to, they say, except for the game of golf.

Turns out, Kralheim almost got it right: Moulton was the perfect man for the job.

And now a prestigious firm has been hired to scour our nation for his replacement. Trustees only have to look up the road toward Tuscaloosa to appreciate that such herculean undertakings sometimes produce a dud.

As friends, faculty and alumni gather around Moulton Tower this evening to celebrate the improbable first 50 years of the University of South Alabama, we should all thank God for Fred Whiddon and Gordon Moulton, and pray hard for the selection committee that's in search of No. 3.
A nose for danger
Program trains canines to sniff out explosives

Ed Enoch
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Chachi, a black Labrador retriever, casually weaves behind college students Thursday at the Auburn University Student Center.
He approaches as if he will greet the students, and some smile when they see him. But Chachi seems to quickly lose interest as he moves from one student to another, as if overwhelmed by the number of people to whom he needs to say hello.

Chachi's temperament changes dramatically when a man passes him with a gym bag. Suddenly, the lab strains against his leash and begins scampering to follow. The dog sits once the man stops, signaling to his handler he has found something suspicious.
The man with the gym bag is a veterinarian with the university, a participant in a demonstration of Vapor Wake detection dogs, a program in AU's Animal Health and Performance Program.

In the weeks following the bombings at the Boston Marathon, the program has received renewed interest — mostly a barrage of calls from national and regional media — as the public discusses what if anything could have been done to prevent the attacks.

Chachi and the other dogs can detect traces of explosives left in the air after someone passes. It is a skill the program has developed through a proprietary breeding and training program. University researchers began developing the premise for Vapor Wake dogs about 2005, with the first animals being deployed in 2009.

Paul Waggoner, a researcher and associate director with the Canine Detection Research Institute, said the Vapor Wake program is enhancing an inherent ability.

"Nature has built them to sample," Waggoner said. "They come naturally equipped to track that odor to its source."

While detection instruments have advanced rapidly in the past two decades, Waggoner believes dogs remain the most capable detection devices. He said many instruments are reliable and sensitive but are harder to deploy in dynamic situations. Dogs are capable of evaluating the strength of an odor and tracking it to the source.

"There is nothing in terms of chemical detection that can come close to a dog yet," he said.
The program produces about 100 dogs annually. Waggoner said it costs from $18,000 to $20,000 to train a standard explosive detection dog and about twice that for a Vapor Wake canine.

Waggoner said it is too soon to know if the university will have new customers for the dogs as a result of the bombings, but added the Vapor Wake dogs are well-suited to detecting threats in environments similar to the marathon.

“There is nothing in terms of chemical detection that can come close to a dog yet.”

Paul Waggoner
Associate director Canine Detection Research Institute

The Huntsville Times
Sunday, May 5, 2013
The University of Alabama in Huntsville opened the 2013 Gulf South Conference Softball Championships in Southaven, Miss., with a 12-0, five-inning win over West Georgia before falling in the first round of the winner's bracket to West Florida 7-1 on Saturday.

That loss created a meeting with North Alabama in an elimination game as the tournament format featured three games on Saturday due to rain on Friday, and the Chargers blew past UNA 8-0 in five innings to survive until today.

**West Florida 4, UAH 1**

Falling in extra innings after a walk-off home run, the UAH baseball team was eliminated from the Gulf South Conference Tournament on Friday.

The Chargers, ranked No. 4 in the NCAA South Regional standings, fell to 33-15-1.

### COLLEGE SCORECARD

#### SEC Standings (Through Friday)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>SEC</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt</td>
<td>20-2</td>
<td>40-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Carolina</td>
<td>13-6</td>
<td>33-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>12-11</td>
<td>25-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>9-13</td>
<td>26-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>7-15</td>
<td>15-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>6-16</td>
<td>18-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>5-16</td>
<td>17-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSU</td>
<td>10-5</td>
<td>42-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>14-7</td>
<td>31-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>7-6</td>
<td>27-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ole Miss</td>
<td>12-10</td>
<td>33-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss. St.</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>33-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M</td>
<td>8-13</td>
<td>24-22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>7-15</td>
<td>25-19</td>
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#### Friday's Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEC</th>
<th>Georgia B, Tennessee 7</th>
<th>Arkansas 2, Kentucky 1</th>
<th>LSU 5, Florida D</th>
<th>Ole Miss B, Auburn 1</th>
<th>Vanderbilt B, South Carolina 2</th>
<th>Alabama at Mississippi St. [good, rain]</th>
<th>Texas A&amp;M 2, Missouri 1</th>
<th>Other Games</th>
<th>West Florida 4, UAH (10 inn.)</th>
<th>Samford 15, UNC-Greensboro 9</th>
<th>UAB 10, Rice 9</th>
<th>Belmont 3, Jacksonville St. 0</th>
<th>Middle Tenn. St. at South Alabama (susp.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEC</td>
<td>Arkansas at Kentucky (Noon)</td>
<td>Vanderbilt at South Carolina (11:20 p.m.)</td>
<td>Georgia at Tennessee (DH, 11 a.m.)</td>
<td>Ole Miss at Auburn (6 p.m., AM-1070-BHM)</td>
<td>Missouri at Texas A&amp;M (1:25 p.m.)</td>
<td>Alabama at Mississippi St. (1:30 p.m., CBS/PR-FM-54, 5-BHM)</td>
<td>Other Games</td>
<td>Middle Tenn. St. at South Alabama (6 p.m.)</td>
<td>Florida International at Troy (noon)</td>
<td>UNC-Greensboro at Samford (1 p.m.)</td>
<td>Rice at UAB (noon)</td>
<td>Belmont at Jacksonville St. (1 p.m.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UAB has big hopes for new signees

Drew Champlin
dchamplin@al.com

A hidden gem and a free agent are two terms to describe UAB’s latest signees, but both will be counted on to play major roles in the 2013-14 season.

The Blazers signed Thad Rideau (pronounced Red-oe) and Chad Frazier recently. Both are long-armed, 6-foot-4 guards who shined for their respective junior colleges.

UAB assistant Richie Riley found Rideau earlier this season while scouting. At Brown Mackie Junior College in Salina, Kan., Rideau was a NJCAA Division II All-American, scoring more than 20 points per game while excelling as a 3-point shooter and showing ability to get to the rim. UAB was the biggest school to offer Rideau.

“A hidden gem is a little bit of the way I look at it,” UAB head coach Jerod Haase said.

The 23-year-old Rideau spent two years working in a refinery near his home in Port Arthur, Texas before going to junior college to play basketball. He’ll play the off-guard position for UAB.

UAB got in on Frazier much later in the process. The 6-foot-4 point guard from Gulf Coast (Fla.) Community College had made two verbal commitments.

One came last fall to Oklahoma State and one earlier this spring to Texas A&M, but he decommitted from both places. UAB got into the mix after he decided not to sign with Texas A&M.
A loss of power

Tide limps into SEC tournament as No. 8 seed

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

A year ago, the University of Alabama softball team was rolling into the postseason as the regular-season Southeastern Conference champion and the No. 1 seed in the SEC tournament, and on its way to the program's first national championship.

This year, the ninth-ranked Crimson Tide is stumbling into the SEC tournament as the No. 8 seed.

Alabama has lost five of its last six games and went 4-6 in its last 10 games going into the postseason, while a year ago Alabama was 7-3 in its last 10, with five losses in its final 12 games of the regular season.

The Crimson Tide's team batting average is actually 10 percentage points higher than it was last year, and its earned-run average is a fraction lower. Alabama has committed one less regular-season error than it did last year, has fewer strikeouts and only five fewer steals.

The major difference is that UA, after the loss from last year's team of power hitters Amanda Locke, Cassie Reilly-Boccia and Jazlyn Lenceford to graduation, has hit 30 fewer home runs.

SEC TOURNAMENT
No. 9 Alabama vs. No. 14 Texas A&M

- When: 3 p.m.
- Where: John Cropp Stadium in Lexington, Ky.
- Records: Alabama 41-12, Texas A&M 39-14
- TV: ESPNU
- Radio: 99.1 FM

STATISTICAL COMPARISON

Here is a look at the University of Alabama softball team's 2013 regular-season statistics as compared to the end of the 2012 regular season:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record</td>
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<td>47-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Batting average</td>
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<td>.320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home runs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walks</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikeouts</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steals</td>
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<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runs</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See next page
POWER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

Alabama has also struggled to pull out close games, with seven of its 12 losses coming by one run.

"It's been missing that one hit," Alabama coach Patrick Murphy said.

Alabama goes into the SEC tournament rated sixth in the Ratings Percentage Index formula that the NCAA tournament selection committee uses for seeding purposes, but the downturn late in the season has put UA's seeding in jeopardy.

The top eight seeds in the 64-team field that will be announced Sunday will host regionals and have the chance to host in the super regional round, and Alabama likely needs a win over Texas A&M today and possibly over SEC champion Florida in the second round to secure a spot in that top eight.

"Instead of playing your way into a seed, we're playing our way out of a top-eight," Murphy said. "You can't lose as many down the stretch."

Alabama players see the problems: sloppy defense at crucial times, not enough early-inning production late in the season, leaving runners stranded on base to kill rallies.

"Our defense and our offense need to work better together," infielder Ryan Iamurri said. "They seem to show up on different days."

Said freshman outfielder Haylie McCleney, "It's frustrating right now because we're not getting any breaks, we're not having things go our way, but this team fights. I think those one-run losses and those tough losses that we keep getting are just making us stronger for a really big run at a national championship."

No one is giving up hope.

"We see a fight in this team," Iamurri said. "We know it's going to be there in the end. One play, we're there. It's just a matter of fine-tuning and getting better."

Braud first-team All-SEC

TUSCALOOSA | Senior outfielder Kayla Braud earned All-SEC honors for the fourth time Tuesday as she was selected to the first team by league coaches.

Infielder Kaila Hunt and outfielder Haylie McCleney were chosen for the second team. McCleney and outfielder Andrea Hawkins were selected freshman All-SEC, and McCleney joined Braud on the SEC all-defensive team.

For the latest top-25 polls and the complete All-SEC Awards list, see page 2C. 

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
Tide responds in second game, earns split with Kentucky

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

TUSCALOOSA | With its season on the brink of collapse, the University of Alabama softball team had less than 30 minutes to collect itself.

The seventh-ranked Crimson Tide had just lost 5-0 to No. 19 Kentucky in the first game of Saturday's doubleheader. It was UA's first shutout loss in two years and the Tide's losing streak to four games, longest since 2004.

Alabama made a dramatic turnaround with a 10-run first inning in the second game and put away the Wildcats 14-0 in five innings to salvage a split in front of 3,605 fans at Rhoads Stadium.

The Crimson Tide (41-11 overall, 13-10 in Southeastern Conference) has a lot at stake for today's 1:30 p.m. finale. UA can make a strong case for a coveted top-eight postseason seed — which would assure Alabama the chance to host in the regional and super regional rounds of the NCAA Tournament — with a win today.

Had Alabama lost the second game Saturday, however, that opportunity might have been lost. So how did UA dust itself off after a shutout defeat to come out swinging?

It started in that break between games. Patrick Murphy, Alabama's coach, addressed the team.

"Four losses in a row is unacceptable," he told them. "I don't care who it is, it's just not acceptable. Make a decision."

Player's made a quick assessment of what had happened and adjusted their attitudes.

"We decided that the first game we didn't play Alabama softball whatsoever," senior left fielder Kayla Braud said. "We came out flat, kind of dug ourselves a hole. We decided that's not how we're going to play this game."

Murphy shook up the lineup. Four players who weren't in the batting order in the first game

See Split | 3C
were inserted for the second, and no player hit in the same position.

"Four losses in a row, I've got to do something different," Murphy said.

After managing just four hits in seven innings in the first game, Alabama had four hits and four runs by the time four batters had hit in the second game.

Center fielder Haylie Mccleney started it with a leadoff double, Braud followed with a bunt single and catcher Molly Fichtner hit a three-run home run. First baseman Leona Lafaele blasted the next pitch over the wall in center field, and just that fast Alabama had a 4-0 lead.

"The second game, it was just a whole different ballgame," Fichtner said. "Haylie just sparked the whole inning, Braud put out a nasty bunt and I was just looking for a good pitch to hit.

"Luckily I got it."

A series of Kentucky walks allowed Alabama to extend the lead to 10-0 by the end of the first, and UA added four more in the second.

The bottom of the order, hitless in the first game, produced four hits and four runs in the second game, with Ryan Iamurri going 2-for-2 and Keima Davis going 2-for-3. Braud extended her hitting streak 17 games in a row by going 3-for-4 with three runs scored in the second game. Fichtner drove in four runs and Lafaele drove in three.

Of equal importance, Alabama ace Jackie Traina (18-6) had to pitch only three innings, throwing just 43 pitches before senior Lauren Sewell took over to close the door. That should leave Traina fresh for today's decisive contest.

Fichtner is confident the right Alabama team will show up.

"We're going to come out just like that, do whatever it takes," she said.

In the first game, Kelsey Nunley (23-7) held Alabama in check and Kentucky (37-17, 12-11 SEC) got a three-run home run from Christian Stokes. Leslie Jury (15-5) took the loss, allowing five runs on five hits in five innings.

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
A senior challenge

Braud wants to make the most of final weeks

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

TUSCALOOSA | Kayla Braud is done with school. She's ready to graduate. But she still wants to savor her final weeks with the University of Alabama softball team.

The outfielder from Eugene, Ore., is one of five seniors who will be honored in the Crimson Tide's final regular-season series this weekend, joining Keima Davis, Jackey Brahan, Courtney Conley and Lauren Sewell.

"There's things I'm going to remember forever, like winning the World Series and playing in big games — those are really special experiences — but that's not what I'm going to miss the most," Braud said. "I'm going to miss the little things the most, like coming out every day and doing the thing I love most with the people that I love most, just calling this field home and simple things like, putting on the jersey every day."

Patrick Murphy will always remember Braud as a quiet competitor. He recalls a game against Northwestern when Braud was a freshman. She went 0-for-4 at the plate, breaking a 14-game hitting streak.

"I really want to see what's going to happen with you tomorrow, because this is the first time somebody's held you down," Murphy told her. "We'll see what you're all about."

Braud went 3-for-5 the next day, scoring three runs, drawing a walk

No. 19 Kentucky
at No. 7 Alabama

- Where: Rhoads Stadium
- Schedule: Today at 6:30 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m., Sunday at 1:30 p.m.
- Records: Alabama 40-10, 12-9 SEC; Kentucky 36-16, 11-10 SEC
- TV: WVUA (all three games)
- Radio: 99.1 FM

INSIDE

BASEBALL TRAVELS:
The Alabama baseball team opens its SEC series at No. 15 Mississippi State tonight | 3C

and stealing a base.

"It's the day after her hitting streak got snapped and she comes back like nothing else happened," Murphy said.

See Braud | 5C

See next page
BRAUD
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

"It showed everybody how competitive she was: resilient, didn't let anything faze her.

"She's that type of kid. The normal fan thinks she's the nicest kid in the world probably, just a happy-go-lucky kid, but she's very competitive inwardly. She hates to lose."

Braud had to make some adjustments in college. She finished off her high school career with a national-record 103-game hitting streak, and had to learn that there were going to be tougher days in college.

"When you come in as a freshman, nobody really knows you," Braud said. "You kind of get the benefit of that situation where nobody really expects anything, so you get to be kind of fearless and put everything on the line. As you get older, sophomore and junior year, pitchers know you and they're prepared for you and their goal is to get you out. I had to learn a lot of maturity. I had to understand some things like if it ain't broke, don't fix it — instead of trying to do too much, focus on the things I'm good at."

She has been good enough to put together a 28-game hitting streak that started late in her freshman season and continued into her sophomore year, as well as that 14-game streak as a freshman. She is currently on a 15-game hitting streak with a .446 average that could land her All-America recognition for the third time in her career.

Braud also had to move from the infield, where she had always played, to left field. She credits UA assistant coach Alyson Habetz for helping her embrace a change that gave her a new perspective on the game.

"In the infield, you're so close to everything, you're in every play, you can talk to people, you can see the strike zone perfectly," Braud said. "You move to the outfield and you kind of feel alone a little bit.

"I never really appreciated the outfield until I was one of them. You appreciate the grass and that part of the game. I don't even know dirt anymore. I'm all about the grass now."

Alabama is riding a three-game losing streak. Braud wants to turn that around, starting this weekend.

"The seniors all got together and talked about it and decided we're going to make the best out of the month, we can't do anything about what's happened, but we're going to work harder, as hard as we can, to get better," Braud said. "That's the first goal, and the second goal is to understand this is the best part of our season, we haven't peaked and we have an opportunity to do something.

"It's going to be a great month."

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
BUILDING THE FUTURE

The SEC is already the top football conference in the nation, and with the addition of a TV network, the league can expect more money and exposure

By Cecil Hurt | Sports Editor

With the SEC Network partnership with ESPN the SEC is planning to become something more — an ‘Every Day’ network.

Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive, asked about the flexibility of the league’s football scheduling, had a quick and quotable answer.

“We’re a Saturday league,” Slive said.

With the SEC Network partnership with ESPN, though, the SEC is planning to become something more — an ‘Every Day’ network.

While the live football games attract headlines and, far more importantly for the SEC, subscriptions from the various cable carriers that will translate into cash for the league and its 14 members, it is the overall pervasive presence of the SEC brand that many coaches see as the primary nonmonetary benefit of the new arrangement with ESPN.

Financially, the network would likely be viable on a regional-only basis. That is particularly true since the SEC region, as it is now defined, includes 15 of the top 50 television markets in the United States, encompassing every major metropolitan area in a swath that stretches from Kansas City to Miami.

That is a crucial revenue base if, as expected, the SECN revenue distribution resembles that of the Big Ten Network, which gets a little more than $1 per customer within its regional “footprint” and 10 cents per customer outside.

If nothing else indicates one reason for expansion into the states of Texas (with four of those Top 50 television markets) and Missouri (with two of the Top 30), those figures are revealing.

Nonetheless, Slive said Thursday the SEC Network would have come into being regardless of expansion.

“We have been working on this for nearly three years,” Slive said. “Obviously, given that time frame, we had to be sure it could work with 12 teams before we proceeded. Certainly, we are glad that expansion has been a success, but it would have gone forward. And there is no connection between this and any (future) expansion, which is on the back, back burner at this time.”

See SEC | 3C
SEC
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

As of now, those markets are not "guaranteed," at least until the largest cable providers come aboard, but Alabama athletic director Bill Battle said he expects those clearances to come.
"I think it's a matter of when, not a matter of if," Battle said.

That does not mean the SEC schools will instantly become wealthy from the Network:
"It will take time," Battle said.

Georgia athletic director Greg McGarity said the league's AD's have not even seen financial projections yet, instead relying on Slive's characterization that the league is "very happy" with the arrangement.

"The potential is there and I think that's what we are banking on," McGarity said.

For the network to be considered a true success, though, the key will be penetration in those other markets.
"I have seen it first hand with the Big Ten network," Arkansas coach Brett Bielma said Thursday. "At Wisconsin (where Bielma previously coached), the issue wasn't recruiting in the state. We were the state university, we had great fans, but for us to be successful, we had to expand out of the Midwest.

"I can't tell you the number of times I would go into a prospect's house in Florida and California, and he'd know all about us. He'd say 'I've seen all your games.' That didn't mean he had seen them on Saturday. He was watching the replays on Tuesday night. That was huge."

One question that was asked by Steve Spurrier on Thursday remained unanswered — the question of whether the SEC Network cash would trickle down to the athletes (not one of whom was present at Thursday's announcement).

"When are we going to start giving some of the money to the performers?" Spurrier said.

That question might come up again, as soon as the money actually starts coming in.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidessports.com or 205-722-0225.
SEC's network with ESPN to debut in 2014

Conference announces 20-year contract with network to operate new channel

By Charles Odum
The Associated Press

ATLANTA | The Southeastern Conference and ESPN on Thursday announced a 20-year agreement to operate the SEC network that is scheduled to debut in August 2014.

SEC Commissioner Mike Slive said the SEC network will produce 1,000 live events each year, including 450 televised on the network and 550 distributed digitally. Slive says the network will carry about 45 SEC football games each year "and a depth of content across all sports."

No financial terms were released for the deal, which continues through 2034.

The announcement came at a news conference attended by Slive, ESPN President John Skipper, 32 SEC coaches and athletic directors from the 14 member institutions.

"We believe this conference has national appeal," Skipper said. "This is a national network. This is not a regional network. We understand that in the 11-state footprint is where the most passionate fans are, but there are a lot of SEC fans in California and Texas."
SEC
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

and New York and Connecticut and Virginia and Nebraska.”

The league’s coaches and athletic directors said having the national network will make all sports more attractive.

“In volleyball, we may want to go after players in California or in the Midwest,” said Georgia athletic director Greg McGarity. “Now they can see the SEC is going to have a broadcast of Georgia-Florida volleyball match on ESPN on Tuesday night at 9 o’clock. That’s the type of stuff you can only dream about. Now we have it unfolding.

“Football, obviously, that’s already well-populated. What it does for your Olympic sports is just immeasurable.”

Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari, who already has a national recruiting base, said the network will make all SEC schools more attractive to national recruits.

“Everybody’s recruiting stretches out because they already may want to play against Florida and Kentucky and everybody here, but being in the SEC means if you come with us, you’re not a regional player, you’re national,” Calipari said.

“Don’t have to worry you have to stay home because that’s your fan base. Your fan base is national. You don’t have to worry about regional fan bases. You can go out and create what you want to create.”

Still, there was no doubt what sport drove the deal — football.

Calipari acknowledged he felt left out as he sat on the stage and heard only football-related questions. Asked where basketball fit in the SEC picture, Calipari said “I don’t know. How many men’s basketball questions were there today? Did we have any? No.

“In the room it was either they wanted to know about money, percentages or what it did with football. I was ready to stand up ‘Can I ask a basketball question?’ I almost did it, just to do it. Then I said no, I don’t want to embarrass anybody.”

Georgia football coach Mark Richt said the network should be another empowering tool for the SEC, already the national power with seven straight national championships.

“I don’t think there’s any doubt,” Richt said. “It’s not a regional network. It’s a national network. It’s going to appeal to people of all ages, including the people we’re going to be recruiting. My guess is there will be content there that will showcase our players, showcase our facilities and showcase our coaching staff and what we’ve done in the recent past and what we want to do in the future. It can only help us.”

Slive also would not discuss details of the ownership arrangement with the SEC and ESPN.

“We would not have done this if we did not believe it would be in the long-term benefit of the league, both in terms of distribution and in terms of revenue,” Slive said.

“We’re both happy,” Slive said.

The Big Ten and PAC-12 also have established networks, but Slive said the SEC’s partnership with ESPN is different.

“What’s unique and never been done before is partnering with our primary rights holder, which will allow us to move events seamlessly between various platforms,” Slive said.

The SEC signed a 15-year deal with CBS in 2008. CBS will still have the first choice of SEC football games.

ESPN senior vice president Justin Connelly said AT&T U-Verse has signed on as the network’s first distributor. He said talks are just beginning with other possible cable partners.

Connelly said the deal also gives ESPN rights to oversee the league’s corporate partner program. In addition, ESPN will manage and run all of the SEC’s digital platforms.