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Bonner to leave Hill for UA job
Bentley to set special election for seat

By George Talbot

U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner, R-Mobile, announced Thursday that, effective Aug. 15, he will resign from the congressional seat that he’s held since 2003 for a new job at the University of Alabama System.

“I trust you know that serving as your congressman this past decade has truly been one of the highest honors of my life,” Bonner said during a news conference at his congressional office in downtown Mobile. “After considerable thought and heartfelt prayer, I decided to accept this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Bonner, 53, will fill the newly created position of vice chancellor of government relations and economic development, reporting directly to system Chancellor Robert Witt.

It will be up to Gov. Robert Bentley to set a special election for Bonner’s seat. A spokeswoman for the governor’s office said Bentley had no timetable for setting the election. Bentley, a Tuscaloosa Republican, commended Bonner for his work in Congress.

“He’s worked hard on several major issues, including the ongoing recovery from the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill,” Bentley said. “He’s a devoted family man and a true friend. I’ve enjoyed working with him as governor, and I wish him nothing but the best.”

The open seat in the 1st Congressional District is expected to draw a wide field of candidates. Bradley Byrne, a Mobile lawyer and 2010 candidate for governor, confirmed his interest late Thursday.

Others expressing an interest in the seat include Quin Hillyer, a conservative columnist from Mobile; state Rep. Chad Fincher, R-Semmes; state Sen. Trip Pittman, R-Montrose; and Baldwin
County Commissioner Tucker Dorsey.

The deeply conservative district, which gave Mitt Romney more than 60 percent of the vote against Barack Obama in last year’s presidential election, is a near lock to remain in Republican hands, according to political experts.

Alabama Republican Party Chairman Bill Armistead said, “We have a lot of great conservative Republican talent who I am sure will line up to run.”

The move is a homecoming of sorts for Bonner. He earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism in 1982 from the University of Alabama, and is also a graduate of its law school. UA’s College of Communications named him an Outstanding Alumnus in 2000.

His older sister, Judy Bonner, was named president of the University of Alabama main campus in Tuscaloosa in November. It is one of the three campuses in the system.

“Jo’s extensive government experience and outstanding economic development record make him ideally suited for this important new position,” Witt said in a news release.

Judy Bonner released a statement expressing her pride in her brother’s record of accomplishments. “Certainly, his experience and expertise in the area of government relations and economic development will be invaluable as he works with all three campuses to enhance the quality of life for all Alabamians,” she said.

UA system spokeswoman Kellee Reinhart said school officials had not determined Bonner’s salary in the new position.

Thursday’s announcement stunned Bonner’s constituents across the 1st District, which sprawls from the beaches of south Mobile and Baldwin counties to the pine forests of Monroe and Clarke counties. Bonner was re-elected to a sixth term in November with no Democratic opponent, and had risen to a plum position on the House Appropriations Committee.


Bonner, a longtime aide to Callahan, said he had no desire to leave Congress until he was approached by Witt less than a month ago. “While I had every intention of completing this term, sometimes opportunities come along that are so rare — and so special — that it forces you to alter even your best-made plans,” Bonner said.

Bonner is the first House member to resign or retire in 2013, according to Roll Call. U.S. House Speaker John Boehner thanked Bonner for his service and friendship in Congress.

“When he leaves, the House will lose a statesman,” Boehner said.
National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Greg Walden, R-Ore., highlighted Bonner’s work as a member of the House Appropriations Committee and expressed hope for the person who takes his spot in Congress. “Jo Bonner has been a dedicated and incredibly hardworking member of Congress,” Walden said. “I wish Jo and his family all the best as they begin this new chapter in their lives.” (Melissa Brown, mbrown2@al.com, and Theresa Seiger, tseiger@al.com, contributed to this report.)
PACT plan projected to regain stability

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | The financial outlook for Alabama's prepaid-college-tuition plan has turned around since the state's highest court ruled the program can pay tuition at fall 2010 rates rather than current rates, a financial expert said Wednesday.

The court ruling has changed the Prepaid Affordable College Tuition plan from being in serious financial trouble to being in a position where it could have money left when the last student finishes his eligibility in 2032, said Dan Sherman, CEO of Sherman Actuarial Services.

Sherman outlined the improved financial standing Wednesday when PACT’s board held its first meeting since the Alabama Supreme Court ruled last month the program could pay tuition at fall 2010 rates. Those reduced payments will start with the summer term, said State Treasurer Young Boozer, chairman of the PACT board.

Robert and Joyce Bradley of Homewood, who have seven grandchildren enrolled in PACT, said they are pleased the program will continue, even with reduced tuition payments.

"We believe this is the best possible and only solution to ensure the majority of the contract holders can get the most they can get," said Robert Bradley, who wore a green T-shirt saying "Save Alabama PACT."

Boozer said he had mixed emotions. He said it's not what participants expected, but it's the best way to give participants as much as possible.

Boozer said he plans to seek re-election as state treasurer next year and hopes to stick around four more years to make sure PACT remains stable.

For nearly two decades, the PACT program allowed a family to pay a fixed amount to enroll a child and then upon graduation from high school, the child got four years of tuition at a state university or a similar amount at a private or out-of-state college. PACT's board invested the money and used the earnings to pay tuition. The program ran into trouble five years ago when tuition increased faster than expected, the recession caused the value of PACT's assets to plunge, and many of the early participants reached college age.

PACT quit taking new participants and the Legislature agreed to shore it up with $547.6 million in payments between 2015 and 2027. But PACT's board soon realized even that was not enough money to meet its obligations.

With PACT on the verge of collapsing, the board and most PACT families reached an agreement for PACT to continue, with tuition paid at fall 2010 rates instead of current rates. Some parents sued, but the Alabama Supreme Court upheld the reduced payments in April.

PACT has 33,224 participants, with 10,573 enrolled in college during the spring semester. The board paid full tuition for the spring semester but will pay fall 2010 rates for the summer term.

Sherman said the PACT board could end up with $85 million left in 2032, when the last students should finish their college eligibility.
Statewide group elects Maddox

Mayor will lead league of cities for one-year term

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

Mayor Walt Maddox has been elected president of the Alabama League of Municipalities, making him the fourth Tuscaloosa elected official to hold the seat.

The league offers a multitude of services to the state's municipalities, including legal advice and lobbying services for the Alabama Legislature.

Maddox, 40, was voted in to the one-year term on Monday.

"I am honored to serve the league and the people represented by league members in this capacity," Maddox said in a news release. "In the months and years ahead, our league must remain strong, vibrant and well-positioned to compete in the race for relevance during this time of monumental economic, social and technological changes."

Ken Smith, executive director of the League of Municipalities, said he is looking forward to working with Maddox over the next year just as he has done in years past.

Maddox has served on the league's State and Federal Legislation Committee since 2005 and the league's executive committee since 2007. He also was a member of the league's finance, administration and intergovernmental relations committee from 2006 until 2008.

Last year, Maddox was elected vice president. Typically, the vice president is elected as president of the organization the next year.

"Walt has been active with the league for many years and brings a lot of energy and progressive ideas to our organization," Smith said. "As league vice president, he attended many league meetings and training sessions as well as workshops hosted by the National League of Cities.

"His municipal knowledge and leadership skills will serve us well as league president."

Maddox succeeds Mayor David Bradford of Muscle Shoals as the league's president.

Other Tuscaloosa leaders who have held the post of league president were Frank Livingston, who was elected in 1937, George Van Tassel, who served as mayor from 1956-1969, and Al DuPont, who served as mayor from 1981-2005. DuPont was league president twice, in 1992 and in 2006.
Legislators' outlook depends on their party

By Phillip Rawls
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | Shortly after the Legislature's 2013 session ended, the public address system in the Senate began playing a recording of Otis Redding singing the bluesy lyric, "They call me Mr. Pitiful." It was fitting music for the Democratic minority, which failed to pass its top priority: expanding the state Medicaid program for 300,000 Alabamians under the federal Affordable Care Act.

"As a whole, this was the worst session we've had in terms of bad legislation and bills that could have passed," Senate Minority Leader Vivian Davis Figures, D-Mobile, said Tuesday.

For Republicans, it was the opposite. They passed the Alabama Accountability Act, loosened restrictions on guns, started the consolidation of state law enforcement agencies, and kept a promise about paying back money.

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"It's definitely been the best session in the three years we've been in power," Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said after the session ended at midnight Monday.

House Speaker Mike Hubbard went one step further. "This is the most productive session since I've been in the Legislature," said the Auburn Republican, who spent 12 years in the minority before the GOP won control in 2010.

Marsh said the highlight was Republicans passing the Alabama Accountability Act over the objections of Democrats. The bill, which Marsh helped write, gives schools flexibility in complying with state education laws and creates state tax credits for parents who choose to send their children to private schools or non-failing public schools rather than public schools rated as failing.

On the last day of the session, Republican Gov. Robert Bentley tried to get the Legislature to delay the tax credits for two years because he said starting them now was fiscally irresponsible without giving failing schools time to improve. The House and Senate rejected his proposal.

"The override vote in the House proved that we overwhelmingly believe that students deserve school choice now, and not two years from now," Hubbard said.

Bentley suffered a second setback on the final night when the Legislature overrode his veto of a bill to allow armed teachers and volunteers in Franklin County schools.

In addition to the Alabama Accountability Act, major issues decided during the session included:

**Budgets:** The Legislature passed and the governor signed both state budgets on time. The $5.77 billion education plan will spend 3.6 percent more than this year, will provide a 2 percent cost-of-living raise for K-12 employees, and will expand the state's prekindergarten program. The $1.74 billion General Fund is 0.4 percent larger than the current budget, but does not include a pay increase for state workers.

**School security:** In response to the killings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, lawmakers passed a bill to allow schools to hire armed security guards who have police training. In response to Dale County school bus driver Charles Poland Jr. being killed while trying to protect his students, the Legislature voted to increase the penalties for trespassing on a school bus.

**School spending:** The Legislature approved borrowing $30 million through bond sales to repair six schools damaged by tornadoes in 2011 and 2012, but another bond issue died that would have allowed the sale of $100 million in bonds to pay for switching public school students from traditional paper textbooks to electronic textbooks on computer tablets.
Campaign finance: With the 2014 elections approaching, the Legislature made changes to Alabama's campaign finance laws, including removing a limit on how much corporations can donate. Individuals could already give unlimited amounts.

Guns: At the urging of the National Rifle Association, lawmakers eased the state's restrictions on guns, including allowing workers to keep guns locked in their vehicles while on the job and requiring sheriffs to give a reason when they reject a pistol permit application. The Legislature also approved a proposed constitutional amendment that would mandate Alabama's courts use "strict scrutiny" when reviewing any new gun control laws. That would require that proponents of the laws show a compelling interest for the regulations and that the laws be narrowly tailored.

Repayment: The first bill passed requires the Legislature to pay back of $437 million being taken from a state savings account called the Alabama Trust Fund to prop up the state General Fund budget for three years. Republican leaders promised that would be their top priority when voters approved the use of the money.

Consolidation: Government consolidation was a major theme for Republicans. They passed bills to merge many of the state's law enforcement agencies and to create an information technology secretary in the governor's Cabinet to bring more coordination to the state's computer systems.

State park: At the governor's urging, the Legislature agreed to use money from the BP oil spill to build a convention hotel and conference center at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores.

Medicaid: The Legislature didn't expand Medicaid like the Democratic minority wanted, but it did pass the governor's bill to reorganize Medicaid. The governor, who's a physician, hopes to save money by switching Medicaid from a fee-for-service program to a managed care program.

Welfare: The Senate passed, but the House let die two bills to ban the use of welfare benefits in liquor stores, casinos and strip clubs and to drug test applicants who have had a drug conviction in the last five years.
State may take out money again

This time to fix National Guard armories

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A proposed constitutional amendment to issue up to $50 million in bonds to be repaid from the Alabama Trust Fund could pass the Legislature on the final day of the session Monday.

The proposal would be the latest of several moves since the economic downturn to take money from the ATR, although it would be on a smaller scale than others.

The money would go to the Armory Commission of Alabama for plans, construction and maintenance of Alabama National Guard armories.

If the plan passes the Legislature, it would have to be approved by voters statewide to become law.

Sen. Gerald Dial, R-Lincoln, said the bond issue is needed to fix existing armories and to help build new armories. Dial, a co-sponsor of the bill, is a retired National Guard general and a member of the Armory Commission.

Dial said only a fraction of the $50 million bond limit would be used initially, and that it would take 15 to 20 years to tap the full amount. The state has missed opportunities for federal dollars on new armories because it lacked matching funds, he said.

A multi-purpose armory is planned for Foley in the next couple of years and in Huntsville in about five or six years. In addition to being used by the National Guard, they could be used for military reserves, Homeland Security, emergency management officials and law enforcement, Dial
The state in recent years has closed some aging armories that were difficult to maintain and has consolidated others. The bond issue bill passed the Senate on April 30 by a vote of 23-7, with seven Republicans voting against it. It would have to pass the House of Representatives on Monday to go to state voters.

Senate sponsor Tom Whatley, R-Auburn, said the bill is about economic development, which is one of the uses of the ATF already approved by voters. He said the state runs the risk of losing National Guard units if armories are in disrepair because that is one of the factors considered by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

There is a 19-1 federal match for state dollars for construction and maintenance of armories, he said. "I think it's a great use of our money, to protect the guard and to protect the 15,000 jobs," Whatley said.

The Association of County Commissions of Alabama opposes the bond issue. Counties and cities receive a portion of the earnings each year from the ATF to spend on roads and other capital projects.

"A removal of any money off the corpus takes interest away from us forever," said Sonny Brasfield, executive director of the association.

"We certainly don't quibble with whether or not the National Guard armories need repair," he said. "... Our issue isn't with the construction. Our issue is with taking city and county money to do the construction."

Dial said the armories are good for the counties and he was "perturbed" that the Association of County Commissions opposes the plan.
State board could limit law’s scope, member says

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A member of the Alabama State Board of Education says the board may be able to narrow the scope of the new Alabama Accountability Act through policy making.

"One thing the board can do is promulgate policy. And in theory, policy can narrow; it just can’t widen," school board member Mary Scott Hunter of Huntsville, said Tuesday.

The board could use its policy-making authority to limit how many students are affected by the law if problems emerge, she said, though the board hasn’t discussed doing so.

Education Superintendent Tommy Bice, who supported a move by Gov. Robert Bentley to delay key aspects of the law, said in a statement Tuesday that the Department of Education is working to implement the Accountability Act and the changes to it that were passed by the Legislature on Monday.

"We will be working with the Department of Revenue and our legal departments reviewing the multiple areas of the law that were not clarified in the (amendments)," he said.

Among the decisions facing the department is a determination of what schools will be classified as "failing" under the law.

The law defines failing schools as the bottom 6 percent of schools in reading and math if they have been in the bottom 6 percent for three of the past six years.

Spokeswoman Malissa Valdes-Hubert said the department will use results from the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test, graduation rates and graduation-exam results.
Bragging about biotech

State plans to more actively promote unheralded sector

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Alabama's burgeoning biotech industry, with about 550 companies statewide, has to a degree escaped notice, Alabama Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield said. The state intends to change that.

Biotech companies are going to get more attention from economic development officials and will get a boost from a $250,000 state rebranding campaign launched in March, Canfield said.

The campaign is being funded by the Commerce Department and AIDT, the state's worker training agency.

The goal is to both assist and capitalize on an indus-

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Dr. Kunsang Yoon, a senior chemist with Serina Therapeutics, works on cancer research in the lab at the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in 2011. (File)

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BIOTECH

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Try whose 10,000 Alabama jobs pay an average of nearly $66,000 a year.

"It's not something that we've been traditionally involved in," Canfield said. "But we're diving in."

Speaking at a science symposium and the annual meeting of the trade organization BioAlabama, Canfield said the state historically has focused development efforts on the timber, agriculture, manufacturing and textile industries. It still will work on behalf of those industries, but the emphasis on biotech will be evident, he said.

"Alabama's economy is highly diversified. It's becoming more advanced," he said. "We've got to help people wake up to... what it is Alabama is doing right."

Kathy Nugent, BioAlabama president, said the industry has quietly grown to become a major economic driver in Alabama. Huntsville's HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology now is the second-largest research park in the United States, and Birmingham's Innovation Depot has earned a national reputation.

The industry is growing internationally as well, she said, making a greater emphasis in Alabama a necessity.

"Global competition is really catching up with us," Nugent said. "We need to encourage innovation at home."

The marketing campaign, which also includes an emphasis on the state's growing aerospace and automotive industries, was designed by Birmingham's Big Communications and will include a 44-page spread in Delta Sky, Delta Air Line's in-flight magazine. Print ads also will appear in trade magazines.

"We're going to be known for bio-sciences," Canfield said.
The HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville is the second-largest research park in the United States, but Alabama officials say the state hasn't promoted its achievements adequately. That's about to change, they say.

(File)
Jobless rate at 6.9%

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Alabama's official unemployment rate for April was 6.9 percent, down from 7.2 percent in March.

In Birmingham, the rate was 5.2 percent, identical to metro Huntsville's unemployment rate.

The state's economy showed positive growth signs across the board in terms of unemployment. The labor force — the number of Alabamians looking for work — grew by 13,000. Employment grew by an even larger number, indicating that some who had not been looking for work recently have now been able to find a job, a crucial piece for Alabama's eventual recovery.

Alabama employers added 9,700 jobs, the second-largest number added in a month since the recession began. Only May 2010 brought more new jobs, at 11,000.

The industry that added the most jobs was leisure and hospitality, with 7,100 jobs gained, mostly in the subcategory of food services and drinking places. Construction employment also grew.
Hatton senior to be first in family to go to college

By: Deangelo McDaniel

The big smile classmates associate with Armando Perales comes most when he talks about his parents.

For different reasons, neither went to college, but the Mexican immigrants always have encouraged their three sons to do so.

Perales, the oldest of the boys, will graduate with honors tonight from Hatton High. And in August, he will become the first in his family to attend college when he enrolls at the University of Alabama.

“My father wanted to go to college, but the family didn’t have money, so he quit high school and got a job,” Perales said. “He got his GED online. In a way, I am fulfilling his dream to attend college.”

Perales, 18, said he’s able to attend Alabama because of a $20,000 scholarship from the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation. Perales had to write two essays about commitment and leadership and tell the committee why he wanted to become an engineer. In his written words and during his interview, he referred to his father, who is now an American citizen.

“My dad came to this country when he was 17 or 18 because his family needed financial help,” Perales said. “He was one of eight children, and he sent most of his money back to the family. That’s commitment.”

His father, Armando Perales Sr., is an electrician and supervisor of a construction company.

Perales said both his parents are “leaders by example.” His mother, America, is a custodian at Hatton Elementary.

He said a good leader is respectful of others, honest, filled with integrity, but “most of all is humble.”

Brandy Bradford, a Hatton junior, said Perales has those characteristics. “He’s also funny,” she said.

Perales was selected class favorite for six consecutive years, a feat math teacher Delaina Greene said no Hatton student had before accomplished. She said he’s also the first from the school to win the Coca-Cola scholarship.

“He’s just an all-around good kid, and we’re going to miss him next year,” Greene said.
Perales said he’ll visit Hatton “as much as I can” because he has two brothers in the school. He wants to impress on them the importance of making good grades and having a plan to attend college.

“I hope they follow in my footsteps,” he said.

His mother has no doubt they will.

“Armando is my first baby and sometimes my interpreter,” she said. “It’s a long way from home, but when he got the scholarship, I told him to go.”

His original plan was to attend the University of North Alabama because he had a scholarship through First Scholars, a program that helps first-generation college students.

“Alabama was my first choice, but I couldn’t afford it until I got the scholarship,” he said. “I was pretty happy to be one of 30 selected.”

After he graduates college, Perales said, he wants to return to Lawrence County and “give back to the community that has given me so much.”

He was born in Savannah, Ga., but the family moved to Moulton, where Perales attended preschool. After a couple of years in Pennsylvania, they moved back to Lawrence County and purchased a home when he was a second-grader.

His mother praised the community, saying people in Hatton “have made me and my kids like family.”

Perales said he’s not athletic, so coaches allowed him to the manage teams.

“I felt included,” he said. “That’s why I want to come back and give what I got.”
Studying law to pursue justice

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When he was going to law school at Boston University in the early 1950s, Demetrius Newton had thought about not coming back home to Fairfield and face setting up a law practice as a young black man in the segregated South.

He had chosen — over his father's wishes — to go to Wilberforce University in Ohio for his undergraduate education — instead of his father's choice, Morehouse College — for just that reason. "I had all the segregation I could stand, all of the back-end-of-the-bus and all of the black- and white-water fountains."

As he neared the end of his time in law school, however, a conversation with Willa Adams helped make up his mind. Adams was the wife of Oscar Adams, who at the time was one of the few African-American attorneys practicing law in Birmingham and who would later become the first African American on the Alabama Supreme Court.

Willa Adams, who died in 1982, told Newton he was needed in Birmingham.

"She said, D, I don't care where you go — as long as you're black you'll always be discriminated against, so you might as well come home," said Newton, who is now in his 27th year in the Alabama House of Representatives, including 12 years as that body's first African American speaker pro-tem.

Nationally, law schools nationwide reported 6.8 percent African American enrollment during the 2011-12 year.

Many other young African American men did not come home after being forced to leave the state to attend law school.

But those few black law students who did come home in the 1950s and early 1960s were thrust into the position of point men in courtroom fights during the civil rights movement. Their battles led to overturning many of Birmingham and Alabama's discriminatory and Jim Crow segregationist laws and protecting the rights of protestors.

A few black colleges

Alabama had a few state black colleges. But rather than developing post-graduate schools for doctors, dentists, lawyers and other professionals, southern states, including Alabama, paid a portion of black students' tuition to attend post-graduate schools outside the state.

For young African Americans wanting to become lawyers, the state would pay the
PAST AND PRESENT

1964: 19 African-Americans licensed to practice law through the Alabama State Bar.

2013: 1,098 African-American attorneys — or 6.4 percent — are members of the state bar.

1964: No African-American students at The University of Alabama School of Law.

2013: 8.6 percent of students at The University of Alabama School of Law are African American.

2011-12: Nationally, law schools nationwide reported 6.8 percent African-American enrollment.

10,452: Total African Americans enrolled in law school nationally — an all-time high.

...difference of the cost of tuition and room-and-board at the University of Alabama School of Law and that of an out of state law school the students chose.

"They gave me railroad fare to go up there in September and then in June to come back home," said J. Richmond Pearson, who graduated from Howard University School of Law in 1958 and later became Jefferson County’s first black circuit court judge in the Birmingham Division. Pearson was a defense attorney for the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, who led many of the Birmingham civil rights protests.

Pearson also had been a classmate of King while at Morehouse College.

Many of the students attended prestigious law schools at universities like Harvard, Columbia, Boston and Howard, "which worked out beautifully for those of us who went away," said Newton.

Crucial contacts

It was at Boston University where Newton first met the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who was attending divinity school at that university and would later stay with Newton when he would come to Birmingham. Newton also worked on some of the cases involving King’s Selma to Montgomery March.

Columbia Law School in New York is where U.W. Clemon, who later became the first black federal judge in Alabama, attended law school in the late 1960s. Columbia was the site of protests for civil rights and against the Vietnam War.

During his second year in law school, Clemon began working for the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund under noted civil rights attorney Jack Greenberg — the lawyer who, along with Thurgood Marshall, argued in the landmark 1950s school desegregation lawsuit Brown v. Board of Education.

Arthur Shores, considered the granddad among Alabama civil rights attorneys, didn’t leave the state to go to law school — except one summer in Kansas. He took a legal education correspondence course from LaSalle University, said his daughter, Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Helen Shores Lee.

The first time her father took the bar exam, he failed. Lee said. She said before the second time her father took the exam in 1937, he was tutored by Montgomery County Circuit Judge Walter B. Jones, a white judge who founded the Thomas Goode Jones School of Law in Montgomery in 1928 named for his father.

Arthur Shores’ father had been a contractor and had done some work for Judge Jones, Lee said.

Second time

At the end of his second bar exam, Lee said, her father didn’t want to take a chance that his exam sheets — which are supposed to be anonymous — would be singled out. So when he went up to the front of the room he stuck his exam in the middle of the pile “so they might not have been able to tag where he had put his papers,” she said.

“If he had just walked up and laid it there, someone could have marked it,” Lee said.

Shores passed the second time around and in 1938 he had begun filing lawsuits that sought to protect or garner rights for African Americans, such as the rights to vote. He was one of only a few African American attorneys practicing in the Birmingham area by that time.
Native American park to hold 5k

Moundville event will memorialize plight of Southeastern Indians

Staff report

TUSCALOOSA | The University of Alabama’s Moundville Archaeological Park will hold its first 5k walk memorializing the Trail of Tears on Saturday.

The event, “Full Circle: Transcending the Trail of Tears,” will feature presentations, book signings, video viewing and more.

“This event seeks to reverse the cultural barriers and misconceptions that propagated the Trail of Tears,” said Betsy Irwin, the park’s education outreach coordinator. “By promoting cultural understanding of who the Southeastern Indian people were and are, we hope to help heal the wounds generated through prejudice and unawareness.”

Beginning in the 1830s, the United States government adopted a policy that resulted in the widespread removal of Southeastern Indians from the Moundville area, Irwin said. Although typically associated with the Cherokee removal, the term “Trail of Tears” now represents the mass displacement.
RUN

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of people from numerous tribes over the course of almost a decade, she said.

In addition to the commemorative walk, visitors will have an opportunity to hear from Ron Cooper, a member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma who walked the Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail of Tears National Historic Trail as a personal adventure of self-reflection and chronicled his journey in his book “It’s My Trail Too: A Comanche Indian’s Journey on the Cherokee Trail of Tears.” Cooper will be available for book signings and discussions after the walk.

Participants can also watch a video of another walk commemorating the Chickasaw Trail of Tears, which is held annually in Tuscumbia.

Walk organizers Robert Perry and Annie Cooper Perry will be available to answer questions and autograph videotapes and books.

Chickasaw author Robert Perry has written three books — “Life with the Little People,” “Uprising! Woody Crumbo’s Indian Art” and “The Turkey Feather Cape: My Creation from Beyond History.” The last documents his journey of recreating a feather cape styled after those worn by southeastern Indians during prehistoric and early historic times.

The event will begin at noon with the walk starting at 1:30 p.m. There is no entry fee for participating in the commemorative walk, but park entrance fees apply.
Alabama graduate wins 'Fashion Star,' $3 million prize

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University of Alabama graduate and New York City-based fashion designer Hunter Bell scored a $3 million prize after winning NBC's second season of "Fashion Star."

The Florence, S.C., native showcased her fashion sense and skills during the spring-time reality series and won the opportunity to debut her own collection with three top U.S. retailers.

Bell, 32, officially won $3 million in orders for capsule collections in Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue and Express stores.

“This competition is all about perseverance, listening, challenging yourself and being challenged," Bell said in a recent release. "Throughout the competition, I just kept reminding myself to run the race with fierce endurance and press on toward that goal. And, in that final moment when I crossed that finish line, ... there was just an amazing sense of accomplishment."

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and feeling of acceptance in this industry. It's very surreal to have all three buyers say 'We want you.' That's what all designers want to hear on a daily basis."

Bell competed against 12 other designer contestants during the six-week period, working with design mentors and participating in weekly challenges to design clothing with specific looks and functions. Contestants would then present to buyers from the three retailers, who would decide then and there to purchase and carry the designs exclusively in their stores.

The UA grad worked closely with several mentors, including Jessica Simpson, who shared useful advice, Bell said.

"She embraces her sexuality, and she taught me to embrace that woman who has curves and wants to show them off," she said. "Watching the finale for the first time and seeing Jessica run to me before the fashion show and give me a hug, that was real. She was really so genuine and loving and giving."

Bell will now focus on evolving her line, increasing her online presence and making her brand relevant, she says.

"I want to keep moving, keep the customers excited and stay true to who my customer is," she said. "I like to say she's a Southern belle with a New York state of mind — true and sophisticated, with a touch of dark and edgy."

Bell studied fashion design and studio art at UA, graduating in 2003. Shortly after graduation, she left Tuscaloosa to pursue a career in New York City. In 2006, she launched her fashion line Hunter Dixon with then roommate Jennifer Dixon.
Westboro outnumbered

Kansas-based hate group overwhelmed by 20-to-1 margin

By Mark Hughes Cobb
Staff Writer

Counter-protesters to the Westboro Baptist Church outnumbered the traveling hatemongers by a ratio of 20-to-1 or more Saturday.

Westboro brought 11 people — four of them children — to a spot outside Russell Hall, designated and gated off by the University of Alabama.

For a UA-designated half-hour, the Kansas-based group waved signs printed with slogans such as “God Hates Fags” and “Bloody Obama,” while across Hackberry, hundreds gathered to mock and drown them out.

A dozen riders on Harleys roared by, circling back again and again to deafen the chants of the WBC, set to boombox-played songs such as Lady Antebellum’s “Need You Now,” but with altered lyrics and dire warnings of the doom for all those who don’t follow the WBC.

The hundreds gathered to counter-protest chanted “Love, not hate” and “T-Town Never Down,” a slogan adopted in the wake of the April 27, 2011, tornado, which the WBC came to town to proclaim was the wrath of God.

Signs drawn up by the counter-protesters ranged from shows of resistance, such as “The WBC can’t hurt us, we’re Tuscaloosa strong,” “Don’t Feed the Trolls,” “Freak Show” and “Get on your broomsticks and go back to Kansas,” to calls for love and forgiveness, such as “Hug it out,” “God is Love,” “Compassion, Not Hate,” and “At 1st I wanted WBC to feel my wrath, but since I am Baptist, I will forgive you,” to outright mockery: “Gar-gamel Hates Smurfs,” “Your Ad Here,” “Han Shot First,” and “Guy for Gosling.”

A group of four signs, when flipped to their opposing sides, read “Firefly was Ripped Off.”

The hundreds gathered to counter-protest chanted “Love, not hate” and “T-Town Never Down,” a slogan adopted in the wake of the April 27, 2011, tornado, which the WBC came to town to proclaim was the wrath of God.

Stephen Robbins, a U.S. Navy veteran, was among those counter-protesting the WBC.

“The only way they can get their hate out there is by outrageous acts,” Robbins said. “What we can do is tell them we love them and forgive them, and maybe they’ll go away.”

Organizers of the counter-protests worked phone calls, club meetings and social media to get people out on a humid Saturday afternoon when much of UA’s operations shut down.

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WESTBORO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

They stressed messages of peace and forgiveness for the WBC.

"We oppose hate, period," said Ashley Rubic. "To oppose hate, you cannot have hatred in your heart."

Steven Headley, who had hundreds of people signed up on his Facebook post about a counter-protest, said he felt frustrated and perplexed by UA's reluctance to clarify what would and wouldn't be allowed on campus.

"We could have been able to get an even bigger group if (UA) hadn't seemed to be hesitating about allowing us to be here," he said. "But we were going to find a way to be here anyway, just to send out a positive message."

Perhaps because the groups were separated by about 50 yards, barricades and UA police, no direct confrontations occurred.

When the WBC contingent was led off by the police at 12:30 — their permit was from noon to 12:30 only — the counter-protesting side cheered long and hard as the Harleys roared by one more time.
Protesters from Westboro Baptist Church, in Topeka, Kan., picket near the corner of University Boulevard and Hackberry Lane on the campus of the University of Alabama as motorcyclists rev their engines in counter-protest on Saturday.
Kilgore House was worth preserving

In a place that sometimes seems to value its history a little too much, the University of Alabama's decision to demolish the Kilgore House is a bit surprising. We regret that the university chose this path.

Tucked away in what was once a quiet corner of campus, the Kilgore House went largely unnoticed for many years. It served as headquarters for Alabama Heritage magazine in recent years. While it might have had many of the problems older structures often have, the Queen Anne-style Victorian house built in 1890 appeared in good shape for a building more than 120 years old.

It's true that the house's origins weren't tied directly to the University of Alabama. It was built for an engineer for Bryce Hospital. But it still held some significance to the university's history and to an important social movement.

The family that lived in the Kilgore House rented rooms to some of the university's first female students. At the time, male students mostly lived on campus. But there was no on-campus housing for female students when they first enrolled at UA in the early 20th century. The university's first female faculty member also lived in the house.

Time has erased much of the emotion that accompanied the issue, but at the time, the struggle for women's rights was contentious. Gaining the right to attend the state's flagship university was an important victory.

Moving an old structure like the Kilgore house is expensive and difficult. It was apparently so expensive and troublesome that private individuals weren't willing to take on the project.

The space where the house was located will be used for a student plaza, hardly a pressing need. Considering the amount of money UA has spent on campus expansion and new buildings, it seems that enough money and a spot on the recently acquired Bryce Hospital campus could have been secured to preserve a stately old house that has long graced the UA campus.
UAB wants people for new Parkinson's study

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Losing your sense of smell might be a risk factor for developing Parkinson's disease and to that end the University of Alabama at Birmingham is part of a worldwide effort to sniff out the answers.

The study is looking for people older than 60 who don't have the disease but are willing to take an online survey, which will be followed up in most cases by a scratch-and-sniff test.

"They have 40 different scents," said UAB spokesman Bob Shepard. "They scratch a small area of each scent patch and try to determine what it smells like. There are four possible answers for each to choose from."

The study is sponsored by the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. This study is a new arm of the long-running Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI), which is looking to attract as many as 20,000 people worldwide to participate.

"Understanding risk factors for Parkinson's disease could help to identify therapies that may prevent the onset of motor symptoms in future generations of PD patients," Dr. David Standaert, professor and chair of the Department of Neurology said.
UAB Child Development Center holds preschooler Bike Rodeo

Joe Songer
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Four- and 5-year-olds at the UAB Child Development Center learned bike safety and raised money to assist St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital's fund for cancer and other catastrophic diseases. A course was set up at the UAB Police parking lot across from the center for the kids to ride and learn bike safety.

The children brought their bikes, trikes and scooters to the center and learned bike safety from UAB Police Sgt. Bryan Fields before hitting the course and riding with their friends. All of the children learned the importance of safety helmets. Teachers and parents manned the course and helped with minor collisions, shot photos and video of the ride.
How's your self-esteem, Birmingham?

Tide of skepticism recedes as city center rebounds

By Stan Diel  sdiel@al.com

There's been a steady stream of good news about Birmingham's city center in recent months.

Downtown lofts are nearly 100 percent occupied, and bars and restaurants dot First and Second Avenues North. Businesses, including an apparel company and a new brewery, are snapping up buildings around the new Regions Field baseball stadium.

Developers are even once again kicking the tires on downtown's historic Cabana Hotel building. (The one with the blimp pad on the roof.)

So what's a hater to do? Climb on the bandwagon, said Maury Lyon.

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“I used to never want to go downtown,” said Lyon, who counts himself among the longtime skeptics who thought reports of a downtown renaissance were overblown. “I was one of them,” he said.

But in March, Lyon and his business partners moved their company, State Traditions, to a building adjacent to the ballpark. And earlier this week he followed suit personally, buying a condo in the LIV on Fifth building, which sits between WorkPlay and the new Iron City bar, restaurant and event venue.

Downtown, Lyon said, is finally beginning to throw off a well-earned burden of skepticism and convince cynics it has a future.

Joshua Klapow, an associate professor of psychology at the UAB School of Public Health, said it’s hard to say whether the community’s collective mood regarding the city center has improved. Economic development, he said, is a crude indicator.

“Our city is not an individual, living, breathing thing,” he said. But growth that contributes to quality of life, that creates opportunity for people to come together, can boost a community’s self-image.

“I think what you’re seeing is great strides in things that are good for the collective well-being,” he said. Despite the negativity and pessimism, you are seeing development and growth socially in the city. I think the trend is going in the right direction.”

Acceptance and progress

Robert Simon, president of Birmingham-based Corporate Realty, was one of the most influential forces behind the Birmingham Barons’ move back to the city, and his firm has sizable real estate interests near the ballpark. Still, even Simon concedes that a psychological anchor has limited the city’s progress.

Skepticism and cynicism have their roots in the city’s civil rights history, in the challenging political atmosphere in Birmingham and Jefferson County, and in a history of corruption, he said. What’s changed is that an older generation is coming to terms with the past as a younger one is looking to the future.

“We’ve accepted our place in history, but we’ve also decided to move forward. And the people who are going to come and live and eat and work and play in these areas will be a younger generation that doesn’t take any ownership of the past.”

Robert Simon
President of Corporate Realty

“We’ve accepted our place in history, but we’ve also decided to move forward. And the people who are going to come and live and eat and work and play in these areas will be a younger generation that doesn’t take any ownership of the past.”

Robert Simon
President of Corporate Realty

Fans pack Regions Field in Birmingham on the stadium’s opening day April 10. (Joe Songer/jsonger@al.com).

ROOTS OF CYNCISM

Why does Birmingham tend to be so down on itself? Here are some reasons:

- Its historically ugly record on civil rights
- A long series of high-profile corruption cases involving top elected officials
- Persistent lack of cooperation among area governments/officials
- Jefferson County’s massive municipal bankruptcy

There will always be pessimists,” he said. “Frankly, there will always be people who are pessimistic and like it that way.”

But, Simon said, the tide of city center cynicism seems to have turned.

“We’re doing some things right,” he said. “There’s opportunity all around.”

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Birmingham family to be featured on TLC's home-buying TV show

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Metro Birmingham will be in the spotlight this weekend on the TLC real estate show, "My First Home," as it chronicles a local family's house hunt.

Andrew and Trista Wolverton were looking to move out of their 400-square-foot studio apartment on Southside, which was way too small for their growing brood. The family, which now includes 18-month-old Ruby and 1-month-old Wesley, and three dogs, did find the perfect home. But because of show rules, they can't reveal their new address until the show airs Saturday from 11 a.m. to noon.

An Alpharetta, Ga., couple is featured first, and the Wolvertons follow them.

Their real estate agent, Randall Alsabrook of ERA-King Real Estate Co., also is featured on the show.

The group's search included homes in Hoover, Homewood, Crestwood and along U.S. 280. The show's camera crews captured those areas, as well as landmarks such as Railroad Park, McWane Science Center, Vulcan, Overton Park and George Ward Park.

The Wolvertons were selected for the show after Alsabrook suggested them to producers looking for first-time home buyers.

"I feel like they found their perfect first home."

Randall Alsabrook
Real estate agent

Along the way, there were the typical stresses of buying a home: dealing with red tape, juggling work and family between showings and contemplating the major commitment of such a purchase.

Meanwhile, a bidding war ensued with one property they considered, a foreclosure, and they found water in the basement of another house. "It was definitely a challenge to find something that fit our budget and fit our family's needs," Andrew Wolverton said.

At the time, he was finishing up his physical therapy degree at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and taking his boards. He now works at Children's Hospital.

The Wolvertons hail from the Pacific Northwest — Andrew from Washington and Trista from Alaska. They moved to Birmingham in 2008 for school.

Alsabrook said the current local market is a good one for first-time home buyers, as interest rates remain low. "I feel like they found their perfect first home," he said.

Randall Alsabrook of ERA-King Real Estate Co., right, with his clients Andrew and Trista Wolverton and their children, Ruby and Wesley. The Wolvertons will be featured on TLC's "My First Home" on Saturday. (Dawn Kent/dkent@al.com)
Oklahoma tornado is a standout, storm scientist says

By: Eryn Brown

A tornado researcher at the University of Alabama at Huntsville couldn't believe it when he heard Monday that a devastating twister was headed toward Moore, Okla.

"One of my graduate students came in my office yesterday and said, 'Moore is about to be hit again,' " Kevin Knupp said. "I said, what?"

Monday's devastating storm was the third major tornado to strike the town since 1999. But Knupp, whose work focuses on how external influences like features on the ground systems contribute to tornado formation, said that scientists don't know yet whether the Oklahoma City suburb's string of storm hits was random or a result of circumstances particular to the area.

"It stands out, and we don't know if it's luck of the draw or if there's something physical or systematic going on," he said. "I think with time we'll have a better understanding." He said that scientists may explore the question by building computer models that can simulate the conditions on the ground Monday in Moore.

Knupp said that he and his graduate student watched the tornado in real time, tracking its path using radar. He said he thought that another dissipating storm in the area may have influenced the megatwister's formation, creating a surge in momentum in low-level air that might have contributed to the circulation of the larger storm.

"It's a case we can add to our list where the external influences seem to be prominent," he said.

The pair measured the width of the tornado's circulation at about 2 miles wide, and their radar readings indicated that debris was scattered across a path at least that broad. Early reports have estimated the storm's strength rating at an EF4 level. Knupp said he thought the tornado might be upgraded to an EF5 -- the most powerful rating a tornado can receive -- once scientists get a closer look at the damage on the ground.

He said that tornado researchers in Oklahoma would want to get started on aerial and ground-based damage surveys as soon as they could, to get the most accurate reading possible of the storm's track and impact. But since it was cloudy Tuesday morning, they might not yet have been able to get out in the field, he added.

He said he thought a local weatherman's suggestion that the twister was "the worst in the history of the world" was probably tinged by the intense emotions of the day.

"There are various ways to make that evaluation," Knupp said. "But while the tornado was intense and wide, it was about as bad as it gets. I can't dispute that."
Interpretation of law clouds UAH rape charge

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Alabama law addresses allegations of rape or non-consensual sex between adults through both felony and misdemeanor charges. The University of Alabama in Huntsville Police Department's incident report for Jan. 13 says the department charged UAH hockey player Lasse Uusivirta, with rape in the first degree.

That is the most serious charge under Alabama law covering rape. It is a Class A felony which carries a possible sentence of 10 years in prison to life, in cases where no weapon was involved and it does not involve a child under 12.

Difficulties in cases

But the facts of the case could lead to more than one interpretation under Alabama law, both for a possible charge and sentence, said Bruce Gardner, a Huntsville criminal defense attorney and former prosecutor.

"The difficulties in cases like this are just the cloud that usually surrounds it," Gardner said. "There are usually drugs or alcohol, or a combination of the two involved and nobody really knows what happened. You're basically left with competing versions. He said this, she said that."

The first-degree rape charge in the UAH case appears to be based on statements Uusivirta made to UAH police following an allegation of rape by an 18-year-old female student.

Uusivirta told UAH police that he began engaging in sex with the woman for about 10 seconds, but stopped because she seemed to be drunk and didn't know what was going on, according to the incident report. The report goes on to say that although she never said "no" or "stop" he realized she was incapable of giving consent to sexual intercourse.

Not uncommon to call DA

Given Uusivirta's alleged statement, the first-degree rape law could apply as it bars "sexual intercourse with a member of the opposite sex who is incapable of consent because of being physically helpless or mentally incapacitated."

The case was not initially referred by the UAH police to the Madison County District Attorney's office for consideration of the charges, the university said, although prosecutors have said it is not uncommon for law enforcement agencies to call the district attorney's office to discuss what charges are appropriate.

The case was initially handled through the university discipline process, but the female student later asked that an arrest warrant be issued for Uusivirta and he was arrested on the first-degree rape charge April 1. After his preliminary hearing was waived, Uusivirta left the U.S. for Finland May 1. His attorneys have said he is not expected to return.

Questions for victim, too

If the case had proceeded, Uusivirta's attorneys, who declined to comment for this story, would have almost certainly raised a number of issues contained in the alleged victim's statement that might weigh against a first-degree rape charge.

In her statement to police, the woman described being led by Uusivirta down stairs to a bedroom; she recalled it being a back bedroom, she told him her name and remembered getting into the bed. In the statement, she remembered asking him his name and "who are you?" several times and his refusal to answer. She also recalled details of the incident said that the room had a Bob Marley poster on the wall.

Defense attorneys would have likely pointed to those details in arguing that she was not physically helpless or mentally incapacitated. "The woman drove to her apartment after the incident."

The defense would almost certainly point out that a UAH police officer who interviewed the woman about an hour after the incident reported he could smell alcohol on her breath, but she did not appear impaired.

Sexual misconduct laws

Alabama's second-degree rape law couldn't apply to the case, since the law involves a child under 16 or someone who is mentally defective.

Alabama also has a sexual misconduct statute, that attorney Gardner said appears to match the details in the incident report. Sexual misconduct is a first-degree misdemeanor and carries a sentence of up to a year in prison.

Alabama sexual misconduct code section 13A-6-65 reads in part, "Being a male, he engages in sexual intercourse with a female without her consent, under circumstances other than those covered by (the Rape 1 and Rape 2 statutes); or with her consent where consent was obtained by the use of any fraud or artifice."


Unanswered questions

UAH silent on how former hockey player was punished after being accused of rape

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The former University of Alabama Huntsville hockey player charged with first-degree rape confessed to police that he engaged in non-consensual sex with the victim, according to campus police records.

UAH police, however, did not arrest Lasse Uusivirta and opted not to contact Huntsville police or the Madison County District Attorney's office. And the punishment Uusivirta faced within the university's student conduct code remains a mystery.

The 18-year-old victim told police the day after the incident in January that she wanted the case handled through the UAH student conduct board, according to the incident report taken by UAH police. By April 1, she changed her mind and sought to have Uusivirta criminally prosecuted, according to UAH police.

Didn't miss a game

UAH has refused to say what happened in the campus disciplinary process, citing federal student privacy laws. UAH acknowledged that those privacy laws provide the school the option to disclose the disciplinary action in the case, but officials have chosen not to do so.

UAH also invoked the federal student privacy laws when asked if Uusivirta remained in class through the end of the semester.

What's clear, though, is that Uusivirta played in every UAH hockey game after the incident — including being in the starting lineup in the first game after being accused of raping another student and being involved in the university student disciplinary system.

Ultimately, the case appears closed. Uusivirta essentially self-deported last month — returning to See UAH, Page 10A

THE NIGHT OF THE INCIDENT

This is how events unfolded on Jan. 13, according to police reports:

> In the early morning hours at a Southeast Campus Housing area dorm, the woman said she began drinking wine and made plans to sleep at another dorm room.

> After falling asleep, she was awakened by Lasse Uusivirta, who told her she couldn't sleep in that dorm room. He escorted her down a flight of stairs to another room and showed her a bed where she could sleep.

> Between 4-4:30 a.m. — once the woman was in bed — Uusivirta asked if there was room for him and the woman rolled over, the report said. The woman told police Uusivirta began kissing her and removing her clothing while she repeatedly asked him who he was. Uusivirta never answered, she told police.

> When interviewed by police, according to the incident report, Uusivirta provided largely the same narrative — saying that he led the woman to his bed, asked if there was room for him, began removing her clothes and eventually having sex.

> Uusivirta told police that he ended the sexual encounter after about 10 seconds because "she seemed to be drunk and didn't know what was going on."

> At 5:30 a.m., the woman told police she thought she had been raped. Police noted on the report that the woman's breath smelled of alcohol but that she did not appear to be impaired.

> About 6:15 a.m., a sexual assault nurse examined the woman. A sexual assault collection kit was turned over to police the next day.

> About 11 a.m., police searched Uusivirta's dorm room for evidence. Nothing was found, according to the report.

See next page
to his native Finland — and prosecutors say they won’t seek to bring him back to the country to face the charge. Should he return, though, prosecutors have said the rape charge will be waiting for him.

**UAH: No outside help needed**

The day after reporting the incident, the victim met with campus police and said she wanted the incident to be forwarded to the UAH student conduct board for prosecution, to which UAH police agreed.

"Crime victims are provided reporting options as part of the process involving such incidents," UAH said in a statement to The Times.

Uusivirta was not arrested and no outside law enforcement agencies were contacted by UAH police regarding the incident.

"Our police completed a thorough investigation of this incident and it was determined that assistance by other law enforcement agencies was not needed," UAH said in a statement to The Times.

**Punishment not revealed**

What happened next is unclear. UAH said in an April 1 statement to The Times that "punishment was administered to the student in accordance with established university policies and precedents."

According to the UAH student handbook, in cases of sexual violence, a formal hearing will be held by the student conduct board. If the student conduct board finds the student "responsible," the board can impose sanctions, which must be reviewed by the provost/executive vice president, who at the time was Vlastep Karbassi. Karbassi has since accepted the job as president of the University of Texas-Arlington and will be assuming that office next month.

A student may also appeal the finding or the sanctions of the student conduct board to the Dean of Students, who is

Regina Hyatt of the Times repeatedly asked UAH what charge Uusivirta faced before the student conduct board and what punishment was imposed.

UAH cited the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as the basis for not disclosing the requested information.

When The Times pointed out that the FERPA law allowed universities to release the name of student, charge he faced and punishment he received, school officials said such disclosure was an option and not mandated by the law. And the school stood by its decision not to release the information.

"The rights and privacy of our students are of paramount importance to this university," the school said in a statement to The Times.

The school had said in a statement to The Times, "and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act does not mandate the public release of information of students enrolled on campuses across the nation."

"UAH has and will consistently protect personal information entrusted to us by our students."

**Punishment unclear**

While whatever punishment Uusivirta received remains unknown, his status with the hockey team appeared to not have been affected.

On Feb. 8, the Chargers played their first hockey game since Uusivirta was accused of rape almost a month earlier. When the puck dropped to start the game that night at Penn State, Uusivirta was in the starting lineup.

Uusivirta also played in the next three games to finish the season, never missing a game.

A month later, on April 1, the victim informed UAH police that she wanted Uusivirta to be criminally prosecuted. He was arrested later that day and booked into the Madison County Metro Jail on a charge of rape in the first degree.

"Update to initial case dated 4/1/2013 in the campus crime report states "Victim chose to pursue criminal charges against the suspect. Suspect was arrested." It's not clear what led the victim to change her mind. Her attorney, Christopher Long, declined to comment for this story."

The Madison County District Attorney's office provided a statement on Uusivirta leaving the country and why it would not seek extradition.

"The DA's office is not involved in the initial setting of bond or the conditions of bond," the statement said. "As such, we no longer have the position to require defendants to surrender their passports as part of their original bond conditions. Although our office does ask for specific bond conditions in certain situations as cases develop, at this point nothing would be gained by doing that since the defendant is no longer in the country."

"On the issue of international extradition, the DA's office simply does not have the capacity to extradite defendants from foreign nations without involving the U.S. State Department. It was determined that based upon the facts of this case, and based upon the fact that the defendant cannot now return to the United States without facing criminal charges, we will not be expending the resources necessary to seek his extradition."

As recently as two days before prosecutors confirmed, on May 1 that Uusivirta had left the country, his name was still listed on the UAH hockey roster.

"By May 1, it had been removed."

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The Huntsville Times
Friday, May 17, 2013

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4 plead guilty in Alabama college hazing case

JACKSONVILLE | Four men pleaded guilty Tuesday to their involvement in hazing at Jacksonville State University.

The Anniston Star reported that Justavious Johnson, 22; Juston Thomas and Mikel Whitter, both 23; and Varian May, 28, each pleaded guilty to one count of hazing stemming from a November 2011 incident.

The victim told investigators he was trying to pledge Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and was ordered to drink alcohol, was hit with eggs, paddles and other objects and was repeatedly beaten at an off-campus site for about four hours.

The man was hospitalized and suffered from internal bleeding, reduced kidney functioning and other injuries. The victim was hospitalized for 24 days and filed a civil suit against the fraternity and its Jacksonville State chapter.

JSU’s chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha has since been dismissed from campus. A university official has said that the incident was one of the worst hazing cases the school has seen.

Twelve other men have been charged with hazing and assault, and two others have been charged with hazing in the case.
MONTGOMERY

Violent crime up 25 percent in capital
Agencies flummoxed by spike; faculty sought to look at data

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Violent crime in the city of Montgomery is up in 2013 as evident by the numerous reports of homicides, shootings and robberies.

According to statistics recently released by the Montgomery Department of Public Safety, violent crime is up 25 percent this year through the end of April, compared to the same period of 2012.

Local law enforcement says it is hard to know what is causing the uptick in violent crime, and it is difficult to prevent these crimes of an emotional nature. Homicides in the city were up by 13 through the end of April while robberies were up by 21 cases and aggravated assaults were up by 28.

Other crimes down

"There is a bit of frustration about this," Montgomery Public Safety Director Chris Murphy admitted. "We can’t determine a rhyme or a reason (for the increase)."

He said detectives are doing a good job at solving the crimes after they are committed.

Overall, crime in Montgomery is down by 11 percent this year due to a decrease in burglaries and other thefts, according to the Montgomery Department of Public Safety.

Outside help requested

Murphy said he enlisted the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Montgomery County District’s Attorney’s Office to help Montgomery Police analyze its data and try to prevent violent crime from occurring.

Faculty from Auburn University and Alabama State University has also been enlisted to look at the data and find out if the department is missing anything. Murphy said partnerships will be the key to solving the problem.

In two to three years from now, Murphy said he hopes to be able to look back on 2013 and see the rise in crime as an anomaly and not something that has become an ongoing trend.

Recent cases

Montgomery’s 23rd homicide this year with a stabbing death on May 13 off McCarter Avenue.

A task force continues to investigate two home invasions that occurred May 3 in the 400 block of Bell Road and on April 11 in the 3300 block of Crestwood Lane. Victims in both of those cases had their hands restrained with zip ties by five people.

Murphy said Thursday that "some significant physical evidence" has been found in the Bell Road case.

He wasnt able to release any more details in the case. Another home invasion where a man was shot and injured at a residence in the 3400 block of Cross Creek Drive on May 14 is unrelated to the other cases, Murphy said.
ALABAMA STATE
School will argue to overturn jury verdict

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Alabama State University is fighting to overturn a jury verdict that could cost the school more than $2 million in damages and legal fees for creating a racially and sexually hostile work environment and retaliating against three women who complained.

U.S. Circuit Judge William Pryor Jr. has set oral arguments in the appeal for the week of Aug. 19.

The suit, filed by former ASU employees Jacqueline Weatherly, Cynthia Williams and Lydia Burkhalter, centers on conduct in ASU offices overseen by then Director for Marketing and Communications John Knight.

He is now executive vice president and chief operating officer and a state representative.

During trial in U.S. District Court, the three women testified they were subjected to egregious racial and sexual harassment, including unwanted touching and frequent, pervasive use of the n-word, at the hands of Knight’s second in charge, Lavonette Bartley, who has since retired voluntarily.

Burkhalter also alleged she was sexually harassed by Knight on multiple occasions.

Weatherly and Williams are black women, as is Bartley, court records show. Burkhalter is described as biracial.

The three plaintiffs told the jury the university failed to address their complaints about the conduct, instead retaliating against them and eventually firing them when they complained.

The jury awarded the women a combined $1.039 million.

Knight declined an interview request, but ASU released a statement saying it puts “special emphasis (on) complying with all laws and regulations, which include all EEOC rules and regulations.”

Efforts to reach Bartley were unsuccessful.
'We were relentless'

After eliminating 12-time nation champ UCLA, Blazers in history-making Super Regional

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Leigh Streetman did what looked nearly impossible. When she ran to the dugout after striking out UCLA's No. 4 and 5 hitters with the bases loaded in the top of the 13th to preserve a tie game, UAB head coach Marla Townsend had one message for her. “Put your glove up,” Townsend told her.

Streetman gave her the “am I coming out of the game” look, but Townsend felt the momentum from the end of the top of the 13th would carry over to the bottom of the inning.

Boy, did it. Whitney Fletcher laced a one-out triple to right field, scoring Heather Pearson from first and giving the Blazers a 3-2 win over UCLA and the biggest win in program history.

UAB rallied after losing in the opener on Sunday 4-1 to knock off the 12-time national champion Bruins. UAB (40-17) now heads to the best-of-3 Super Regional at No. 2 seed Florida (55-7), beginning at noon on Saturday on ESPNU. The second and possible third game will be at 11 a.m. on Sunday on ESPN.

I wouldn’t say it’s our best played game, but when you talk about relentless, we were relentless,” Townsend said Monday as she and Streetman met with reporters.

UCLA outhit UAB 16-4 in that second game, but all 16 hits were singles. Streetman, the former Hueytown star who threw five shutout innings to start Game 1,
UAB
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pitched 7 2/3 innings in relief, striking out seven and giving up one unearned run in the top of the 11th, which UAB answered with Fletcher's RBI sacrifice fly in the bottom.

UAB was in that position after beating UCLA on Friday and host Louisville on Saturday. The Blazers helped a 1-0 lead in Game 1, but UCLA scored four in the bottom of the sixth off Lannah Campbell, who came in relief. Campbell had gotten the win in UAB's first two regional games. Pitching depth showed, as Lauren Webster pitched into the sixth in Game 2, holding UCLA to just one run.

Fletcher threw out a runner from center field in the third and ran down a deep fly ball. Another big play came in the sixth when UCLA loaded the bases with one out, but left fielder Amy Dennis caught a fly ball and fired to Anna Kimbrell at the plate for a double play.

"It was huge," Streetman said. "Our defense seriously, I think is the best defense in the nation if we're on our A-game. I could go around the whole entire nine and say something good about them because they all did something good."

Streetman rose to the challenge when adversity struck her the hardest. With the bases loaded and one out in the top of the 13th, she got cleanup hitter Mysha Sataraka swinging to end an 8-pitch at-bat and got No. 5 hitter Britney Rodriguez looking on a 1-2 curve ball.

"When bases got loaded, I wasn't nervous surprisingly," Streetman said. "I really wanted to play for the seniors. I wasn't ready to give up. This is a very special team and we're not done yet."

With one on and one out, Fletcher, UAB's No. 3 hitter who started off the game 0-for-4, had the hit that sent UAB into the Super Regionals. In the 11th, her clutch sacrifice fly tied the game at 2-2.

"Everybody's dog-piling at home," Townsend said. "Not till I went back and looked at the video, I saw Whitney wasn't in the dogpile. She was walking from third to home just bawling. It was just a weight lifted off her shoulders. To go 0-for-4, she had that huge sac fly in extra innings, to have that hit and score the run in extra innings, she had helped her team out."
COLLEGE BASEBALL

UAB earns 8 seed in C-USA tourney

UAB 6, Tulane 3

At New Orleans, James Nalle pitched six scoreless innings of two-hit relief as UAB rallied to beat Tulane 6-3 on Saturday.

UAB won the series and clinched the No. 8 seed in the Conference USA Tournament. Harry Clark drove in three runs, all with two outs, after UAB rallied from being down 3-0.

Clark and Ivan De Jesus had three hits each. Ryan Prinzing and John Frost had two hits each.

Samford gets 8 seed in SoCon tourney

Samford earned the No. 8 seed for the Southern Conference Baseball Tournament, with the Bulldogs meeting top-seeded Western Carolina in the opening round Wednesday at Fluor Field in Greenville, S.C.

Samford wrapped up its regular season on Friday, falling 12-1 to Davidson to finish the year with a record of 27-28 overall and 12-17 in SoCon play.

al.com reports
Alabama storms back for victory
Crimson Tide returns to NCAA Championships

Combined reports.

BATON ROUGE, LA. | The second-ranked University of Alabama men’s golf team shot the lowest round of the day to overtake Florida and win the NCAA Baton Rouge Regional on the par-72, 7,436-yard University Club of Baton Rouge on Saturday.

The Crimson Tide overcame an eight-shot deficit after 36 holes to beat the Gators by six strokes with a 6-under-par 282 on Saturday for a 4-over-par total of 888. Florida carded an 8-over 296 in the final round to finish second at 10-over while LSU vaulted up the leaderboard for a third-place showing at 26-over.

Tennessee made it four teams from the SEC advancing to the NCAA Championships out of the Baton Rouge Regional with an even-par round on Saturday and a 28-over total. Coastal Carolina secured the final NCAA berth with a 30-over.

It was Alabama’s seventh team victory of the year, setting a new school record for wins in a season. The top five teams and low individual not on an advancing team (Tyler Knapp of South Alabama) earned a spot in the 30-team NCAA Championships at the Crabapple Course at the Capital City Club in Woodstock, Ga., on May 28-June 2.

“They did a really great job,” Alabama coach Jay Seawell said of his team following Saturday’s final round. “We played really good all afternoon. We didn’t make many mistakes. We were right in the middle of the field. We’re really proud of the way the team played.”

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NCAA

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week. Looking back, we might have been a little rusty. We had not played a competitive round since SEC (Championship). This team never gave in, and I'm proud of them. You get in these regionals and your mindset is qualifying (for NCAA's), but their mindset was to run to the front today and it was a really special round.

Crimson Tide senior Scott Strohmeyer won his first individual tournament title in the next-to-last event of his career. He carded a 3-under 69 on Saturday for a 4-under 214 total to beat teammate Bobby Wyatt, who was two shots back at 2-under 214. Wyatt shot a 6-under 66 in the final round.

"Scott's win really was special," Sewell said. "We were clearly in the NCAA's and with three holes to go, I think I was more nervous than I have ever been. Those last three holes are really hard and Strohmeyer just played great. I'm really proud and happy for him. He works very hard, and he is a leader. He has always been dedicated to this game, and it is great that he gets this moment."

The 212 was the second-lowest 54-hole total of Strohmeyer's career after shooting 6-under 210 at the 2013 Aggie Invitational to finish third. He made three birdies in the first seven holes Saturday. A bogey on the ninth hole left him at 2-under at the turn. He made eagle on the par-5 11th to move to 4-under. Strohmeyer then made six straight pars before a bogey on the 18th.

Wyatt carded the tournament's low round Saturday with a 6-under 66 that also marked his best round of the season. He finished runner-up for the second time in three events and the fifth time in his three years in Tuscaloosa. Wyatt made three birdies and a bogey on the front nine and four more birdies (10th, 12th, 13th and 18th) on the back to put a little pressure on his teammate.

"Bobby played spectacular golf," Seawell said of Wyatt's final round. "He always seems to have a teammate in front of him when he finishes second, but he is going to get his (chance to win) and I am looking forward to that."

Justin Thomas also posted a top-10 finish with a tie for sixth at 2-over 218. He shot 1-under 73 on Saturday. Cory Whitsett, who came into the event leading the team in scoring, finished tied for 30th at 11-over. It was the first time in seven events he has finished outside of the top 10. Trey Mullinax's 75 was dropped from Alabama's score in the final round and he finished tied for 37th individually.

The Crimson Tide advances to its 15th NCAA Championships, seventh under Seawell and third straight.
UA golfers Wyatt, Whitsett win academic honor

TUSCALOOSA | University of Alabama men's golfers Bobby Wyatt and Cory Whitsett made the Academic All-District IV men's at-large team.

Both carry perfect 4.0 grade-point averages for their careers and are on the Academic All-America ballot after earning the all-district honors.

"Bobby and Cory continue to perform at a championship level both in the classroom and on the golf course, and that is a testament to the importance they place on both areas of their collegiate careers," UA associate athletics director for student services Jon Dever said. "We are very proud of all they have accomplished to this point and we look forward to more of the same as they continue on with their careers."

In addition to their prowess in the classroom, the junior duo has led Alabama to a pair of Southeastern Conference titles, a pair of NCAA regional championships and an NCAA runner-up finish in 2012.

A 2012 All-American and two-time All-Southeastern Conference selection, Wyatt is a two-year member of the SEC Academic Honor Roll and the Burton R. Morley Scholarship Award winner as well as the Crimson Achievement Scholarship recipient and the Alumni Heritage Scholarship.

Whitsett is the 2012 NCAA Elite 89 winner, which goes to the student-athlete with the highest career GPA at each of the NCAA's 89 national championship sites. A two-time All-American and two-time All-SEC selection, the Houston native was the 2011 SEC Freshman of the Year and the 2013 SEC Men's Golf Player of the Year and Scholar-Athlete of the Year.
LOUD AND CLEAR

Tide sends a message with win, advances to super regional

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

TUSCALOOSA | The University of Alabama softball team had heard the whispers.

What has been wrong with the Crimson Tide? What happened to the defending national champions?

Those whispers were enough to make them want to scream.

They let it all out Sunday at Rhoads Stadium with a loud statement, crushing Western Kentucky 13-1 in five innings in a merciless mercy-rule victory for the championship of the NCAA Tuscaloosa Regional.

Alabama (45-13) advanced to the super regional round of the NCAA tournament for the ninth year in a row, dating to the start of the super regional format. The Crimson Tide will visit Tennessee for a best-of-three series, with the winner moving on to the Women’s College World Series. The first game is set for Friday at 6 p.m. on ESPN2, with the series resuming Saturday at 4 p.m. on ESPN.

That peak started in the top of the first inning, with Alabama playing as the visitor on its home field under the NCAA’s postseason format. Top-of-the-order batters Kayla Brand and Haylie McClenny, who combined to go 6-for-7 on the day, started it off with back-to-back infield singles as UA showed its short game. Hunt moved them over with a sacrifice bunt, and catcher Molly Fichtner drove in a run with a sacrifice fly for a 1-0 lead.

Coaching played a role in sparking a six-run outburst in the second inning. Alabama coach Patrick Murphy, playing a hunch that Western Kentucky would start left-handed pitcher Mallorie Sulaski instead of ace righty Emily Rousseau, started right-handed batter Danielle Richard as the designated hitter because he liked the matchup. Richard confirmed Murphy’s hunch with a leadoff home run in the second, making it 2-0.

NCAA SUPER REGIONAL

Alabama vs. Tennessee

- Where: Knoxville, Tenn.
- Game 1: 6 p.m., Friday (ESPN2)
- Game 2: 4 p.m., Saturday (ESPN)
- Game 3: 7 p.m., Saturday (ESPN2)
- Records: Alabama 45-13, Tennessee 47-10
- Radio: 90.7 FM

ESPN. The third game, if necessary, will be played Saturday at 7 p.m. on ESPN2.

UA will move on to the round of 16 with a regained swagger after dispatching the upset-minded Hilltoppers (43-18), who had taken Alabama to the limit in a 7-6 Crimson Tide victory the day before. But Western Kentucky encountered a different Alabama in the regional final.

“We wanted to try to have a mission, to try to kind of make a statement,” said second baseman Kaila Hunt, who made her statement with a grand slam in the second inning. “We’re starting to peak at the right time.”

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REGIONAL

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It was, however, only the beginning. Rousseau relieved Sulaski (13-9) three batters later, and Alabama promptly loaded the bases for Hunt, who launched her grand slam over left field.

An RBI single from Fichtner and a sac fly by Richard in the fourth pushed the lead to 9-0, and Alabama added four more runs in the fifth, with McClency hitting a two-RBI single and senior Jackey Branham adding an RBI double.

The particulars didn't matter as much as the fact that Alabama executed in every area of its game. Lost in the offensive barrage was a sterling outing from junior ace Jackie Traina, the driving force behind last year's national championship run.

Traina (19-6), who pitched 288% innings last season then went on tour with the U.S. national team without a rest, hadn't looked the same in 2013. She found her old form in this outing, holding Western Kentucky to one hit with a mix of power pitches and off-speed offerings. She didn't issue a walk and needed just 52 pitches to get through four innings, with the only Western Kentucky run coming in the last inning of reliever Leslie Jury.

"I felt great," Traina said.

An Alabama team that stumbled into the postseason with six losses in its final nine regular-season games is feeling like a contender again.

"We're starting to find it," Hunt said. "I think that's huge for us."

"I don't think there's anything wrong (with this team), to be honest. In nine or 10 of our losses if you get a hit here or make a play there, then we don't have those losses. All that matters is we know we have the potential to be that good."

Murphy knows that he has a confident team, and a formidable one.

"I'm a happy coach," he said.

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"All that matters is we know we have the potential to be that good."

Kaila Hunt on Alabama's chances of repeating as national champion
Vandy star says Tide might be SEC sleeper

Don Kausler Jr.
dkausler@al.com

NASHVILLE — The teams to beat in the 2013 Southeastern Conference baseball tournament should seem obvious. They’re the top two teams in some college baseball polls: No. 1 Vanderbilt and No. 2 LSU.

"On any given day, it could go either way," Alabama coach Mitch Gaspard said Saturday after a 14-10 loss to the Commodores. "They’re both awfully good. But I think there’s other teams there too that could certainly come in the back door and be a sleeper in that tournament."

So who’s the sleeper?

"Alabama could be," Vanderbilt outfielder Mike Yastrzemski said. "They played unbelievable weekend. They’re a good group of kids. They have hard chips. They’re not going to get knocked down easily. They’re going to put up a fight. It wouldn’t shock me if they tried to make a run for it."

The Crimson Tide (32-24, 14-15 SEC) is the No. 7 seed and will meet No. 10 Auburn (33-22, 13-17 SEC) in the second of four single-elimination games Tuesday at Hoover Metropolitan Stadium. Top-seeded Vanderbilt (48-7, 28-3), second-seeded LSU, third-seeded Arkansas and fourth-seeded South Carolina have byes until double-elimination play starts Wednesday.

Alabama is the only SEC team that has defeated both Vanderbilt and LSU this season. The Tide defeated LSU 4-3 on April 21, the day after falling to the Tigers in 16 innings.

Alabama defeated Vanderbilt 5-4 in 10 innings Friday, one day after losing 7-6. On Saturday, the Tide out-hit the Commodores 14-9 but paid for its pitchers’ nine walks. Tyler Beebe came into the game with a 1.73 ERA, but he allowed six

runs on eight hits in only 3 2/3 innings.

"They just don’t back down," Yastrzemski said of the Tide. "They’re not scared of a kid who’s 13-0 on the year. They came out swinging the bats and were aggressive and were going out there hitting balls hard. You haven’t really seen that this year off Beebe. They came and did that, and that’s pretty impressive."

Alabama freshman shortstop Mikey White won’t discourage smiles at the thought of the Tide being considered a sleeper.

"I think a lot of teams are underestimating us," he said. "If our pitching gets hot, we can do some damage in the SEC Tournament."

Why not Alabama?

"We’re good enough to beat anybody in the country if we play and put everything together," senior catcher Brett Booth said. "We’ve got a lot of momentum swinging the bats. We’ve got a lot of confidence."

"When you play a team that’s as good as Vanderbilt and you’re with them all weekend, that gives you confidence."

As the CEO of the Bruno Event team that manages the SEC Tournament, Gene Hallman said ticket sales are on pace with the 2012 tournament that set an attendance record (129,112).

Alabama and Auburn met in the 2010 tournament opener. A large crowd resulted in traffic problems that Hallman says have been solved.

"We’ll be ready operationally," he said. "We would encourage them to come early."

Single-elimination means Alabama or Auburn won’t advance, but by the rivals playing each other, Hallman is pleased that one is guaranteed to advance. He says the tournament has managed well with or without the state schools represented.

"It’s the most well-attended conference tournament in the country," Hallman said. "You’ve got the best college baseball from top to bottom in the country."
Recruiting top priority for Curry

By Chase Goodbread,
Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA | Recruiting will be at the heart of new University of Alabama women's basketball coach Kristy Curry's plan to turn around a struggling program.

And in her introductory news conference Thursday, the former Texas Tech coach said that begins in her new program's home state.

"Recruiting is the lifeblood of any program. We are going to do everything we can to secure the borders of Alabama," Curry said. "In the Southeast, we're going to go right, left, north and south. And we're excited. There is great talent in this area."

Curry's contract details were not immediately available.

UA Director of Athletics Bill Battle said Curry was his first choice to replace Wendell Hudson, who was reassigned to an administrative role earlier this month.

At Texas Tech, Curry led the Red Raiders to a 21-11 record and an NCAA Tournament appearance last year. Over a 14-year head coaching career — seven seasons each at Purdue and Texas Tech — her career record is 309-149.

"You can see the fire in her eyes, the gleam in her eye, when she speaks," Battle said. "She turns everybody on — fans, players and all of us. It will be exciting times again."

Curry said she was especially excited about the level of talent in the state of Alabama's freshman high school class.

"The freshman class in the state of Alabama might be one

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of the best in the country, 2016. In 2014 there is quite a bit of talent. "We're excited about 2015, but 2016 might be one of the best classes in the entire country," Curry said.

As for UA's current players, the new coach said she has watched "a ton" of film on the Crimson Tide, and believes the players will blend nicely with her philosophies of multiple defenses and an offense that pushes the ball up the floor quickly.

"We're going to defend and rebound. We're going to get after you defensively. We're going to change defensively to keep the offense off balance. On the offensive end, we're going to look to score quick, score easy and score a lot. That's the type system young women want to play in. We want to score six to eight to 10 points a game off our inbounds and sidelines a game.

Curry also indicated she is making an effort to change the mind of one of UA's top talents from last season, Kaneisha Horn, who requested a release from her scholarship earlier this month.

"Definitely, I've already reached out to her and her parents. I'm not ready to talk about personnel yet, but I've been enjoying visiting with her and her family and look forward to building that relationship," Curry said.

Battle said he hopes the program will outgrow Foster Auditorium under Curry's leadership.

"We talked about Foster Auditorium. There are advantages to playing in Foster, we think, but there are advantages to growing out of Foster," Battle said. "Our goal is to grow out of Foster. We'd like to have 5,000 or 7,000 fans. That creates another problem, but that's a good problem to have. We look forward to that day."

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Tide introduces new women's basketball coach

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Kristy Curry began her campaign to make Alabama women's basketball relevant again at an introductory press conference Thursday afternoon. The Crimson Tide's newest coach unveiled a three-point platform in front of media members that she hopes will lead the team to its first NCAA Tournament appearance since the 1998-1999 season sooner as opposed to later.

Her three-pronged approach to rebuilding and revitalizing a program, which won just 14 games in SEC play in five seasons under previous coach Wendell Hudson, includes focusing on player development, in-state recruiting and revitalizing the fan base.

Curry began her college coaching career at Purdue and spent the last seven seasons at Texas Tech, where she guided the Lady Raiders to a 130-88 record, going 21-12 in 2012-2013 to advance to the NCAA tourney for the second time in the past three seasons.

A native of Ollie, La., the opportunity to return to the southeast, especially at a program rich in championship tradition in other sports, ultimately drew her to Tuscaloosa.

"Well, it's evident that the resources are in place to be successful and there's no reason in the world that women's basketball can't compete at the level that those programs are," Curry said. "You look at women's tennis this year. You look at men's and women's golf, four national championships a year ago and I think it's evident the commitment that the administration has made. (It's the) same commitment they're making to women's basketball or I wouldn't be sitting here."

She was Alabama Athletics Director Bill Battle's first true hire.
"It was great because we

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dates and we looked at a lot of different candidates. When it became evident that Kristy was interested, she became our No. 1 candidate. We zeroed in and didn't take long for that to happen. So, we were fortunate.

Curry, hired last Saturday, said she's already communicated with the each member of the team she'll lead next winter via phone and is looking forward to beginning to working with them when they get back on campus next week to start off-season training.

She's also been in touch with former Alabama Sports Writers Association Miss Basketball Kaneisha Horn, who requested and was granted a release from her scholarship in early May.

Horn, rated among the top five players in the country when she came out of Birmingham's Ramsay High School in 2010, averaged 8.3 points and 5.4 rebounds this past season.

Senior-to-be Jasmine Robinson transferred to Southeast Missouri State.

"I've already reached out to her and her parents," Curry said. "I'm not ready to talk about personnel yet but I've been enjoying visiting with her and her family and look forward to building that relationship."

Her No. 1 goal in recruiting will be to lock down the state's pool of talent.

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R.A. Hubbard's Alex Gholston is the only member of al.com's Sweet 16 super all-state girls basketball team headed to Alabama and she's going on a track scholarship.

"I think probably, the freshman class in Alabama might be one of the best in the country — 2016," Curry said. *Nick Birdsong covers basketball for al.com and the Alabama Media Group.*
Pettway promoted to assistant UA hoops coach

TUSCALOOSA | After spending the previous three seasons as the director of operations for the University of Alabama men's basketball team, former UA standout Antoine Pettway was promoted to assistant coach, head coach Anthony Grant announced as part of several changes to his coaching staff on Monday.

"Antoine's done a great job for us," Grant said. "I think he has really grown as a coach and has prepared himself to take that next step in the coaching career. He knows what it takes at this level and I am confident that he'll step in and make a smooth transition as an assistant coach."

Pettway finished his third season as Alabama's director of operations this past year. He was an assistant coach at his alma mater from 2008-10 and spent two seasons as an assistant coach on the Jacksonville State staff (2006-08).

He began his Alabama career as a walk-on with an academic scholarship before earning an athletic scholarship for his sophomore season. He was an integral part of Alabama's Elite Eight run in 2004, starting every game at point guard. That season was the third consecutive in which he led the Crimson Tide to the NCAA tournament after making appearances in 2002 and 2003.

In addition to Pettway's promotion, Grant tabbed John Brannen as associate head coach. Brannen, who has been with Grant for the past seven seasons including three years at Virginia Commonwealth (2006-09), has spent the past four seasons as an assistant coach at UA.

Grant also announced the addition of new strength and conditioning coach Lou DeNeen. DeNeen, who replaces Andy Weigel, comes to UA with almost 30 years of experience in the profession.
Sabans going in early, but not unusual for some inductees

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Nick Sabans credentials for induction into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame are pretty easy to spot.

Three national championships in the past four years put the Crimson Tide football coach in pretty elite company when it comes to bringing fame and glory to the State of Alabama through his sports exploits.

But if Alabama's football greatness continues at the same rate, how many revisions might ASHOF Executive Director Scott Myers have to make to update Sabans plaque, which he'll get in Saturday nights induction at the Birmingham Sheraton?

According to Myers, the answer is none. The plaques are done for that moment in time and are not changed, he said, noting that the history of a hall of fame's website and program book do reflect subsequent accomplishments.

"Once theyre up, theyre up," he said of the museum plaques. "Part of that is a function of when they were inducted and, quite frankly, the other part is a function of cost."

"Those plaques are not cheap. They cost quite a bit to have made. To have them made would be significant."

There are two paths into the Alabama Hall of Fame - the modern category, which is broken down by various sports, and the old-timers category, for persons who are or would have been 70, regardless of sport.

In the modern category, a person who is 40 or older is eligible then, even if he is still active in his sport. Prior to 40, he must be retired for a year before being eligible.

Saban, a West Virginia native, is 61.

Saban joins a list of hall of fame inductees who either could or did add to their legacy after they were immortalized in the ASHOF collection.


"But it does not read that on his plaque," Myers said. "It is as it was at that time."

Auburn coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan went into the hall the same year as Bryant and didn't step away from the sideline until 1975.

Birmingham native Bobby Bowden was inducted in 1986. He won his two national championships in 1993 and 1999 before concluding his coaching career in 2009.

Georgia coach Vince Dooley and Auburn coach Pat Dye also had work to do after they were enshrined. Dooley coached through 1998 after being inducted in 1984; Dye coached through 1992 after his induction in 1990.

Saban isn't the only current Alabama coach who could make his plaque outdated. Tide gymnastics coach Sarah Patterson was inducted in 2003. She added another national championship to her legacy in 2012.

"In recent times, Frank Thomas had reached the age of 40 and was still playing baseball," Myers said. "He was still DHing and hitting. He was nominated and placed on the ballot."

Thomas ended up retiring about the time he was nominated. He wasn't playing on an active roster when he was inducted.

Former Alabama running back Shaun Alexander was placed on the ballot and selected for induction after he had been retired a year.

He received flirtations from the Washington Redskins to return to field.

"That would have been a unique situation," Myers said, "because he was inducted under the age of 40."

Saturday nights induction into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame appears to be the first such distinction for Saban.

"Maybe there's something where he went to high school, we're not familiar with," Myers said.

"I don't know of another hall of fame he's been selected to as of yet."

"Myers declined to guess how many halls of fame the name Nick Saban might be found in when all is done."

"I would say there are plenty more halls of fame that will be calling his name in the future," he said.
Saban: UA offers value for recruits

By Chase Goodbread
Sports Writer

ORANGE BEACH | NCAA rules prohibit coaches from commenting on recruits publicly, so when University of Alabama coach Nick Saban was quizzed Wednesday about Auburn's recent commitments from the Mobile area — for years the state's hotbed for talent — he had little to say about the Crimson Tide's archrival or its pledges.

But he had plenty to say about Alabama. "We offer a lot of value to players who come to Alabama. We have the highest graduation (rate) in the league other than Vanderbilt," Saban said before his final Crimson Caravan appearance at the Orange Beach Event Center at The Wharf.

"We have the most guys make SEC honor roll of any school in the conference over the last couple of years, we've certainly won our share of games, we don't have a lot of guys getting in trouble."

While national signing day is more than eight months away, the recruiting cycle is a year-round competition. The Crimson Tide's signing classes have been ranked No. 1 in the nation more often than they haven't since 2008, and UA already has half a dozen commitments for its 2014 signing class. AU has seven, including four from Mobile or the surrounding area.

Alabama's track record for NFL success, he said, helps maintain a

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high profile to potential recruits.

"We like them to have priorities about being good people and developing a career off the field, like graduating from school, but a lot of these guys want to play in the NFL," Saban said.

"We've had the most players drafted, the most first-round draft picks, the most juniors go out early that become first-round draft picks of any school in the country. So if guys are interested in that, I'd say our coaches and our team and our administration has done a really good job of creating a really good atmosphere for developing players."

Woodson transfer

Saban said he was happy that former UA wide receiver Danny Woodson, suspended indefinitely before spring practice, will be able to renew his playing career after a transfer to South Alabama.

"He had a decision to make as to whether he wanted to do things the way they needed to be done for him to be successful at Alabama, or he had an opportunity to go someplace else," Saban said. "We're pleased that he has an opportunity, and we wish him well at South Alabama."

Quotable

"I made several double bogeys, which is kind of my game."—Saban on his Wednesday golf round

Tidbits

Alabama players, off for most of May, will return for summer school next week and begin an eight-week conditioning program. ... Saban said that for the fourth consecutive year, no active player will need summer school to academic gain eligibility for the fall.

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Mal Moore gets national honor

NEW YORK | Former University of Alabama director of athletics Mal Moore was named the winner of the College Athletic Director of the Year award Wednesday night at the Sports Business Awards banquet.

Moore, who died March 30, served as Alabama's director of athletics from 1999 to 2013, overseeing a renaissance of the university's athletics program.

"I am thrilled that Coach Moore has been named Athletic Director of the Year by the Sports Business Daily," said Bill Battle, recently named UA's new athletic director. "This is so perfectly appropriate as a recognition of the job he did at Alabama, particularly in leading our teams to unprecedented success during 2012. As his successor as Athletics Director, I have a unique perspective on the job that he did for us here. Perhaps more than anyone, I can attest to the tremendous job that he did."

Moore oversaw the most successful championship year in Alabama's athletic history as Crimson Tide teams won four national championships and came close to a fifth during the 2011-12 academic year. The Alabama football team won the BCS national title. The Crimson Tide women's gymnastics team won the NCAA championships and the women's softball and women's golf teams took national titles.

Alabama's men's golf team came within one stroke of a national championship.
House advances student loan plan
Proposal would link loan interest rates to financial markets

By Philip Elliott
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON | The days of fixed-rate student loans could be coming to a close, with House Republicans on Thursday advancing a proposal that would link rates to financial markets.

The GOP-led House Education and the Workforce Committee sent to the full House a bill that would offer some students a better deal at first, Democratic critics warned that graduates would face steadily climbing rates and costs over the long haul if the markets change.

“Our families deserve better than this bait and switch,” said Rep. George Miller of California, the senior Democrat on the committee, who led the opposition.

The Republican chairman of the panel, Rep. John Kline, said critics were giving too much credence to Congressional Budget Office figures that anticipate future interest rates and don’t accurately measure real costs for the program that helps 36 million students.

“We don’t know what these interest rates are going to be. No one actually knows what they will be,” Kline said. “Pick your score and make your best guess.”

Without Congress’ action, interest rates for new subsidized Stafford student loans would double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1. Neither party wants that to happen, although there remain strong differences in the methods to dodge that.

Democrats attempted to hold the rates at 3.4 percent while Congress considers a long-term fix. Their proposal received no votes from Republicans who hold the majority on the panel.

“Student loan rates should not be subject to the whims of Congress,” said Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C. “Students’ families and taxpayers deserve a long-term solution... This legislation offers predictability and simplicity.”

Democrats were not swayed. “I’ll tell you what’s predictable: They’ll be paying more,” said Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass.

Under the GOP proposal, student loans would be reset every
year and based on 10-year Treasury notes, plus an added percentage. For instance, students who receive subsidized or unsubsidized Stafford student loans would pay the Treasury rate, plus 2.5 percentage points.

Using Congressional Budget Office projections, that would translate to a 5 percent interest rate on Stafford loans in 2014, but the rate would climb to 7.7 percent for loans in 2023. Stafford loan rates would be capped at 8.5 percent, while loans for parents and graduate students would have a 10.5 percent ceiling under the GOP proposal.

"These rates reset every year. Buyer, beware," Courtney said.

Democrats on the panel objected to increasing the rates within a program that generates vast income for the federal government. The Congressional Budget Office this week revised its figures this week, reporting that federal loans will generate almost $81 billion this year. Over the last five years, that sum is almost $120 billion.

"That $81 billion is more than Exxon," Miller said.

"It's time we stop using federal student loans as a profit center," Tierney said.

In real dollars, the GOP plan would cost students and families heavily, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service. The office used the CBO projections for Treasury notes' interest rates each year.

Students who max out their subsidized Stafford loans over four years would pay $8,331 in interest payments under the Republican bill, and $3,450 if rates were kept at 3.4 percent. If rates were allowed to double in July, that amount would be $7,284 over the typical 10-year window to repay the maximum $19,000.

For students who borrow the maximum subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford loans, they would pay $12,374 in interest under the Republican bill. The interest charges would be $10,867 if subsidized loans were allowed to double in July, or $7,033 if rates stay the same.

The maximum available in subsidized and unsubsidized amounts is $27,000 for four years of school.

Graduate students and parents, meanwhile, would see interest payments reach $27,680 for four years of college under the GOP plan. If Congress keeps the rates the same, their interest payments would be $21,654 on the original maxed-out $40,000 loan, according to the Congressional Research Service report.

Republicans, however, stood by the proposal as needed amid economic struggles. A two-year extension of the 3.4 percent rate for subsidized Stafford loans would cost taxpayers about $9 billion.

"I would love to have the rates at 2 percent. It's just not realistic," said Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn.

President Barack Obama's budget outline included flexible rates for student loans, pegging the interest to markets, but did not have a cap. Republicans had long pushed for the flexible rates and Kline said he would go along with Obama on that principle while adding a cap that Democrats sought.

The White House, however, has not embraced Kline's proposal and stressed there are serious differences between proposals.